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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 1/80
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE

We propose to publish the four articles by Elder Samuel Trott titled "The Absolute Predestination of All Things". These first appeared in the 1833 volume of the *Signs of the Times*.

We are happy to send them out to you as sound doctrine. This doctrine was suitable for Baptists then, and is so now.

The other three articles will appear in future editions of the *Signs* this year.

Editor

THE ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS

No. 1

This sentiment as expressed in the Prospectus of the *Signs of the Times* has called forth so much invective from some, and so much ridicule from others of the popular Baptists of this region that one would conclude some strange and absurd idea has been advanced; some absurd whim daringly promulgated as a part of the secret things of god.

It, therefore, may not be amiss to re-examine the subject, and enquire whether it be a revealed truth of God, or a visionary notion of man, which is calling forth such malicious sneers from those who profess to be the servants of God.

Predestination is the same in meaning, with fore-ordination or fore-appointment; and is with God, one with pre-determination; for as God declares, so he determines, the end from the beginning; saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Thus the pre-determination of God, to

admit sin into the world embraced in it the decreeing of the time, manner, result, etc., of that event. And his pre-determination to bruise his Son in the place of sinners included in it the instruments, time, place, and manner of his death. Compare Acts 2:23 and 4:25-28, and John 13:1, and Heb. 13:11, 12. The doctrine of predestination, then, is this, that God has so pre-determined every event, as to fix with such precision its limits and bounds, its causes and effects that with him it is divested of all contingency. This, Brother Beebe, is the monstrous doctrine, which you engage to maintain, in your paper, and which we Old Fashioned Baptists, some of us, profess to believe, and which is drawing down upon you and us the reproaches and contempt of all the learned gentry among the Baptists.

The term absolute, has been prefixed by yourself and others to the word predestination, to distinguish the doctrine you hold from the idea of a conditional predestination. Strictly speaking, however, this is an unnecessary appendage. A conditional predestination is no predestination; for the predestination of an event conditionally, is but a pre-determination to leave the event undetermined, and therefore excludes predestination altogether.

Having thus briefly explained what we mean by predestination, I will proceed to show that it is a doctrine taught in the Scriptures. In relation to the salvation of the Elect we have the doctrine of predestination expressed in direct terms, as in Rom. 8:29-30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son etc.---Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called etc." And Eph. 1:5, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, etc." and verse 11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things

after the counsel of his own will". In these passages, we have not only the word predestination used in the translation, but in the original the Greek word employed is of a corresponding signification; being Proorizo, formed of Pro, before, and Orizo, to bound, or limit, to determine, to define, etc., and is derived from the theme, oros, a bound or limit, or the end of a thing. Hence the literal signification of the word, used is, a fixing before, the bound or limit, of a thing or event.

If we look at the connection, we shall find the idea conveyed by the word, fully sustained by its use in these cases. In Rom 7:29-30, the whole of the Apostles argument in these and the following verses of this chapter are in support of the declaration he makes, verse 28; "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." To this the enquiry might be made, how, Paul, can we know this? "For, or because", is the answer, "whom he did foreknow" that is as the objects of his purpose and call, "he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren". Did decree that they should be like Christ, should partake of his image; should as his brethren participate in that life that is in him, in a justification from the demands of the law, in the Father's peculiar love and care, in the resurrection, and in that glory which the Father gave him, etc. And this was no inefficient purpose. "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". Paul, now retorts some inquiries to those, who might doubt the assertion made in verse 28; he asks in verse 31, "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us"? or more emphatically "who against us", that is who is it, that is against us?--He goes on to confirm his position by a series of

inquiries, in which he shows that the predestination of God is firm against all the assaults of tribulation or distress, etc., and against death and life, and angels and principalities, and powers, and things present, and things to come, and height and depth, etc. Thus we see that the predestination of God in this case, not only secures the leading purpose, that the Elect shall be conformed to the glorious image of his son, but also fixes the limits, and determines the end of all things which transpire in relation to them.

Again if we refer to the use of the word in Ephesians we shall find that the predestination, and the determination or purpose of God, go together. Thus Chapter 1, verses 4-6, "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself according to the good pleasure of his will,--To the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Predestination is here represented to be according to the good pleasure of his will, and is a decreeing of the objects of his choice unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world; but determines at that early period, their being accepted in the Beloved; and of course, decides with certainty, their repenting, believing, and being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; things necessarily embraced in their experimental acceptance in Christ. Again in verse 11, the Apostle speaks of having obtained an inheritance as the result of that predestination of God which is according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Here then, we have in these and the connecting verses every part of salvation brought to view as the predestination of God. For he worketh all things, not according to the caprice of fallen men, not according to any

fortuitous circumstances which may transpire, but according to the counsel of his own will. If then it is a fact, as the Apostle declares that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; then does the counsel of God's own will, not only determine with certainty all the parts of salvation and fix the whole chosen race, blameless before him in love in the possession of their inheritance, as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, but also decrees the result of all events according to his good pleasure.

If all persons with whom we have to do, were disposed, cheerfully to submit to the decision of Divine Revelation, there would be but one question more to decide, in order to determine whether all things absolutely, or things in a limited sense, are predestinated, or worked according to the decision of the counsel of God's own will, and that question is,--how far does the government of God extend? If his government extends universally over matter and mind, then there is no movement either of matter or mind but what God works after the counsel of his own will, or determines the result thereof according to the good pleasure of his will. King Nebuchadnezzar evidently thought that God's Dominion was universal, over Heaven and earth, for he says of him, "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 doest thou?" Dan. 4:35. And the King was certainly correct in this, for Christ assured his Disciples in Matthew 28:18, that all power was given to him in Heaven and in earth; that is as Mediator. If so, God had it in his own hands to give. Again Christ says in John 17:2, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him". Hence his power is over the wicked as well as over those to whom he gives eternal life; and it being all power, it must extend to both matter and mind,

as there can be no disposing influence, or power besides, and therefore, the devices both of men and devils, as well as their actions, must be under his control.

Still, however, many persons are unwilling to believe, that the predestination of God has anything to do with the wicked actions of men or devils. They, in order to be consistent with themselves, ought to believe that wickedness is under the control of an opposite power, and that God exercises no control over wicked actions or thoughts, to limit their extent, or to overrule their results in accordance with his purposes; lest thereby he should be charged with being the author of sin.

I think, however, I shall be able to bring from the Scriptures of truth, several facts which go to prove that the predestination of God determines the results, fixes the limits and so controls the actions and devices of wicked men and devils, so as to cause them to terminate in the furtherance of his own glorious purposes.

But as I wish not to be tedious, I will leave the further consideration of this subject for another number.

S. Trott

Fairfax Court House, Virginia

WE ARE BOUND

This morning I have before me a portion of the Book of Thessalonians, the Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to them. "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." And in the third verse he said something that's on our mind, I trust I have your prayers as we try to expound the scripture: "We are bound to thank God." "We are bound to thank God always for you." The word "bound" is used oftentimes in that which our duty brings us to. We are bound by a lot of things in this life, we are bound by the laws of the land, we are bound by tradi-

tion, we are bound by the bonds of truth. We are bound by a lot of things, but here Paul is speaking of that which they are bound. It would be absurd to give someone else thanks for what God has done. I believe that God's ministers serve their purpose in this life and that they serve it well. I believe they are bound by their calling to follow in that which the Lord leads them. Here this great apostle is saying, "We are bound to thank God always for you." "You" is a personal pronoun that does not include everyone. He's talking of the church, the Thessalonians, and Silvanus and Timotheus and, "We are bound to thank God for you." I think we should keep this in mind, that we are bound by the truth, we are bound by our experience, we are bound by the scripture. We are bound by the precept that's left by those who've gone before, who were faithful in Christ Jesus, "We are bound to thank God for you."

In the churches that I have served in this community for more than forty years we've had a lot of good meetings, we've had a lot of things that bring us to rejoice but for every one who's found rest to his soul I am bound to thank God for you as Paul said. This great evangelist—perhaps the world has never known one before and shall never know one equal to him. He was converted on the Damascus Road when he was on an errand of mischief. And the theory is that he taught and that we believe and that the scripture teaches that God calls those where He finds them and He turns them round about and He places them in a position that they are bound to thank God always for their deliverance. We could not say that in the conversion of this great writer we could give any man on the earth credit for it. By the same token we believe that with all the preaching that has been done, and all the evangelists that have traveled many miles, that when one believes in God we are bound by the truth to give God thanks for him. Paul said, "We are

bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet." The word "meet" here means that it's right, that it is according to the truth. "Because your faith groweth." "Because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of everyone of you all toward each other aboundeth." It aboundeth and we are bound.

These things I wish we could keep in mind: that we are bound by the truth, we are bound by the scripture, we are bound by the words of the prophets, we are bound by the words of Jesus Christ to give God thanks for every increase in the church, every blessing in the church, every one that's added to the church; the church is not to be defined as a building made with hands that a fire or an earthquake might destroy because if you should destroy every building in this country that's called a church building you wouldn't destroy the church. And you might build a building that reached across the county or across the State, God does not dwell in buildings or temples made with hands. His church is his people and He lives in them, He dwells in them, He guides them and we are bound always to give God thanks.

Now, in the 13th verse of the 2nd Chapter of Second Thessalonians, and I'll have to agree that I've heard some beautiful expositions on this scripture, and I shall not try to copy the words of those who have gone on before but I think hearing them inspired me or gave me a desire to talk about the same things, and we have not skipped over scripture for any special purpose but we have this word "bound" on our minds. In this Chapter God describes two types of people. He describes those who are led about by Satan and those who are led of God and He said, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." I didn't say it, Paul said it. He's talking of somebody, "Even him, who's coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." These are the

words of Paul and he speaks of the "mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

I'm sure that these words we've just read in the latter part of this discourse have no application to a true believer in God. But in the 13th verse he said something else. He brings again this word: "But we are bound." I am bound by my experience, by the things that I have felt, by the things I trust the Lord has revealed to me, by the truth that I've found in the scriptures and I believe something that the Lord put in my heart and wrote in my mind, I am bound. And we are bound, and God's people are bound, and God's ministers are bound and those who believe are bound. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you." We have just read in the first part of this scripture where Paul said, "We are bound to thank God always for you." That's the 1st Chapter and the third verse of Second Thessalonians. This is the 13th verse of the 2nd Chapter of Second Thessalonians: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you,...because..." We are bound because. This scripture is not complete unless you read the whole verse. When we take a portion of a verse and preach it and leave the other portion out we are not rightly dividing the word of truth because it's important--the truth can be preached and not rightly divided.

But we are bound, we are bound to "search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." But now, to get back to this scripture, we see eternal security in it; we see the sovereignty of God; we see that which ever existed as faith by which we believe: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."

Now this is what we have believed, we have tried to preach here in this community for forty years that "from the beginning." In other words, "beginning" might be interpreted many different ways but "In the beginning God"--that's the first four words of the Bible. "In the beginning God." We have here a standard set up, we have a rule to follow: "In the beginning God". And Paul says here fifty-four years after the beginning of the christian era, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Now if God has chosen someone from the beginning, "In the beginning God" as we have the first four words of the Bible. Can you go back further than that? I don't know whether he has reference to this globe or not, I don't know whether he has reference to the universe as we know it or not, I don't know whether he has reference to the galaxies as we know them or not, but, "from the beginning." You couldn't find anything further back than that: "from the beginning." "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you". Now, if you are chosen of God, and let us hope that you are, let us suppose that you are, if you are chosen of God it is from the beginning. It wasn't the beginning of a meeting, it wasn't the beginning of the year, it was "from the beginning"

because God has never changed and I am inclined to believe that if He loves me today, He always loved me, there never was a time when He didn't love me. And if I'm chosen today, and I trust I am and I hope I am, "from the beginning." Can you go further back than that? Can you see anything that can disannul that? Can you see anything that would dispute that?

And the choice of God and your choice of God, God's choice of you and your choice of God. We have heard it debated many times; there are many different versions, there are many different ideas of what it means. But we have the words of the apostle or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." I believe the Lord Jesus Christ said to somebody, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you...that you should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Can anyone disannul this choice. And if you have chosen God this scripture brings out very clearly that your choice of God is because He first chose you. And the psalmist said, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face Lord, will I seek." Have you sought His face--until He speaks in you?

Now we are bound. "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you." "You" here could mean one or it could mean every child of God. "You" is a personal pronoun that has no bounds for number. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren."

What does it take to make brethren or what happens that you are a brother to somebody. Are you responsible for it? Did you choose your brothers? Did you choose your sisters or did you choose your parents, or did you choose your grandparents? I am sure if you did you would choose very noble ones. You wouldn't go back to trace your genealogy and find "a dead cat on the line" as it were. I am told by those who seem to know that the name I bear goes

back to a pirate who lived in the Atlantic Ocean called Bluebeard. I don't know if it's true or not but if I had my choice of choosing my ancestors I would not have chosen a pirate. But we don't have that choice. But in the choice of God, God hath chosen you, it's a complete statement. God has chosen you to salvation. If God has chosen you to salvation, everything you have that is human seems to fight against it, rebels against it, as Paul was told, "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you." You know, I don't remember when Noah went into the ark, I don't remember when Adam came out of the Garden of Eden; I don't remember when old Abraham took his son upon the mountain as it were to sacrifice him; but, if I'm chosen of God, if I belong to God, if I'm one of His children: before this all happened I was one of them. I just didn't know about it. "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." If you are beloved of the Lord you were always beloved of the Lord. The theory that you can do something now that will incur the love of God just will not stand up in the scrutiny of the scriptures because we have all sinned and come short of the glory of the Lord and God does not love sin, in fact He hates it.

But as we get back to the text before us: WE ARE BOUND by the things we believe, by the things we have experienced, by the Bible, by the words of Jesus, by the words of the apostle Paul, by the first words ever written: "In the beginning God." In the beginning of your faith, in the beginning of your experience, in the beginning of your love for your brethren--and that's the only real tangible evidence that you have. You cannot say you have credentials to say that you are chosen of God, you cannot say you have credentials to show that you love God. The only real

tangible evidence you have in this life: "For we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

Now, getting back to the doctrine. We are bound, everything that's in us, everything that's been taught us, everything that we have believed, everything that we have loved, and all the reasoning power that we can bring up as we study the scriptures, we are bound by these things, by these traditions, "to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." That's who they are: brethren beloved of the Lord, "because God hath from the beginning." In the beginning God made heaven and earth and from that beginning God has chosen you to salvation. "Chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." Salvation means to save that which was lost. "Chosen you to salvation." If you have salvation it's because God has chosen you. And if He has chosen you, you will not fail to be saved. And the word "saved" often means "separated." But "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification." I love this word. Paul speaks of it in the right perspective and he said sanctified by God the Father. They say, those who study the words and in the translation, that sanctify means to set apart for the service of God. So when Paul spoke of the status of the church he speaks of them as sanctified by God the Father, chosen in Christ Jesus and called. The calling is the last part. Of these three progressive things toward believing in God, the calling comes last. You are called because you are preserved, sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus and called. The calling comes because of the preservation, the preservation comes because of the sanctification and this comes because God hath from the beginning. I love these words. Now, I can hear someone, the objector, someone who doesn't believe it, someone who believes

something more liberal, saying then we are robots: that if this is true, we are robots. It is true. We are not robots. We are God's children if indeed we are not deceived. We believe the Bible because it's been wrought in us. And we are bound.

(Transcribed from tape of a sermon by Elder O. K. Tench delivered on the radio, 4th Sun. in Nov., 1978).

(Continued next month)

SELECTED FROM
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1834
ARMINIANISM

As every reader may not have a clear determinate idea of what Arminianism precisely is, it may to such be satisfactory to know that it consists chiefly of five particulars. (1.) The Arminians will not allow election to be an eternal, peculiar, unconditional and irreversible act of God. (2.) They assert that Christ died equally and indiscriminately for every individual of mankind; for them that perish, no less than for them that are saved. (3.) That saving grace is tendered to the acceptance of every man; which he may, or may not receive, just as he pleases. Consequently, (4.) That the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit is not invincible, but is suspended for its efficacy on the will of man. (5.) That saving grace is not an abiding principle; but that those who are loved of God, ransomed by Christ, and born again of the Spirit may (let God wish and strive ever so much to the contrary) throw all away, and perish eternally at last.

To these, many Arminians tack a variety of errors beside. But the above may be considered as a general skeleton of the leading mistakes which characterize the sect.

Toplady

FROM AN OLD SIGNS

Dalark, Arkansas

Dear Brother in Bonds:

I received your very comforting letter about a month ago, and was certainly elated over the contents, but wonder why any one would stoop so low as to even notice such a wretched character as I am.

Brother Griffin, I feel to hope that we have a few things in common. Your age exceeds mine only about four years. In relating your experience you gave the "waymarks" so plainly that I believe we were brought over the same road. We are both members of the same faith and order. We have both been placed under the same yoke of the ministry. Having so many things in common, I am impressed to relate to you by pen some things of my experience along life's way, if it be God's will. I have never attempted to write it before, but have been blessed to tell it in public a few times. It seems so different from the experience of most people that I very often doubt it being an experience of grace. I was raised by very religious parents, my father being an ordained minister of the Missionary Baptist people. Very few Sundays did I miss Sunday School and church services. I was reared in an Arminian atmosphere. I do not remember ever hearing the term "Primitive Baptist," or ever meeting a "Hard Shell," until I was grown. I was taught that there were a very few ignorant, devilish people, who lived in the backwoods, who were called "Hard Shells," who I was to shun as a wild beast. Of course I did not want to even meet one. At a very early age I, too, joined the organization with my parents. Being termed as one of the best "kid speakers" in our community, I was solicited to take part in the testimony meetings. When I was sixteen years of age I obtained a teacher's license, and began to teach both literary and Sunday School. This, of course, helped me "practice up" on public speaking. Being first

in the school-room, first in the Sunday School class, and first in the other community socials, gave me a good case of "Big I," and the foremost symptom was self-righteousness. Then I was solicited to preach, and having such a good opinion of myself, and seeing so many of my fellow-men falling so far short of me, I also thought it prudent that I should be clothed with the authority to tell them of their wicked ways, and admonish them to "get right." Therefore, I was ordained, and zealously pursued my task, and went along smoothly for awhile.

Now, dear brother, the saddest, most heartrending and serious part of my experience I am about to tell. The thoughts of it even now make me shudder. One certain night, during a protracted meeting in our community, I was called by the "big preacher" from the city, to take full charge of the service. He called me the night before, and thus spoke: "Brother Lambert, I have been preaching here every night for almost a week with no results. No mourners have come forward. Tomorrow night I want you to make the altar call after you have preached." Of course I was elated over the opportunity to try my luck. The next day I studied the proposition seriously. I decided on the theme, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God," using "Thou shalt be cut off, and that without remedy," as a text. That particular night I must have been blessed with rhetorical eloquence, for when I made the altar call old men, old women, boys and girls began at once to flock to the altar. Dear brother, I suppose you think I should have been somewhat overjoyed. Naturally I would have been, but alas! there seemed to be an audible voice which spoke, "Who are you, that you should invite?" This would not have been so bad if the answer had not come immediately by the same voice, "You are a sinner vile and needy." I wanted to run out at the door and hide from every one. As soon as I could I did

get away from there. Oh how miserable I was! On that night I saw myself as a sinner for the first time, and I went about to right myself. The more I tried to do the deeper in sin I sank. I tried until I could try no more, and gave it up as a hopeless task. Of course I gave up trying to preach, but I was still in possession of my credentials.

Some little time after that, I drove into a little town quite some distance from home, about sundown. Some of the people there knew I was coming, but did not know I had given up trying to preach, and had given out an appointment for me that night. As I drove in town the church bell began to ring, and I asked the one that I was stopping with what it meant, and he informed me that I was to preach that night. I told him I could not do it, but he informed me that it was too late to back out then. I saw the trap I was in. I was in a strange community, so decided to act the hypocrite and get up one of my old themes and texts and raise a reputation for myself in that community. But alas! I could not think of a thing. I tried to think of some Scripture and to take some of my Sunday School knowledge, but that had all sunk into oblivion. I know I tried to think soberly on the Scriptures, but I could not, I could think of nothing except how sinful I was, and I knew it would not do to tell them that, for instead of giving me a reputation I would lose it. A great audience was in front of me when I went behind the pulpit and I was as blank of thoughts of the Bible as any one could be. If I ever prayed I did then. I groaned, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." I became unconscious of action or thought, and when I became conscious I was exhausted and was standing there feasting upon the power, holiness and wisdom of God. I left that place thrilled to the highest, still feasting upon several of the attributes of God. I was driving home in my car that night by myself, still feasting, when the train of thoughts

was turned. I saw myself the blackest of black sinners, and then glimpsed God as the Holiest of Holies. I saw myself as most foolish and God as all-wise. I saw myself unable to perform anything, and God as having all power. What a great gulf there was to be spanned between my condition and the requirements of the law. I went along groping in this predicament for quite some time. Finally the sweetest of my experience came. I was teaching school in the community where I had witnessed that glimpse of God, when one day a neighbor came to the place where wife and I resided. He suggested that we go to a home that night to preaching. He said Elder A. D. Wall, of Amity, Arkansas, would preach. I asked him if they were "Hard Shells," and told him if they were I did not care to hear them, because they believed that a man was justified in killing another because God predestinated it. He answered thus: "I just supposed you would be interested, for if I ever heard a Primitive Baptist sermon you preached it here last year." I answered, "For curiosity's sake I will go." I have never been able to recall anything that I said that night, as I seemed to be in a subconscious state, and have often wondered what I did say. Therefore, I consented to go for the first time to hear a "Hard Shell" preach, and I was glad I did go. I accused Elder Wall of being a mind reader that night. He was blessed to take up each question that came to my mind and to thresh it out to my satisfaction. That night I was blessed to see another attribute of God: that of mercy. I saw the character who was able to span the gulf between my sinfulness and God's holiness; my inability and God's power; my foolishness and God's wisdom. I saw Jesus, who was verily God and man, with one foot on God's side of the gulf and the other on puny man's side. I saw him, as it were, pick up sinful men, whom God had chosen, and cleanse them with his blood and place them safely on the other side, without

spot or blemish, to bask in the sunlight of God's eternal love and power forever on the sunny banks of sweet deliverance. Jesus died in my low room and stead, tread the wine-press alone. In my stead (as I hope) he kept the law to a jot and tittle. The keeping of this law by Jesus was charged to my account, my sins were laid on his shoulders and he bore the penalty. His life's blood was shed while hanging on the cross of Calvary for the remission of my sins, as I hope.

This experience was so consoling to me that I thought my troubles were over. But my lot seems to be akin to Job's. The last of my experience told was at the dawn of the year 1930. I will tell briefly some of the things that took place with me that year. Three cars were wrecked for me, a son was born to us and in about a month my wife died with pneumonia. I lost my position and health. I had to give up teaching because I was not able to meet the requirements for a license of course. With all this, and doctor bills, funeral expenses and other things, I suffered a nervous breakdown. In that year I was received in Cedar Hill Church. In September I was visiting the South Ouachita Association, among strangers in the flesh. I was so nervous and burdened down with something that I could not face any one. One night, at the home of Elder J.R. Evers, a sister (who was a total stranger to me) requested that I be called on to say a few words. I was on the outside of the house, but was called in, and God blessed me with the light and liberty of unloading that burden. In the course of time I was licensed to preach. Then, against my protests of not being qualified, called for my ordination, which was carried out while the South Arkansas Association was in session, in September, 1934. I met and married my second wife in that year and God blessed me with the privilege of baptizing her last year.

Brother Griffin, I have tried to give you some of the marks of the road I was

forced to travel. I am glad that God blessed you to come to Arkansas, and hope that we may meet again. If you receive any comfort from this give God all the praise. Pray for me at the throne of grace.

Hoping in Christ for my soul sufficiency, I am your brother,

(Elder) E. J. Lambert

Jan. 1938

(Selected)

SPIRITUAL TRIALS

Dear Sirs,-It is with an heart overpressed with sorrows, that I take up my pen to write a few lines to you, and I do sincerely believe that was I not supported by an unseen hand, they would be too many for me, when darkness of soul, and darkness in my way, with God frowning, no light, no life, no liberty, no hope, at least very little, no joy, but, on the contrary, all sorrow, all gloom, all wretchedness, all misery; these things make me think, at times, that it is all over with me, that what in months that are past I have been enabled to triumph in has been all a delusion, and that I must eventually lie down in eternal sorrow. O sirs, do tell me, is it, or has it ever been thus with you? I now know what the psalmist meant when he said, "I mourn and am as a swallow alone upon the house top". Indeed, sirs, I have told the Lord that if he designs sending me to hell at last, if he would but condescend to let me enjoy him while in this time-state, I should feel far more satisfied; but not to know him as my God neither here nor hereafter, is more than I can bear. What if God this day was to call me to his bar, to give an account of deeds done in the body! what could I say, but, "Amen, hallelujah!" to my damnation. It is his love, or rather his forbearance, that has kept me hitherto out of hell; but what grounds have I to hope that I shall not one day awake there? I am so tossed about with temptations, sins, and fears, that I think at times that if I belonged to that

number gathered out of every nation, kingdom, people, and tongue, I should not be tried and left to sink so long and so deep where there is no standing; for if I go to pray, in secret or in the family; if I go on a Lord's Day to worship God in public; if I attempt to read my Bible; yea, whatever I do appears to bring me under that passage, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me". But, sirs, I have more than once had pleasure in what God says by Isaiah, "My ways are not your ways, neither are my thoughts your thoughts". If they had been, where should I have been at this moment? Why, in hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched; and yet, amidst all within and without, a small hope rises at times; but unbelief says, "The end of these things is death; for dare I hope in his mercy who crucified him afresh? Well, here I am, and I do think I cannot know much worse, or feel either.

Dear sirs, now do tell me the truth. Can you for a moment think these are the feelings of God's family, that, for the trial of their faith, they are thus perplexed, thus cast down, and thus in despair, having to wade through hot fires and deep waters, thinking the next wave that comes will swallow them up for ever? If these are the feelings of God's family, let me know, for these are mine. Often am I led to say,

"Is this, dear Lord, the way?

Dear Saviour, still lead on;

Nor leave me till I say,

Father, thy will be done:

At most, I do but taste the cup,

For thou alone hast drank it up!"

Manchester

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JOHN 3:16 AND THE LITTLE WORD "SO"

If "so" is a word, and if all words mean something, then "so" means something. When a word with a meaning is placed within a sentence, it modifies, changes or qualifies that sentence. In John 3:16, "so" modifies and qualifies the simple statement, "God loved the world." Without that word "so" and what follows it, one would find God doing what He told His children not to do in I John 2:15--"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Yet, innumerable Arminian pulpiteers throughout the world hammer on what they consider to be the world's favorite

text, John 3:16, as though it says, "God loved the world."

However, to say that God loved the world merely elicits a bored "Oh" from the unquestioning natural mind. The spiritual dullard who would believe anything that is comfortable to him would soak up this statement in nature's blindness and go on to other things. "God loves the world? Okay, then he loves you and me, I guess. What's for lunch?" Such is the carnal mind's appreciation for the love of its God.

I.

To say God loves the world is vaguely satisfying to the natural mind but specifically frustrating to it. The Old Testament pharisees were a case in point: "Yet ye say, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' (Mal. 1:2) When love is generalized to include all, it loses its potency and its very appeal. To love everything equally is to love nothing. Love becomes too diluted to mean anything. To love someone means that the loved one is someone special. To love everyone would mean that everyone is special, which means that no one is special; for, by definition, "special" must separate someone or something out of a general group. For example, we speak of loving our country, meaning that our country is something preeminent to us; or, a man loves his wife, which tells us that his wife is peculiarly precious to him, more dear to him than all other women. Now, if a person loves all countries or all women equally, then must he not admit that his own country and his own wife are nothing special to him?

Is someone says he "loves all the cities of England equally," is he not saying in those very words that London, for example, is nothing special to him?

The misleading Arminian proclamation that "God loves everyone without exception" is a designing, scheming approach. Bluntly, it is a contrivance based on crude, carrot-and-stick psychology, designed to make people feel obligated toward God. It is a subtle theory,

not too well thought out by the men and devils who designed it with a hope that it would produce within mankind a response toward this God who loves them--a response of gratitude, service, obedience and devotion. It is a subtle system which in theory is supposed to bring the maximum number of the citizens of this world to feel and to say, "God loves me? Then, I must love (and serve) him in return! I must feel gratitude for his love, and, to repay him for it I shall obey all of his laws forever."

However, in actual application, the believers in this universal love are not particularly moved toward obedient service by their theory, but are ultimately reduced to looking about themselves at the "mess" in which they perceive the world to be and mulling over the ineffectuality of this vague, universal love which does nothing special for anyone in particular. They proclaim a yearning god who is just as concerned over a Pharaoh or a Judas as he is a Moses, Peter, James or John. He can do nothing for any of them unless they let him. According to Arminianism, the primary difference between the apostates and the apostles is that the former would not avail themselves of his love while the latter would and did; so, this god continues to yearn and mourn over his losses and failures while ever offering more love, more love.

Musing upon his god's lavish waste of the same love upon the atheistic, hellish hordes around him that he "offers" to his most faithful saint, the thoughtful Arminian must cynically say in his heart, "Wherein hast thou loved us?"

Whenever the statement "God loves you" comes to an entire class, as on the surface of things it seemed to come to all of national Israel in Malachi 1:2, the natural response from any subset within the "universally loved" entity will be identical to that of Israel's leadership, which was not undying gratitude, willing service and obedience, or total devotion and love to God in return (as

the Arminian theory would lead us to expect), but rather this question from an undiscerning mind: "Wherein hast thou loved us?" When love is generalized, diffused, scattered everywhere and made as common as straw, it becomes as cheap as straw in the estimation of the "beloved" one(s). The implication in Malachi is that the Old Testament religious leaders were saying, "What distinguishing marks prove you love us more than you love anyone else? Just what have you done for us lately?"

It is of vital interest to the child of grace that God Himself answers the question in Malachi by directly proclaiming His sovereign election of Israel. The thrust of God's reply is, "Jacob is elect, Esau is not; THAT is wherein I have loved you." Election in Christ Jesus to the eternal salvation which is in and through His blood--that is the cardinal proof of God's love; conversely, without divine election there is no proof of divine love. Yet, for years the Arminians have misused John 3:16 to preach around the truth of God's sovereign election without directly having to confront it or even having to mention it. Perceiving election as an enemy they have, like the ostrich hiding its head in the sand, ignored it, hoping it would go away. Election has not gone away, nor will it; and the theory that God loves the world is weighed in the balance and found wanting.

II.

On the other hand, to say that "God SO loved the world..." is entirely different from saying "God loved the world." "SO" is a qualifying word, and inserting it in the complete sentence, "God loved the world," results in its no longer being a complete sentence. To say God SO loved the world raises the valid question: how, or in what manner did He love it--how SO? This leads to the fact that Jesus both anticipated and answered this question when He continued, "...that He gave..."

His continuation and explanation to Nicodemus would indicate that perhaps we are on the right track; He did not say, "God loved the world, period." He said, "For God SO loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," but He did not stop with that revelation, either. "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here Jesus sets forth a fact about believers. Nowhere did He either tell Nicodemus (or anyone else) how to believe, or urge him (or anyone else) to do so. It remained for Paul to point out that belief is, like the only begotten Son Himself, also a gift (Phil 1:29), and that all who believe in Him do so "according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead..." (Eph. 1:19-22) Paul's doctrine is that it takes the same power of God to bring a poor sinner out of natural unbelief into a state of belief, the same power of God that raised Christ from the dead and exalted Him in glory at His Father's side. It takes that kind of power to make a believer out of an unbeliever. But, in John 3, Jesus did not go into these things with Nicodemus. He told Nicodemus how God loved the world so that believers would not perish, and he indicated that belief is *evidence* of eternal life—not one of several steps toward it.

Nowhere in the third chapter of John is there any indication that the love of God does anything for an unbeliever. Nowhere does it say that any unbeliever, *per se*, is loved. The unbeliever is condemned already (verse 18) and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth, or stays continually, on him (verse 36). This is unchangeable, unalterable, abiding. The evidence that the unbeliever is condemned is that he loves darkness and hates the light (I.e., Christ, John 8:12) and will not come to Him lest his deeds should be reproved (3:20). In contrast to this, another evidence of eternal life in the believer is

that he does come to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God, which is to say their deeds are produced by Him (John 3:21, Phil. 2:13).

The world thinks it is doing God a favor by attempting to make His love as broad as possible. John well answered all who believe such when he said, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." If Christ is not the propitiation for an individual's sins, there is no proof whatsoever that God loves him. If Christ is his propitiation, then this proves that God does love him. God's love, The Father's election, the Son's propitiation, the Spirit's regeneration, and the result and belief in the individual's heart--these are all to the exact, same extent.

The error of the world is: "God loved the world; God gave His only begotten Son; IF you will believe in Him you will not perish but have everlasting life."

But ye have not so learned Christ.

The doctrine of Christ is: God has a people, God loves His own; He gave His only begotten Son for them, He gives their belief to them, He works their deeds in them. They believe in Him, and they shall not perish but have everlasting life. His people rest in His love which is eternal, unchangeable, specific, and effectual. A renewed heart and a changed life are the results and evidences of God's love in anyone's life. In summary, it can be truly said that the knowledge of God's sovereign, electing love, when it is implanted by the Holy Spirit in an enlightened sinner's heart, will produce in him or her that genuine gratitude, obedience and devotion about which the will-worshippers of this world can only speculate when they are in their finer moods, and which they try to imitate when they are on their better behavior.

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

EDITORIAL

GALATIANS 5:17-26

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

I do hope that as I endeavor to write about the fruits of the Spirit, that I will have the patience of those to whom I would write. I would beg that the mantle of charity be cast around me, for I am a poor sinner, and as subject to error as water is to flow down hill. If I am thus carefully handled by my readers, I will be covered by this mantle, for it covers a multitude of sins.

Only one reference to the works of the flesh do I want to make. That is this, to wit, that there is a law against each and every one of these works. As far as I am concerned, there is not a "thus saith the Lord" for us to engage in any of these works. Not a single commandment, not a single sanction, not a single approval can be found from the Lord. As far as the deportment of the children of God is concerned, it is like unto this, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his

commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (I John 5:3) It is grievous that I am weak, that I am often going astray, but the commandments are not grievous to me. I am often stumbling, and I am often disobedient to the commandments of my God, but I am not given to being burdened because that He has not left me a place to sin once and awhile, to take vengeance, to get even, to blow my top. His commandments are delightful. When I sin, it is the greatest sorrow to me, showing definitely that there is law against all works of the flesh.

I desire that you notice the technicality of manner with which Paul deals with this intricate matter. It is indeed intricate when one is engaged in such bitter opposition to the other that he and she in whose breast the battle rages, is unable to do as they would. As he finishes his account or narration of the works of the flesh, and the dire consequences when they are engaged in, then he turns. His turning from one to the other is complete. He does not carry a single part of his treatise on the works of the flesh over into his treatise on the fruit of the Spirit. One is altogether dealing with the works of the flesh; the other is altogether dealing with the fruit of the Spirit. He turns from one subject to another with the little word "but" which, I used to be told, was a conjunction used to separate phrases in the same sentence. One phase of this deals with the works of the flesh, the other deals with the fruit of the spirit, and when he turns from the first to the second, he turns all the way.

These fruits are as follows: Love is the first. I used to feel that the apostle did not list these fruits according to their importance, but not any more. This word is the foundation of everything that is precious to the child of God. God is love. It is not that this is one of His characteristics, that it is one of His attributes, but that is what He is. Love is active. It doesn't make any difference to

me whether it is God loving His people, or His people loving Him (and if Him, then one another), love is active.

The subject is of so much importance to us; it is the only hope for poor sinners, and yet its magnitude overwhelms me. I am so unlovely, and God is so lovely, that an effort for me to speak of my relationship to it causes me to approach handling it with much reluctance. I am not able, in my flesh, to command nor to put down and out this love. I am sure that no one, no one at all, can command love. It handles us, for it is not handled by the objects of love. Love is not severed by the actions of a person any more than it begins by the action of another. Love originates with God. I am well aware that men are running around in circles telling sinners that are dead in sin that they can love God, but I am sure that it is not true. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son (to be) the propitiation for our sins". (I John 4:10) Here is love. It is not in sinners to love. It is in them to hate, but not to love. This love of God in action moved Him to send His Son into the world. In this delivering Him up for His people, showed to us the manner of love that has been bestowed upon us. Even though bestowed upon us, we are not able "yet" to handle it. The One that bestows this love upon us is the One that supplies it to us. We do not have access to this love except as it is shed abroad in our hearts by the giving to us of the Holy Spirit.

This fruit is effective as it grows on this good tree. It does not hang on the tree and ruin for the want of somebody plucking it off and utilizing it, but it is shed abroad in our hearts, and what changes are wrought. It causes us to love God. The English Baptists are called Particular, and I do not have a fault to find with the name. This work of love is a singular, a particular love. God loved us when we were dead in sin, and because of that love, He quickened us into life. The result was that the one

dead in sin, in turn, loved God. He did not love God and turn, but God loved him, and being loved, it turned him to God. It is utterly impossible to love God and not love those begotten of God. "Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." (I John 5:1) This is a universal doctrine. If I have a reader that is not in love with his brethren (all of them) then he is saying that he does not love God.

Now these that are born of the Spirit love God. These that love God love those begotten of God. I said earlier that love is active. There is no such a thing as love resting or becoming inactive as long as a single case of need exists. If all of the need to praise God is past; if all of the praise due Him has been rendered; if all of the need of the brethren has been met, then, by all means, we have a love that is inactive. Loving God, and loving those begotten of God, brings us to the things of God. The commandments of God, the promises of God, the accomplishments of God, all, all, are things that love is active toward. This love is a fruit of the Spirit, and fruit grows from that of which it is a fruit of.

The second fruit of the Spirit is joy. Let us remember that this is the joy of our salvation, the rejoicing that comes about by the in-wrought work of God's Spirit in us. This Spirit does not seek help in the benighted soul into which it has entered. Not being dependent on the flesh, and, all of the work of quickening, sustaining, moving this hidden work, being all of the Spirit itself, it follows that it is not hindered by the flesh, and that no resistance is offered it by the spiritual nature, thus this, as are all the other fruits, wholly the work of the Spirit. God having, from all eternity, loved the sinner, and having acted to the bringing of him to see his lost and ruined condition, His work produces the joy. Certainly, this joy does not come from the flesh. There is a constant crucifixion of this flesh, and it can not joy--yea, it has nothing to joy in, rather

to groan and lament at the overthrowing of itself. The good tree, the new creation, the spiritual man, has so much to joy in.

In the beginning of our experience there is not any joy. It is always in much trouble and sorrow when the God of the law comes into our lives. He is hard and austere; He demands so much, and we cannot do the first thing to appease His wrath. Although there is not any relief in what we do, the magnitude of the condemnation which the broken law demands causes us to double our labors. The result is His frowns come upon us with nothing to give us any hope. In the midst of our mourning because that there is no hope for us, we hear the Voice of the Lord Jesus Christ as He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28) This is a joyous message.

It is a long night when we are sowing in tears; the night endures as we weep, and the long watches bring us low. But what joy comes in the morning, as we see Jesus as our Faithful One who has kept the law for us. As salvation is made known unto us, joy will always spring up. As the water of life springs up with us, joy will abound. This water is the gift of God. It flows from Him to usward. A flowing, springing well does not abate. As it cleanses, purifies, assuages, joy equally flows from the poor recipient of this great mercy. If we have anything to do with the water coming that much, no more, no less, do we have something to do with the joy. This giving of joy is the work of the Spirit of Christ in us. (Isa. 61:1, 3) This giving of the oil of joy for the mourning enables these newly planted trees of righteousness to go forth with joy, (Isa. 55:12) and there will be so much joy that clapping of hands will follow.

When love and joy grows as lively fruits in the dear weeping and groaning children of God, peace will follow. Love has conquered all of the hatred of our dull mortal frame; it has caused the wolf

and the lion, the leopard and the bear, to become domesticated and to lie down in the same fold. The unity that accompanies the work of grace in the midst of those thus dealt with, is a wonder; the peace which the indwelling of the Spirit gives, passes all understanding. (Eph. 3:19, Phil. 4:7)

We may sometimes have natural patience, but it is not extended to the people of God and their doctrine. If I could draw the picture of us toward the people of God before we were put in our right mind, (Luke 8:35) and then extend that picture to include us as all things become new we would have us in introspection and in retrospection. We were not anything within ourselves--in fact, as we looked within all was a mass of sin and corruption, and as we looked back at our name set down in the Lamb's Book of Life, peace, even the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ would flood our soul, and we would become the most forbearing and patient with the saints of God, and longsuffering would be extended to every vessel of mercy. This longsuffering is a fruit of God's Spirit. The sons and daughters of God get the likenesses of their Father. In fact, the family likenesses pass from Father to Son, and all of the sons and daughters of God become the brethren of the Elder Brother. As the King reigns in righteousness, the family in unison with one another, bearing one another's burdens, sharing in the obligations of God's children towards one another. This long suffering is a great blessing with so many personalities in the family. While these fruits have their likeness in each other, our unity ends with them, for no two are alike. If we all tried to have our way what discord there would be in the Kingdom of Heaven; if all had a tendency to force our peculiarities on each other what gloom would set in at the first meeting. This longsuffering is one of the loveliest of these fruits; it only comes from much pruning and removal of unfruitful

boughs and branches. This vital work is not left to the barren branches—if so, it would not be done. The Husbandman looks after this as much as He does the bringing forth of fruit. This is as it ever must be because the garden is His, and is all to the praise of His grace. This longsuffering of the saints acts in love and it is gentle and merciful; it is slow to believe rumors, it is quick to commend good stewardship.

As I look back over the writings of our lovely elders and others, I am made to regret each and every scathing remark or charge that I have ever made towards those with whom I have disagreed. Our sarcasm has never converted one from the error of their way; perhaps our gentleness has not changed anybody's view, but it has given credence to our having had visits from the gentle Saviour. As I look over the many times that His people were contentious and fault-finding and even contemptuous, I am amazed to find Him gentle. His rebukes were given in mercy and in such a way as to cause a falling down, as it were, at His feet begging for mercy. But, you say to me, "You are writing about His gentleness, and your text is talking about our fruit". O, no, I am not writing about our fruit. I am writing about the fruit which His Spirit causes us to bear. The kind of gentleness that He bore towards His frail brethren is the same kind that we will bear towards them. We will be known by the bearing of this fruit.

But do you mean that the Spirit causes or moves or influences us to be gentle towards those who are weak in doctrine? O, yes, very much so. How gentle He asked, "Will ye also go away?" How gentle he turned and looked on the wretched Peter. What gentleness did David feel towards his son, Absolam, when he asked that they deal gently with him. Paul was moved by the gentleness of Christ to write to Titus that he be gentle towards all men; James was moved (not moved towards, or upon,

but) to write about the wisdom from above that enabled us to be peaceable and gentle; the minister is commanded to be gentle to all men. (Tit. 3:2; Jas. 3:17; 2 Tim. 2:24; 2 Cor. 10:1)

If any among us would make light of goodness, of good things, of good walk and talk among the saints of God, they do not have any right whatever in the church of the living God. If any among us stand off and belittle those that avoid telling dirty yarns, hitting the bottle, I tell you once and forever, that their writing and preaching has lost its savoriness. The Spirit does not, never has, and never will, bear ungodly fruit. It bears goodness. The goodness which God has ever borne towards His church and people, is the same kind (as though there was any other kind) of goodness that His people bear towards Him, towards His kingdom, and towards the subjects of that kingdom. The good things of the kingdom are the good things that the saints at Rome were full of, and they were full of them because of the fulness which we receive from Him. (John 1:16)

As mentioned, I used to think that faith should have been placed at the head of the list of this cluster of fruits, but over the years it has seemed that faith is placed in this category of fruits at exactly the right place. These other fruits are states of mind that we are brought into from day to day by the Spirit. It is speaking more of what we are than it is of what we do. Something is said of faith that is not said of any other fruit. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23) Over and over, time and time again, I have, over the last fifty years, quoted this declaration of Paul's, and yet have had it hurled into my face that I advocated free willism. Once more, God willing, I want to say this, that what is not of faith that it is sin. Further, let me say that it is impossible to please God without this faith. Further, this faith is a gift of God. Further, this gift is a fruit of the Spirit.

This gift of faith, like all of the gifts of God, are without repentance; that they are not given Indian fashion - if you do not use them and appreciate them that God will take them away from you; that is given to use or move you into obedience; that is given to you for your use; that it is not given to you who do not have faith, so that you get faith; that is not given so you can exercise faith, but that it does exercise or move or cause you to perform good works, to please God.

It is an established fact that God perfects that which concerns us: "Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands." (Psa. 138:8) Often the perfecting of us is done before we are aware of the need, but as far as its manifestation to us, as far as the consummation of the perfecting of us, it is always in faith that we receive it and enjoy it. If not, then it is sin to receive it and to joy in it, and then we have one of these fruits contrary to the other, yea, we find that there is a law against at least one of these fruits, and if one, I do not know who would say that there was not a law against them all.

There is not a law against admonition, exhortation, encouragement; if so, Paul broke his own writing hundreds of times. There is not any law belittling right living, seeking to stand in the ways of peace, lifting up the low head, giving a helping hand to the children of God, even to all men. However, there is a law against all of the works of the flesh.

The two last of these fruits are meekness and temperance. Goodness and meekness are so closely related that I do not know how to separate them from one another. Yet although I fear that I do not know what true humility is, yet it is the outstanding mark of a child of God. I can find much more enjoyment with a humble brother, even though we do not agree, than I can a sarcastic arrogant one that is in agreement. Meekness speaks its own piece; it tells us whether

the meek and lowly Lamb of God is dwelling in us, and the best of all is that it is a fruit of the Spirit.

Temperance is usually looked upon as the reasonable use of wine. I doubt that, taking what the Scriptures say in the aggregate, that there is a temperate use of it as a beverage, but as a blessing of God, its temperate uses are borne to us by the Spirit.

This temperance or moderation is given to us by the Spirit, and its effectual working in us lets it be known unto all men. When it comes to sin, temperance and moderation does not have any place, but when it comes to the things of God there is a time to speak and a time to remain silent. It is the Spirit's work to work in us to that end.

In conclusion, if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. This commandment is not to ships without an anchor, nor is it to vessels of honor that do not have a rudder. In both cases, yea, in all cases, they are stabilized and guided by the same power, to wit, the power of God as made known unto us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

This is my love. Farewell in the Lord.

(Elder) W. D. Griffin

Nothing but Christ will do for a dying sinner; and why should we dream that any thing else will do for a living sinner?

Sin cannot enter into heaven; but a sinner may.

Toplady

Worms and other insects take up their habitation under the surface of the earth. A plat of ground may be, outwardly, verdant with grass, and decorated with flowers. But take a spade in your hand, and turn up the mould, and you soon have a sample of the vermin that lurk beneath. Temptation is the spade which breaks up the ground of a believer's heart, and helps to discover the corruptions of his fallen nature.

Toplady

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

IT IS FINISHED

When the beloved Son of God hung on the accursed tree, -- when His soul was poured out unto death, when frightened rocks were burst asunder, the heavens in sackcloth were veiled, when the rugged bars of death were loosed, and tombs of marble resigned their sleeping tenants, when by the rending of the veil of the temple the ark, the cherubims, and mercy seat were all disclosed, while, nerved with malice, Jews and Romans mocked, while racking pains and most tormenting smarts were inflicted on that blessed Lamb who bore our sins, when justice drew its flaming sword, and vengeance struck the dreadful blow, when hell exulting in her hour of darkness, amidst the awful grandeur of that dreadful scene, the voice of triumph, from the expiring Saviour's lips shook the creation to its very centre; stern death, in dreadful terror clad, affrighted, paused and felt the thunder of that voice which in all the power and majesty of the eternal God-head shouted, "It is finished".

With due humility and that reverence which becomes the ransomed of the Lord, let us inquire what was finished? From the sacred record of eternal truth we learn that all was finished that the glorious Mediator had began; love was not finished, for the love of God had no beginning. Election and predestination, with all the perfections of Jehovah which shine forth in the economy of salvation were not finished, for these were without beginning, and can never, never end.

But something was certainly finished by the Saviour when He in triumph gave the victorious shout; nor has our Lord left this important subject in the dark. "He who runs may read". "He finished

transgression, made an end of sin", etc. He Himself has declared that He has finished the work that His Father gave Him to do. We eagerly inquire, what then was the work that His Father gave Him to do? The Son of God responds, "I come to do thy will, O God." "I am come to do the will of my Father who sent me, and to finish the work. And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing; but should raise them up at the last day." "And the Father has given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him." A shining messenger from the world of glory came down from heaven to earth, to accounce the work that Jesus was to perform, viz: "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." He finished the redemption of his people agreeably to the prediction of the Psalmist: "The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever."

First. He has finished the redemption of His people, and it ceaseth forever.

Second. He has finished, or made an end of sin, as far as it relates to those he represented.

Third. He finished the law as far as relates to its demands in reference to the election of grace, and the fulfillment of its divine requisitions. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of the law shall not pass until all is fulfilled. He is the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believes.

Fourth. He has finished transgressions; for His blood cleanseth from all sin. He has given Himself for His church, that He might redeem it from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

Fifth. He has finished the curse, having borne our sins in His own body on the tree; "and being made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one

that hangeth on a tree."

Sixth. He has finished the covenant of works, having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which were against us, nailing them to the cross.

Seventh. He has finished the work of making sacrifices for sin. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin".

Eighth. He has given a finishing stroke to the perfection of his people, "for by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Ninth. He has finished death, having destroyed death and him that had the power of death, which is the devil.

Tenth. He finished the work of His sufferings, being now baptized with that baptism for which He was straitened until it was accomplished. When deep called unto deep, and the billows of divine wrath went over Him; deep waters came into His soul.

Eleventh. He finished the complete pattern which He set for His children to walk in. Let no presumptuous wretch dare attempt to change the pattern of the things in heaven.

Finally, He has completely finished all that was written of Him in the law, in the prophets, and in the Psalms; and all that was necessary to secure the eternal salvation and justification of His people, and left them to challenge wicked men and devils, to declare, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; It is Christ that died. He was wounded for their transgression; He was bruised for their iniquities, and the chastisement of their peace was upon him; and with his stripes they were healed. He sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied.

Reflection. Is it finished? Or, is something remaining to be done by the redeemed, in order to secure the blessed objects of the death of Christ? If something remains to be done, whether it be using means, or giving our hearts to God, or our money to modern institutions, or sitting on anxious benches, or anything else, much or little, then is the

work not finished, and the words of the expiring Lamb of God are contradicted. But be assured, dying reader, whatever relative duties are enjoined on the disciples of Christ, there is among them nothing to be added to the finished work of the Redeemer - nothing to render his redemption efficient, or effectual, or to extend its benefits to any for whom God did not eternally intend it; so far indeed from it, all the good works of the people of God are the immediate result of the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing can be added to or taken from the work which Christ finished when He yielded up the ghost and bowed His head unto death. "It ceaseth forever."

Here then the Old School Baptists find a sure foundation to build upon, and hence we preach Christ crucified, and proclaim a finished salvation in His worthy name - a salvation completely suited to the case of the poor, the needy, the halt, the lame and the blind; a salvation suited to the condition of every hungry, starving soul, who by grace is made to feel his wretchedness, and mourn his sins; but by no means suited to the case of the whole, who need no physician. The pharisees of eighteen hundred years ago, rejected this finished work, and from that day to the present it stands rejected, despised, opposed, and slandered by all the work-mongers who have flourished in our sinful world. But tell us, reader, how do you view the perfect work and finished salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, for be assured if you despise this doctrine you are yet in your sins; but if you love the doctrine and can feed on it, you are not far from the Kingdom.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
February 10, 1837

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

We are pleased with the communications of our esteemed Brother Trott, on this all-important subject; and we do

hope that our readers will faithfully examine all his numbers, comparing them with the infallible standard, the Bible, with unbiased minds, open for the reception of truth. These numbers we are fully persuaded will bear examination; and certainly the importance of the subject should be a sufficient incentive to lead us to weigh them in the balance of the sanctuary.

Among others, we doubt not, some well meaning brethren have started at the position assumed by Brother T., that the predestination of God extends to the wicked actions of men and devils. But is there not a cause, why they are so fearful? Few, very few of our pulpits have rung with this doctrine for the last ten or fifteen years. Arminians and New School Baptists have and do hate it; while some, who are compelled to acknowledge the truth of it, have thought they were doing God service by suppressing the publication of it; and of that class, not a few who have seemed unconscious of the presumptuous stand which they occupy, while they are virtually attempting to dictate to the all wise God what portion of His truth will do to publish, and what should be kept back. **It is sufficient for us to know that God has revealed this doctrine in the Bible; it is our privilege to publish it, and leave the result with Him.**

This subject evidently involves the consideration of the extent of God's government. If we say that God cannot, without attaching impurity to His nature or motives, govern or overrule the wicked actions of men and devils, we say in substance, that He cannot maintain His holiness unless He resigns His universal government.

The examples given by our brother, from the sacred volume, of the overruling providence of God in regard to some, and the express declaration of His foreknowledge and predestination of the wicked action of others, are in point; nor can they be easily surmounted by

those who protest against the universal government of God. The Bible is full of testimony on this subject. God has declared the end from the beginning; and He says His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure. Prophets and apostles have corroborated this testimony. Balaam was forced to acknowledge that he could not go (though a wicked prophet), beyond the word (or decree) of the Lord; and Satan himself, if he could speak truth, would tell us that he could not drown a swine without the permission of God.

But leaving all other witness, we would be perfectly safe in resting the whole subject on three of the scripture references offered in brother Trott's numbers, viz: Acts 2:23, 4:27, and the history of Joseph. In the first two passages, in relation to the crucifixion of our Lord by wicked hands, we have an example on the extent of God's government, in perfect harmony with the responsibility of man for his conduct; and in this transaction we have placed before us the grand centre of all human events; this is the most important of all; all others, past, present, and to come, stand connected with this. The model then which displays the government of God over the wicked hands which acted in the murder of the Holy Child Jesus, is suited to every event that ever has or ever can come to pass.

In the case of Joseph, we are taught that notwithstanding the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God, which bounds the rage and wickedness of all beings that exist, men and devils act voluntarily in sin, without the least regard to the purpose or decree of God; of whose purpose or decree they are totally unconscious. Of this truth, what a striking example is given in the case of Joseph's brethren. Read the words of Joseph to them, Gen. 50:20. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive". Thus we see that while men and devils

act from wicked motives, with wicked hands, God means it for good; overrules even their wicked acts and murderous designs for his glory, and the good of all such as are the called according to His purpose. Amidst all our trials and conflicts, opposition and persecution, be this our consolation:

“That death and hell can do no more
Than what our Father please.”

Elder Gilbert Beebe

March 19, 1834

A FEW THOUGHTS

They are so many, so sweet
Yet none, save Him, may secure
My devotion which within retreats
That One of which I am sure.

And, Oh, there are many others
That would quench my earthly thirst;
To lead me on a way corrupt,
To be even, if possible, accursed.

But am I not nearly so already?
One poor soul, doomed to sin?
So God sent His only begotten Son
Our hasty hearts to win.

Yet, to help us our Saviour came
And led us from the world's path.
Now in the Truth we're no longer lame.
Or ever, we pray, will feel His wrath.

Thomas P. Houser IV

December, 1978
Blacksburg, Virginia

OBITUARIES

CHARLIE FRANK BIDDLE

Our dear husband and father was born in Plain Dealing, Louisiana on April 27, 1886 and departed this life June 15, 1979, making his stay on earth 93 years and 49 days.

He was in Lafayette County Hospital four weeks but died in Homestead Nursing Home in Stamps, Arkansas. He was in the nursing home only two and a half days before his death.

Brother Biddle was baptized the first Sunday in May, 1951, by Elder W. A. Speer at New Hope Primitive Baptist Church in Patmos, Arkansas. His funeral was

conducted at New Hope Church by Elder David E. Turner of Marion, Louisiana.

His first wife was Lilie Curles and to this marriage was born five children. She passed away and then he married Mary Eva Hilms Stultz who had five children, four boys and one girl. He had grandchildren and great grandchildren who all loved him dearly and called him Papa Biddle.

My husband and I were baptized the same day and he will be missed by his relatives, friends, and neighbors.

This was written by his sad and lonely wife. I hope some sweet day to be with him in our Lord and Saviour's house.

Mary Eva Stultz Biddle

ELWOOD E. DUNLAP

Brother Elwood E. Dunlap, age 56, of Route 1, St. Albans, died in St. Francis Hospital after a long illness.

He was a retired mechanic for Chemical Leaman Tank Lines and a member of Fair View Primitive Baptist Church.

Surviving is his wife, Wanda; sons, Lyle E. of Little Rock, Ark., Jerry W. of Hurricane, W. Va.; Mother, Mrs. Effie Dunlap of St. Albans; sisters, Mrs. James Gaylor of South Charleston, Mrs. Aaron Martin of Milton; brothers, Edward of St. Albans; two grandchildren.

Services were held August 25, 1979 at Fair View Primitive Baptist Church with Elder Wallace Justice officiating. Burial was in Cunningham Memorial Park. Services were handled by Casdorph-Curry Funeral Home of St. Albans.

Brother Elwood always filled his seat in the church as long as his health permitted him to. We will miss Brother Elwood, but our loss is his gain.

Sent in by a brother and sister in hope of eternal life.

Okey & Gracie McClure

SALLIE ALTIZER GRIM

Our Heavenly Father called our dear Mother, Sallie Altizer Grim, from her earthly home on March 3, 1979. She was 93 year, 6 months and 9 days of age.

She was born to William H. and Angeline Graham Altizer on September 22, 1885 at

their home near Riner, Virginia.

She was married to Zoll Lewis Grim on June 3, 1908. To this union were born four daughters: Pauline Grim Mast, Reba Grim Rasnic, Nell G. Grim, Madeline Grim Basham and two sons; Zoll Grim, Jr. and Kermitt Grim. All survive her except her eldest daughter, Pauline Grim Mast. Also surviving are her sister, Mrs. W. F. Gordon, fourteen grandchildren and eighteen great grandchildren. Her husband died on October 23, 1962.

Funeral Services were held at the Richardson-Horne Funeral Home in Christiansburg, conducted by her pastor Elder Raymond Goad. Her body was laid to rest in Sunset Cemetery.

She was received into the fellowship of the Valley View Primitive Baptist Church near Riner on the third Saturday of July in 1930 and was baptized on the following Sunday. Also baptized at this time were her two sisters Mrs. L. L. Lawrence (Lucy) and Mrs. W. F. Gordon (Myrtha) and her brother-in-law W. F. Gordon.

Her Family sadly misses her and remembers her unselfishness, patience, kindness and loving care among many other wonderful characteristics.

Written at the request of the Valley View Church by her Daughter.

Reba Grim Rasnic

SISTER BEATRICE HAMMOND FOOKS

Sister Beatrice Hammond Fooks was born October 25, 1903, and died February 4, 1979. Her funeral was conducted in Snow Hill Old School Baptist Church, where she was a faithful member, on February 8 by her pastor, Elder James F. Poole. She was buried in the church cemetery beside her beloved husband, Brother Albert D. Fooks, and her first born son, Albert D. Fooks, Jr. She is survived by twins, William H. Fooks, and Sister Rosalee Adkinson, and four daughters, Martha Quillen, Mary Age, Alberta Lynch, and Barbara Parks. There are 18 grandchildren and 8 great grandsons.

The word "gracious" brings Sister Beatrice to mind. She lived a gracious life and loved a gracious God. She praised Him always and could solve any problem through faith in her Saviour. She was a beloved member and a devoted mother; the church

and her family being her life. Sister Beatrice was released from this flesh by God's grace and I believe she welcomed death to be in His presence.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints".

"And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

In Bonds of love,
Sister Audrey Davis

SISTER MINNIE BET SIMMONS

The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Sister Simmons was born to James Abram and Bettie Simpson Wright, Dec. 30, 1893, and departed this life July 24, 1979 making her stay on earth 85 years, 5 months and 6 days. She was married to Jessie Gold Simmons in 1912 and to this union were born; seven daughters and three sons; Miss Mabel Simmons, Mrs. Mary Mabe, Mrs. Nellie Webster, Mrs. Janie Wray, Miss Virginia Simmons (deceased), Miss Helen Simmons, and Miss Lois Simmons. Sons; Lawrence Simmons, William E. Simmons, and James Simmons.

On the second Sunday in August 1960 she united with the church at Bush Arbor and was baptized the following second Sunday, by Elder W. C. King, and remained a faithful servant until her death. Though she had much sufferings and afflictions to bear, she bore them patiently; waiting for the adoption to wit, the redemption of our body; Rom. 8:23. She spent much of the time of her invalid years reading the Bible, on one occasion she stated she was glad to be blessed to suffer for Christ's sake.

Her funeral was conducted at Bush Arbor church by her pastor, Elder Wallis Smith, assisted by Elder Donald E. Smith, her body was laid to rest in the church cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, there to be with Him and be forever satisfied.

Written by T. I. Rice as ordered in conference at Bush Arbor church Aug. 11, 1979.

Be it resolved that one copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, one placed on the church records, and one be sent to the family.

Elder Wallis Smith, Moderator
Earl S. Rudd Clerk

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
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JESUS HAS TIME FOR ME

It seems no one has time for me,
I'm very much alone.
But in my Saviour I can see,
The grace which keeps His own.
His precious hand will lift me up,
For in Him I believe:
His beauty then will fill my cup,
As blessings I receive.

I surely know my Saviour cares,
When trouble comes my way:
And every one I know He shares,
He's with me night and day.
So very precious is His love,
His mercy and His grace:
Which flows from Heaven's throne above,
My soul now to embrace.

Upon His mercy I depend,
He's greater far than all;
His grace will keep me to the end,
He hears my humble call.
He safely keeps me, this I know,
When life for me is drear.
His love and grace He will bestow,
And I have naught to fear.

By Ethel Gilland

Dear Brother Spangler,

I often feel alone and unwanted in this sinful world, and but for faith in my precious Redeemer I would be most miserable and unhappy. But bless His Holy Name He keeps me looking up toward a beautiful place called Heaven where sin and sickness cannot enter. My afflictions are many but by the grace of my Saviour I am able to bear them, I hope to His praise and glory.

There is much I do not understand concerning my treatment in this world, but I do understand that my Redeemer

was not treated with kindness when He walked here. The desire of my heart is to please and glorify Him as long as I journey here, and then meet Him in that eternal home above where there is perfection and love forever.

May He bless you and yours is my humble prayer.

In sweet hope,
Ethel Gilland

Hazen, Arkansas

GOD RULES OVER ALL

"Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts. 4:24-28)

Yes, God really is God. The Creator of the heaven and the earth is also the Governor and Disposer of the same. He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. He is the One in whom we all live and move and have our being. He is the One that upholds all things by the word of His power. By Him all things consist, and He is the Head and King over all. He is the eternal, Sovereign, Almighty God. All creatures and all events are under His Sovereign control, and He disposes of them according to His eternal purpose and to the praise of His eternal glory.

The above-quoted scripture passage shows a striking display of the sovereign majesty of the One and True God. Here we see Him gathering together and manipulating some of the most powerful and rebellious of His creatures

to bring about His will. It was not because they wanted to further God's cause in the world that they acted. Rather, they imagined a vain thing. They imagined that they would throw off the oppressive yoke of God's authority from them by putting this troubler, Jesus, to death. But even as they raged against God and His Christ they were being "gathered together" (by the Providence and Power of God) "For to do" not what would upset and overthrow God, but "whatsoever (God's) hand and (God's) counsel determined before to be done." Notice, it was not whatsoever God foresaw would be done, but "whatsoever" God "determined before to be done". Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world for the redemption of His people, who were chosen in Him before the world began. When the fulness of time was come, He accomplished their redemption "by Himself", and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Praise and honor be to His high and holy Name. This is the One and true God, who overrules all creatures and all events to bring to pass His Sovereign Purpose. May we be blessed to see Him as He is and fall before His feet in worship and love.

Shannon Vaughn

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

In the December, 1979 issue of the Signs of the Times we promised to issue a statement regarding rumors of error and departure in the pages of the Signs.

The following statements express the feelings and position of the entire Board of Trustees and Associate Editors.

1. The Board and Associates reaffirm their support and defense of the Prospectus of the Signs of the Times and deny any departure from it by the Editors, either in doctrine or in practice. Neither has there been any departure by the board. The Board and all Editors stand on the same ground occupied since the

Signs had its beginning in 1832 with Elder Gilbert Beebe.

2. The Board of Trustees publicly affirm their belief that the work of the Board of Trustees meeting at Riverview Church, Bassett, Virginia, on August 3, 1979, was performed in order and was carried out in a brotherly manner in all points. The present Board affirms their belief that the two resignations from the previous Board were voluntary and properly accepted.

With the two above statements, we republish the original Prospectus and endorse the same with our signatures. This will close the matter for our part.

PROSPECTUS

of the

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Proposals for publishing a semi-monthly paper, to be called the "Signs of the Times", devoted exclusively to the Baptist cause, maintaining inviolably the following scriptural sentiments:

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

ministers of the New Testament; that the Scriptures are the only divinely authorized Rule of Faith and Practice for the saints of God.

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

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

D. V. Spangler
Elder D. V. Spangler, Pres.

Julian W. Williams
Elder Julian Williams, V.P.

Burnell B. Williams
Deacon Burnell Williams, Sec.

Kenneth R. Key
Elder Kenneth Key

James F. Poole
Elder James F. Poole

John D. Wood
Elder John D. Wood

Haywood Wray
Elder Haywood Wray

W. D. Griffin
Elder W. D. Griffin, Assoc. Editor

E. J. Lambert
Elder E. J. Lambert, Assoc. Editor

WE ARE BOUND
(Concluded)

We are bound by all the things that we have learned, we are bound by all the things that we believe, we are bound by all the things that we have experienced, we are bound by the words of the scripture, we are bound by the old and the new, we are bound by the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are bound by those who have left a precious hope, we are bound by those who have gone on before. "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." If you have salvation it's because God has chosen you and because God is sovereign. No one has ever said what doest thou, no one has ever circumvented His purposes. No one has ever frustrated His will. He doeth His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and this writer said, "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification" setting you apart, designating you, putting His laws in your heart and writing them in your mind "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The truth. Jesus Christ is Truth. That's how you know Truth. Because He's revealed in you the hope of glory. The ministers have served their purpose well, the prophets have served their purpose well, the apostles have served their purpose well, but they have never added one to to the Lamb's Book of Life. Because this is sealed with seven seals in the hands of Him who sits upon the throne. No one has ever disturbed it. No one has added it No one has taken from it. All things are as they ever have been and as they ever shall be for God hath chosen you: "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."

You ask where He has chosen you to--to salvation through sanctification, setting you apart, designating you.

And by the same token forty-some years ago, almost fifty years ago, something happened to me, I don't tell of any apparitions I saw, I didn't see a white horse without a head, I didn't see an angel come down from heaven, but something was wrought in my heart that made me to believe, and I believed in that day just as I do today that if the Lord loved me in the twentieth century when I was a lost young man, why He loved me from the beginning. And if He chose me in the twentieth century, in the year of 1932, why I was in His choice before the world was. "God hath from the beginning chosen you."

Now suppose we should have a selfish motive and try to change these words, try to change this dialogue, how would we go about it? It is so plain, it is so clear: "we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." Is there any other way to put it, is there any other way to read it, can it be read out, can it be changed or can we say we can change it or could we say that it will fail, His choice will fail because of something we have done or haven't done? If you do you dispute the power of God. God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification, setting apart, designating, picking you out and taking hold of you and putting His laws in your heart and writing them in your mind and saying "and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people." And we find in this eternal security. If one that God loved from the beginning, if one that God chose from the beginning, if He chose somebody from the beginning, if He chose ten thousands times ten thousands and thousands of thousands, can anyone frustrate His purpose, can anyone cause one of these not to reach heaven, can anyone take a blessing from them? It's just as easy to

disfranchise them whose inheritance is laid up in heaven as it would be to take a blessing that's stored up in the Lord Jesus Christ because that's where they are. I believe every blessing that the Lord has directed toward me from the beginning I will have it, I will receive it. I believe "we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel." Now here's the gospel call.

You know we have so many instances of it (the gospel call). When Peter went up to Cesarea he found one whose heart the Lord had opened, who listened to him and believed the truth, and those that were not opened did not believe it. Every time the messengers, the servants of God, the ministers sent from God—they went out to preach the gospel to those that believed. You know that when Paul in route to Macedonia stopped over at a village on the Sabbath day and was waiting for it to pass, he walked a short distance down by the riverside, there a group of women had resorted down by the waterside and Paul felt impressed to preach and there was one whose heart the Lord had opened, she attended to his sayings. The Lord had been there before Paul got there. You will find every time that the gospel has any effect it's to those whose hearts the Lord has opened and the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, and has nothing for an unbeliever. They will not believe it, they will not hear it, they will not have it, and they'll say away, depart from me, they will say some more convenient time, I know, but, but, but. But those whose hearts the Lord has opened, where the Lord gets there first and makes the preparation, thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. I have not doubted for forty years that God's people are always willing when

He makes them willing and they will never be willing until He does. There's a time for all things, a time to be born and a time to die and God is so perfect that we are bound always.

"...we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth."

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,"

"Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

"Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His throne with exceeding joy, be the honor, glory, dominion and power. Amen."

Transcribed from tape of a sermon
by Elder O. K. Tench delivered on
the radio, 4th Sunday in Nov., 1978.

THE ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS No. 2

Brother Beebe:—I proposed at the conclusion of the preceding No. to show from the Scriptures of truth, that the predestination of God extends to the wicked actions of men, that is, that God has decreed or predestinated every wicked act, which he permits man to perform, so that man does not act out any part of the enmity or corruption of his heart, farther than God has predestinated to permit him, and so that every act, however vile, has its allotted place in the government of God, and

accomplishes the very purpose for which it was designed in the eternal council.--The first proof I shall bring in support of this position is the declaration of the Apostle, relative to the crucifixion of Christ as recorded in Acts 2:23, "Him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." I know there are those who say that the event accomplished by the death of Christ, was so glorious, and of so great magnitude, as to justify the making use of wicked men or predestinating their acts relative to it. But this is measuring the mind of God, by our little contracted views. We are apt to be so dazzled by splendid events, as to overlook the means by which the event may have been accomplished; whereas if the event had been less splendid, we should have condemned those means. But let us beware of attaching such imperfections to God.--As great as was the benefit accomplished by the death of Christ, it did not lead God to overlook the perpetrators of the act.--Judas received his marked punishment, and went to his own place, and the Jews are to this day receiving the punishment of their crime, as denounced upon them by Moses, Deut. 28. As great as was this event, there were many circumstances connected with it, which were done with wicked hands and yet were foretold of God, and of course had been determined. He was delivered up, that is to be slain, by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God. Jesus says of his life, "No man taketh it from me but I lay it down of myself", John 10:18. Yet in this laying down of his life, was involved the wicked act of Judas in betraying him to the Jews, of the Jews in delivering him to Pilate, of Pilate sending him to Herod, and his being sent back, and of Pilate's delivering him up to be crucified though he found no fault in him. Judas' act was evidently predestinated; for Christ said to his Disciples, "One of you shall betray

me", and when asked of John who it was, he designated Judas, by a sign; "And after the sop Satan entered into him". (John 13:21-27) And even farther back than this, it was designated, compare Acts 1:15-20 with Psalms 41:9, and 109:8. Thus also Herod and Pilate's combining to deliver up Christ as also the Jews and Gentiles being united in that act, was predestinated of God. See Acts 4:25-28, compared with Psalms 2:1,2. The circumstance of the Jews' wagging their heads at him and mocking him, etc., their parting his garments among them were prophesied of. See Psalms 22:7, 8-18; and that these circumstances were not foretold upon the mere ground of God's foreknowing that they would do these things. See the circumstances of their giving Christ gall mingled with vinegar as prophesied of in Psalms 69:21, and the fulfilment as recorded in John 19:29-30; from which it is manifest, that the prediction governed the event, hence that the prediction might be fulfilled, Jesus says, I thirst. *Indeed it is altogether idle to attempt to separate the foreknowledge of God from his predestination;* for how could God foreknow that certain persons would give to Christ vinegar and gall, unless he had pre-destinated to bring those very persons into existence, to preserve them alive to that time, to give them health and strength sufficient to attend on the crucifixion, to leave them to the enmity of their hearts, and to give them the occasion to act out this enmity by Christ's saying, I thirst, and then to suffer them to offer that insult? So of every event fore-known to God. If God then fore-knows all things, all the circumstances necessary to bring those all things to pass, must have been predestinated of God, it is said by the apostle relative to what Herod and Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel did to Christ, that they did "Whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts 4:27,

28.

Another proof in support of the doctrine that the wicked actions of men are predestinated of God is found in Isa. 10:5,6, "O Assyrian; the rod of mine anger, and staff in their hand is mine indignation, I will send him against an hypocritical nation and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets". Here God in the clearest manner declares what use he will make of the Assyrian. Can any say that he did not predestinate the Assyrians "taking the prey, etc."? Yet these were acts of violence and cruelty in the Assyrian as is manifest from the connection. Verse 7, "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." And verse 12, "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria and the glory of his high looks." In perfect accordance with what God says of the Assyrians relative to their ambitious, murderous course, that they are the rod of his anger, the Psalmist in praying to be delivered from the wicked that opposed him, and from his deadly enemies, says, "Deliver my soul from the wicked which is thy sword, from men which are thy hand, O Lord, etc." Psalms 17:9-13,14. Can the wicked thus be God's sword and God's hand, and he not determine and govern their acts? And if their acts were foreknown to God, did he not predetermine or predestinate those acts? Hence it is said in Proverbs 16:4, "The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." Some may suppose that by the day of evil, for which the wicked are made, we are to understand their own destruction. But such is not the faith of the Old School Baptists. They do not believe that God in bringing the wicked

into existence had no higher object in view than their destruction. By the day of evil we understand, the day in which God brings evil upon his people or upon others. It has pleased God to bring his church and people through great tribulations; from whence are their tribulations to arise but from the persecutions of the wicked? God will give those blood to drink, who have shed the blood of Saints and Prophets by whom will he do it? Not by the righteous. He had made the wicked for this day of evil; and so has he prepared instruments for every evil day. "Thus says the Psalmist, Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain". Psalms 76:10. What is this but a predestination, that limits and bounds even the wrath of man, letting it go just so far as to accomplish the purpose of God, and no further?

If the above is not sufficient, to establish the fact that God predestinates the evil acts of men, we have additional proof from the history of Joseph and his brethren.

Joseph says to his brethren, "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life", again, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God", Gen. 45:5-7,8. And in Gen.50:20, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive". Thus we see that whilst Joseph's brethren thought evil against him, and wickedly devised means to put him out of the way, in order to disappoint his dreams, God had determined that this very wickedness of theirs should be the means of bringing about the fulfilment of those dreams, and to terminate in his and their good. So also he employed the wickedness of Potiphar's Wife, to bring about the

ultimate exaltation of Joseph, and consequently to fulfil the purpose for which God sent him into Egypt. So full was Joseph in the belief, of the predestination of God in this thing, from the manifestation he had received, that he said plainly, to his brethren, It was not you that sent me hither, but God. And as full proof that this affair was determined on before-hand, or predestinated of God, we have not only the thing revealed to Joseph in dreams; but the dwelling of Israel in Egypt, and the length of time they should be there was foretold to Abraham, See Gen. 15:13-16.

These several proofs which I have brought forward, are not to be considered as so many peculiar instances in which God's government is exerted over the wicked actions of men' but rather as special illustrations of the universal government of God. They show how surely he will cause the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. The soldiers must not break the legs of Jesus though so commanded, but they pierce his side, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, that is that the foretold purpose of God should stand. See John 19:31-37. So Joseph's brethren could neither kill him nor leave him to perish in the pit, nor could Reuben deliver him; but the company of Ishmaelites must needs come along at that juncture of time, and they sell him to be carried down into Egypt. These several instances which are thus particularly recorded, of God's making the wickedness of men and devils subserve his purpose are sure pledges that in spite of the combined malice and rage of both, he will roll on his gracious purposes, accomplish all his promises, and fulfill every prophecy. He that could make the enmity of Joseph's brethren and desire of gain in the Ishmaelites, the wickedness of Potipher's Wife and the ingratitude of Pharoah's Steward, all combine to accomplish the exaltation of Joseph and

the purpose God had in view, will while he causes judgment to begin at the house of God, surely accomplish at the appointed time; the complete destruction of the Man of sin, in all his branches.

And, dear child of grace, however much men may revile you and hate you, or Satan may desire to have you,--you have a sure pledge both from the declaration of God, and from what you have seen of his overruling providence, that all things work for your good, as they did for the good of Joseph, when taken from his father, and for the good of David when hunted as a Partridge upon the mountains. For as it is said in Prov. 16:9, "Man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps."

In another Number I purpose noticing some of the objections brought against this doctrine.

Fairfax Court House, Va.

S. Trott

January 7, 1834

FROM AN OLD SIGNS

Altus, Okla., May 26, 1931

Dear Sister Turner:—After some delay I will try and answer your good letter. We all enjoyed it very much, for it brought with it that spiritual relation that binds us together as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that relation is unknown to the world.

In such messages we are drawn so close together by the Spirit of Christ that dwells in his people that we are made to praise him from whom all blessings flow, yet so far apart in person. There are evidences connected with these spiritual relations that we most gloriously feel, but cannot explain, even to ourselves. "Oh the depth of both the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" God's wisdom and knowledge are perfect and his ways and judgments are right. How consoling it sometimes is to us to even hope that we believe in and are possessed with a

sufficient amount of faith to say in our poor hearts (forgetting self) that God is right and just in all his ways.

But the question might arise, and does, What are his ways? His ways are those that bring to pass the events of time according to the counsel of his own will, and they are just and right because they were all embraced in his will, in counsel, and that before the world was. We must acknowledge this or deny the perfection of God's wisdom and knowledge; in the coming to pass of the events of time, in time, before he made the world. I must accept the testimony of God's inspired prophets and apostles. Their testimony is that he is God and there is none else. He is God and there is none like him, declaring the end from the begining, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure. God's holy and righteous will is executed in the events of time, all of them, through the channel his perfect wisdom designed.

Yes, every channel and avenue by which the events of time, all of them, are made manifest here in this time world was embraced in and according to the counsel of his perfect will. God, being holy and righteous, could not possess an unrighteous or an unholy will. All events of time were embraced in his eternal counsel, in which counsel all the divine attributes of the Diety were present.

Oh yes, a God by whom all worlds and things that have ever been, are now, and things that are yet to come, had their existence in that counsel. Nothing was found in them all but the divine perfection of God, which is eternal. The material or timely things all had their existence in that counsel, according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will. Would it be in violation to the teaching of the Scriptures to say that in that counsel which is, only his decrees and purposes in all things whatsoever come to pass,

and are according to the foreknowledge of him who is the first great cause of all things? Then let our eyes behold that perfect God in his lofty habitation before there was any world, for he was before the world, for the world was made by him, and without him was nothing made that is made.

We see him surrounded with every event of time, all creatures and things, from the least atom that floats in the air to the greatest monster that inhabits the earth. These things were not only present with him in purpose, but every movement, act, desire, thought and deed was known unto him, as though it had already been done by each creature and thing in all the world that God's foreknowledge embraced, and that before God had made a world, and if the least event of time that God's foreknowledge embraced failed to come to pass it would destroy his perfection in knowledge, and if there has ever been, is now, or ever will be, an event of time that was not embraced in his foreknowledge it would destroy his perfection in wisdom.

If there is any power in heaven, earth or hell that can hinder one of God's decrees coming to pass, or bring to pass an event by the act of one of God's creatures that God had decreed should not come to pass, it would destroy his power and set up a greater power than God. But not so. All the "shalls" and all the "nots" are the unchangeable decrees of God, who possesses all power in heaven, in earth and in all deep places. He is head over all worlds, and over everything that in them is; his eternal counsel, wisdom and knowledge embrace them all.

Oh how I wish I could find words to express the greatness and perfection of God as I understand the Scriptures teach it. God is eternal, and all that is perfect, holy, righteous and right is connected with his being. He made the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is, made them after the counsel of his holy and righteous will. How can

they fail to accomplish the end for which he made them? They will not fail. "Let every soul be subject to the higher power, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God."

"Keep silent, all created things,
And wait your Maker's nod;
My soul stands trembling while she sings
The honors of her God."

The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament sheweth forth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth wisdom. There is no language or speech that their voice has not been heard. All his works shall praise him, and his saints shall bless him. Yes, all created things, from the least to the greatest, are praising God. In that they are carrying out perfectly that which God's perfection designed for them. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor and power, for thou didst create all things, for thy pleasure they are and were created." Will they fail to accomplish his pleasure? No, a thousand times no. But if any part of God's creation, even the smallest particle of dust, was to fail to glorify God's perfection, then we could not say that God is perfect in all his ways.

"I will publish the name of the Lord (in perfection), ascribe ye greatness to our God. He is the rock, his work is perfect. All his ways are judgements. A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

"Not Gabriel asks the reason why,
Nor God the reason gives;
Nor dares the favorite angel pry
Between the folded leaves."

The secret things of God are folded up in his divine perfection, and can be known only as it pleases him to reveal them. Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, Father of heaven and earth, that thou didst see fit to hide these things from the wise and prudent and reveal them unto babes. Even so, Father, for it seemeth good to thee. This saying of Jesus only furnishes us one more link to put in the chain of events

that was embraced in God's counsel, and was decreed by him to be, as seemed good to him. God's eternal decree is all that ever did or ever will make any event of time sure to come to pass, hence he could not have foreknown any event of time had he not decreed it to be so. His foreknowledge is an attribute of his perfection, and his decree or purpose in the event foreseen makes it sure to come to pass. Then it is possible for any event that God saw and knew would come to pass in this world, to not carry with it the seal of God's decree? or, in other words, could he foreknow and event if the event was not firmly fixed in his certain decree? Then can an event fail to come to pass that God decreed should come to pass, or can any event not yet come be sure to come without God determining it shall be? To not accept this would destroy God as a sovereign. It would ever destroy the testimony of those inspired men who testified of his perfection.

This doctrine neither makes God the author of sin, nor having any fellowship therewith, for God is eternal, immortal, without the beginning of days or the end of time. He is above law, but is the law-giver, through which sin entered the world. Some people would like to believe the doctrine of God's absolute perfection in knowledge, wisdom and power, and that he has been eternally able to execute according to the good pleasure of his own will, but they say that kind of doctrine would get God into trouble, and get him mixed up in sin entering the world. *Perish the thought.* God in his entirety is divine and eternal and cannot be touched or influenced by the corruptness of sin. All corruption and sin came into the world by and through an act of the creature God made. God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, but when you are tempted you are drawn away of your own lust and enticed. Lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin. The law was holy and just, because it came from

the eternal God, but the violation of that law came by man.

Hence God was just as much separate and apart in his divine perfection from the fruits of that act of man as was the man separate and apart from the divine perfection of God. When he gave the law, by man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death is passed upon all, for all have sinned, and the law entered that the offense might abound, which means sin.

But says one, "Did God know the fruits of the act of man would be sin? *He surely did.* Did he decree the act? *He surely did*, or how could he have known sin would enter the world? He either knew it or he did not know it, which one shall we believe? If we say he did know it, then we must say he had a purpose in it, and God being eternal, just, holy and righteous, surely the end of all his purposes must be the fruits of his most holy and righteous will. To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven, a time to be born and a time to die. Read the full quotation, beginning with the first verse of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes. Does this embrace everything or just part of the things that are under heaven? Then we find God's inspired witnesses wrong in these statements? No, they are not wrong, but are true witnesses of God. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Then we must accept what they say as being the truth. It is not given to any one man to understand all of their sayings, but we must accept it as the word of God.

"The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord shall stand forever." Surely the word of God is the truth. In a man's heart there are

many devices, nevertheless the counsel of God it shall stand. Yes, God is ever in one mind. Who can turn him? Whatsoever his soul desireth even that he doeth. We know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever. There shall be nothing taken from it nor anything added to it, and God doeth it that men should fear before him. What is this that God has done that shall stand forever? It was to drive the Nail in a sure place, upon which safety hang God's eternal purposes and unchangeable decrees in counsel before the world was. Yes, and surely there was not one act of all the creatures in all the world, in all ages, that passed by his divine perfection unnoticed. Do you think there was? How could it, and God be perfect in wisdom and knowledge? Yes, and they shall be forever; nothing taken from them and nothing added.

Blessed truth, it is all arranged by him and for him in the accomplishment of one grand, glorious and holy end. Surely there cannot one event of time fail to come to pass, and that at the very time appointed, for there is a season and a time to every thing and purpose under heaven. All devils, and hell itself, cannot hinder one event from coming to pass. Yes, he works all things after the counsel of his own will, and they shall stand forever. Not one act of any creature of God's creation will fail to accomplish the desired end, which will be to his name's honor and glory, and his honor and glory will remain throughout all eternity. The evil acts of men and devils will be placed to the honor and glory of God. We see these things in his will of decrees that was nailed in a sure place.

Yes, he created all things for himself, yea, the wicked for the day of evil. All the deeds of the wicked will in the end brightly shine* to the glory and honor of God, although they meant them not so. They will not go unpunished for the wicked deeds done, for the wrath of God, which is an attribute of the Diety,

stands out against all unrighteous and ungodly deeds of men, and punishment will be inflicted upon the creature according to the righteous and just judgment of God, yet the effect of the deed done will in the end glorify and honor God. "The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder he will restrain." These are hard sayings. Who can hear them? The prophet said, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The Lord must reveal his almighty arm to us before we can behold perfect justice in all his ways and judgments, and his arm cannot be revealed to us in nature, because in nature we are dead to the knowledge of spiritual things, for the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to his laws, neither indeed can be. The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Then there must be something done for us before God reveals his bare arm to us. When his arm is revealed, then we believe the report of the prophets and apostles, but there must be life imparted first, and God alone is the source of spiritual life, and it must be a life from him before we discern things of him. Neither did we understand things of nature before we were born of our natural parents, which life comes from a corruptible seed and only has to do with the corruptible things of earth.

Let me point you to one event done by man, only in possession of natural life, and let us note God's hand in the matter: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Was God glorified in that act done by those wicked hands? **Most**

assuredly he was. That was just one link in the chain of events that God in counsel had decreed should come to pass in the accomplishment of one great and glorious end, and every event of time is a link in that chain. Listen, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in him." That will be the end of all timely things, then God's glory will shine throughout eternity. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Written by your pastor,
(Elder) W. N. Green

*(Note to P. 35, Col. 2, last par. We agree with the brothers sentiment, but question the words "brightly shine" as regards the deeds of the wicked. Editor)

AVAILABLE AGAIN ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

Elder Gilbert Beebe

In the January, 1979, issue of the *Signs of the Times* we reprinted the last editorial on Predestination by Elder Gilbert Beebe, published originally on October 1, 1880. In the minds of many, nothing since the Apostles has been written on this subject that compares with this article.

Due to a complete sell-out of our last printing, we have printed this article once again in pamphlet form and it is obtainable from us at the price of four (4) for one dollar. We pay postage. We make no profit on this and unless we again sell our entire stock out, we won't even break even.

Brother Shannon Vaughn of Hazen, Arkansas, donated his time in printing this valuable article and only charged for

materials.

This pamphlet will make an excellent gift to anyone desiring to know what Old School Primitive Baptists believe on this subject.

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FROM AN OLD SIGNS

The Baptist Church at Welsh Tract, to the Elders and Messengers composing the meeting of all Old School Baptist to meet on Monday after the third Lord's day in May, with the church at Black Rock, Maryland sendeth greetings:

Dear Brethren:--As you are about to assemble together to consult on the great interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, it is our desire to meet you with our friendly epistle.

Through the tender mercy of our Heavenly Father, and the Divine influence of the Holy Spirit, we are yet enabled to stand together, contending for the ancient landmarks of Zion. We consider it Brethren, a day of gloom and darkness with the church, we have also reason to fear that the darkest time is yet to come, we hear the watchmen in Zion saying, the morning cometh, the morning cometh. We would respond and say, Oh, that it were come, that the darkness may flee away,--but we rejoice that the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that are his, though his people are called to pass through the deep waters of affliction, they have the promise that it shall not overflow them, or through the fire it shall not kindle upon them, he will be with them in six troubles, and in the seventh he will not forsake them. We are sorry that so many of the good old servants of our Divine Master are leaving the long trodden path of gospel truth, and are allured by the meteors

that are floating around them. We have the pleasure of saying that peace and harmony prevails among us, and we are desirous of holding fast the form of sound words, and maintaining the faith once delivered to the Saints. Oh, that the Lord would lift up his banner, and draw souls to it, and we earnestly pray that he would make bare his arm of saving grace, that his people may grow as the corn, flourish, as the vine, and appear as tall cedars of Lebanon, and that rebels be made to submit to his authority, until the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall subdue the power of the Beast and deface his image, and wax and fill the whole earth, and the praises of our great high Priest and King resound wherever there are voices to extol his name. We now commend you to God, praying that you may be preserved in this day of trial, and may you take sweet counsel together in things appertaining to the Kingdom of our dear Redeemer.

Done by order of the church, May 3, 1834.

William K. Roberson, Pastor
Joseph Griffith, Clerk

Near Lexington, Ky.
January 31, 1834

Dear Brother Beebe:

Since I last wrote you I have felt more encouraged than for years past. I trust we have experienced a refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Three of the churches I supply have had additions within the present month. I baptized two on first Lord's day, three on the third, and two on the fourth Lord's day--all upon profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus. We require something more than a bare assent to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. Each of them related all that we could ask, in order to full fellowship.

Thus you discover that preaching the Doctrine of Sovereign, reigning grace, so far from hindering the gathering

together of the Elect, into the Churches (as is contended by some) it encourages the

"Helpless and poor, to Jesus to come
Nor hope to bring a perfect thought".

For with him there is for such mercy and plentious redemption. It has often been said of us that the rigid course we pursue in examining candidates for baptism will operate as a hinderance to young converts who may be seeking an asylum with us.

I have yet to be convinced that heavenborn and heaven-taught souls object to a critical search after fellowship without which we have no disposition to increase our number. There is considerable excitement amongst the members of those churches belonging to what is called the "General Union", but which would more appropriately be styled "General dis-Union". In our vicinity the frequent applications to join our churches by letter and examination, I consider a good omen. The practice of our churches is to read our declaration of Faith at the introduction of every church meeting, and no one is received into fellowship who does not profess to receive cordially our declaration of faith and practice. Hence you may account for the unprecedented oneness of sentiment prevailing in our Association.

Perhaps there is no section of our country where the same means have been resorted to arouse prejudice against a body of people, which have characterized a number of the General Union Baptist against the Particular Baptist in this country; and those efforts have been but too successful where there is no Particular Baptist ministry. But where our ministry visit these sections, they are by many received cordially; and frequently greeted with:—"This is the doctrine our souls feed upon, and you are not the people we have been taught to believe you were"!

The crisis is at hand when I conceive another split amongst the Baptist is inevitable, an event I much desire to see,

forasmuch as I consider it indispensable to the production of harmony of sentiment from whence flows brotherly love and affection amongst professors. Indeed there is little of what I denominate gospel fellowship existing among a large portion of the Baptist in Kentucky, hence a division, if such division shall throw those who harmonize in sentiment together, should be ardently desired by all those who love the cause of our Redeemer. Our Association stands firm, and uncompromising in the doctrine of the Cross, and in her opposition to the trickery of the times, combining Schools, Societies, Conventions, etc., in which the most erroneous of our day would seem to think they are helping the Lord to build up his Kingdom upon the earth. I wonder whether they have ever thought of Uzza and the Ark? Or of David's declaration, "Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain". (Ps. 127:1) It is confidently believed there is not to be found in our Association one dozen who are favorable to these establishments; and yet the Lord seems to prosper us; without the use of such means. One of the churches I supply was constituted about eighteen months ago with six members, in the midst of a Baptist Church composed of more pliable materials and surrounded by several other Baptist Churches of the General Union Stamp, besides a variety of other denominations from whom the little Church has had to encounter opposition to a considerable extent, and yet, requiring as she does, a renunciation of all connection with, and fellowship for the popular societies of the day; she has quadrupled her original number, and her prospects are brightening daily, for a further and more extensive increase.

I must desist as my paper is nearly full.

Yours,
(Elder) Thomas P. Dudley

EDITORIAL

MATTHEW 1:20, 21

"And while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Recently, while seemingly, at the point of death, and after some unkind attempts upon my life in the church, and while feeling already the approach of the grim monster that has never asked leave of any victim, there appeared to me in my irregular thinking as I was slowly being engulfed in the steam of death, there was a still small voice that spake as no man has ever spoke, said to me, the time is not yet. Then and there was an invisible, yet a power that was effectual and sovereign and inevitably coming down from God out of heaven turning me in an eddy of water from the stream which I was drifting into, and into this peaceful, restful, gift of life giving and life restoring waters, wherein no galley with helpful oars went by, nor no gallant ship sailed by (Isa. 33:21). That restful "not yet" restored my desire to live and, as I have hoped and believed that I had testified before this to the goodness and mercy of God, that I yet would be blessed "also" (Acts 21:11).

How singularly blessed art thou O Israel, anointed of God, for thou, O Lord is the Comforter of thy blood bought children. His promises are yea and amen to the glory of God. If His promises are fulfilled in Him to His name's honor and glory, then, by all means, and to all dying (even though they think they can give life) men and women, is, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. The old time worn expression

of man that men and women are masters of their own destiny, is with Babylon, fallen, fallen!

Ministering angels are from the Lord. All of them are given to those that need ministering to. Certainly this truth is clearly substantiated in the episode in which our text takes and finds its background. All of the writings of heaven sent men are to those that need comforting. Let us apply the text. Was Joseph in a condition where he could have comforted God or man? Are the afflicted and poor people of God in a fit condition for imparting comfort and instruction to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to any of His elect family? When life is ebbing out of you, and it seems that man and God has forsaken you, are you qualified to comfort and instruct the lamenting children of God? If you are, then by all means, I write to you in a singular manner. I could never bring anything to you worthwhile. I am reminiscing from a recent sick bed, and it was doubtful if I would ever leave it or not. What little of life was left me, certainly I could not have mustered up a revival of that life to where my advice, my instruction, my handling of the things of God, would have meant anything to you.

That able character does not desire, and does not need what a dying man would have to offer. I feel a lingering desire to write to those that have been in darkness for a long, long time and in the shadow of death that I have been looking for and seeking the rays of a new day dawning, even the appearance of the lovely Saviour of sinners. Perhaps the greatest news that the Gentile believers ever heard was when the herald voice of mercy said unto these that were not a people, behold thou art now my people. Individually, as well as collectively, was when the Lord said, "Say unto Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh" (Isa. 62:11). When the time came for the Lord's people to know a thing, the Lord taught it to them by signs and wonders, by ways past finding out by

his people, as well as those not His people (Rom. 11:33, I Cor. 2:8). No man, by seeking or researching can find out God, equally so, can no man, nor set of men, find any excuse for making an exception to this divine rule, for God does not ever come to creatures for an increase in His wisdom. If any of my readers have ever thought that He stood in need of their help, or have thought that general principles would devolve upon creatures to be instant ready to teach him to reach a helping hand or to ladle out wisdom to him, then that person has not been taught how frail that he is before God. If any have a notion that this is treason to the cause of Christ, or that I am guilty of blasphemy, then by all means say so. God willing, I will notice your case. However, dear readers, one and all, the needy, the destitute, those that are afflicted, that are poor, that oftentimes are made to see your needy and lost condition, that you need instruction, that you need the guiding hand of the Lord to lead, to beckon, to point out to you the Way, then, this is sent forth to you hoping that it may be a heavenly breeze sent your way to ease your burdened soul.

This has been, as I humbly trust, my lot for more than fifty-five years. O, how good and merciful He has been through these trying and soul searching years. I have been oftentimes afraid that I am deceived in it all, and yet, for what I hope in, and what I hope for and that which has been taught me in part, here a little and there a little, a line here, another one there, and it all woven into a glowing fabric into a covering for my naked soul, how precious it has been, and how precious it still is to a poor sinner.

Oh, it is admitted that I have, as I hope, sent two disciples to the Saviour to know if he was what my longing heart and soul desire, or should I look for another. I long to know more, for being weak, the evil one often inveigles my soul and my spirit into a troubled dream.

The dream is from the Lord, those that dream or lulled to false dreaming are under the influence of the evil one, but that are given dreams of warning or of good tidings, are under the divine care. How little is known of Israel's God, and what a great favor and blessing it is to be taught in dreams. God's children (all of His children) are taught salvation is of the Lord; they are taught of the Lord, not about Him. Every dream sent by the Lord has had the intended effects upon the dreamer. There is not any loose or broken links in the teachings of the Lord. The text at the head of this little epistle condemns such an interpretation. Filthy dreamers may interpret their dreams, giving them the bent that suits their preconceived doctrines, but the God given dreams carry weight, conviction, teaching, satisfaction, encouragement. (Acts 4:12).

I must urge about the sufficiency of what the Lord teaches in the dreams given to His saints. Let me repeat the text. It is the voice of an angel speaking words of instruction to one of the Lord's precious saints. It was a time of great trouble to that saint. He was in the same condition as all those to whom I write. He could not solve the trouble with which he was being assailed. He was not going about seeking to put to the front his prowess as a follower of the Lord; he was not looking for something to do wherein he might do the works of God. Tossed to and fro, tossed about in mind, seeking guidance, at a loss as what to do. It was a tedious question. It was a question that concerned he and his wife. No man had answered him; no man had suggested a number of plans whereby he could do any one of them and do very well by himself and his wife.

Please allow me to digress. If you are walking on your own highway; if you are travelling where the saints have trod, you have indeed been loved with an everlasting love. God indeed has set His love on you in His eternal mind, even before the world ever had a beginning.

At the manifestation of this distinctive love upon you, God had given to you His Son with all of the glorious benefits that comes to sinners. In giving you His Son, he likewise freely and unequivocally gives you all things. Gives you all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus before morning stars sang together.

What support to the text. What corroboration of one truth by another. What more can God say to you than what He has already said. He set aside all time. Nothing that has occurred in the time state to undo that which God, out of His own will, and for a purpose of His own declarative glory, placed His love on His people. This love of God was solemnized between God and you when Jesus died. No man made love was mixed in this solemn work, nor was any of it mixed in the solemn work when the Man that has His way with a maid takes you and presents you unto himself in the holy bonds of wedded bliss. (Pro. 30:19; Eph. 5:27).

This is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ with His chosen people. As the tiny helpless infant out in a cold field was noticed by its lover as He passed its way, even so, each of God's chosen people are ever before Him in love. I would, yea, I must insist, that the love of God never ceases for one of His little ones. What a deplorable condition was this little one in. In our relationship with earthly matters it would call for a turning away for such a polluted one as was this. As deplorable as the description gives us to see the babe, yet to this glorious Benefactor, it was a time of love, and it was given to live instead of perishing. (See Ezek. 16:4-8)

Joseph was thrown out on his own resources. He did not know what to do about his wife Mary. Wearily and desperate, he went to sleep. What a great blessing to go to sleep. I have heard it so much of late coming out of the mouths of those that have professed to be taught of the Lord, that so and so sure was lucky. In the face of God's great love and

mercy, the use of the word luck is the most misplaced word that is ever heard from the lips of a professed believer in God. The Lord gives His beloved sleep; this He does to one and all. In addition to that, He is the maker of their bed in all of their sickness (Psa. 41:3; 127:3). In addition to these glorious promises, he loved (and He loves) His church, His people, His bride. He gave Himself for her that He might redeem her from all iniquity, and present her unto Himself without spot or blemish or wrinkle or any such thing. There were not any exceptions; there were no ifs or conditions or strings attached to His promise. His blood cleanses from all sin, or, to be explicit, from all sins. This gives me place to mention the pieces that is often talked about as peace is talked between brethren. There are no exceptions. Peace does not have a set of qualifying terms for peace, that is, it does not, unless I have missed the true import of the Saviour's salvation. If He made an "if" or set a condition for sinners to be housed in heaven, only then do we have the right to limit fellowship to those that will meet a set of rules for fellowship. Where fellowship is, peace is there; where peace is, there is fellowship.

All the peace that is peace, is that which is wrought in us by His Spirit. He always takes the initiative in bringing this about. He comes to us, He crosses the sea to get where the Gaderene is at in his awful condition. (Mk. 5:1) In all of the approaches of a man towards a maid, it is He that makes the first approach, although this world (and unless we, as a people, are preserved in Christ Jesus, we are apt to catch it) has gone mad in reversing heaven's order, and is wooing and beseeching the maid to take the initiative and have her way with Him.

He gives His people sleep. He gave Joseph a sweet rest in sleep. In no sense of the word could Joseph wake up of himself and say, Now I have found out what to do. No sir, not that. Joseph was

as much at a loss as to what to do when he went to sleep as he had been at any time. If salvation had been in the power of the Jews, there would not have been any need for Christ to have come. If those things attributed to Christ could have been as easily done without Him having come, then by all means God the Father, certainly would not have made a mockery, a travesty, on His darling Son as that would have been.

Manifestly, to Joseph, the Prophet prophesised of did come (Deut. 18:18). That prophesy not only was devoid of conditions as to His work, but the reaction of those to whom He was sent was likewise devoid of conditions. He comes, they hear. I like that, don't you? Isn't that heaven's language to poor sinners? And isn't our example fitting for that kind of doctrine? Isn't Joseph showing forth, even before Christ's arrival, that His Spirit was dwelling in him? Let us remember that Christ loved (loves) the church, and gave himself for it, and that we are commanded to love our wives as He loved His wife, and that Joseph shows that he was a follower of Christ and indeed a doer of the word. His concern was for his wife. What to do about her? Whether to do this or to do the other. There is not a theologian on God's green earth that can prove that Joseph met God in sleep with a plan half way concocted as to how to take care of the situation. Nor was Joseph about to complete a plan, and that God builded on his scheme. That is a doctrine that is part from below, and a part from above, and my soul abhors it. That is part of grace and part of works, and my soul abhors that also.

Maybe I am mistaken, but I think not. Only that which is from above saves sinners; only that name given under heaven and among men is today, or ever has saved men. This is what was taught Joseph when he was asleep, when he was not able to think, to concoct, to perform. Every unanswered question was answered from heaven. The

answers were all baffling to nature-bred sinners, and was enlightening to heaven born sinners. With all the sophists in the universe, from time immemorial until the glorious and final coming of the blessed Redeemer berating and lamenting sound doctrine, they will never set aside the doctrine that satisfied Joseph, and not only he, but all the true Israel of God forever and forever. One thing is sure, Joseph would have waved an Arminian flag and would have solved the dilemma that he was in without having to wait. Yet, how great the lesson taught him in God's way and in God's time. David waited and yet longed for that salvation that comes from the Lord. This longing and yearning and waiting after and for the Lord, is for a display of His saving hand. This is the history of God's people without exception. There isn't, nor cannot be such a thing as a saved sinner satisfied with his own righteousness or his accomplishments. In our text, when applied to us by His Spirit, is the history of us all, without exception. It causes anxiety and a longing after and for, and Joseph did not know where to turn nor what to do. In that time, in just such a time as that, it was and is made manifest that He loves His own, and that He giveth His own sleep. Joseph was put to sleep by Him that gives sleep.

God's care continued after sleep was given. Joseph did not have a nightmare in order to scare him into activity, but he had a dream. In all the universe that there is not one that can give a dream. (If I have overlooked something or somebody that can, please feel free to communicate with me, and I will be glad to retract this). Again, angels are messengers to comfort to instruct, and this is not an exception. He was given sleep with the problem unsolved, and he was awakened with it solved. The union is solemnized, the coming together of man and wife is given heavens approval, all of the gossip talk about Mary's being with child is stilled and

she was made honorable before God and His children.

The question of the virgin Mary, to wit "How shall I know this?" shall be to every querist of like import, answered by the angel of mercy to she, and the question of Joseph is answered in the same way, and that from heaven, to wit, this is the work of God wherein He shall save His people from their sins. And, like all solved problems, great joy is always felt in Zion the city of our God, whether it is an anxious Mary or a perplexed Joseph.

Elder W. D. Griffin

CONTRIBUTIONS

To October 31, 1979

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Elder W. D. Griffin, AL.	6.00
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VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

ISHMAEL AND ISAAC

Dear Brethren Beebe:—Will you be so kind as to give your views on Genesis 17:20, 21? Your compliance with this request will oblige a poor old sinner, whose only hope for salvation is in the grace of God which was given in Christ Jesus from the foundation of the world, for all the elect of God. Your brother in hope of eternal life, although often troubled by doubts,

W. L. McPherson

Hood, Co., Texas, March, 1890

REPLY

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee; Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."—Gen. 17:20, 21.

So strong is our sympathy with a consciously "poor old sinner", it would be a most delightful privilege if we could in the least degree minister to his comfort by presenting such views as are committed to us in reference to any portion of that Scripture which is given by inspiration of God. All such Scripture is the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of prophecy. Recognizing this fact, even the historical records of the Old Testament glow with heavenly luster, which is not seen by the wisdom of this world. To the natural mind only earthly and temporal events are recorded in the book of Genesis; but when they are by the Spirit of truth revealed in their spiritual import with heavenly radiance they all unite in bearing witness of the grace which shines in the face of Jesus Christ. Many of these lively types are defined by inspired authority in the New Testament. The application thus revealed is certainly correct; and no theory of human invention must be accepted by the believer in Jesus, unless it is strictly in harmony with such

inspired explanation. Paul has left for our instruction the true definition of this expressive type. He says, "It is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."—Gal. 4:22-26.

In the light of this revealed explanation it is evident that Isaac represents the whole seed of our Lord Jesus, who is the antitype of Isaac in that he is the true child of promise. Time and space would fail us to trace every point in which this lively figure is descriptive of Christ Jesus as the embodiment of his chosen generation, whose election of God is in their ever living Head. It is of him that Jehovah speaks by the voice of inspiration, saying, "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, not lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law."—Isa. 43:1-4. The inspired apostle applies this prophecy to our Redeemer, and interprets the last clause plainly, "And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."—Matt. 12:17-21. In no other sense can our Lord be called the Servant of God but in his unity with his people. Aside from this relationship, there is no revelation of his glorious character except as being one with the Father, in

which glory he thought it not robbery to be equal with God.—Phil. 2:6. Certainly in that infinite Godhead he could not be under bondage as a servant, yet he did not cease to be the very and eternal God when he was made flesh, and dwelt among us. While no finite intelligence is competent to solve this great mystery of godliness, by faith the subjects of salvation are enabled to know the truth as it is revealed in the scriptures and in their own personal experience. All the study and research of the best and wisest of men has never penetrated this mystery beyond that which Paul has left on record, and it is still "the mystery of godliness." He says, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3:16. He is the promised Seed of the woman who has bruised the serpent's head. Our Jesus is not anywhere in the Scriptures called the second person in the Godhead, or the third part of the eternal God. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."—Col. 2:9. No less than the perfection of divine holiness and immortality could qualify him for the work of saving his people from their sins. For this purpose he is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."—Rom. 1:4. In this omnipotent glory he is the true Isaac, of whom it is written, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."— Isa. 9:6,7. He is the promised Seed of whom the patriarch

Isaac was but a faint type. Every circumstance recorded of the natural Isaac is profitable to the saints in all ages only as it is seen to foreshadow the glory of this Child of promise, in whom all the chosen seed of our God are made holy and without blame before him in love. So, Paul says, "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. 9:6-8. Ishmael was as nearly related to Abraham in the flesh as was Isaac; and in that respect he was Abraham's seed, and had as much claim to inherit from him as did the sons of Jacob who were born of the bond women, Zilpah and Leah, to be recognized as his heirs. It was by the express commandment of God that Abraham hearkened unto the voice of Sarah in casting out Hagar and her son, Ishmael. It is for those who dare to charge God with injustice to decide what they will do in the case; but let those who have the fear of God in their hearts confess he is just and true in all his wonderful works, whether in loving Jacob, or in hating Esau, when "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, it was said unto her (Rebecca), The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

The sovereign purpose of God chose Isaac as the type of the election of grace in Christ Jesus, just as the same sovereignty is displayed in giving Jacob the precedence over his older twin brother Esau. However reason may be lost in contemplating this mystery, the fact connot be controverted by any believer in the truth of the inspired record of the Scriptures. With infidels,

who deny this truth, we have no desire to contend. They must be silenced by the word of him whose authority governs all the legions of the bottomless pit, and makes them tremble at his name. The precious truth of the electing love of God is the very foundation of the hope of every saint; and it is to them that this article is written. The denial of this doctrine of God our Savior would remove the only ground upon which any sinner can trust in the salvation which is revealed in Christ Jesus. Every conditional system of salvation is built upon the quicksands of human reasoning, and must sink to the bottomless pit of falsehood, from whence it originates. When this truth is revealed in the experience of the subjects of divine instruction every form of false doctrine is at once exposed and overthrown; for error can no more stand in the presence of the light than Dagon could retain his position before the typical ark of God. No saint can afford to entertain a question of this fundamental truth of the gospel of the grace of God, on which alone his whole hope of salvation rests.

It must be remembered that in himself Isaac had no more claim upon the favor of God than Ishmael. The election of grace alone gave him the inheritance of the blessing which of his own sovereign will God gave to Abraham when he called him, out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gave him the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 22:18. Both the sons of Abraham were by nature the children of wrath even as all others of the sinful children of Adam. If Isaac had any merit by which he was entitled to divine favor, then there could be no grace in the election by which he was blessed of God. And if the blessing came on the ground of natural relationship to Abraham, Ishmael was entitled to the preference as being the firstborn son. But the election of God directed in the matter, so that the blessing must come upon Isaac,

as the promised seed thus presenting him as the type of Christ in whom is the election of all who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world. So, Paul says, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." The birth in which this relationship is developed, is not according to nature, but by the sovereign power of God. The inheritance of the saints in light is not upon the principle of natural relationship to earthly parents, but by virtue of "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."— 1 Peter 1:23. This heavenly birth is in no sense dependent upon the earthly parentage of its chosen subjects. It is exclusively according to the will of God. Therein is manifest the grace of God in the election of his chosen vessels of mercy, which choice was in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.

Much of the unbelieving doubt which troubles the saints in their sojourn here in time, arises from the incapacity of their natural mind to receive the gracious truth of the sovereignty of God in choosing guilty sinners in Christ, and ordaining that they shall be in him holy and without blame before God in love. This infinite sovereignty is one point of the truth which is typically expressed in this case of the two sons of Abraham. Under the shadows of that prophetic night the testimony of Jesus was dimly revealed in all the types which were ordained of God; but when the Spirit of truth takes those symbols and shows unto the saints their spiritual signification, they all unite in proclaiming the glory of Jesus as the Saviour of his people from their sins. When this truth is realized by the believer, the assaults of the adversary are powerless to disturb his comfort in believing, since it is only their conscious sinfulness which gives force to all the cruel suggestions of unbelief and doubt in the experience of the saints. The

shield of faith quenches all these fiery darts of the devil with the divine assurance that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. He is our immortal Isaac, in whom we are already justified freely by his grace from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Since he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes, it is evident that they whom he has redeemed from under the law of sin and death can no longer be subject to its condemnation. They are no more under the law, but under grace. To every accusation of the adversary their only and sufficient answer is that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."—Gal. 3:13,14. Every unbelieving doubt is predicted upon the denial of the birthright of the saint as an heir of God and joint-heir with our Lord Jesus Christ. When this divine heritage of freedom is acknowledged, all the infinite righteousness of Christ is the perfect justification of every child of his grace. Even the inflexible judgment of eternal justice then commands, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."—Job 33:24. The heritage of the freeborn children of God in Christ Jesus is all the righteousness which is ordained of God in him as their omnipotent Redeemer. In him they have righteousness and strength. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."—Isa. 45:25.

(Concluded next month)

We can never be truly easy and happy until we are enabled to trust God for all things: and the more we are enabled to trust Him, the more gracious and faithful we shall find Him.

The old Arminians mentioned in scripture are blamed for thinking wickedly that God was such an one as themselves; but our new Arminians out - sin their predecessors, and actually represent God as a being in many respects considerable inferior to themselves. They suppose Him both to form schemes with less wisdom, and to execute them with less power, spirit, and success, than a prime minister of common sense forms and executes his. They dare ascribe to God such impotence, blunders, imperfections, and disappointments, as they would blush to ascribe to a Ximenes, or a Sully.

Toplady

However sound and orthodox (as the phrase is) professors may be in their principles, though true candour will make tender allowances for the frailty of nature, and the power of temptation, yet neither candour nor charity will require us to accept them as real believers, unless the general strain and tenor of their deportment be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

John Newton

OBITUARIES

BESSIE CHAMBERS

Funeral services for Bessie Chambers, age 80, of DeLeon, Texas, were held on September 21, 1979 in DeLeon Northside Baptist Church with Brother Frank Robertson of Cross Plains officiating. Burial was in Stag Creek Cemetery under the direction of Nawlin Funeral Home.

Mrs. Chambers was born January 29, 1899, in Oliver Springs, Texas to the late Andrew and Nancy Baen. She was married to Charlie L. Chambers on December 15, 1917, in Comanche. She was a retired nurse and a member of the DeLeon Pilgrim Rest Primitive Baptist Church and had lived in and around DeLeon most of her life. Mrs. Chambers passed away on September 19, 1979 in the Loving Care Nursing Home in Stephenville, Texas after a lengthy illness.

She is survived by her husband, Charlie, of Stephenville; two daughters, Jalene Loza of Santa Maria, Calif., and Norma Jean Skeen of Reevesville, S.C.; three sons, Baen

Chambers, of Ocean Springs, Miss., William J. Chambers of Sunny Vale, Calif., and Don Chambers of Aurora, Colo.; a brother, John Baen of DeLeon. She was preceded in death by a son, L.C. Chambers, one sister, Myrtle Chambers, and five brothers.

OUR LOSS

Rehobeth Church of Union County, Arkansas, mourns the passing of the following previous members within the last year:

Irene Murphy - Born Sept. 12, 1892, and Died Feb. 11, 1979.

Neila Ryan - Born Dec. 18, 1901, and died July 4, 1979.

Even though we lament their passing yet we remember without ceasing their works of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope. Each of us treasure the memory of their deeds of love to such degree that surely our loss is their gain.

We pray God's blessings upon us so that we will be reconciled to His will and content with out lot.

Rehobeth Church agreed to file a copy of this memorial with our church records and that copies be sent to the bereaved families and to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

This was read and approved in conference Saturday, October 13, 1979.

Faye Hogg, Church Clerk
Elder E. J. Lambert, Moderator

SISTER POLLY GEORGE McCLAIN

It was our Father's will to call Sister Polly George McClain from this life on January 25, 1979. Her rather sudden death was caused by a cerebral hemorrhage, which seems to run in her family. She was born April 13, 1906, the daughter of the late Brother Robert and Sister Nannie Pickral George.

Sister Polly joined Richmond Primitive Baptist Church on October 12, 1976, at the pool at Springfield Primitive Baptist Church in Gretna, Virginia and was baptized along with her husband, Brother William, by her pastor, Elder D. L. Simpson, assisted by Elder Julian Williams. She was faithful to her church and had recently attended her Union when she was called home. She told

her Pastor and others how much she had been blessed to enjoy that Union.

She leaves to mourn; her husband, Brother William G. McClain, her son, Robert Best of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, two sisters, Mrs. Lena Tyre, and Mrs. Louise Ballard; two brothers, Mike and Arthur George, all of Lynchburg, Virginia.

Sister Polly's funeral was held January 27, 1979, at Joseph W. Biley Funeral Home's Chippenham Chapel in Richmond, Virginia by her Pastor, Elder D. L. Simpson. Her body was laid to rest in Greenwood Memorial Gardens beneath a blanket of beautiful flowers to await the resurrection in her Saviour and Lord.

May God bless and comfort her companion and all who loved her.

Written by request of the Richmond Church. Resolved: one copy to be placed on the Church Records, one to be sent to the *Signs of the Times*, and one copy to be sent to the family.

Sisters: Nannie Varnier
Azalee Lee, Committee

POSEY LESTER HOLLEY

Once more the Lord has called from our midst a dear and highly respected brother, Posey Lester Holley on July 24, 1979. He had been in declining health for ten years.

He was born in Pittsylvania County on September 14, 1902. He was the son of the late Charlie Lester Holley and Susan Brumfield Holley. He was married on December 25, 1926 to the former Gertie Cassada who survives. He united with Strawberry Church on September 18, 1938 and was ordained a deacon there on March 3, 1946. He served his church well in this capacity as long as his health permitted.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by three daughters; Mrs. Iva H. Ligon, and Mrs. Linda H. Allmond, both of Danville, Virginia and Mrs. Betty H. Clark of Walnut Creek, California and three sons; Posey L. Holley, Jr. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Ray W. Holley of Gendoria, California, and J. Donald Holley of Raleigh, North Carolina. Also, four sisters; Mrs. Viola H. Davis, Mrs. Mabel H. Wilson, Mrs. Gladys H. Stegall and Mrs. Inez H. Hollie all of Danville, Virginia; two brothers, Russell T. Holley and Irvin R. Holley of Danville; twelve grandchildren

and two great grandchildren.

Brother Holley was a firm believer in salvation by grace, a humble and highly respected man and to know him was to love him.

On July 26, 1979 his funeral was conducted at the Wrenn-Yeatts Chapel by Elder O. K. Tench and his pastor Elder Raymond Payne. He was laid to rest in the Highland Burial Park in Danville, Virginia to await the coming of his blessed Savior to gather his jewels home.

Be it resolved that we bow in humble submission to His holy will.

May the dear Lord comfort and bless his dear wife and children.

Resolved that a copy be sent to the family, one put on church record and one sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Written as requested
Sister Mary H. Stratton
Brother Guy H. Hundley

SISTER EMMA LOIS GAY

Sister Lois Gay was born on January 19, 1934, to the late George and Effie Calhoun Gay. She is survived by a sister, Mrs. Bettie Gay Alford, Route 4, Rocky Mount, N.C.; a brother, Alton Gay, of Rocky Mount, N.C.; a niece, Mrs. Robin Alford Thigpen, of Midlakes Trailer Park, Rocky Mount, N.C.

While a patient at Edgecombe General Hospital, Sister Lois told the members of Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church of a wonderful experience she had. She was gladly received in full fellowship on June 11, 1975, and was baptized on June 29, 1975.

She passed from this life on September 10, 1979. Her funeral was conducted by her pastor, Elder Henry Jones, and Elder Bill Everett, in Gay-Yost Funeral Home Chapel.

She was a good nurse, and was loved and respected by all her co-workers at Edgecombe General Hospital. She kept working and studying off and on during her sickness and suffering.

We at Pleasant Hill Church loved and miss her very much, as do her loved ones and many friends. I feel that she is resting peacefully, awaiting the coming of her Lord.

Written by request of the church in conference.

Fannie Mae Calhoun

Signs of the Times

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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DIVINE CERTAINTY

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

These are some of the words the angel spoke to Joseph when Mary was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost. In these words we see three Divine Certainties. Notice the word "shall" in each statement. God's "shall" and "wills" are not conditional or contingent as are man's. What He speaks comes to pass without fail. In Isaiah 46, the Everlasting God says, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: ...yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

The first certainty is this verse is, "she shall bring forth a son." There was absolutely no possibility that anything could come to pass to prevent her from bringing forth a son. She could no more bring forth a daughter than she could create a world. She was absolutely certain not to miscarry or bring forth a still-born child. God spoke it, and He brought it to pass.

The second certainty is, "thou shalt call his name Jesus." Joseph did not have to worry about what to name the son. God named him. The name Jesus means "The Salvation of Jehovah". God decreed that His name should

describe His Person and Work, and the "shall" forever eliminated all other names.

The third certainty—and the most important to helpless and hopeless sinners—is, "for he shall save his people from their sins." Blessed be His Glorious Name! This God, this Saviour came into the world not to do some uncertain work—not to try to save some people—not to make salvation possible to men if they will add something to his work. This Saviour is a Saviour indeed. He came to save. The angel of the Lord said "He shall save." And He did save. He came to save His people. God has marked them out and given them to His Son before the world began, and the "shall" shows that their salvation is certain. Jesus said in John 10, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice;" "He shall save His people from their sins." Sin is that which damns us, but Jesus has and shall save His people from the guilt, the power, and the presence of sin. May His name alone be praised.

Shannon Vaughn
P.O. Box 317
Hazen, Ar 72064

THE ABSOLUTE
PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS
No. 3

Brother Beebe: I will now notice some of the objections, which are made to the doctrine under consideration.

The objection most frequently made, is that this doctrine represents God as the author of sin. Most of those who make this objection will allow that God governs the world, and that no event takes place but by his permission. Where is the difference between them and us? It appears to be something like this. We believe that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that he has a wise design in every event which he either permiteth or causeth to

take place, that each event and all the transactions of men, even the vilest, are as so many links in the great chain of that providence, by which the eternal purposes of God are connected together, and drawn on to their ultimate and glorious consummation; that from eternity God drew the wonderous plan of his government, saw through the operations and bearings of every event, and assigned to each its place and use in the dispensation of his providence, his justice, or his grace. They, if I can comprehend their views, believe that God has not beforehand determined the wicked actions of men, that merely as a spectator he suffers the wicked to go on according to their own wills. Of course, if God has had no previous determination relative to their acts, he can have no design in permitting them, unless it be simply the general design of leaving those persons to aggravate their condemnation. Now it would seem to me that if either of these systems makes God the author of sin, it is the latter, for it makes God to be, in a most wanton manner, accessory to the vices of men. But why is such a system preferred? Surely only because it takes the government from God and gives it to the will of man.

But says one in the case of an assassin's way-laying a man and murdering him, it would be horrid to suppose that God had predestinated this barbarous act. Where is the preacher who talks thus, if called to preach on this funeral occasion, that would tell the afflicted relatives that God had nothing to do with this affair, and therefore instead of exhorting them to eye the hand of God in it, and to be submissive to his will, would direct them to regard only the hand of the assassin? And yet he ought thus to tell them to be consistent.

The Master said to his disciples, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father? But the

very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" Matt. 10:29-31. Christ had been telling them not to fear them that kill the body, etc., in reference to persecutors, and then brings in the case of the sparrows. Would not the disciples naturally be led to think of the sparrows as exposed to the ravages of birds of prey? And when thus assured that the hawks could not seize their prey but by the will of God they would feel such confidence in the care of their heavenly Father, as to believe that their bloody persecutors could not take their lives until his gracious purpose was accomplished, and he for wise purposes saw fit to suffer them to be put to death.

If God thus taketh care for sparrows, can it be supposed that any human being will be left to fall by the hand of an assassin without our heavenly Father? If any can find comfort in believing that men's lives are thus left to the sport of chance, I envy them not that comfort.

Let us take another view of this subject--I think it more consistent with what God has revealed of his universal government, to suppose that the days of this murdered man was numbered, that the designs of God in his existence on earth were accomplished, and the period had arrived for his being taken from it; and that God had determined to leave him who was the assassin thus to manifest the enmity and depravity of his heart, to be a warning to others, and to receive that open punishment which his depraved principles merited. Also that such afflictions as attended this affair, God has seen fit to appoint unto the relatives, if not to result in their good, yet for wise and good purposes.

I do not see that this view of the subject, any more makes God the author of sin, than any other system would short of that, of the Magi which supposed the existence of two Gods the one good and the other evil. Nor any more than the Lord's having appointed

to Peter the death by which he should glorify God, made him the author of the sin of his persecutors. See John 21:18, and 19.

But to give, if possible, a clearer illustration of this subject, I will offer a few remarks on the text - Luke 13:4-5. "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." I have said in a former Number there is no movement either of matter or mind but what has been so fixed by the counsel of God as to work for his glory. In the text above quoted I think there is an illustration of this fact. In the case of the eighteen being slain by the fall of the tower of Siloam, are the following circumstances to be noticed.

First, the passage gives no statement of the special cause which produced the fall of the tower; neither is there any intimation that it was occasioned by any thing miraculous. The whole account appears clearly to imply that it was what would be termed at this day, a mere casual event.--Second, the Jews having been taught by their lively Oracles, to acknowledge the hand of God in every event, considered this a special visitation of God upon those who were slain, and accounted for it by supposing that they were sinners above others. This latter idea, the Master evidently designed to correct, and to impress upon the minds of his audience, that they were sinners equally, with those eighteen, and like them, exposed to the judgments of God, unless they repented with that repentance which their law required of them as national Israelites.

Whilst we are left ignorant of the direct cause of the tower's falling, whether it was carelessness in building, negligence in repairing, the wear of time, or some other circumstance, the fact is evident, that the materials of which it was built, having been undermined or in some other way

removed from their proper balance one upon another, fell by the regular operation of the law of gravitation, and in their fall killed eighteen persons. Can any be so hardened in opposition to the sovereignty of God, as to contend that he by whom alone the sparrow falls, had no hand in the death of these persons? Yea, is it not manifest, from the improvement which the Saviour made of the event that it was designed as a warning to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, of the impending judgments which hung over their heads? These impending judgments of which the Jews were thus warned, were brought upon them, as the event shows, by the instrumentality of the Roman arms. That these impending judgments were limited and bound by the predestination of God is evident from Matthew 24:15-28, and Luke 21:17, 24. It is equally manifest that it was the ambition and pride of the Romans which impelled them forward to the destruction of this devoted people.

Now if in the one case God could accomplish his purpose of cutting off those eighteen persons, by the instrumentality of the effect of the law of gravitation upon the materials of the tower in Siloam, without diverting that law from its regular course of operation, why could he not in the other case, bring his threatened and defined judgments upon the Jews, by the instrumentality of the Roman's thirst for conquest and blood, without being the author of their sin, or without infringing upon their free-agency in the act? Some may say that God was the author of the law of gravitation. True, God did establish it in the original creation of matter; and so did he originally permit sin to enter into the world and man to become so depraved, as that it is as natural for him to sin, as it is for a heavy body to fall to the earth. And there was no more necessity for God, in the one case, to produce a new principle of depravity in the hearts of the Romans, than, in the

other case, to produce a new principle of gravitation or give a new bias to that heart. In the one instance God had only to permit the interposition of certain occasions, to bring the law of gravitation into effect upon the materials of the tower, and to bring those eighteen persons within its reach, to accomplish his purpose concerning them. So in the other case, he had only to permit the Jews, by their turbulence and rebellion, to provoke the resentment of the Romans to be the occasion of their acting out their bloody cruelty, so far as God had determined to permit them.

What I have said upon this subject is probably not sufficient to satisfy the minds of some who may think they are honest inquirers after truth. But it is not dependent on me to vindicate the revelation and ways of God from the charge of sin. Let those who charge that doctrine which God has revealed, with a sinful tendency, answer to him for it.

I will offer a few remarks for the consideration of those who think that God has too great affairs to manage, to concern himself with the smaller particles of matter, such as are seen floating in the air; for such professors there are. I would ask them whether they believe in the resurrection of the body? If so whether they believe that God will raise the bodies of all or only of such whose bodies he can find on the resurrection morn? We know that the bodies of many have been burned to ashes, and those ashes scattered towards the four winds of heaven, the bodies of others have been left to moulder to dust on the surface of the earth; the graves of many have been opened and the dust that once composed the bodies mingles with other particles of earth, not to insist upon the continual process through which matter is passing of decomposition and new organizations, by which that which was once the component part of an animal body, becomes incorporated in a vegetable substance, etc. How can any

person with these facts in view believe that God will or can raise the bodies of all persons, unless they believe that he exercises that infinite knowledge, and that universal disposal of all things, that every particle of matter is present to his notice, passing through what process it may, filling by his direction the very place, and accomplishing the very object he designed? Is this knowledge too wonderful for your comprehension? So it is for mine. But is it too extensive for our God whose understanding is infinite?

Other objections I leave for another No.

Fairfax Court House, Va. S. Trott
January 21, 1834

Benton, Ky.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

Enclosed please find a check for a contribution to help distribute the *Signs of the Times*.

I enjoy the *Signs* so very much as I am not able to go to church. May God bless you Editors for your wonderful work and may He bless you and keep you able to keep it coming to the sick and ones not able to go to church any more.

Best wishes,
Maggie Culp

Rayville, La.

Dear Editors,

I see it is time for me to renew our subscription to the dear *Signs of the Times*. We enjoy it so much. It seemed that the September and October issues were so full of good pieces.

Enclosed is a check for another year. May the Lord bless and keep you and help you in your wonderful work.

The paper is really a gift or a visit from above to people like us who can't go to church.

A little child of God (I Hope),
Mrs. Earl Wilson

LETTER FROM SISTER SPENCER

Meadows of Dan, Virginia

To the Signs of the Times:

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

It has been a while since the Lord has laid a burden in my heart and mind to write a little to the *Signs*. Without this burden it is just flesh and no comfort to anyone, but with the burden so heavy, there seems nothing to stand in my way, only to say, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. Without the Spirit and Truth, it is nothing.

They that worship God must worship in the Spirit and Truth, all else is mockery. I feel very weak in spirit tonight. But then when I am weak, Thou art strong. Therefore Thy strength is made perfect in my weakness. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no man cometh unto me, except my Father draw him." If this is not in us, then we are deceivers and have come on our own accord, and shall hear the awful verdict, "Depart from me, I never knew you". I do not believe any one can rob God of His glory, yet on every hand we hear how they say they are saving souls for God, and blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that every sin was forgiven except blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, and that sin is not forgiven.

In Revelations the 22nd Chapter John was blessed to behold and see these things that was done and shall come to pass. The eleventh verse says, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." There is no works system in this verse of scripture for man to try to carry out. A man once told me it was his duty to go and tell a drunkard to clean himself up and come join the church and live a decent life, and be saved and go to heaven. I said, "When you get him there, and God says, 'Depart from me, ye that

work iniquity, I never knew you', just what will you do with this man?" He looked at me for a while and then closed his Bible and put it in his car and never bothered me any more that day with his "soul saving system".

Verse 13 reads, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last". Now I cannot find any works system in this verse. Verse 17 reads, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." To me this is the Spirit of Almighty God drawing His chosen to Him, and the Bride is the true Church also saying, "Come". "And let him that heareth say come". Yes, this is the Spirit also saying "come" to the hearer. "And let him that is athirst come". This means the chosen that are thirsty for the true Spirit. "And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Now, if I have to pay a man or woman to give me or show me the water of life, then it is not free. Away with such a blasphemous doctrine. This is a free water of life which cannot be bought or sold. Please read the 18th and 19th verses. The angel which showed John these things said for him not to worship him, but to worship God. I feel sure John did worship God in the Spirit and in the Truth. These things are very precious to me tonight.

I remain a helpless sinner,
Pauline Spencer

Riner, Virginia

Dear Brother and Sister Williams,

I am glad to write you at the Circulation Office of the *Signs of the Times*. We would so enjoy having you visit us at Valley View Church, and hope you will in the near future. We would also love to have you in our home when you are up this way.

Last third Sunday was so beautiful. Brother Donald Agee was ordained a deacon. Oh! how wonderful to see the Elders, some old and some young, who traveled so many miles after serving

their own church.

It seemed the Heavens were opened. The Gospel was preached, and how beautiful to see the love. I shed many tears of joy, and it seemed there were tears in everyone's eyes.

We had a number of elders with us, our dear Pastor, Elder Raymond Goad, Elders Roy Agee (the father of Donald), Tench, Brown, Simpson, Hash, Sanders, Hollingsworth, Conner, Carter, Jones, and Cox. The songs were so beautiful, too, especially "Amazing Grace". That was a beautiful melody.

I am sending a check for two years of the *Signs*, which I love so much. Use the rest as you see fit for the *Signs*. I do hope the older ones with the *Signs* will continue to write and am thankful for the younger ones, too. He will send His servants in due time.

Give my love to your family, and we hope you will visit us soon.

In love,
Beulah Wells

Kitty Hawk, N.C.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

Once again the time seems to have arrived for me to renew my subscription for the *Signs*. Enclosed please find a check for the same for two years, with the remainder to be used as you deem necessary. It is with much pleasure I receive our paper, and from time to time precious comfort in reading its contents. Dear Brethren, is it not a wonderful wonder of wonders, whenever our memories are once again brought to bare upon the reality of our having been given a precious desire that our trust and hope be in the One and only three-one God in whom there is no shadow of turning, neither does He need, ask for, nor receive, any help from puny sinful mankind in the process. So therein being made fully aware that no man is deserving nor worthy of any praise or honor for anything. I am so glad, and I hope thankful, unto my God for having

brought up such precious ones as you Brethren, who are given both mind and strength to put forth your allotted time in publishing the *Signs* in the manner in which it has been and is published at the present time.

In recent months I have received much joy and comfort in reading the writings of Elder Silas H. Durand in "Fragments", his Autobiography, and later writings. I am now reading it for the second time. If you have this book and should find the time and desire, look on page 231 under the heading, "How Often Shall I Forgive my Brother?"

If you should ever find the time and desire to include this in the *Signs*, someone or more who do not have this book might find themselves benefited by deep searchings within their very soul, as I felt to experience in reading same. I feel a precious love for Old Baptists everywhere; I just hope this love I feel for you all is for Christ's sake, and by reason that He first loved me (though oh, so unworthy I feel) and worked that same love within me.

Your Brother in Christ, I hope,
Troy G. Shepard

P.S. I have no more conception of one child of God being either larger or smaller than another, than of God's love being greater for one of His children than for another. I say the above even in the face of my feelings to be (if one at all) the very least of them all; but yet must confess of my belief that God's love for all His children is the same unchangeable everlasting love, and so therein establish it as an unchangeable fact of truth; they all are just His children. Period... Surely God gives different gifts to some of His children than to others, as be His pleasure to do so, but those gifts unto one does not change that one into a larger size or of any more importance in the operation of His government than that of any other one that be of that total number consisting of them all that make up that

whole structure of the Body of Christ's Church. For the gifts of God unto His children cannot rightly be measured as if one gift were greater or smaller, for they each and all are given with that exact same everlasting love He has for them all. Therefore my precious Brethren, it is entirely impossible to rightly claim of any one elder, or deacon, or member, being even one iota greater or smaller than another. For they all are just His afore chosen children Period... Because for just one of the total to be smaller in importance would in itself be proof of an imperfect body of Christ's Church. So I say to all my precious Brethren, please do not speak to me of any one or more great or big preachers, or elders, or deacons, or members; for that arrow of all Holy true Greatness points directly and only unto the three-one God over and above all things. For whatsoever ability any one ever had to speak, or act, or feel, that be to the praising or honoring or the glorifying of His great and Holy Name, was and is only the direct resulting from a free gift from God, unto that very exact end. So my Brethren, the pleasure of God is the one and only rightful consideration to ponder concerning those above mentioned things. Christ's Church is just simply Christ's Church. He is its only Builder, its only Supplier, and its only Keeper and Saviour and Transporter unto Heaven and immortal glory. So therefore there can be no rightful claim of any of mankind ever aiding or hindering in its (the church) structure or otherwise.

The hands of mankind may put up a building, and then call that building a church, and some members of Christ's Church might meet together within its walls; but nevertheless no board or nail or timber or brick nor stone that goes into that man-constructed building can rightly be referred to as any particle or portion of Christ's Church; for it is just and only a meeting place or house, for a

portion of the members of Christ's Church to meet together in, and is just one more of His many, many blessings unto His children; so therefore my Brethren, wherever or whenever we point to a man-constructed building as being the Church, we so say without a true knowledge of what we truly are saying. Dear Brethren, has the ways of this present world become of so much importance (to us who profess a hope that we are Old or Primitive Baptist) that we are afraid to say we are going to "meeting" (instead of to church, or to preaching), or we are going to the "meeting house" (instead of to the church). True Primitive Baptist not only believe, but know for a surity, that fire and storms have and do destroy man-constructed buildings; but do they not feel just that sure that neither fire nor storm shall ever destroy or even hurt the true Church of the living God, and that man's hands had nor has any part in the building thereof. I feel and believe they do.

All the above was written without malice toward any one, but only as food for thought. So I say to one and all who may read it; please look over all my mistakes and shortcomings with charity, and charge them all to my depravity; while at the same time, if there be any portion herein that is in accord with Holy Truth, and any portion should be any comfort to any one, please refrain from praising or honoring this poor sinner for it; but instead, render any and all praise, honor and glory unto the Name of our Lord and Master.

In Hope I could be your
Brother in Christ,
Troy G. Shepard

BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Mill Branch, the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in March, 1980.

All lovers of the truth are invited to come

and worship with us.

Harold Pittman, Clerk
Box 4524
Rocky Mount, N.C. 27801

SKEWARKY UNION

The Lord willing, the next session of the Skewarky Union will be held with the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Church the fifth Sunday in March and Saturday before. The Church is located at Scotland Neck, N.C.

Kehukee is the Mother Church of the old Kehukee Association, and we invite all of same faith and order to visit with us.

Hassel Allen, Union Clerk

ORDINATION OF DEACON

At the request of Valley View Church we met for the purpose of looking into the qualifications of Brother Donald Agee for the office of Deacon, and if found qualified, proceed to go through the process of ordination.

First, Elder Noel Conner offered prayer after which Elder R. L. Goad was chosen moderator and Elder Amos Hash was to serve as clerk. Elder Henry Jones and Elder Rufus Brown were chosen to lead in questioning, with Elder O.K. Tench to deliver the charge. Elder Lane Carter was chosen to lead in the ordination prayer and Brother Vance Duncan was selected as spokesman for the Church.

Brother Vance Duncan was asked to deliver the Candidate to the Presbytery. After questioning the candidate and the questions being answered to the satisfaction of the presbytery, the charge was impressively delivered to the candidate by Elder Tench.

All Elders and Deacons then proceeded to lay on hands. The Elders present were R. L. Goad, O. K. Tench, J. L. Agee, N. F. Conner, Lane Carter, Henry Jones, Rufus Brown, Randall Saunders, Denver Simpson, and Amos Hash.

Deacons present were Clay Brown, Vance Duncan, Lonzie Nichols, Harry Cannaday, Fred Murphy, W. R. Bernard, Marvin Brumfield, H. D. Ingram, and Tiras Conner.

The ordination prayer was delivered by Elder Lane Carter after which the Church was asked if they were satisfied with the work of the presbytery. After being

answered in the affirmative, Brother Donald Agee was delivered back to the Church as a duly ordained Deacon by Elder Randall Saunders.

We had a motion with second and approval that the minutes be approved as read.

Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
Elder Amos Hash, Clerk

FIFTH SUNDAY MEETING

The Lord willing, Elder D. V. Spangler will be with the Salisbury Old School Baptist Church, Salisbury, Maryland, the fifth Sunday in March, 1980.

All lovers of the Truth are welcome.

James F. Poole, Pastor

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES THRU NOVEMBER, 1979

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"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED"

This was the deeply solemn question of the jailer at Philippi. Paul and Silas, the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus, answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."—Acts 16:31

The miraculous and almighty power of the Lord was manifested in all this amazing and glorious work of salvation, as the inspired history of it clearly shows. In this merciful work, the power of God had quickened the heathen keeper of the Roman prison, by his life-giving and convicting Spirit, so that he was filled with awful fear and trembling, under a solemn sense of the mighty power of God, as well as of his own sin and guilt, and his righteous accountability to him who had so fearfully shaken the foundations of the prison by an earthquake, opened the prison doors, and loosed the bands of all the prisoners. The jailer was awfully convinced that all this was nothing less than the righteous judgment of God in this fearful display of his just indignation against his wicked enemies, who had so cruelly sinned against him in persecuting his servants, in which he himself was guilty, and that now the impending wrath of God was about to fall upon him in a fearful death, which he justly merited. His only hope of escape from this dreadful doom was in the mercy of God, and so he, in his guilty terror, instinctively pleaded with the servants of the Lord to tell him what he must do that he might escape the fearful

punishment of his sins and be saved.

This guilty and awfully condemned man fitly represents the case of every awakened and unpardoned sinner, who is made to experience sin and guilt and condemnation by the law and Spirit of God, in the dreadful ministration of justice and wrath against sin and ungodliness. It was at the dark hour of midnight, when men naturally are locked up in unconscious sleep, typical of death. Out of this helpless sleep the mighty power of God awaked this unthinking and uncaring man, and at once guilty terror and remorse seized him. Till now he had been unmoved by the tortures inflicted upon the meek servants of the Lord, but his own hands would add to their cruel persecutions by making their feet fast in the stocks.

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and they are dead in trespasses and sins, and are by nature the children of wrath, even as was the cruel and wicked jailer. But the fearful display of the power of God, “who quickeneth the dead,” awakes the sinner out of death, as did the power of the Lord call up Lazarus out of death, and although the guilty soul was locked up in carnal security, yet the power of God fills him with a sense of impending wrath and dreadful guilt; fear and trembling overpower him, and he cries out in alarm, turns to man for help, and asks what he must do to be saved. For every awakened sinner is under the law, and sincerely thinks, but ignorantly, that he must keep the law or do something to be saved. So did the troubled jailer think, not knowing that “Salvation is of the Lord,” nor that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, the chief of sinners. This was the gloomy and hopeless experience of each one of us who have believed on the Lord Jesus. For the law was our schoolmaster until Christ came and fulfilled it; yea, until he fulfilled it in us. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of

sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteous of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Not fulfilled by us, but in us, by the righteous Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, and who liveth in every believer.

But of this way of salvation, the guilty and fearing jailer was ignorant, and he therefore tremblingly asked Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” In this he voiced the legal spirit of every one to whom God has not revealed his Son, for, like him, all naturally depend upon works of their own doing to save them, and cleave to the law of works for salvation, as does the wife to the husband for protection when danger is impending. This is the way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof is the way of death. For the reward or wages of sin is death, and all our works are marred by sin.

There are only two principles and ways of salvation, and the question of the lost jailer represents one way, the legal way, the way of works, the way of being saved by what we must do. This do religion, do and be saved, is the way of all the world, and all the world, both Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, accept and believe in this way, and it is the way that seemeth right unto them. Then let us not abuse them for it, dear brethren in Christ, for they, like Paul and we, were alive without the law, and so they are not dead to this first religion, which is natural and legal. Therefore, as we see and know, the whole world is carried away with this do salvation, and their great zeal is in doing something to be saved. All their religious works are for this purpose and to this one end—to be saved. So with the jailer; he was deeply in earnest, devout and sincere in it, for he was lost, and fearfully he felt

and realized it, so now he sought to be saved, but he sought it by what he must do. So it is with the world. The fatal weakness and error in this way of being saved is, it is of self, by self, for self, and all selfish, for it both begins and ends with self. It asks, What must I do? What for, we ask? Because you love the Lord, who died for you and saved you, and therefore you would live to him and glorify him? No, not this, but "to be saved." What must I do to save myself? So all the religious world is saying, both in christian and heathen lands. This, then, is the way of the wise and prudent, the popular way, the only way that will ever make the Baptists popular and sought after. Alexander Campbell, Andrew Fuller, and all lesser leaders among the Baptists who have gone in their steps, have gone in this way, and have taught the people that they must do something to be saved. They may be and are shades of difference as to what must be done, and as to the extent of salvation, yet the principle remains the same among all—do and be saved.

The answer of Paul and Silas to the trembling sinner reveals the other way of salvation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Through faith in the Lord Jesus is the way of salvation, therefore, and so Paul states it, saying, "For 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." This settles it, both as to the power and the way of salvation, showing that it is not of works, but by grace through faith in Christ, and faith is the gift of God to us, therefore not of ourselves. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." And so, when the legal Jews said to Christ, "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." It was not their own work, then, to believe on

Christ, but the work of God, wrought by the Spirit in them, and faith is a fruit of the Spirit, not a work of ours, which we must do. So when Peter believed on the Son of God, Jesus said to him that his Father in heaven had revealed it to him. This is true in every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul therefore says, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. * * * * * Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed"—to all the heirs of promise. How clearly and strongly does Paul thus separate between works and grace, as between chaff and wheat, and shows that faith is of grace, but not a work that we must do.

To teach otherwise, and say that to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is what we must do to be saved, and that it is now a condition of our salvation here in time, and is our work, and depends upon ourselves, and that this is voluntary on our part, to be either done by us or refused, is an Arminian and legal principle and doctrine. And it is condemned by the Scriptures already given, and by all the oracles of God. Our works never produce faith in the Lord Jesus, nor cause us to believe in him, but the revelation of his faith in our hearts by the power and Spirit of God, will and does produce in us the works of faith and labors of love, moving the blessed possessor of the faith of the Son of God to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to show his faith in him by his heart-given service of loving and willing obedience. This is the obedience of faith, which worketh by love and purifieth the heart, and it is both the way and the evidence of salvation; yea, and its testimony in the heart and life of every saved sinner is, that salvation is of the Lord, and by his mercy and grace alone. The believer in Christ will not say, It is by what I must do that I am saved, but

the blessed Jesus saves me now and ever by his death and life, by his Spirit of love and grace and power, "which worketh in me mightily," so that I joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, whose grace is sufficient for me, and whose strength is made perfect in my weakness. "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Therefore, to me the precious word of Jesus is all my desire and all my salvation, saying, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "By him my prayers acceptance gain," of his fullness do I receive, and grace for grace, and with him my God, who is rich in mercy, freely gives me all things; so that for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

The jailer earnestly desired and sought to be saved. Paul faithfully told him by whom and how he should be saved. He should be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ, through faith in his name. Thus and in this way he and his household should be saved. What did they mean by the word "saved?" It would be trifling with the most solemn matters and feelings to say that neither the question nor the answer meant anything more than a sort of salvation which was only temporal and in part for the time being, and which he must obtain by what he must do, for the guilty sinner cried out for salvation from his sins, and of this salvation Paul and Silas preached to him and his household. They pointed them to Christ, the Lamb of God, testifying that salvation is by him, and that whosoever believeth in him shall be saved. So the vastly momentous word "saved," in

the question and answer, covers the whole ground of salvation, affirming that Jesus is the only Savior, and that faith in him is the medium or the manifestation and assurance of salvation. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Not for calling on his name, but because they realize that they are lost and cannot save themselves, they do thus pray to him who is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him; therefore they shall be saved by him on whom they call, and living in him they also believe in him, and call on him in whom they believe. Thus saved by the Lord Jesus Christ, and given faith to believe in him to the joy of their heart, yet with fear and trembling, they are received to the cross of Christ, and to them is given the sacred ordinance of baptism by the authority of Christ, as the declaration of their faith in him as their only Savior, and as the figure of their salvation from sin and death, by him who died for them, and rose again, and is their resurrection and their life. It was of this salvation from all that can destroy that the jailer asked, and faithful Paul and Silas answered.

From this answer, which is by inspired revelation, let every penitent and fearing believer in Jesus, who trembles in view of the solemn greatness of salvation, of which he feels entirely unworthy, take courage and be comforted in faith and hope. For the beloved John says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." Paul says, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto

righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And blessed be the name of the Lord, this salvation is now, and for ever and ever. The blessed Savior himself says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Saved now, and saved world without end. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life." "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," said Jesus to Martha. Nothing less than this salvation did the jailer tremblingly ask for, nor Paul and Silas assure him of in the blessed words of truth: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

This is the glorious way and power and fruit of salvation, and it is to the glory of the Lord and his grace, and the rejoicing of the saved.

In the faith of Jesus,

D. BARTLEY

May 28, 1902

Rocky Mount, Va.

Dear Elder Spangler and all who love the good Lord;

I will try to write some to the *Signs of the Times*, hoping the good Lord will guide my pen.

I awoke this morning at 3 A.M. and did not go back to sleep. I was just thinking about what a good Lord we have.

I was born November 27, 1887. I will be 92 years old if I live until the 27th of November. My dear wife will be 91 years old this November 3. As you have heard me say at some of the Associations, we will have been married 70 years on

December 15, 1979. We would love for all to come to see us at that time, but my dear wife and family do not think she is able to go through with all of that. Our family consists of 8 children, 7 in-laws (we lost one of our son-in-laws in September, 1978), 17 grandchildren, (11 of them are married) and 15 great grandchildren.

We do want all of God's children to remember us in their prayers.

I fell and broke my hip on October 4, 1977, and had to stay in the hospital 16 days. My dear wife fell and broke her hip on March 10, 1979. We both have to walk with walkers, but we have a lady to do the work and wait on us. We do thank the good Lord that we can walk at all. We are so very thankful that we are up and around.

My dear wife joined the church the second Saturday in June, 1912. My Papa baptized her the third Sunday in June, 1912. I joined the church on September 14, 1907, and Papa baptized me on Sunday September 19, 1907. Many times I felt to be a poor lost sinner and have to go down on my knees and beg the good Lord to have mercy on me, a poor sinner, but on that day, that appointed day, He gave me a Hope.

It was Monday after the fourth Sunday in August, 1907. I was in the field at work, and I had felt all the morning that I was going to die and be forever lost. It got so heavy on me that I went down on my knees and laid my face upon the ground and begged the good Lord to have mercy on me, a poor sinner. I raised from there singing "Amazing Grace". I never could sing it like that before. I went to the house and thought I would tell Papa. I did not tell him that day, but that night I was upstairs laying on my bed and I heard the prettiest singing. I looked up and saw three angels over me, dressed in white. I was so happy. The next morning Papa told me at the breakfast table to go to the mill, and he would measure the wheat while I hitched up

the horses to the wagon. I could not go until I told him. I went up to him and told him I wanted him to pray for me. He shed tears and said, "I have tried to pray for you." That was the appointed time for me to tell him.

I dreamed that Papa and I were out in the water and the water was so pretty and clear. The day he baptized me it was just like that I had dreamed it was. When Papa raised me out of that water I was so happy.

In a few years I felt a burden on me to preach. Many times I got on my knees and told the good Lord I would rather die than to go and preach. One day I was in the field suckering tobacco and He made me willing to preach. I said, "If You will spare me until the second Saturday, I will go and do the best I can with the ability You give me." That morning my dear wife asked me if I was going to meeting. I told her I thought I would plow corn. I got my mule and went to the field and plowed a round or two. I got in such a fix that I was made to say, "Good Lord, if I am deceived, undeceive me, and if it is Your will for me to preach, make the burden heavier". I got in such a fix I felt like I would die if I didn't go. I went and when I got to the church Papa was in the stand waiting for me. He told me to come to the stand, pick a song, and introduce and preach. I did, and felt good. That was Saturday, July 8, 1922, 57 years last July.

Dear Brethren, sometimes I try to pray and feel like it doesn't get any higher than my head, and sometimes I feel like I do pray. The good Lord has to prepare our hearts to pray. Two years ago when I was in the hospital with my broken hip I begged the good Lord that if it be His will to restore me to health I would go back in the stand and preach His glorious Gospel. I thank Him. I have been in the stand many times since that time. I preached a dear brother's funeral a month from the day I came home from the hospital.

Brethren, I am not boasting at all. I

just thank my good Lord.

Brother Spangler, you and I have been speaking longer than any of the ministers in four Associations. I love them all.

I could write more but this is long and I will stop for now. This is to the Dear Ones. I beg all to pray for me and my dear wife and come to see us.

Your Brother in Hope of Eternal Life,
(Elder) Posey L. Plybon

Every person that sits under the sound of the gospel should ask himself these three questions: "Do I know any thing of the excellency of the gospel? Do I feel the power of it? And do I live according to the rules of it?"

Fanch

LETTER TO SISTER CATHERINE HOUCHINS

Dear Sister Catherine:

Hope this may find you well and being comforted of "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (Quoting from II Corinthians 1:3-5)

Sometimes I think I am partial to Paul's writings, however, when I am blessed to read the writings of Isaiah I ask myself could anything be more comforting. Isaiah 25:4, "For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

Therefore, I come to this conclusion, all scripture is comforting when we are prompted to read by the God of mercy, the God who gives us to understand a little here and a little there. Oh! this

great God, He is a God of mercy, a God of truth, a God who forgiveth our many sins. He has been so kind and so merciful to me, a poor dying sinner, saved by His mercy and grace, if saved at all.

I want the comradeship of a people who will not hold my sins against me. I think of you as one of those people, a people who "Serve in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter". (Rom. 6:7)

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isa. 40:1-2) Oh! the many scriptures that are so comforting, that comfort us when the Comforter comes.

When I was about to retire to bed last night, I thought-O! if I could but read a few comforting words wherewith I might be comforted. I picked up my Bible, opened it, not choosing any certain book. I opened to John 6, beginning with the 44th verse. When I had read to verse 48, "I am that bread of life", Sister Catherine, I felt I had eaten of that bread. I desired to read no further. Again, I felt assured the Comforter had come. However, this morning when preparing breakfast I suddenly felt so depressed. I need not attempt to describe that awful feeling, since I am sure you know something of that condition, too. Where was that sweet comfort I had enjoyed? Is not this one of the ways we are kept at His feet? I am so prone, when things are going well with me, to forget the God that brought me. Right now, I can say, "Yes, brought me from nature's darkness into His marvelous light".

May it please God to visit you, from time to time, comforting you with the assurance that He still cares.

Yours in bonds of love,
Gaye A. (Mrs. B.O.) Thompson

EDITORIAL

FIVE SMOOTH STONES

Text: I Samuel 17:38-50

Much has been said or written in regard to the five smooth stones David carried with him into battle against Goliath the Giant of Gath. Most views regarding these stones seem to be the result of a forced, or strained interpretation of what these stones represent. Nearly all expositors have come up with what is, to them at least, a satisfactory meaning of the five smooth stones, but they by no means give a reasonable explanation as to the number five itself.

One writer says these stones are the eternal decrees of God. (Why five?) Another believes they represent the attributes of God, while yet another sees them as the cardinal doctrines of our faith. (Again, why five?) Others have seen in the five smooth stones the graces of God's children while they live here in the world. One dear soul has even dared suggest the five smooth stones represent the four corners of the earth; the north, east, south, and west, with the fifth stone representing up! Still others believe they point to the five words Paul said he had rather speak with his understanding. (I Cor. 14:19)

While there may be a measure of truth in all these explanations, they surely do not tell us why David, nearly one thousand years before the birth of Christ, actually did, with purpose, "Choose him five smooth stones out of the brook". (I Sam. 17:40) He didn't select four, or six stones. He chose five, no more or less! "Well", someone opines, "five is the number of grace, and that is why David took the number of stones he did." If David's number was based on the spiritual meaning of Bible numbers then we should suppose he would rather have selected a number to represent death, or conquest, or judgment, or possibly the

number seven since it supposedly represents completeness. David's conquest over this uncircumcised Philistine and his army certainly was complete, at least for that day of battle.

We are compelled to believe, however, after reading this and corresponding passages very carefully that David had a specific purpose in selecting five stones. His choice was not casual or happenchance, but rather, based on knowledge and wisdom gleaned from his own personal experience and understanding in the current situation.

It will be noticed that David wouldn't go out to face this Philistine in Saul's armour, although it was offered to him. "He had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him." (I Sam. 17:39) The armour surely had been proved, time after time, by Saul. But it had not been proved by David. David could not, dare not, go into battle with armour which had been given another man to use. In like manner the Christian cannot enter into his battles with another man's experience (armour).

We see David then going out to meet this uncircumcised Philistine, the enemy of Israel, with armour that is much more suited to his experience. David has put off Saul's armour, and instead of it he carried with him (1) his staff, (2) five smooth stones that he chose from the brook, (3) a shepherd's bag to put them in, and (4) his sling. Carefully note the choosing of five, not more or less, but five smooth stones. With these and his staff, his bag, and sling, he had in effect, put on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6:11). He was now prepared to do battle with the enemy of Israel.

In this chapter the story of the battle is recorded. We find when David made his approach, the Philistine said, "Am I a dog, that thou cometh to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." (I Sam. 17:43) You see how

the enemy ridiculed and spoke lightly of the armour of David. Little did he know that he soon would bitterly discover how complete David's armour was. Fearless of God, and despising the young shepherd boy, Goliath boasts further, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." (V. 44)

They draw closer on the field of battle and David cries out that he comes to Goliath, "In the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou has defied." (V. 45) "And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." (V. 47) How glorious to see that David defends the Name of our God and the cause of Israel. He recognizes that swords and spears are not suitable armour for the children of the Heavenly King, for the battle is the Lord's. What wonderful truth, that even now, our battles are not to be fought with sword and spear, but in the Name of the Lord. "And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth." (Verses 48, 49) And we read then in Verse 50 that David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone. How comforting to know that the battle really was the Lord's and He did give David and all Israel the victory that day.

"When first my soul enlisted
My Saviour's foes to fight,
Mistaken friends insisted
I was not arm'd aright.
So Saul advised David,
He certainly would fail,
Nor could his life be saved,
With a coat of mail.

But David, though he yielded
To put the armour on,

Soon found he could not wield it,
And ventur'd forth with none.
With only sling and pebble,
He fought the fight of faith;
The weapons seem'd but feeble,
Yet prov'd Goliath's death.

John Newton

One may wonder at this point what has been so often asked, "Why, then, did David take five smooth stones when he only needed one?" Let the Bible answer all our questions concerning the Bible, for surely it is a thorough furnisher. In turning to II Samuel 21, we see there what should be conclusive evidence that David would not have carried the whole armour of God into battle had he carried only one, or possibly two stones with him. "Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." (Verse 15, 16, 17) Notice here that Ishbi-benob was a son of the giant and he has now been slain. Then again we see that Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, who also was one of the sons of the giant. (V. 18) and then again we find that Elhanan, a Beth-lehemite, slew another brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. (V. 19) I Chronicles 20:5 gives the name of this brother as Lahmi. Then again there was another battle in Gath, and there was another brother of Goliath, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot and the scripture says he also was born of the giant. (V. 20) "And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew

him." (V. 21) Finally, "These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants." (V. 22)

Listed below are the sons of the giant and who they were slain by:

SONS OF THE GIANT	SLAIN BY
1. Goliath	David
2. Ishbi-benob	Abishai
3. Saph	Sibbechai
4. Lahmi	Elhanan
5. Unnamed brother	Jonathan

How clear this should be to us. David, in going to battle against Goliath, the son of the giant, beyond question knew that he had four brothers; so it seems plain enough he took a stone for each one of them. David went into the battle to smite Goliath and there was a good possibility that another giant, one of his brothers, would step forward and take up the battle. Should he slay him then another, and another until David had killed the five. You see the importance then of carrying the whole armour of God. David needed five stones for there were five potential enemies to be destroyed. David needed only the one stone on that day, but we see that another day (II Samuel 21:15-22) the other giants would be met and destroyed. There were five stones for five giants although only one stone was used on one giant. The point to be stressed is this: when the children of the Heavenly King prepare themselves to go to battle and put on their armour it is necessary for them to put on the whole armour of God. In the case of David the whole armour would not be one, two, three, four, or even six stones; but rather five. Five stones for five giants! David could not know if he would need to slay one or all at that time, but he was prepared.

Let us conclude this subject with Paul's instruction from Ephesians, Chapter 6: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (V. 11) In the case of David, as we have pointed

out, the whole armour would include five stones. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers (note rulers, plural) of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (V. 12) Observe that it is a wrestling, and in going into this battle these principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness are in high places, as formidable giants rising up against us. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (V. 13) The whole armour of God! It is worthy of consideration that we take notice of the expression, "armour of God". We dare not use Saul's armour, nor any other's armour, but only God's. Even then we must beware that it is the whole armour, not just part of the armour. Think not that we may take three or four stones with us, but learn rather we have need of all five, as did David. In Verses 14 thru 18 the Apostle listed those things comprising our whole armour of God; truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And then too, he exhorts us to praying and watching. Could we believe we could be properly equipped for our battles if we left off the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And then too, he exhorts us to praying and watching. Could we believe we could be properly equipped for our battles if we left off the breastplate of righteousness, or possibly enter the battle without the shield of faith? Would we dare face our enemies without the helmet of Salvation? How naked would we be without the sword of the Spirit. The battle would be impossible. Nay, brethren, we seem all these things that we must have the whole armour of God. We must have the truth; we must have righteousness, we

must have the gospel, we must have faith, we must have the helmet of salvation, and so on.

In all of this we hope we have shown that when David went into battle, the whole armour of God consisted of his staff, his shepherd's bag, his sling, and five smooth stones, for there were five formidable enemies. Even so, our warfare requires us to put on the whole armour (Christ) of God, or we will not be equipped to meet the enemy. May the Lord bless us to consider these things.

(Elder) James F. Poole

Carey, N.C.

Dear Elder Williams,

I am very sorry to be so late with my renewal check. I will make no excuses. I am grateful for the continued issues although I owed for them. I try to read each new issue through as fast as I can. Even though I do not belong to any church I sincerely believe exactly as the paper reads. Both my parents and my grandparents on both sides of my family were Primitive Baptists. Please forgive me for being late with my payment.

Sincerely,
G. M. Lackey

All the altars of the law were but so many steps to the cross of the gospel.

Dyer

Criticism is not without its benefits to the Elect of God. Among the many "woes" our Lord pronounced during His ministry this one in particular is fearful to those with a tender conscience, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you". (Luke 6:26)

The Editors of the *Signs* have been the target for some rather strong and critical remarks of late. To the authors of these remarks we feel indebted, for by making the same, they have surely relieved us of any dread of the above mentioned "Woe". Thank you.

Editors

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

ISHMAEL AND ISAAC

(Concluded from last number)

Dear Brethren Beebe:—Will you be so kind as to give your views on Genesis 17:20, 21? Your compliance with this request will oblige a poor old sinner, whose only hope for salvation is in the grace of God which was given in Christ Jesus from the foundation of the world, for all the elect of God. Your brother in hope of eternal life, although often troubled by doubts,

W. L. McPherson

Hood Co., Texas, March, 1890

REPLY

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee; Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."—Gen. 17:20, 21.

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee." Notwithstanding the fact that his son of the bondwoman was cast out from the house of Abraham by the commandment of God, the prayer of Abraham was that he might live before God, and this prayer was accepted of God. In the literal circumstance it appears that the desire of Abraham was only a natural regard for his son who was born after the flesh. But the purpose of God was that this fleshly son should live as the typical representative of that legal covenant which should be given four hundred years afterward from mount Sinai. As Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and is in bondage with her children, so Ishmael is the embodiment of all those children of Abraham who look to their own works for acceptance before God. While these do not enjoy the liberty of the free born children of promise, they are yet subjects of the blessing of God. In their bondage they are in no sense different from others who toil under the hard servitude of the

law, which cannot give life. Is there not a sense in which those saints who foolishly desire to be under the law, are represented by this son of the bondwoman? They certainly seem to be "entangled again with the yoke of bondage." If the churches of Galatia were thus entangled, may not the saints still be liable to fall into such bondage? These questions may be worthily of earnest consideration by the saints now, even though in the past it may be said of them "Ye did run well." "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—I Cor. 10:12. There was need that our Lord should say to his disciples, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation!" Are his disciples now beyond the need of this admonition?

In the allegory Ishmael is the son of Hagar, who is defined as being mount Sinai in Arabia, and answering to that literal Jerusalem which was in bondage with her children. The prayer of Abraham on his behalf was heard, and God blessed him with the promise of temporal prosperity and fruitfulness; in this is figuratively expressed the truth which is plainly written by Paul, "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."—Rom. 10:5. This blessing is all that can be bestowed upon such as are held in bondage. Hence the inspired admonition to those who sought justification by their own obedience to the Sinai law, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law are fallen from grace."—Gal. 5:2-4. This is the only portion of Scripture in which anything is said of falling from grace; and it is manifest in this text that the meaning is not those addressed were so fallen for want of righteousness in themselves,

but that the justification by the law for which they were striving was only the approval of an obedient cation in the perfect holiness of their Redeemer, by which they were made free from the law. When the child of grace looks to his own works for justification, it is as if Isaac had attempted to perform the slavish service which was the duty of the bond servant, Ishmael, thereby seeking to obtain the inheritance of the blessing which was already secured to him by the appointment of God. Certainly such action on his part would have been falling very far below his standing as the divinely appointed heir of Abraham. The same is true of every saint who desires to be justified by his own works of obedience to the law of Moses.

In the giving of the legal covenant to the natural children of Israel God did bless them with temporal favors, such as were never bestowed upon any other people; but there was no promise of eternal life in that covenant. Its penalties for disobedience and its blessings for obedience were all limited to this natural life. This was the blessing of Ishmael.

“Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.” The literal fulfillment of this promise concerning Ishmael is recorded Gen. 25:13-15. There is evident significance in the number of the sons of Ishmael being the same as the number of the sons of Jacob; but it is not our purpose now to consider this coincidence further than to remark the fact that the appointment of God was not less positive in the one case than in the other. The blessing of God made Ishmael a great nation, although the covenant of the Mosiac law was not given to his children. In this fact it is manifest that the will of God is as positive in fixing the circumstances sur-

rounding the natural children of Adam as in establishing the condition of his own chosen people, who are in our text represented by the free born son of Isaac. In what is written both these sons of Abraham are evidently presented as embracing their respective generations, as their mothers represent the two covenants. In the casting out of Hagar and her son from the house of Abraham is typified the rejection of that carnal people to whom the first covenant was given; and as it was said that the son of the bond woman should not be heir with the son of the free woman, so there is no possibility that the servants under the bondage of the law of a carnal commandment shall ever attain to the inheritance of divine righteousness, which is the gift of electing love to the children of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus. In the antitype, the Jew had much advantage every way; “chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” They enjoyed the special protection and favor of God in his temporal providence, and had his law written upon tables of stone, in observing which they were assured of all earthly blessings. No enemies could oppress them while they observed the statutes which God had given them, and they were never to suffer from blighted crops or unfavorable seasons so long as they were obedient to the conditions enjoined upon them in that covenant. These peculiar marks of the blessing of God exalted them above all the nations of the earth as the people whom God had chosen from among the inhabitants of the world. All this is presented in the blessing of Ishmael; but it did not include any promise beyond what was afforded by this earthly existence.

“But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.” Three prominent points of the doctrine of God our Savior are clearly shown in this declaration of the Lord to Abraham. First, the unchanging purpose of God

controlling all events, whether to man they appear to be good or evil. Second, the special and personal election of the subjects of divine grace without reference to any merit in themselves. Third, the time for the manifestation of the purpose of God is so set by his own appointment that it can neither be delayed nor hastened by any efforts of created beings. These essential principles of the gospel enter into the personal experience of every sinner who has received the hope of salvation from sin through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is therefore profitable to the saints to understand the truth of the doctrine in these particulars, since their assurance of hope in Christ is built upon these immutable principles.

Nothing but the sovereign purpose of God could have determined the selection of Abram from among the idolatrous Chaldeans, when God called him out of his native land, and gave him the promise that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. This purpose must have been immutable, or there could have been no certainty that it should be accomplished. Finite intelligence can assign no reason why Abram was thus called instead of Lot, or any other man. Neither is there any intimation that Abram was consulted in the matter. God did not submit to him an offer conditioned upon his acceptance; nor did he issue a general call to all the idolatrous Chaldeans proposing to bless such of them as should accept his proposal. Abram had no more power to resist the voice of God in calling him, than did the dead Lazarus to refuse to come forth at the command of our Lord Jesus. As when God said, "Let there be light!" his word was irresistible, so when he called Abram the same omnipotence secured the accomplishment of his will. Neither men nor devils could prevent obedience to his word. The iniquity of the Amorites could not be full until the time appointed of God; nor could it fail to be full when that set time

had been fulfilled. In the purpose of God this was a firmly established as was the favor which was bestowed upon Abram.

In the establishment of his covenant (that is, the counsel of his will) with Isaac, the sovereign choice of God is manifested. Notwithstanding the evident desire of Abraham that the promise of God might be fulfilled through Ishmael, and the impossibility according to nature which forbade the birth of Isaac, the choice of God secured its own fulfillment at the time which God had set. Reason cannot explain why it was needful that Isaac should be born contrary to the laws of nature; but by faith it is revealed that in this peculiarity there is a plain declaration not only of the miraculous manifestation of the son of God in the flesh, but also a typical revelation of the spiritual birth of the whole family of them that believe on the name of Jesus, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is settled beyond the possibility of failure by the election of grace; and sin, death and hell are powerless to prevent its development in the fullness of the time which God has set.

Until this set time, there is nothing to indicate that the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction differ in any respect from the vessels of mercy, which God had afore prepared unto glory. Manasseh may cause innocent blood to flow in the streets of Jerusalem, and Saul may persecute the saints even to strange cities; but when the set time is come they must call upon his name in prayer, and the Lord will hear them in his infinite mercy. This next year in which Isaac is manifested is the year of the redeemed of the Lord, and it is in this year only that the Lord appears in his glory in building again his spiritual Jerusalem. The covenant of the grace of God is established with our spiritual Isaac, who is the antitypical Seed, even Jesus Christ, in whom alone is revealed the

salvation of his people from their sins. This glorious consolation of Israel does not appear under the night of the legal dispensation. Jesus must close that legal year by being made a curse for his people, before he is revealed as the triumphant Savior of his chosen Israel from their sins, in which they were lost. This is the everlasting covenant which God has established with our spiritual Isaac, in which he is revealed as the Life of every member of his body, which is cleansed from all sin by the one offering of himself without spot to God. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son (the true Isaac), made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." This covenant includes no provisions for Ishmael; it is the heritage exclusively of the children of the promise of God, which is received only through the faith of the Son of God. It is not given conditionally, but confirmed by the oath and promise of God that cannot lie; therefore it affords strong consolation to them who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope which is set before us, which is sure and steadfast, and enters into that within the veil, whither our Isaac is already entered for us. In him alone is all our salvation, and all our desire. To him be glory evermore. Amen.

(From Signs of the Times Dec., 1890)

Quitman, Mississippi

Dear Editors,

Please find enclosed a renewal for myself and a new subscription for a precious believer in God's Sovereign Grace who is unfamiliar with Predestinarian Old School Baptists other than through our private correspondence. Please begin, if possible, the new subscription with this present (November) issue.

This issue is very much in need in this day of spiritual darkness, carnal

security, and compromise.

I trust the Lord will continue to bless you in this gracious labor of love and truth. The *Signs* is the oldest Baptist publication in America holding to its original Prospectus. Many come, many go, and all seem to compromise the truth of free and Sovereign Grace. But the *Signs* has been well blessed to be so spared.

Yours in hope,
Stanley C. Phillips

Chula Vista, CA 92011

Dear Editors and Elders,

Please find enclosed my check in the amount of \$20.00 to renew my two-year subscription to the *Signs of the Times*, and the balance to use as you may see fit.

I enjoy reading your publication very much. It is such a joy to me when I can hear or read our Lord's truth proclaimed.

The January, 1979 issue; specifically the late Elder Beebe's Editorial, "Absolute Predestination of All Things" sets forth truths as I see and believe; for which God is given all the praises.

May God continue to bless you in your endeavors in preparing this "food" for His people.

A sister in hope,
Marjorie Harris

OBITUARIES

VERNA QUESENBERRY DALTON

Sister Verna was born on June 21, 1932 and passed away October 18, 1979 making her stay on earth 48 years, 4 months, and 3 days.

Funeral services were held at Maberry Chapel at 2:00 P.M., Sunday, October 21, 1979 by Elder Hale Terry, with interment in Sumpter Cemetery in Floyd County, Virginia.

She is survived by her husband Harry C. Dalton, one sister, Mrs. Elmer Cox, two brothers, Eugene Quesenberry and Fred Quesenberry, step-mother, Mrs. Eula Belle Martin.

Sister Verna united with the Union Church, Sunday, February 25, 1978 and was baptized, Sunday, April 23, 1978.

We have already missed Sister Verna at Union Church.

I Thessalonians 4:13, 14

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

May God comfort all who mourn their loss.

Written by request of Union Church.

A Sister in hope,
Lessie Cox

SISTER MARY JANE PATTERSON

The Lord saw fit to remove from our midst one of our beloved sisters, Mary Jane Patterson.

Sister Patterson was born December 19, 1888, in the Dry Fork community, but she spent most of her life in Danville, Virginia. She passed away in the Roman Eagle Memorial Home on September 3, 1979, making her stay on earth nearly 92 years. We trust our loss is her eternal gain.

Sister Mary Jane was the daughter of Robert Hartwell Herndon and Cora Alice Collins Herndon. She enjoyed a large family of 15 brothers and sisters. Only 3 brothers and 3 sisters survive, namely: R. Clifford and Marvin Harold of Danville, and Gilbert P. of Brandon, Fla., and Mrs. Noni Patterson of Williamsburg, Va., Mrs. Blanch Saunders of Staunton, Va., and Mrs. Wyrtle Moon, North Woodbury, Danville, Va.

Sister Mary Jane was married to James "Jim" Patterson, who died in 1941, leaving her with three sons, Julian, James, and Keith Patterson of Danville, and one daughter, Mrs. Merwin P. Smith, of Baltimore, Md. She also left 9 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Sister Patterson worked hard and long hours to care for her children and they all respected and loved her for it, as did all who knew her. She always carried a smile.

She joined the Danville Primitive Baptist Church at the age of 14, and she was a faithful member until sickness overtook her. She believed in salvation by grace.

Her funeral was conducted at Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Home by Elders H. W. Wray and D. V. Spangler. She was laid to rest in Highland Burial Park to await the second coming of the Lord.

Written at the request of the Danville Church. Resolved that one copy of this obituary be retained by the Church, one copy sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, and one copy sent to the family.

Written by Mrs. Bernice W. Marshall.

Elder H. W. Wray, Moderator
R. T. Holley, Church Clerk

MABLE CLARA AKERS SCHLEISMAYER

Mrs. Mable Clara Akers Schleismayer was born in Olympia, Washington to Charles and Florence Akers on January 10, 1888, and died October 25, 1979, making her stay here on earth 91 years, 9 months, and 15 days. She came with her family to the Yakima Valley area and in 1896 they settled in the Naches, Washington area. She lived there until her marriage to her late husband, Andrew L. Schleismayer in 1907. Following their marriage they moved to California where they lived for five years, returning to Yakima in 1912.

She offered herself for membership to the church and was received and baptized by Elder Jefferson on April 11, 1947. Her membership was in the Pleasant Grove Church of Naches, Washington.

She was the mother of two children; one son, Conrad Schleismayer, Yakima, Wash., and one daughter, Mrs. Lauora Davis, of Salem, Oregon; 6 grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren, and 6 great great grandchildren. She also leaves one sister, Mrs. Nora Miller, of Bathell, Washington.

She was a faithful member and attended the meetings whenever she was able to do so. She was laid to rest in the Terrace Heights Memorial Park to await the voice of the Saviour when He shall call His children from the grave. Elder Ben F. Preston ably conducted the services, speaking comfortingly to his hearers.

Written by request.

Marguerite Simpson

SISTER ANNER Langley

On Tuesday, December 19, 1978, Pittman Grove Primitive Baptist Church lost a dear devoted member, Sister Anner Langley. God saw fit to call her home after blessing her with 97 years in this present world.

Sister Langley was born January 7, 1881 in Wayne County, N.C. to W. H. and Sallie Barnes. On December 13, 1904 she was married to Joseph Langley. He departed from this world on November 14, 1956. After his death she lived with her loving daughter, Ella, who cared for her until her death.

Sister Anner died in Wilson Memorial Hospital, Wilson, N.C. after a short period of serious illness. She is survived by one daughter, Ella Langley Evans of Kenly; one half-sister, Nancy Tedder of Lucama; 6 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren and 6 great-great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Grizzard Funeral Home Chapel in Kenly, N.C. with Elder Harvey Holland and Elder Curtis Rains officiating. Burial was in the Bennett Barnes Cemetery in Wayne County.

She joined Pittman Grove Church August 7, 1933. She believed in salvation by grace and enjoyed the fellowship she shared with the brethren. She was a loyal member and attended church regularly until her last few years when her health failed. The family, the church, and her friends will miss her deeply, for she was an inspiration to all that knew her. We know that her labor in this world is over and feel that she is resting eternally with God.

Written by request,
Asst. Clerk, Randolph Barnes

FANNIE LEE BURCH WARREN

How sweet and precious are the memories of our dearly beloved sister, Fannie Lee Burch Warren, whom it has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from our midst. May we be given to bow in humble submission to His holy and righteous will.

Sister Fannie Lee was born August 12, 1893 to Gaston D. and Martha Evans Burch and died Saturday afternoon, July 21, 1979 at Alamance County Hospital. She was nearing her 86th birthday. She was married to L. W. Warren and to this union were born three sons and four daughters. Her husband

and two daughters preceded her in death. Her survivors include two daughters, Mrs. Ruth Richmond of Mebane and Mrs. Sarah Almond of Richmond, Va., three sons, W. G. (Bill) Warren and James T. (Jimmy) Warren both of Mebane and Donald G. Warren of Spruce Pine; 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

She was received into the fellowship of Mebane Primitive Baptist Church, August 8, 1937 and baptized by her pastor, Elder T. Floyd Adams. The great love she manifested in her faithfulness to the church, as a member, and her concern for the welfare of the church, the warmth of her handclasp and sweet smile still lingers in our memory. She visited other churches and associations far and near, when she had the opportunity, the last one being the Lower Country Line Association. Her endurance and determination has strengthened others and especially me. Her walk in life was truly an example. She bore a good name, ever feeling her unworthiness.

After her husband's death in 1942, she was cafeteria manager of Alamance County Schools for many years.

Her funeral was conducted by her beloved pastor, Elder Burch Wray, at Mebane Primitive Baptist Church. Her body was laid to rest by her husband in Oakwood Cemetery. The many memorials and beautiful floral arrangements showed the esteem in which she was held in the hearts of her family and friends.

We are truly thankful, I hope, for the privilege of having known and loved one whom we held in such high esteem. We feel that her soul and spirit are now resting in the Paradise of God, there to await the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalms 116:15.

Be it resolved that a copy be placed on our church record; a copy be sent to her family; and a copy sent to Zion's Landmark for publication.

Done by order of Mebane Primitive Baptist Church, in conference, November 3, 1979.

Written in love and humbleness by one who loved her dearly.

Bessie Gilliam
Elder Burch Wray, Moderator
Victor Walters, Clerk

Signs of the Times

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**IT IS TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 4/80
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

SEVEN WOMEN

"And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach". (Isa. 4:1)

As I traveled to a meeting the second Sunday in September I passed by many "beautiful women" on my way. But the one that I was looking for was a little farther on down the road, meaning the Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and it was not these seven women. Now, if these seven women had no reproach then why did they desire to be called by this man's name? Now it seems to me like these seven women were of something other than the true church of the most high God or they would not have desired to be called by the other man's name. Now it seems that they wanted to live their own ways of life or as some would say, have their own self-righteousness, than the righteousness of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is why they wanted to be called by this man's name. They wanted to wear his name so they could pass as righteous women. They have gone their way, they have built their own buildings and they have furnished them with all of the finery that they could bill their people with, and all kind of things to try to get the world to come and walk with them. They are out to please the world, and not the children of God. I have heard it said that Old Baptists have nothing to offer, no kind of entertainment to intice people to go to their meetings. I don't know what you

think, but to me the Old Baptist have more to offer than all seven women have to offer. I drove two hours to get to see one "woman" and to hear the truth, and then drove two hours back home.

Now I would like to write a portion of my experience in connection with the above statement. When I was about seventeen or eighteen years of age, my burdens got so heavy that I did not feel like I could bear them much longer. At this time I was visiting with these "seven women" trying to work out my own salvation. It wasn't long before I ran out of tools and timber so I had to look somewhere else for comfort if I was to have any. At that time I began to try to beg the good Lord to show me the Church that was right, and if there were none that was right, to show me the one that was nearest to being right. I went on this way for a few weeks, and as I lay on my bed early one night, and it seemed before I had fallen to sleep there came something over me and I was shown the inside of a church building and was shown the people in it at that time. The walls and ceiling were made of knotty pine lumber which at that time had not been painted. I was allowed to look over the building and also the people, both young and old, and to study them for some time. And then it changed from this to another scene. At this time it was the most beautiful thing that I have ever been blessed to see. The knotty pine walls and ceiling and the people that were there were all changed to the most beautiful white that my eyes have ever seen and while I was looking on these things something spoke to me in a small sweet voice and I looked around to see where the voice came from, and I saw what appeared to be the very Christ, and then I felt a strong right hand on my shoulder and it felt so strong that it could crush me to nothing and I was allowed to see a portion of a large left hand and an arm up to the elbow and I looked for more but I was not allowed to see any more at that time. The left hand

pointed out toward the pulpit where my late uncle, Elder Walter C. Edwards, was standing and then my name was called by the most kind and tender and soft voice that I have ever heard, and said, "Clyde, there is your place". I was allowed to look on this for some time and all the people there from infants on up were all the same size and all dressed alike in pure white, and all looked just alike.

Now I don't think the "seven women" have anything like this to offer to their friends. Then I went back to the first scene where I was allowed to look and study it again and at this time I knew everybody that was there.

Now this sounds like the one "woman" which I believe Christ bled and died for and I believe this woman is the example of the church. The seven women, to me, represent the Arminian world which has but little to offer to the afflicted and poor children of God. I feel to be the least of these if one at all.

No wonder the seven women desired to carry this Man's name to take away their reproach. I feel like Jesus has taken away the reproach of His church, and then we are enabled to walk in His paths of His righteousness and I believe this is the reason that I am still standing where I am today.

Now Jesus was not born of the "seven women", but He was born of the "woman," and in like manner, when we are changed from nature's darkness unto His marvelous light, then we are born of Christ, and Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and not of the seven women. These seven women wanted the man made in their ways. They wanted to hold to the Law and not Christ's ways. We read where He bowed His head and said, "It is finished" and by this He meant that He had put all things in order and there was not anything left undone. He fulfilled all of the Law and set up a new day, and I believe this was the day of His power and not the ways of the seven women. And His way was the

days of the Apostles and the days of the gospel of which He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He is the One that we are looking for as our help and all of our needs in this world and the world to come.

Please look over me for my poor writing and my mistakes. May the good Lord bless and keep every one of you and keep the *Signs of the Times* coming.

From your afflicted and poor brother in Christ, I hope, from the one that loves the truth if I know anything about what the truth is. Write me, and come to see me.

(Elder) Clyde Caudle

A POEM

NO. 1

Have you ever heard the story?
In the Bible it is told.
How the blessed King of Glory
Came to earth in days of old.

How He came to save His people
From their sins, the story goes;
And to ransom His disciples
From the world and all its woes.

Have you ever heard the story?
Of the sufferings of Christ
And the glory that should follow
When our Lord was sacrificed.

With His garments dyed and gory
When He bowed His head and died;
Have you ever heard the story?
Of a Saviour crucified.

Have you ever heard the story?
How they laid Him in the tomb
How He burst death's bars asunder
And ascended from its gloom.

Have you ever heard the story?
Of the victory He won
As He rose from earth to glory
When His mission here was done.

Have you ever heard the story?
Of a Saviour and His love
Bringing many sons to glory
Have you ever felt that love?

Bringing many sons to glory
How I love that blessed theme.
Have you ever heard the story?
Praise, oh, praise His holy Name.

RESPONSE

NO. 2

Yes, I think I heard the story
When a lad of tender years
When it pleased the Lord of glory
To wipe away my tears.

And I think I heard the angel
When he came to me by night
As I lay upon my pillow
And it filled me with delight.

For His form was robed in glory
And His words were few and sweet
As He told me the story
Of a Saviour good and great.

Lo, thy sins are all forgiven
Were the only words He said;
Then He flew away to Heaven
Yea, the blessed scene had fled.

But it was a wondrous story
Comprehended in that line
All the attributes of glory
Vouchsafed to me as mine.

And it filled my heart with wonder
And I never can forget
And I often sit and ponder
For it lingers with me yet.

More than forty years have drifted
Since that vision came to me;
But my burden has been lifted
And my spirit now is free.

For those blessed words were spoken
And the story sweetly told
And the tidings gently broken
To a sinner lost and cold.

I should love to tell the story
But alas I cannot speak
Yes, my pencil seems to falter
And I find I'm very weak.

It is not for man to utter
Words unspeakable as these
We can only seem to mutter
And our efforts cannot please.

But that angel robed in glory
He has borne the tiding sweet
He has told the blessed story
Which no mortal can repeat.

For that angel, it was Jesus;
He has paid His sacred vow
He has died to save His people
And is crowned with glory now.

Written by Elder L. L. Schenck
(Submitted by Elder W. A. Winfrey)

December 5, 1979

Dear Ones,

I enjoy the writings from the voices of the dead and also the voices of the living, and I did enjoy the "Voices of the Past" written by John McConnell dated February 11, 1918, on "Bible Reading" and how the name Old School Baptist may cease to be the name of our faith.

The reading of the December *Signs of the Times* has moved me to write concerning it, as we are admonished to contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints.

I asked for a home with the Primitive Baptist Church at Old Republican on February 19, 1939, and was received by the Pastor, Elder George Dyer, and also Elder John Peter Helms. I do not like the name Primitive Baptist faith denied.

As I travel around I notice the different names of churches; the Church of God, the Church of Christ, and many names of Baptists, First Baptist, Grace Baptist, Free Will Baptist. In John, Chapter 3 Jesus speaking to a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And then Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Christ Himself is the tree of life, the bread of life, and the door to the

Kingdom of God by the "wills and the shalls" of God. In John Chapter 5, is a very strengthening verse, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.", and then Verse 30, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Christ was not a Free Will.

I believe in the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by the wills and shalls of God, as being the way of the truth and the life, and the predestination and election of God, yet He is not the author of sin. He does not make people sin, or do wrong, but allows it for the purpose that His Name should be honored and glorified above every name in heaven and in earth.

We read in Ephesians 4:5, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism", and that is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the three in one.

"Father, what'er of earthly bliss
Thy Sovereign will denies,
Accepted at Thy Throne of Grace
Let this petition rise".

May I remain yours in the faith of God's elect.

Mattie Underwood

Box 48
Duanesburg, New York 12056
November 23, 1979

Dear Editors;

The word Sanctuary brings different mind pictures, thoughts or views to each individual. Faith and Hope are a personal matter and each believer has his or her own reason for their Hope. (1 Peter 3:15)

God in the annals of eternity, before time began, foreknew, elected and Predestinated a People. (Romans 8). He knew the names of each one of His elect and the travels and pitfalls they would have in their life. God laid out the way.

I feel our only Sanctuary is in the arms and bosom of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. God with his foreknowledge provided Salvation through the death of his Son.

Christ, in the Old Testament is concealed, but revealed in the New. It says in Matthew chapter 1 verse 1. "The book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham".

There were many generations from Adam down through the Old Testament, but only one in the New, "The Generation of Jesus Christ".

Jesus, in the Old Testament is revealed by types and shadows. All the offerings and formalities have a definite significance in representing or proclaiming our salvation and sanctuary in Jesus. All the Prophets and others like Joseph, David, Daniel typify Jesus if we are given the knowledge to observe it. (Mark 8:18-19).

I feel that, when God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock while He passed by and showed Moses his hinder parts, Jesus was that Rock. The Rock of our Salvation. The 2nd chapter of Luke verses 25-32 are very beautiful to me. It shows the revelation of Jesus to the old prophet Simeon "who were waiting for the consolation of Israel". Aren't all the elect of God, that Israel of God's election, waiting for that consolation (Sanctuary)?

Ecclesiastes 2nd chapter verses 1 and 2 read "To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted;"

Each of the elect of God was predestinated, of God, to be born at a certain time, be brought into the fold, by the new birth, and return to God at a certain time. It pleased God to have it this way.

Jesus expounded all this to his disciples and they recorded it, by inspiration, for the comfort of the elect in years to come. Jesus told of perilous

times to come when brother would rise up against brother and of tares in the wheat, but we are to let them remain with the wheat until the harvest when the tares will be removed and dealt with while the elect are taken into that wonderful Sanctuary of the Arms of Jesus. Jesus states in John 6:39 "and this is the Father's will which sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

Also John 17 is wonderful.

Enclosed is a check to renew my subscription to the *Signs* for two years.

In Hope,
Woodrow W. Bellinger

(The following is the closing parts of the Editor's (J. C. Philpot) annual address in the "Gospel Standard", 1848. Although we do not feel capable of writing after such a manner, and in such a gracious spirit, we can say, if not deceived, the writer has expressed our feelings in regard to our own circumstances. Editor)

As dying men, then, speaking to dying men, we would simply mention what blessings we would desire for our spiritual readers and correspondents and for ourselves; and if the Lord has given us eyes to see and hearts to desire those spiritual blessings with which he has blessed the church in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, there is every encouragement for us to plead with his gracious Majesty that He would bestow them upon us.

1. The fear of the Lord, as the beginning of wisdom, we may well place at the head of these spiritual blessings. What a treasure, (Isa. 33:6) what a fountain of life, (Prov. 14:27) what a safeguard from evil, (Prov. 16:6) what a wise and faithful bosom-counsellor should we find this precious fruit of the Spirit through the year! Blessed with this grace in living exercise, we need fear no evil, for it must be "well with them that fear God". (Eccl. 8:12)

2. Living faith, drawn forth by the blessed Spirit, upon the Lord of life and glory, is another blessing which we would desire to be abundantly favoured with. When such blessings are attached to and accompany living faith, when it has such a transforming purifying, world-subduing, sin-vanquishing, lust-mortifying power, well may we sigh after its exercise and increase! And if by being daily plagued with the workings of infidelity and unbelief, and sometimes favoured with a little faith in exercise, we have experimentally learned the amazing contrast, we shall certainly desire to be increasingly favoured with that "gift of God" whereby Jesus becomes dear, near, and precious to the soul.

3. Love to the Lord and his dear people shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost-heaven's crowning gift--that divine grace, without which all attainments are valueless, (I Cor. 13)--what a blessing is this! Love to God! what balm would this be against all the trials, sufferings, and afflictions which we may be called upon to endure during the coming year! The love of the brethren! how many crooked things would it straighten, how many divisions would it remove!

4. A broken and contrite spirit,--that best, that acceptable sacrifice, (Psa. 51:17) we cannot but in our right mind desire. The means indeed whereby that brokenness and contrition are produced, the series of trials and afflictions which may be required to bring it forth, our coward flesh may well shrink from. And yet, when we see and feel the beauty and blessedness of such a frame, what a weanedness it produces from all earthly things, and what union and communion are realized through it with the Man of Sorrows, we are desirous to be favoured with it at almost any cost.

5. Sincerity and simplicity towards God,--that we may be able to lay our hearts bare before him, and say, "Thou God seest me",--how desirable it is in all

our dealings Godward, in all our dealings manward, and in all our dealings selfward, to have this grace in living exercise! Carrying, as we do, such a deceitful heart in our bosom, must we not, shall we not, inevitably go astray unless blessed with this divine grace?

Amidst all the turnings and windings of our treacherous heart, is not this conviction still deeply and firmly engraved within, that we cannot deceive nor escape the eye of Omnipotence? And yet, left to ourselves, how insincere do we become to God, to man, and to self! God, of his infinite mercy, make and keep us sincere and simple before him, for if wrong there, we are wrong everywhere.

6. A spirit of prayer and supplication poured out upon us, whereby we shall besiege, as it were, the throne of grace night and day,--that effectual fervent prayer which availeth much,--that almost unceasing cry which dwelt in the bosom and came from the lips of Hannah, Hezekiah, David, and the saints of old--that distinguishing feature of the elect, (Luke 18:7)--O may this grace of the Spirit be poured out upon us, and abide in us throughout the year! And in our various trials and afflictions, instead of fleeing to man and leaning upon an arm of flesh, may we look to and lean wholly on the Lord.

7. Patience and resignation under all trials and afflictions--that "meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price", (I Pet. 3:4)--that submission of soul to the righteous dealings of the Lord--that kissing of the rod--that moulding of the will in holy conformity to the will of God--that tender pliancy to the hands of the heavenly Potter--is not this a grace to be coveted more than house or lands, than health and strength, than all the smiles of men? If indulged with this frame, things cannot go wrong with us. Afflictions become blessings, temptations lose their keen edge, and trials are endured as a part of our

allotted portion.

8. A simple, childlike, confiding trust in God of all our mercies, the Object of all our desires, and the Source of all consolations--how precious, how desirable a blessing! Instead of trembling at every leaf, of anxiously fearing approaching trials, of looking droopingly forward to the next day's dawn lest the morn should bring forth some new trial, blessed with this grace, we should trust and not be afraid, we should not be afraid of any evil tidings, (Psa. 112:7) nor add to the real sufferings of the day the imaginary sufferings of the morrow.

9. Communion with the sacred Three-in-One--that only source of all fruitfulness, (John 15:4, 5) that sure pledge of heaven, that antepast and foretaste of rest, peace, and bliss in the bosom of God to all eternity--to be favoured from time to time with a measure of this choice blessing, may well be the object of our earnest desire. To see light in God's light, to feel life flowing into our soul out of the fulness of Jesus, to be of one mind, heart, will, and spirit with the Lamb of God, and thus realize and prove an eternal, spiritual, and inseparable union with him; how this would raise us up above this vain world, fill our souls with humility and love, subdue the unbelief and rebelliousness of our carnal mind, and make us and manifest us Christians indeed!

10. Fruitfulness in every good word and work--that our religion may not be merely on our lips, but be carried out in our life; that we may shine as lights in the world, and make it manifest that God himself is the Author of our faith and that we have something more than a name to live, must in our right mind be earnestly desired by us. Alas, alas! for our barrenness and unfruitfulness, so that often we seem rather to vegetate than live a life of faith, rather to creep and crawl than run the way of God's commandments with an enlarged heart, rather to be cumber-grounds that tress of righteousness which the Lord hath

planted. How much we need the Lord to work in us, not only to will, but also to do, of his good pleasure!

Were these blessings more earnestly and intensely desired by us, were we enabled more constantly, believably, and perseveringly to plead with the Lord for them, and above all, were they bestowed upon us by his bounteous hand, how many snares should we find broken, evils seen and departed from, and that spiritual-mindedness felt which is life and peace! It would make fruitful editors, fruitful correspondents, and fruitful readers.

But we pause; not because our list of desired and desirable blessings is exhausted, but that we may not occupy too much space. We can make no promises what we shall do, or what we shall be in the coming year; but we hope we shall, with increases and increasing sense of our own weakness, and increased and increasing desire for the Lord's strength to be made perfect in that weakness, continue to contend for the truth as it is in Jesus, so far as we are acquainted with it; and may the God of all grace condescend to use our monthly messenger, and bless its pages to his own glory and the church's good.

The Editors
(J. C. Philpot - 1848)

Providence, N.C.

Dear Ones,

Way up on top of a mountain sat a little church called Salem, in the Smith River Association. It was here the Association convened. My husband and I were blessed to attend the entire meeting. You could just feel the sweet love and fellowship for each other that existed throughout the meeting.

As we rode along to the services from the home of the Parsons', where we were so royally taken care of, you could see the fields of grain that stood so erect as if in praise to God, and the blue pine trees that covered the hillsides made it a

setting of beauty. The church was in a beautiful setting, too, with a black top road all around it, and the large well-kept cemetery in the front of it.

There were little streams of water with cattle grazing along side them. We thought it was the most beautiful scenery we had ever seen.

The preaching was so wonderful and sweet. Each Elder came in his own manner yet bringing words of spiritual food, admonition, wisdom, doctrine, and God's love and mercy for us.

Back at the Parsons' home there was singing at night. We never enjoyed an Association more.

A Sister I hope,
Ema Sartin

Kernersville, N.C.

Dear Editors,

I would like to see this letter published in the *Signs of the Times*.

FALLING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH
AS IT IS IN CHRIST JESUS

We have drifted away from what the Apostles taught and preached in their day, and what our forefathers contended for. Some of the Primitive Baptist have left their first love and have taken up with the world and worldly things to please man, and this has caused divisions and separated lovely Brethren. This is a sad situation. If we had the love of God in our hearts we would strive for that which causes peace, love and fellowship. Christ said for His little children to love one another. He also said "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John 2:15) The pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. There is no fear in love. "Perfect love casteth out fear". "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness". Thanks be unto God that we still have a few Elders who are contending for the faith that was

once delivered to the saints, preaching that salvation is by the grace of God and not of man. May God bless us to continue on in the good old way and have everything in common, and hold fast to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, ever looking to Him in the time of need.

Yours in Bonds of Love,
Gilmer L. Williard

Written by a little brother in Christ I hope. I desire your prayers for I feel the need of them so much.

FROM AN OLD SIGNS

Washington, D.C.
December 29, 1868

My Dear Elder Beebe,

Amid the cheer of the Christmas holidays we send you our greetings. We have been indulging in some reminiscences. Looking back over long years that are gone—happy years that marked the golden age of our country. A past age that will return no more. In the winter of 1856-1857, I found myself a wanderer in this wilderness called Washington City. I wondered if amid so much pomp and display there could be found any traces of that peculiar people, the "Old School Baptists". I found them on Sunday, the 8th day of March, 1857. Their little wooden house was in a place called the Island. It was as simple and unpretending as though it were a thousand miles in the back woods. There were present fifty-three white persons, and in the little gallery I counted twelve black people. The little assembly bore that air of simplicity, earnestness and frankness that I have always found to characterize them wherever I have been. The United States Senator that sat among them and prayed with them was scarcely distinguishable from the plainest artisan. There were no pews. The seats, in the popular phraseology, were all "free". It was a perfect republic. My astonishment was that being here in the Federal Capital made not the slightest difference in the doctrine,

worship, and manners of these people, from those of the same "faith and order", who meet in log school houses in the forests on the Wabash or Cross Timbers of Texas. There is no formality, no peculiar cut of coat, no cut of beard or other fashion to mark them; nothing but the most simple manners and the most frank hospitality. The minister was a young man of thirty-four. He had a friendly, honest face. His style was forcible, earnest, and effecting; a bold, strong advocacy of the doctrine of Grace; terse in statement and fruitful in illustration; identically the same doctrine I had always heard from this peculiar people. The minister was Elder W. J. Purington, since so well known among the Baptist people. The writer has known him in all his walks and ways of life for twelve years, and he never knew a more diligent, earnest, frank, conscientious man, a more pure and faithful minister of Christ. The peace, harmony and union of the little church of Shiloh, and the tender feeling with which they still regard him, attest the truth of these remarks. Long life and peace to him and his devoted wife.

The little church now has no pastor, but like waiting ones, they have a cheerful hope and confidence that all will be well. They have faith that the Lord will in due time send someone to break for them the bread of life. They have had many struggles through the dark days of the past, but such a people are not looking for worldly smiles or sunshine of temporal prosperity.

Just here allow me to mention that the Circular Letter addressed to the churches of the Salisbury Association, October 1867, embraces the most beautiful and sensible summary of Baptist principles that I have met with, and I advise those persons who take pains to criticise their views, to obtain a copy and compare it with the New Testament; especially would I invite those persons who make lords of their ministers, to read the letter on that

subject. And here let me thank that excellent pattern of the lady and true christian, Mrs. James Towles, for kindly placing this valuable paper in my hands.

Before closing these remarks about the Shiloh Church in Washington, the writer, an unworthy sinner, but believer in their cardinal doctrines, would be doing injustice not to mention their proverbial hospitality, and to himself personally, to acknowledge the amenities of the twelve years of neighborship; closing with the wish that they may soon have a preacher who may be able and willing to defend these truthful but "unfashionable" convictions."

And now a word as to this sect in general. While all the world is run mad after new things, and intoxicated with its notions of progress, and bringing about a millennium by man made missionaries, and a cloud of isms, they affect to ignore the existence of such a people as the Primitive Baptists. But they exist,--they began with John at Jordan, and will continue to the "end". A peculiar people, infallible in their faith, and identical with the "three thousand" that were "pricked in the heart" on the day of Pentecost--identical with the Waldenses of Piedmont, who bravely defied the papal persecution of more than three centuries, and identical with the Bunyans and Roger Williamses, and John Lelands of later times.

Notwithstanding the degeneracy of the age, they scorn to truckle to the blandishments of power; they sternly oppose a union in any way between the church and the State, and view with abhorrence the poison of political corruption. Vigorously maintaining the doctrine of Grace, they turn their backs upon all those religious systems which owe their origin to human traditions.

The mitred priest and the Mother of Harlots have been unable to seduce these people by their gaudy show and

"semblance of supernatural splendor". Images, crosses, relics, legends, traditions, confessions, indulgences, absolutions, clerical celibacy, orders, titles, tithes, vestments, monkery, masses, prayers for the dead, purgatory, invocation of saints and of the virgin Mary, holy water, festivals, processions, pilgrimages, vigils, lent, pretended miracles, exorcisms, consecrations, confirmations, extreme unction, canonization, infant sprinkling, and the many other things not found in the word of God, find no place in the worship and observances of these people. Their history is a history of persecutions, and today they are persecuted to some extent in free America, because in spiritual matters they believe God only.

The American world has closely followed the unbelieving Jews. Christ told the Jews he gave them no "sign", except the sign of the prophet Jonas. This simple and plain type of the resurrection-his baptism in Jordan, was ignored by them. Now, strange to say, it is the first point perverted and falsely construed by the arminians of this day, and more persevered in than any other one thing. The arminians having got rid of this sign, baptism, they feel at perfect liberty to construe any other great truth to suit themselves. The gate being opened the whole train of evils come in, and hence the victory of Satan-the great apostasy. Then the apostasy at the point of the sword, proposes to christianize the world! Such is the consequence of turning God's word into fables.

And now, my dear Elder, one word about your friendly paper, the *Signs of the Times*. I remember my emotions when more than thirty years ago my father brought a copy of it home. Timid and fearful I looked upon its title as portentious of some mysterious meaning, with which the immediate future was pregnant. How fearfully have those forebodings been fulfilled. A third of a century has rolled by with

remorseless speed, and has borne away on its waves many loved ones. Strange and startling events have been unfolded. Bloody pages of human history have been written. Revolutions have rocked the reeking globe. I read with emotion the solemn passages on the 246th page of your last volume, and feel their force. Through all these long and weary years of sorrow, the little paper has ceased not its warnings, ceased not to seek the homes and hearths of the believing waiting ones. Its columns richly laden with tales of the heart, known only to those who have felt the tender quickenings of the Second Adam; tales of suffering, of sorrow, of despair, of deliverance and grace, all unlike each other; yet as like each other as grapes from the same vine. I, too, a poor helpless, sorrowing sinner, have sought consolation in its letters, those simple analogies of the heart. I have there seen confessions of the helplessness of man and the frailty of human schemes; and there too have I seen strong men confess that Jesus is the Christ.

And now as the hour grows darker, as the Lord is making bare his arm, and nations are shaking, and men's hearts are failing them, still send me the little messenger. It will do me good. It will tell me what good men and women feel and fear. And that you may long live to dispense counsels of humility, forebearance, wisdom and doctrine, is the sincere wish and prayer of your unworthy writer.

W.

Washington, D.C.
January 23, 1869

My Dear Elder Beebe:--In the article published in the last, No. 2, current volume of the Signs, your printer has done me unintentional injustice.

He makes me say in the fifth paragraph, "A peculiar people, infallible in their faith," etc., and in the eight

paragraph, "The American world", etc.

In the latter I meant to say: "The Arminian world", etc. In the former, "A peculiar people inflexible in their faith", etc.

The word infallible is a very expressive word in its proper place, but a certain party have misused it so grossly that writers friendly to Baptist principles are generally disposed to avoid its use except when precisely applicable. That Christ and his salvation are infallible is most certainly true, but genuine believers in him, when speaking of themselves claim nothing but dependence, weakness, and frailty. By publishing this note for correction you will place me under renewed obligations. Your obliged friend,

W.

Kenly, N.C.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I am enclosing a check for \$15.00 to bring my subscription up to date and to extend it for one more year. Please use the balance to distribute the *Signs*. I am sorry I got behind in my subscription but I am glad that you kept sending us the good news. My wife and I enjoy reading the experiences of the children of God, and we hope we ourselves are one.

I remember how my mother, Peoria Barnes, (deceased two years) enjoyed reading its contents. Long before we could afford to subscribe to it she would borrow copies from other people to read the previous words that made her hope in God stronger. She had a firm belief in predestination and salvation by grace. Her faith was strong and she was always ready to defend her belief.

Mama was a member of Pittman Grove Church for 59 years. She enjoyed going to church and hearing her Pastor, Elder W. E. Turner, preach. She had a deep spiritual love for him and he was the last person she spoke of before she died. We miss Mama and can hardly

speak of her without crying, but we have precious memories to cling to. We thank God that she could leave this world without having to linger and suffer as some do.

As some of you already know, Elder Turner has been in poor health for over two years in a rest home, sometimes not knowing anyone. He has meant so much to the church, our family, and to so many others who were blessed to know him. It hurts us deeply to see him in this condition but surely God must have some divine purpose for this to be. Please remember him and his dear wife in your prayers.

I feel so unworthy to write to you but I desired to mention these two saints who have been such an inspiration in our lives. I hope that God will wonderfully bless you for your efforts in the *Signs*.

A Brother I Hope,
Randolph Barnes
Assistant Clerk, Pittman Grove Church

Bassett, Va.

Dear Editors,

We do hope and trust that you all and your dear loved ones are well and resting in the tender love and sweet mercy of our Great Heavenly King, who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Bless His sweet and holy Name. Oh that He in His blessed will would be pleased to bless us all to bow in His sweet Spirit and sincerely thank Him for His great love and tender mercy and watch care.

He has in His loving kindness blessed us to meet with His little ones from time to time in church too and we humbly hope to praise Him and taste of His great love. He has blessed this old sinner all these years to meet with His dear little ones, and Oh, dear Editors, it has been a sweet loving comfort to me, for I don't feel worthy of the least of His tender watch care. But Dear Ones, I long that it may be His holy will to keep me at His blessed feet begging Him for His tender love and mercy and keep me that

I may never hurt His little ones. Many times He has spoke sweet comfort to my poor castdown soul and I have been bowed down so low I feared I was one alone. This has been even a long time after I had been blessed to hope that sweet Jesus had forgiven me of my sins.

"Fear not; I am with thee;
O be not dismayed.
I, I am thy God,
And will still give thee aid.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee,
And cause thee to stand.
Upheld by my righteous Omnipotent hand.

The flame shall not hurt thee;
I only design,
Thy dross to consume;
And thy gold to refine.
Even down to old age
All My people shall prove
My Sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love."

These sweet and precious words came to me with such power and great calmness it went all through me, and the Dear Blessed Holy God our Saviour I do feel, has calmed my troubled soul with His sweet love. I was blessed to say, "O, Lord, I long to go Home." The sweet calmness and tender love I felt I cannot tell. It is too sweet to put into words.

Another time I was so troubled I didn't feel I could live. I felt that I prayed for the blessed Lord to do whatever was His will with me, only let me be submissive to His will. I longed for peace in our family. These sweet words came to me while I was trying to beg the Good Lord for mercy and that He would bless me to be submissive to Him in all things. I do feel He spoke these words to Me, "Our peace is in Jesus". O the sweet love and comfort that was given to me at that time. I wanted so much to thank our Heavenly Lord in deed and in Truth. This we can't do of ourselves. It comes from God in sweet Jesus our Lord.

Dear Editors, I am enclosing a check to renew the dear *Signs of the Times* for two more years. Use the rest as you feel best. I do love so much to read the *Signs*. It is a sweet comfort to me to read

the Voices of the Past and the good writings of the sweet children of Jesus our Lord. I do hope He is mine, and if so it is because He first loved me. If I am not His in the Covenant of Grace, then I cannot ever be, yet I do hope He is mine and I am His.

Dear Brethren, please pray for me, a poor needy sinner in the love of Sweet Jesus, I hope.

Mrs. Callie I. Clark

Mountainair, N. Mexico

Dear Elder Spangler,

I am sending my subscription for another year for the *Signs of the Times*. I am a little late in getting this in the mail, and I am sorry about this.

We find many wonderful articles in the paper. We have loaned our paper to friends to read who have no subscription but enjoy reading it.

We are rather isolated way out here and find but very few who are interested in the Truth. So we feel a need for encouragement which we find in some of the good articles in the paper.

Your brother in hope,
R. R. Wolf

ANTINOMIANS

By William Huntington

Be not afraid of the name of Antinomian, which in our day is given to those who are partakers of the Holy Ghost; for a bad name will never hurt a good man.

1. A real Antinomian in the sight of God, is one who holds the truth in unrighteousness.
2. One who has Gospel notions in his head, but no grace in his heart.
3. He is one who makes a profession of Christ Jesus; but was never purged by his blood, renewed by his Spirit, nor saved by his power.
4. With him carnal ease passes for gospel liberty, and daring presumption

for the grace of assurance.

5. He is alive without the law, the sentence of the *moral law having never been sent home to him.

6. The law of Christ was never sealed on him, the law of truth was never received by him, nor the law of liberty proclaimed to him.

7. He was never arraigned at, nor taken from, the throne of judgment.

8. He was never justified at the throne of grace, nor acquitted at the bar of equity.

9. The tremendous attributes of righteousness were never seen nor felt by him.

10. The righteousness of the law was never fulfilled in him, the righteousness of the law was never fulfilled by him, the righteousness of faith was never imputed to, nor the fruits of righteousness brought forth by him.

11. He is an enemy to the power of God, the experience of the just, and to every minister of the Spirit; and is in union with none but hypocrites, whose uniting ties are the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity.

12. He is one who often changes his opinions, but is never changed in heart.

13. He turns to many sects and parties, but never turns to God. In word he is false to Satan, in heart he is false to God; false to Satan by uttering truth, and false to God by a false profession.

14. He is a false professor in the world, and in the household of faith he is a false brother.

15. He is a child of Satan in the congregation of dissemblers, and a bastard in the congregation of the righteous.

16. By mouth he contends for a covenant that cannot save him, and in heart he hates the one that can.

17. His head is at Mount Calvary, and his heart and soul are at Mount Sinai.

18. He is a Pharisee at Horeb, and a hypocrite in Zion.

19. He is a transgressor of the law of

works, a rebel to the law of faith, a sinner by the ministry of the letter, and an unbeliever by the ministry of the Spirit.

20. As a wicked servant, he is cursed by the eternal law; and as an infidel, he is damned by the everlasting gospel. And this is a real Antinomian in the sight of God.

W.H., S.S.

*On this point we would agree with William Gadsby and other Baptist writers of his period that the Bible makes no mention of anything called a "moral law". This expression was gotten up by workmongers to entangle the blind in a duty system based on the ten commandments. (See Gadsby's "Perfect Law of Liberty" for a full treatment of this subject.) We otherwise consider Huntington's 20 marks of an Antinomian as excellent.

Editor

"I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." (Hosea 5:15)

The Lord, in His displeasure with Israel, has, through the Prophet Hosea, said to His people that He will return unto His place therefore withdrawing from them until they acknowledge their offence. Yea, in the latter days they will see their condition and will call on Him early, but He will not be there; that is, be present with them. In the Fifth Chapter of Song of Solomon, the Second Verse, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drop of the night." Here, I believe in the wisdom of Solomon, is given a warning to the saints and to the churches that in the latter days they will awake from their slothfulness, lukewarmness, and their lack of love for their lord and will seek Him out, will seek His face, and He will be not there. Oh, how often have we

as a people, even after a feast at the banquet table of the Lord, returned to the way of the world? In our thoughts, conversation, actions, and deeds have we put away the love of Christ and our brethren. Even in our churches have we become complacent, lukewarm, going along satisfied in what we are doing. Yea, even giving an outward appearance of Christianity; tending to the needs of the Church, attending meetings, and offering prayer in public, yet, not having that love of Christ in our heart. How do we know this? Because we do not have that love for the brethren as we ought.

Dear Ones, look at our churches today. There is a falling away, that the Scripture might be fulfilled; however, there is strife and confusion on every hand among our people. When we are blessed to meet together in love, peace, and harmony how sweet the feeling; how bountiful is the table from which the crumbs fall. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Song of Solomon 5:1) Here the Lord is saying if you will note, that I am come into my garden. Does this not say to you without any doubt that it is the Lord speaking? Remember that when Moses asked The Lord, "Whom shall I say sent me?", He said, "Tell them I am sent you, I am the great I am." Yea, The Lord is telling His sister, His spouse, His Church, and the saints that comprise the Church He has already entered the garden; He has already gathered His myrrh; He has already elected His people; He has already anointed them; He has already drunk His wine with His milk; He has already tasted the love of His people because He has already loved His people with an everlasting love, and He bids His Church and the saints to drink, yea drink abundantly. Isn't that a sweet and

wonderful bidding? Yea, the world would have you believe that invitation was to all mankind. However, please note who the great I am is addressing this statement to: My sister, My spouse, My Church, which would include all of its members, as no body is complete without all its members.

Now let us turn our attention to the Second Verse of the Fifth Chapter of the Song of Solomon: "I sleep but my heart waketh:" Oh, Dear Ones, this is the sad part of it. It is the answer of the church to the bidding mentioned. How many churches today sleep? They are lulled to sleep by complacency, yea, they meet and there is present enough of the love and crumbs to sustain them for the moment and they are satisfied. They hear the voice and recognize that it is the voice of my beloved Lord and Savior that knocketh, saying "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled". Oh, how could the Lord of Hosts address this church, this people as undefiled? Thanks be unto God that it is because of His Love for us and by the imputed righteousness of His darling Son that we may be made so, either as a church or as a people. They hear the voice and recognize that He is filled with love for them but here again comes excuse by the church, "I have put off my coat: How shall I put it on?". (Song of Solomon 5:3) In other words, I have removed my garments for the purpose of retiring for the season; shall I dress again to answer the door? Yea, the church again has assumed the prone position, only lying there. "I have washed my feet: how shall I defile them?" Yea, I have washed my feet, removed my garments, and retired for a season; should I arise and dress and dirty my feet by walking across the floor to answer the knock? Oh, what an answer to such a precious knock. Yea, if it could be the will of God that the time is here that the church should rise up, come together in the same oneness as the Father and Son and make manifest the Love of Christ in His people. Here

belies the condition of many of God's people everywhere; here is the condition of churches everywhere that contend for the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. And, what are these things and these Scriptures brought before us for? Dear Ones, if it could cause one to see himself as he is; if it could cause one of the churches to examine itself, ask the question, "is my soul in this condition?", it would be a part of the fulfillment of these Scriptures. Oh, if by the Grace of God we could fill our hearts with the Love of Christ, there would be no room for gossip, for talking about preachers, for talking about brethren, except to praise them as being better than ourselves.

To continue on: Yea, "My beloved put his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved by him." (Song of Solomon 5:4) I would refer you back to the Second Verse where the church says "I sleep, but my heart waketh." Dear Ones, this is to say, I have slipped, I have fallen away, I have done a little backsliding, but not in an eternal sense. No, the heart and mind of a dead alien sinner is always asleep to the teaching of God, and therefore, only hears the voice of satan and his angels. Thanks be unto God, not so with His people. Even though God's people sleep and God turns His face from them from time to time, at His appointed time He puts His hand to the hole of the door. He touches the heart and mind of His people and they are moved. Yea, they are moved to the point of arising and opening the door and they do smell the sweet smelling myrrh left there by the Holy Spirit. They are given to feel for a season the closeness of the Love of God in their hearts. Isn't it a sad awakening to find that when we do open to our beloved that He has withdrawn Himself. Yea, not in a judicial manner as to leave us to everlasting destruction, but as in love as a father applies the rod that his child might be in obedience. Of ourselves we call, we inquire of the Watchman, but He

is not to be found. Therefore, our hope comes through faith wherein we remember the former things of old, that in the eons of eternity, before the world was, that God in His infinite Wisdom and for the love and mercy of His people did elect them to be conformed to the image of His Son and gave power to the Son to raise them up in the last day that they might sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

"All things work together for good to them that love the Lord". May our hope be sustained and our faith strengthened by the Word of the Holy Scriptures; yea, even those that exhort and rebuke as well as those that declare the Power and Mercy of Almighty God is my prayer.

Elder B. J. McLaughlin

PIG RIVER ASSOCIATION
CIRCULAR LETTER (1827 & 1828)

Dear Brethren: In persuance of an order of our last association, we present you with this, which is designed, as all our acts should be, for the glory of God and the edification of each other. Knowing of no subject which should stand higher with us than revelation, we have, from among the many subjects thereof, chosen Charity, not that we expect to shed any new light on this great subject; but to exhibit it in its proper or scriptural point of view. It is defined by some to be susceptible of a two-fold interpretation; first, "An alms-giving disposition", and secondly, "In our opinions of others and their actions".

In order fairly to understand this subject, it may not be amiss to notice the light in which it is exhibited in scripture, I Cor. 13:1. "Tho' I speak with the tongue of men and angels and have not 'charity', I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal;" again, verse the 3rd, "And tho' I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing;" from which it is evident that there is a some-

thing going before these offerings, which makes them morally praiseworthy, and that something, it is feared, many are destitute of, a heart renewed by divine grace.

For proof, that bestowing our goods upon any object is not 'charity', but the effects of it, we need but recur to the scripture quoted above; again, that giving alms is not 'charity' in its primary meaning, may be further argued from the fact, that wicked and graceless men and women, may and do give from a variety of motives; some from vanity - some from hope of a reward - and others for the sake of having a name to live while they are dead. Again, if giving of money, goods, &c. to poor persons, beggars, sufferers, missionary societies, tract societies, or education societies, be 'charity' in the legitimate meaning of the word, Paul was mistaken (in our opinion) in the 13th chapter of the Corinthians, & especially in this before recited third verse. Rather may we not conclude that giving bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, &c. &c. is the fruit of charity, than the thing itself; or regard these acts of beneficence, in reference to 'charity', in the same light as we do of cause and effect, the latter always following the former?

"In our opinions of others and their actions". Here, if possible, the term is more perverted than in the former case, for a professor of religion, who is the member of one church, whose system of faith or principles are materially different from another, to fellowship or unite with him or them (as the case may be) in acts of apparent devotion, it is regarded as 'charity', and the person so acting is regarded as one in whom 'charity' shines conspicuously; and those who decline a union, are branded with the name of "bigot", or "uncharitable", when 'charity' has nothing to do in the matter. Again, for a preacher, whose principles are predestinarian, to unite hand in hand with one of

arminian principles - meet at the same place of preaching - each in his turn occupy the same pulpit - appear well pleased with, or make no objections to, arminians error, he is called a charitable man. The same may be said of baptist and pedo-baptist; likewise for a preacher to contend earnestly for his faith - on all proper occasions to inculcate his principles, whether in a direct way, by summing up the evidence on his side of the question; or indirectly, by fair reasoning, refute the opposite principle; his zeal is too often ascribed to want of charity; when (as we said before) it has no reference to the matter, or bearing on it, would justify him in using all fair means to correct the error of the other, whether it be in faith or practice.

But, we conceive the Apostle takes a view of it, especially and materially different from both of these; I Cor. 13, and last verse, he makes it greater than faith or hope. 'Charity', (says he, verse the 8th) 'never faileth', 'but, whether there be prophecies they shall fail,' &c.; in another place (Col. 3:4) he calls it, 'the bond of perfectness; in another (I Tim. 1:5) 'The end of the commandment, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience and of faith unfeigned! These quotations go to prove it of more importance than is usually attached to it. In comparing 'charity' with the other influences of God's spirit on the soul, we shall in some cases speak of it under the name of LOVE; an interpretation it will very well bear, without disparaging its divine import. The soul in a state of impenitency, unbelief, or enmity with God, is wholly destitute of faith, or hope, or love; things, which all who are Christians are possessed of, and for which they are exclusively indebted to Christ their redeemer, faith being 'the gift of God', Eph. 2:8, a 'faith which works by love', Gal. 5-6, a faith of which 'Jesus is the author and finisher', Heb. 12:2.

Of hope it is said; 'that it maketh not

ashamed for the love of God is shed abroad in the heart,' Rom. 5:4-5; that 'we are saved by hope,' Rom. 8:24; that 'Jesus is their hope,' I Tim. 1:1; that it is an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast.' Heb. 6:19.

Well may it be called great when it has the pre-eminence of such inestimable gifts as faith and hope. By and by hope shall be realized, (that is) the hope of the righteous; faith will be turned into sight - here christians have need of faith, hope and charity; but when they shall have an entrance administered unto them, to the incorruptible and unfading inheritance prepared for the saints in light, they will be done with faith and hope. But love will sway their breasts, while God himself shall live - "Charity", never faileth" - that same love, which took possession of their souls at the time of their espousal to the Lamb - now purified from all that's mortal, will pervade their sublimated spirits - Love, divine love, proceeding from God and returning in anthems of eternal praise to God and the Lamb, will be the sensation which shall sway their souls forever and forevermore.

Elder Joseph Pedigo
(Submitted by Elder N. F. Connor)

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It is well for those who are duly sensible of their own weakness and fallibility, and of the difficulties with which they are surrounded in life, that the Lord has promised to guide his people with his eye, and to cause them to hear a word behind them, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when they are in danger of turning aside either to the right hand or to the left. For this purpose, he has given us the written Word to be our lamp to our feet, and encouraged us to pray for the teaching of His Holy Spirit, that we may rightly understand and apply it. It is, however, too often seen, that many widely deviate from the path of duty, and commit gross and perplexing mistakes, while they profess a sincere desire to know the will of God, and think they have his warrant and authority. This must certainly be owing to misapplication of the rule by which they judge, since the rule itself is infallible and the promise sure. The Scripture cannot deceive us, if rightly understood; but it may,

if perverted, prove the occasion of confirming us in a mistake. The Holy Spirit cannot mislead those who are under his influence; but we may suppose that we are so, when we are not.

John Newton

EDITORIAL

“BUT WHO AM I”

(Transcribed for publication)

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.” (I Chron. 29:14)

Whether I shall be blessed to bring to you the leading thoughts in this scripture, I know not. But I do know that if we are blessed to see them we will find comfort. These were the words of David. They were the words of David before he died, and before the throne was turned over to King Solomon. I think in our ministry and in our preaching we often stress Solomon's building the temple as the type of the church of God. But another point is made and emphasized in David assembling most of the treasure from which the temple was built; precious gold, and if you read it you can find what it is. We understand that Solomon's temple, if we could compare it with today's wealth, was the most expensive building that has ever been erected for its size in all the world. The building was garnished with gold, but the sentiment that brought it into being was David's attitude. The important thing was his attitude.

The most important thing for us tonight is our attitude toward our Creator. We used the song this morning,

“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”.

I received a gift from a member of this church and she quoted the scripture, “For it is more blessed to give than to

receive”. And I was filled with joy because of all the things I receive. David wasn't allowed to build the temple because he was a man of war. He was a man who went out and fought. He fought Israel's battles, he overcame their enemies, but God would not allow him to build this temple. But he gathered all the material!

You can read for yourself all the wonderful things that he was blessed to gather, that would go into the temple, and when he offered them willingly he said, “Who am I?” “Who am I?” Do you know what that means? Do you know what it means to ask God, as some token of mercy comes to you, “Who am I, that I should receive such a thing?” Every token of mercy and the grace of God that is bestowed upon a sinner leads them to say, “Who am I, that this thing should come to me? Why am I so drawn? Why am I so inclined to see this thing?” David says, “Who am I?”

But he didn't say that alone. He said also, “And what is my people”. The people of God by nature are no better than other people, but God, by His sovereign, immutable, eternal purpose has shed His love upon them. You will not find in the lives and walk of the Israelites that they were, by nature, better than the people around them. The word of God says that He had not sent His love upon them because they were the greatest, but the fewest.

Looking back over their pilgrimage and journey through the wilderness we find them a stiff-necked people, when left to themselves. A brother has been writing me from another state and I was rather disturbed that he suddenly seemed to take the attitude of taking a man by the throat and saying to the man, “Pay me all you owe”. You know, Jesus tells us about a man like that. A man owed his master a certain amount and his master forgave all his debts and that man went out and began to collar people who owed him and take them by the throat and say, “Pay me what you

owe me". His attitude was so different from his master's. But thank the Lord, that dear brother I referred to came back with a different tune in another letter and he said, "I know that when we are left to self and to our flesh we will take a man by the throat and we will say, 'Pay me what you owe me'." But back to the text. David said, "What is my people" that God has chosen out of the nations of the earth and given them covenant of promise: a covenant wherein was embraced the promise they were going to have a Saviour coming.

"Who am I?" Who am I? Do you know what I am talking about? Do you know? Do you receive some token from the Lord and then say, "Who am I"? I lay awake many hours of the night in the most pleasant thoughts on the word of God. I used to get up, wander about, drink milk, but thank God, those hours are alright now. Thinking upon the word of God, I say in my mind, "Who am I?" Who am I to have such thoughts. And in time a person that has a knowledge of the truth will have a knowledge of how gracious God has been to them, and they will say, "Thank the Lord." Thank you, Lord....not to anyone aloud, but to God, with the evidence that God has been mindful of you regardless of how you have been. And David said, "Who am I?" What is there about me in any way that with merit what God has blessed me with to bring in all these things together to build the wonderful house of God. "And what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?"

I like the thought that all that was brought by David and the others of great value, silver, gold, and other things, that he said were willingly brought. I think he could have said, "Were gladly brought". It is a wonderful thing to do things right from your heart, and be glad, isn't it? I am sure our Saviour meant this when He said, "It is more blessed to give", and He said it for the poor, also. It doesn't have to be such

a great thing. If it is given in the Name of Jesus, that one receives their reward. I believe with all my heart that the same one inclines our heart unto certain things, and then grants us a willing heart in doing it. I believe He is just as great in one as He is the other. David had no desire to take any honor. David had no desire to say, "Look what we have been doing". That was not his attitude.

That is not the attitude of true believers today as God pours out His mercy upon them. They will say, "Who am I? Why was I not left to go with the world and be sent into hell"? "Why am I not there? Who am I?" But God has so richly bestowed His grace upon you, and caused you to love His Name. "Who am I? What are my people?" A people despised! A people the nations round about them hated. People, if you take them out of the world, the Bible says, the world wasn't worthy of them. Yet, a people left surrounded with enemies all their days and they say, "Who am I?" I think the Lord had a purpose in the man asking me to speak on this subject tonight, because I believe we all know something about the joy in David's heart when he thought, "I am not taking any honor, I am not taking any glory, and who am I".

We never truly worship God until we know He is God of the whole earth. We never truly worship God until we know God said, "If I was hungry I would not tell you." We never truly worship God until we know something of that one who said, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are mine, and the gold of Ophir is mine", and that everything that you have is God's. It belongs to Him. And when men in any realm (it doesn't make any difference what realm they are in) begin to be exalted in themselves, God will cut them down and show them who is in control.

We find a man in the Bible who issued a decree that everyone must fall down and worship the idol he set up. Daniel

was among them. The Hebrew children were among them. And God took him off the throne. God sets men upon the throne and God takes them off the throne. He has a purpose for what time they are there. The Bible says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will". And He took this man, Nebuchadnezzar, off the throne and caused him to eat grass like an ox, and caused his nails to grow like claws, and He taught him that God does reign in the kingdom of men and gives the kingdom to whomsoever He wills. Nebuchadnezzar was far from David's attitude, wasn't he? He was far from David's attitude when he said, "Who am I?"

David had been blessed to sit upon the throne of Israel and was a wonderful king over the people. God had blessed him in so many ways, and yet as he brought all that he had and God caused him to assemble the material to build the temple he said, "Who am I?" Who am I? A lot of difference between David and Nebuchadnezzar, wasn't there? One said, "Everybody will bow down and worship the god I set up". He exalted himself. But the Bible says, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." How true it is. Who am I?

How many of you listening to me tonight can look back over your journey and see that somewhere the hand of God was in your life; to see somewhere God touched your heart; to see somewhere God showed you what a sinner you are; to see somewhere He opened your heart and showed you the love Christ has for you; and praise went up to God when it did, and you could say, "Who am I?" Who am I?, that I should offer so willingly? Yes, I like the willing part. I like to preach and live among a people you don't have to tell how much they have to give next Sunday. I like to live among a people where God can open their heart for their ministers and their

pastors so they won't suffer need. And throughout all our journey here, as we taste the goodness and the mercy of God, we can say, "Who am I?" Who am I? Who are my people that I should give so willingly, that we should be glad to do what we are doing, and the great beauty of it is that all things come of Thee.

"For all things come of Thee." What did he mean? He meant just what he said. He meant that if his heart was inclined, God inclined it. All things come of thee, and the great beauty of the text is, "Of thine own we give you". It was Yours, it wasn't ours. Oh, lovely thing, my hearers tonight, that God moves you to walk in His light and enjoy, and realize that everything you have belongs to God. Yes, everything we have! I know that sometimes in my life God has been good to me and in His graciousness to me I have had prayers, "Oh, Lord keep me, keep me". Keep me. We've heard in the hymn how we are

"Prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God we love,
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it.
Seal it for your courts above".

All things come of thee and though David said that we have all of this great wealth of gold, silver, and jewels to build the temple, it belongs to You. It is still Yours. We just handle it. It still belongs to You. I was thinking just before I came into the building of that scripture in the 50th Psalm, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." You know, I have seen some big ranches in Florida and out West, but I never saw one that had a thousand hills on it. But here David just goes beyond all this. This is the same man who said, "Who am I?" And he said, "For every beast of the forest is mine, (that is, God's) and the cattle upon a thousand hills." I know all the fowls of the air and the wild beasts of the field are His. No wonder David said, "Who am I". Who am I compared to God? Who am I that I should be so willing and so glad and yet in giving it, it is God's. It was God's all the time. He just let me use

it and He just caused me to bring it, yet today men go about glorying in what they are doing, and even talk about what they are doing for the Lord. How inconsistent with God's Word. It is inconsistent with those who are heavenly taught. It is so inconsistent with all the Word of God for man to go about with God's breath in his nostrils talking about what he is doing for God. "Who am I?"

Jeremiah says, "Thus sayeth the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches." Those are the things that make up men's lives in nature; wisdom, strength, and riches, and if you take those out of the picture there is nothing left. And God said, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not rich man glory in his riches. Let not the strong man glory in his strength". But let him that glory, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, saith the Lord. "Who am I?" I like that sentiment. I like to know that one of the greatest men that ever lived used it. I like to think that was a man after God's own heart. I like to think that the same man wrote the 23rd Psalm, and said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want", and he said, "Who am I?" Aren't you glad? Aren't you glad it was the same man? He is my Shepherd, I shall not want. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul." These very things in David's life are what caused him to say, "Who am I, that I should know Him in such a wonderful way." In the latter part he said, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." He is the only One you need tonight, my friends. "Thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the

house of the Lord forever."

In closing this subject, my hearers, remember when you read the Psalms of David that most of them point to Christ. In the beginning of the first Psalm, Christ is brought into the picture. "Blessed is the man", not "blessed is a man", but "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly, or standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful". Who is that? That is not you! That is the One David talks about in this chapter: Christ! "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,....His leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper". And as you read the Psalms you will find Christ here and there in the language of David, the sweet singer in Israel, and you will remember that whatever he brought, and whatever he was enabled to do in the house of God he said, "Who am I?" We are only bringing to God what God had given to us before. Now in conclusion, take the last book of the Old Testament, and God reminded the people, through Malachi, that they had brought polluted bread into the house of God. They had brought blind lambs into the tabernacle. What did it mean? Just that God had been secondary in their eyes. Oh, my friends, this God should always be first in our lives. Not just part time, but all the time.

End of Taped sermon
Preached at Dan River Church
February 25, 1974
By Elder David Spangler

Denton, N.C.

Dear Editors of the Signs of the Times,
My subscription to the *Signs of the Times* expires with the December issue. Enclosed is my check for a two year renewal and use the rest as you see fit. I have been a subscriber for several years and enjoy every issue. Hope you will be blessed to continue publishing the good news in the coming years.

Minnie G. Roberts

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

Patterson, Juniata Co., Pa.
January, 1869

Brother Beebe: We would like to have your views on *Deut. 34:4, "And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed; I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither".*

Yours in love,
John P. Shitz

Reply: - The Old Testament is replete with types and figures, parables and dark sayings in which are portrayed "good things" which were to come. The imagery was drawn by the Holy Ghost, and in such mystic lines as baffled the wisdom of even the patriarchs and prophets, who searched diligently what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory that should follow. This cabinet of magnificent types were sealed from human scrutiny, and covered with that cloud in which God has involved his throne, so that men who were used as types, and prophets of our God who spake and wrote as they were inspired, were as dependent on God to unseal the sacred book and disclose to them its hidden treasures, as are the feeblest of the saints at the present time. The handy work of God in the creation, as written by Moses more than two thousand years after the works of creation were finished, which we have in the book of Genesis, contains the outlines of the new creation, in a depth of emblematic beauty too deep and profound for uninspired wisdom to trace, and in ample abundance to fill the enlightened mind of all the saints with glowing admiration while time endures,

which shall survive the dissolution of all created things, and be the theme of praise to God in boundless eternity. The sweet singer of Israel, with all his inspiration could not contemplate the glittering hosts of the firmament above without humiliating thoughts of man. He is filled with amazement that so great and glorious a God should be mindful of man. But the infinity of God descends to and embraces the most minute, as well as the most magnificent of all his works. Sparrows are provided for and protected, so that not one of them can fall to the ground without your heavenly Father: the hairs of our head he has numbered, and suns and stars can as soon be hurled from their orbits, as our hairs can fall independently of God. The animalculine tribes that people a single drop of water are as firmly secured in their being and destiny as are angels or men.--But we are wandering from the subject on which our dear old brother desires our views. As in the surpassing glories of the creation, and the inscrutable labyrinths of divine providence, the glory of our God appears in radiant glory to those who are taught of God; so in the resplendent glory of the "New heavens and new earth" as revealed by the Spirit, the saints in rapture cry, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty' just and true are thy ways, thy King of saints".

Of the life and death of Moses, the account given in the scriptures is plain and simple, requiring no explanation from us, but of the typical position which he fills, in all the recorded incidents of his life, an interesting and instructing field is open for the contemplation of all who are quickened and taught by the Spirit. As a prophet and as a leader, he was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ; for he said, "A prophet like unto me shall the Lord your God raise up unto you; him shall ye hear in all things."

But we are to regard him as presented in the text under consideration, as the

impersonation of the law which God gave by him to the children of Israel. In this character he is spoken of by the inspired expounders of the word. See 2 Cor. 3:15, and Heb. 3:5, 6. Representing the law which could make nothing perfect, he held dominion over them in their wilderness state; but he could neither make them perfect, nor give them rest, Yet as the law foreshadowed good things which were to come, so Moses spake to the people of Israel of a land of rest into which God would bring them.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the oath of God confirmed with infallible certainty the promise that their seed should possess by inheritance the land of Canaan, represent the whole family of God, which under the three dispensations should be gathered according to the oath and promise of God, into the gospel kingdom. Like Noah, Daniel and Job, or like Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-nego, in the burning furnace with the form of the Son of God in their midst, and many other figures, represent the family of God, as brought into manifestation under the several dispensations of the fullness of times. Like the Hebrew children, they are chosen in a furnace of afflictions, yet preserved by the presence of Christ from being utterly consumed. Not only was it true of the patriarchs and Old Testamen saints, that they were held under the dominion of the law until the fullness of time came for their redemption and deliverance, but all the children of God throughout all time and all nations, when quickened by the Spirit, have to make a pilgrimage from Egypt, through the dreary wilderness, under Moses, who holds them under rigorous discipline until they have passed the flaming mountain where the voice of words and the terrific sound of a trumpet fills them with dismay, and makes them feel the need of one to stand between them and the awful majesty of God, and until they come to Mount

Nebo, which is as far as Moses can go with them. The reason why Moses was not permitted to go over Jordan and into the promised land with Israel is given, Num. 20:12, because he smote the rock in Horeb, and did not sanctify the Lord in the eyes of the children of Israel. In this transaction we have a rich cluster of the most important types and figures contained in the Old Testament. The chosen tribes of Israel under Moses, or the law, are in the wilderness, far from the land of promise, in a rebellious, murmuring state, and in a dying condition. Neither Moses nor Aaron could supply them with the waters on which their life depended. "For if a law had been given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law". Neither the law represented by Moses, nor the priesthood represented by Aaron could give them life. "And God said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go. Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink". (Ex. 17:5, 6) And in Num. 20:7-12, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together; thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the

eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

(Concluded next month.)

Where is the difference between Arminianism and Epicurism? To suppose a fortuitous concourse of incidents is no less Atheistical than to suppose a fortuitous concourse of atoms.

Toplady

The Lord knows what I need, and what I can bear: gladly would I receive, earnestly would I desire, more of comforts while here; but if I mourn now, I hope to be comforted in heaven; in the meantime it is more immediately necessary for me, both as a Christian and as a minister, that I should be humbled; the Lord's will be done. I cannot pretend to determine what ministers or what body of people come nearest the character of the primitive time; but in my judgment they are the happiest who have the lowest thoughts of themselves, and in whose eyes Jesus is most glorious and precious.

John Newton

OBITUARIES

OLLIE S. HOLLANDSWORTH

Sister Ollie was born December 7, 1907, and passed away November 22, 1979, making her stay on earth 71 years, 11 months, and 14 days.

Survivors are three daughters, Sister Fay Quesenberry, Sister Margaret Quesenberry, and Mrs. Neva Shelor; six sisters, Mrs. Ocie Hollandsworth, Mrs. Eva Higgs, Mrs. Gertie Hylton, Mrs. Ella Duncan, Mrs. Verlie Hollandsworth, and Mrs. Mable Hollandsworth; three brothers, Noah, Loman, and Herman Slaughter; and seven grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Maberry Chapel on Saturday, November 24, 1979, by Elder Hale Terry with interment in Hollandsworth Cemetery in Floyd County, Virginia.

Sister Ollie was preceded in death by her husband, Major Hollandsworth, five years.

She had been in ill health for some time, but she bore it with meekness. "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 8:18)

Sister Ollie had been a member of Union Church a little over two years, but had manifested a love for a long time. May God comfort all who mourn her passing.

Written by request of Union Church.

A sister in Hope,
Lessie Cox

SISTER GERTRUDE FOY

As it has been requested, we write our Mother's, Sister Gertrude Foy, obituary, whom the Lord saw fit to call from our midst on August 31, 1979, at the age of 87 years, 10 months, and 20 days.

She was a member of the New Bay Primitive Baptist Church, where she attended for years when her health permitted. She was well acquainted with poor health, pain, and much affliction in body for many years; yet through it all she would say as Job, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him." We feel Mama welcomed death, as all saints of God would say, "Come welcome death, I'll gladly go with Thee." The day she had waited so long for had come.

Her funeral was conducted by Elder Samuel Jones and Elder Oliver Allen, a son-in-law, at Jones Funeral Home, Jacksonville, N.C., with beautiful singing and lovely flowers. Burial was in Hicks Run Cemetery.

We miss Mama so much, yet we feel our loss is her eternal gain. We trust the good Lord will see fit to fill the vacancy in our hearts with His precious love and mercy that our praise might ever be to Him for His blessings and tender mercy to us during her sickness and death. She is survived by two daughters, Louise Baugus, and Alice Allen and two sons, Louie Foy and Hubert Foy. We feel she is at rest in the Paradise of God where she will never know any more pain, heartaches or afflictions.

Written by request of New Bay Primitive Baptist Church in conference on December 1, 1979.

Written and submitted in our love
Her Daughters, Alice Allen & Louise Baugus

Elder Samuel Jones, Moderator
Brother Norman Jenkins, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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THE ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS

No. 4

Another objection urged against the doctrine of predestination is that it would involve the notion of the fatalists, and destroys the free-agency of man, and consequently, his accountability. These notions must arise from ignorance of the true character of God, who as an efficient intelligence governs the world in wisdom and righteousness, causing everything to result in the greatest good. But in answer to the objection, suffice it to say, that the universal experience of man, and the sure word of prophecy, both unite in establishing the fact that man in all his sinful transactions acts freely, and is accountable therefor. I will notice a few instances in which the consciousness of guilt was manifested in persons, relative to transactions, manifestly predestinated of God. We have an instance in the case of Joseph's brethren. Although Joseph declared that it was God who sent him into Egypt, yet when their Father was dead his brethren sent unto him saying, "We pray thee forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy Father". (Gen. 50:17) We have another instance in Judas who though committing the very crime which had long been predicted, and which the Master pointed him out as the one destined to perform; yet when he had committed the base act, he in contrition said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood". (Matt. 27:7) An instance of acknowledged free-agency we have in the case of the Assyrian, who was the

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IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE

rod of God's anger against the Jews. God says of him, "I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it and by my wisdom....". (Isa. 10:12, 13) Thus it is that men and devils instead of frustrating or retarding the righteous government of God by acting out of their enmity, are, in their very acts of sinning against him, made by his wise government to bring about his holy and eternal purposes. This view of the holiness and Majesty of God, manifested in his overruling the sins of men to the promotion of his purpose of grace, whilst it fills his enemies with wrath, constrains the believer to exalt him and to worship at his footstool under a feeling sense that he is holy.

I now pass to the consideration of an objection made by the popular Baptists, more particularly against this doctrine as held by the Old School Baptists. Even those who profess to believe the doctrine of predestination make it, when professed by an Old School Baptist, to be a very Pandora's box, from whence springs Antinomianism, and everything which they are accustomed to consider as evil in us. It is, according to their representation, our belief in the Absolute Predestination of all things that keeps us from engaging in the Benevolent enterprises of the day, and prevents us from preaching repentance and faith as conditions of salvation, and from making any efforts to convert sinners, and in a word that it makes us very idle and wicked professors. This is the most unhallowed of all the objections made against this doctrine. It is the very course pursued by the Jews against our Master, that of raising a prejudice in the public mind against him and his doctrine, that they might more easily accomplish his death. As they thus succeeded against him to do with wicked hands, what the counsel of God had before determined to be done, so will they succeed against the two witnesses.

But let us, dear Brethren, rejoice with his early disciples, in being accounted worthy to suffer persecution for our Lord's name sake. This course pursued by the popular Baptists, in reproaching this doctrine, and us for holding it whilst they admit it, even to be a Bible doctrine, is the most decisive testimony as to what manner of spirit they are of, that could be had. It is, I sometimes think, undeniably an instance of our being reviled and having evil said of us falsely for his sake. The Christian knows that ordinarily, owing to a sense of the corruptions of his heart, the instances are not many, when he can clearly draw the conclusion, that it is for Christ's sake he is reviled. Hence how thankful ought we to be for the privilege granted us, of having such an unequivocal testimony that the blessing recorded in Matthew 5:11 and 12 belongs to us.

It is not in one solitary instance, or two that we are reproached for holding this doctrine. There appears for a few months past, to have been a general concert on the subject. Preachers whilst professing to preach the doctrine of predestination, have in the very same discourses, represented it to be Antinomianism and have the most deadening influence when held by certain Baptists, meaning the Old School Brethren. Others have given the same views of the subject in their publications in the Religious Papers: witness the Letter of a certain celebrated preacher of Virginia, published in the "Religious Herald" of December 20, 1833. But it is perhaps proper to answer the objection, however unprincipled it is. The objection seems to imply that the whole sum of our faith is the doctrine of predestination; that all our religious course is determined by our belief of this one point of revelation.

It is true, that believing in the predestination of God we have no idea of procuring or of being instrumental in producing the salvation of one indivi-

dual, not chosen of God unto salvation; nor that one of the travail of Christ's soul will die, without experiencing the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and thus being prepared for the society of Heaven, whether that individual die in infancy or in old age, whether he was born in New York, or Rome, in Mecca or in Peking. But we as firmly believe that God has "chosen his people to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth:" that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," and that whilst the "preaching of the Cross is unto them that perish, foolishness; unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

Let those who think and speak of Tracts and Sunday Schools as the more efficient means of converting the world, ponder this text, and think seriously on the distinction drawn between those who perish and those who are saved. The one class esteem the preaching of the Cross, or Christ crucified, as far surpassing any scheme of men, as the power of God surpasses the weakness of man. But they do not consider the difference between the preaching of the Cross, and Sunday School teaching, or reading of Tracts, to consist so much in any natural superiority of the one over the others, but simply in the fact that the one is the appointment of God delivered to us through the Volume of eternal truth, and that the others are not. Attendance therefore on the one, calls for and authorizes the exercise of faith in God, that he will bless his own appointments, whereas there can be no authorized faith in relation to the others, because God has made no revelation concerning them. And according to the apostles views of the subject, the reason why God has instituted the simple preaching of the Cross, unadorned with wisdom of words, and by that God might make foolish the wisdom of the world, and that the faith of his people should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

(See I Cor. 1:18-29 and 2:4, 5) The above may suffice to show that it is not our belief in the doctrine of predestination alone, that prevents us from uniting in the "Benevolent enterprises" of the day, as they are styled, but the fact that God has appointed the one institution, and but the one has its due weight with us, and ought to have with all who have confidence in the wisdom of God. But again our belief in the predestination of all things gives us confidence to believe that not an instrument shall be wanting, or a circumstance fail, that God ever designed to employ, or ever would own for bringing an individual of the Election of God into the liberty of the Gospel, or for establishing him in the hope and consolations thereof. It also leads us to believe that Christ's people will be willing in the day of his power, according as they are called to believe in him, to confide in him, to profess his name, to enter the ministry, and that with just such gifts as he has bestowed on them, and to go and occupy these gifts wherever he in his providence directs; and that their willingness to these things will be from a manifestation of the day of his power to their souls, and not from any offered worldly accomodations.

Hence we have no confidence in the Divine call of any person to the Ministry, who enters it or goes forward in it, only as some salary or mission fund is proffered for his accommodation. Neither when they go forth from these considerations can we believe that God will make their labors a blessing. Consequently we stand opposed to Missionary and Theological school systems. The preacher made willing in the day of Christ's power to enter the ministry does not need these proffered accommodations to stimulate him to action. Neither does he need, for this end, the notion of becoming popular by a display of school polish or by multiplying converts. He has to preach to answer his own conscience. Being an

ear-bored servant, he will desire to be found faithful. And feeling that he is a servant, he will feel it to be his province to follow the directions of his Lord, to keep strictly to his written orders; to preach the word to be instant in season and out of season, and to leave it to his Master's will to accomplish his own purpose by the word preached. Thus the predestination of God has secured that belief in the Absolute Predestination of all things will not make his servants idle, but on the contrary it becomes an incentive to active obedience. The same is the case, as might be shown from the word, with all his other children, in their several relations.

It is true that the servant of the Lord may sometimes be left to seek his own accommodation, rather than to do his Master's will, but when this is the case, the Lord will assuredly send leanness into his soul, or otherwise, so chastise him as to bring him back to a cheerful discharge of duty.

As to antinomianism, those who know the meaning of the word, when they use it, certainly do know that it is a base calumny upon us. They know that what offends them in our preaching relative to the law is our contending so strongly for the spirituality and unchangeable nature of the Law, and that nothing but that full and perfect righteousness, found in the obedience of Christ as the representative of His people, could release from condemnation. If instead of preaching the Apostles' doctrine which establishes the Law, we preached the abrogation of the eternal law, and that man is as they say, on pleading terms with God and by which many seem to mean that man is on grounds of proposing terms of acceptance with God, we should then in the estimation of the populars be very lawful and holy men.

In reference to the charge that our belief in the doctrine of predestination occasions our not preaching that men should repent and believe, I would

remark, in the first place, that according to our understanding of the Scriptures, repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ are essential parts of that salvation to which the Elect of God are predestinated. These things therefore we preach. But the repentance to which God has predestinated his people is a heart repentance, a godly sorrow for sin; a turning with heart-loathing from self and all self-doings, as being defiled with sin. We do not therefore and dare not preach a mere Ahab or Ninevite repentance, as that which characterizes persons as entitled to the consolations of the Gospel. There is the same corresponding difference between the one repentance and the other, that there is between the deliverance granted to Ahab and Nineveh, and that salvation which cometh by Christ. It is true, that if we could satisfy our consciences by preaching the word "repent" instead of preaching that repentance which is the result of the regenerating operations of the Holy Ghost, we should much better please the unregenerate, and popular professors, as we should then preach a repentance of which they have some conception.

Again, Christ, by nailing the hand writing of ordinances to his Cross, so took the Sinai covenant, as such, out of the way, that it never after should, by all the contrivances of men, be introduced into the plan of God as any part of the system of salvation. Hence Christ, after his resurrection, made known to his Disciples, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47) "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." If therefore, there is any meaning in the expression, "In His name", it must mean something very different from preaching repentance and remission of sins in a legal form. So we understand it, as fixed by the predestination of God, and

therefore we do not preach repentance as a condition upon which salvation is suspended. But while we preach the manifested obligation of all, both Jews and Gentiles, as the creatures of God, to return unto him by repentance, or as the Apostle expresses it, "But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent", and whilst we preach the absolute necessity of heart-repentance as a predestinated part of the salvation of God, we preach that Jesus Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel; and that no repentance short of that which he giveth in making his word as a fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces, either manifests the person as entitled to, or capacitates him for receiving the consolations of the Gospel. Hence that no other is of any avail.

Thus far our belief in the predestination of God effects our preaching repentance.

So faith we preach, not as a condition of salvation, but as the gift of God. And the faith we preach is as distinct from any natural belief of the human mind as the internal revelation or testimony of the Spirit of God is distinct from the testimony of men: the one is external and natural, the other is internal and spiritual; the one is comprehended and received by the natural powers of the human mind, the other can be understood and relied on, only by spiritual life imparted. In a word, we believe that the predestination of God has fixed eternally the point that none but that system of salvation, which God has decreed, that truth which God has revealed, and that order which he has established shall stand. We would, therefore, be wholly conformed in understanding, in feeling, and walk to that system, be grounded in that truth, and bounded and defined by that order, which God has revealed. Being thus established in the truth of God and sustained by his word, if persecution come, let it come, we shall feel the

assurance that the two Beasts with their image, and all their drilled and mustered forces, can go no farther in their rage than our God has determined to permit them, that they cannot afflict us, only as he has designed the affliction in mercy unto us, that they cannot take our lives one moment before our Father has accomplished his wise purposes with us in this vale of tears.

Such an established belief in the predestination of God serves to preserve us, amidst the various trials of life, and amidst the rage of persecution, from that fretful, sullen, and heart-sunken spirit manifested by Saul when he said, "Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards, etc.-that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, etc...." (I Sam. 22:7, 8. But on the contrary it will enable us to manifest that patient, resigned spirit, which David manifested when he said to Saul, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; But mine hand shall not be unto thee", (I Sam. 24:12) and when he said of Shimei, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, who shall then say wherefore hast thou done so;"...."Let him alone and let him curse for the Lord hath bidden him, it may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day". (II Sam. 16:10, 11, 12) In the case of Saul we see manifested the genuine temper of that spirit which will not have the Lord to reign over him, and which therefore rejects the purpose of God; in the other that humility and meekness which is incident to a belief and acquiescence, in the Sovereignty of God.

But David did not believe that God's having bidden Shimei to curse, or in other words, his having predestinated this act, exonerated him from guilt.

Hence David's directions to Solomon in I Kings 2:8, 9.

I will here leave the subject, praying that whilst others reproach us for believing in the Absolute Sovereignty of God, the Lord would bless us with more unshaken confidence in his universal predestination, and with a more entire submission to his Sovereign will in all things, and that whilst others indirectly charge God with revealing a doctrine that leadeth to licentiousness, God may manifest in us, that the belief of his truth and the power of his grace can so overcome the corruptions of our nature as to enable us to lead quiet, peaceable and godly lives.

Fairfax Court House, Virginia
February 24, 1834

S. Trott

Fayette, Alabama

Dear Sister Maud Laws and Family,

Your letter and contents were received according to mail schedule. I feel my inadequacy to express thanks to any one for a kindness shown us, but I believe that you know, and I know that God knows all things. I do believe that we are thankful to God for you, and for your kindness and thoughtfulness that has been such a noble part of all your dealing with your fellowmen, and more especially with and to the household of faith.

Reconciliation is a great victory over self. It only comes by the Lord bringing us into a reconciled state. I am ashamed to own it, and yet I know that He knows my weakness in every way, and more especially in that way. It seems so far from being what I would desire to be for it to be said that I am not reconciled to my gracious and heavenly Father. He has been so kind and so gracious to us in our nearly fifty-seven years together that I am fearful when I find myself at odds with the way that my affairs cross Him in disposing of my affairs to His Name's honor and glory.

Yes, I know that when I am turned to the written word of the history of His dealings with His children, that threaded throughout the sacred Scriptures are evidences that He has always stood on the side of Israel; that He has always wielded His sword and His power to the good of His children. More than that, I look back and I am made to say with John Newton that

"Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought us safe thus far,
And grace will lead us home."

and today, after having traveled in this good grace way, as I hope, for nearly fifty-five years, I do hope that the saving grace of God will uphold us and that He will not let us yield to any of Satan's seductive ways, nor let us yield to slavish fears.

I was disappointed in having to turn back from finishing our determined trip. How true it is that we poor, weak, trembling sinners propose, but that our Master disposes of all things to His Name's honor and glory. I had my misgivings about being mentally or physically able to drive up, but except for a little confusion in heavy traffic in Greensboro, North Carolina, I had made out right well for me. As you remember we were going to Welsh Tract on the second Sunday after being at Salisbury on the first Sunday, and then at Salisbury on Wednesday night as supply for Elder Poole. We had intended crossing the bay to see our friends in New Jersey, but all of those stops were interrupted by the sad tragedy of our granddaughter losing her baby. Our son told us that he would carry us back to Welsh Tract and that we could start over and finish the trip as we started out to do, but I did not think it was best to undertake it. I did not tell anybody that I would be back, but I did tell them that I doubted that I would try driving up any more. I might get brave enough, or even foolish enough to try it again, but I doubt that my children would let us do it.

It was lovely indeed to see the dear faces of the precious saints once again, and how sad it was to miss the dear faces of those that are now at home with the Lord forevermore. I did not express any sorrow at Brother and Sister Fooks being absent--I did express sorrow that they had launched out on the ocean of God's love, leaving us poor way-faring pilgrims still facing the rolling sea of time.

It is so good to have a good hope through grace of a better land. It is a land where

"No chilling winds, or pois'rous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.

When shall I reach that happy place,
And be forever blest;
When shall I see my Father's face,
And in His bosom rest?

Filled with delight, my raptured soul
Can here no longer stay;
Though Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearless, I'd launch away."

and I think and believe and hope that life's tempestuous seas have brought me to the place of a dear Elder in Texas when, as he lay dying, his last words were, "How sweet it is to die and go to my Saviour's arms".

This ungodly world talks much about the second coming of the Lord, but I fear it is lip service. God's dear people will go out of this fleshly cage that is such a burden to them, and it will be with joy unspeakable and full of glory (See Isa. 55:12) that they meet Him in His glory. The wicked will not be ready for Him, and they will cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them as His coming approaches. But to those that have been washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, when that day comes, when the glorious return of the Saviour, it shall be a delight to them, and they shall say, "Even so, Lord, come quickly". I do not know that I will be in that number. I do not know who will be in it, but I do know by the description of it, that it will be a happy time for the saints of God. the

Bible is not silent on it, but since I do not have any impression to preach anything about who is or who is not going to be keenly anticipating His coming, I will leave the speculating to those that speculate.

Now I must run. It has been such a pleasure, and so reassuring to have a few moments with you all in speaking about the love of God to sinners.

If I had a pen of a ready writer, and a thousand tongues of praise I would join you in praise to His high and lofty Name for having brought you to the threshold of a century. May His mercy continue as a bright and shining pearl, to give you light and joy from the rays of that pearl, who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once again, we desire to express our appreciation to you for your kindness to us.

The time, I well know, will come when we shall meet no more on this tragic sea of life, but if it ceases now or later, may the love that brought us into sweet union and fellowship never be severed but finally bring us home to the haven of eternal rest.

Lois joins me in love and fellowship,

Yours in that blessed hope,
(Elder) W. D. Griffin

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SOUND DOCTRINE

I must confess that I don't know how to put in words what I believe about Absolute Predestination. Let us consider the meaning of the word "absolute". According to Webster's Dictionary, the meaning is as follows: "Unconditional, unlimited, sovereign, and in one mind." If we take away the meaning of the word "absolute", then we have a conditional God, and if we have a conditional God, then we have a

conditional salvation!

Let us consider the meaning of "Predestination". Webster gives these words, "Foreordain, predetermine, appointed, determined."

I believe that God foreknew all things in eternity and as much as He did foreknow all things, it is a fact that there had to be a set time, a way, a place, and a manner for the coming to pass for every event, good or evil.

The reason that Paul mentions only the salvation and inheritance of God's elect was because that was his subject. Paul was concerned about the children of the promise, and he could have said that the unredeemed were predestinated to the second death, but the subject was concerning only the elect. (8th Chapter of Romans and 1st Chapter of Ephesians.)

Jude speaks about both the elect and the unredeemed. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Jude could have been right in saying "predestinated to this condemnation."

God is in control of all times and events. We know that God hates sin and loves righteousness, and everyone that is born again hates sin, also.

The purpose for sin is described in Romans 5:20, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." "Him, being delivered by

the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23)

Back to Jude. Jude said, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." These men were certain men, not just men, but certain men. The Virgin Mary was a certain virgin. The elect are a certain people, the house of Jacob, and these are ordained unto eternal life. The others are ordained to everlasting punishment; a certain people fitted to destruction which are the children of wrath. They will fit the place of their destination. The vessels unto mercy fitted or prepared unto eternal glory will fit the place of their destination.

Death is the end of all human nature, and the body returns back to dust from which it came and the spirit back to God from which it came. We receive the Spirit of adoption in the new birth, and as many as have this spirit are waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our bodies.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11) We have received the quickening Spirit. The Apostle was talking about the dead being raised. It is true that we are quickened together with Christ, but the quickening of our mortal bodies will take place in the resurrection when Christ will come to call us from the grave. Notice that he said, "He that raised up Christ will also quicken your mortal bodies". Using the word "also" has reference to the raising up of the dead.

In conclusion, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither

tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (James 1:13, 14)

(Elder) J. R. Hollandsworth

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER

November 8, 1973

Mount Vernon, Washington

Dear Sister in the Lord,

It was good of you to write us, telling that you are in good health and all was going along quite well with you. We are so glad to learn that you receive such wonderful love and attention from your dear ones, including your grandsons. So many of the youngsters these days seem to have but little actual love for their grandparents and most lose it when they get into their "teens" and far too many do likewise toward their parents. It is good to hear of yours being so good. That is a blessing, indeed.

We had a recent letter from dear Sister Josie, who seems to be holding up so well. She told of dear Sister Daisy and Sister Bowman both being in poor health. We hope both have improved since then. The remaining number of the Lord's little ones is so small in our area that it just seems we can't stand further losses, but the Lord's will must prevail, regardless of how hard it seems to usward.

In past months, while not too active physically, I "got in some licks" reading books and old, old numbers of "Zion's Landmark" and the "Signs", all of which treat on the old "Apostolic Doctrine" and rightly dividing of the Scriptures. I have had quite a few small books (sermons) by Philpot, Gilbert Beebe, Durand, and others, as well as larger books by John Bunyan, John Newton, and others so gifted to write their own experiences and their interpretations of the Holy Writ and all expose the false doctrines of ages past, and of their time. John Bunyan wrote the great allegory of the life of a Christian on earth, beginning with the

time the Lord took over and going on thru this life to that Celestial City which is the destination of all Christians. It was the "Pilgrim's Progress" which he wrote, among other inspired writings, while in English prison some 12 years, at the hands of the Church of England, which controlled the Government, having him imprisoned because he preached the Truth and would not yield to preaching their false doctrine.

Last month, I secured two more books, one of which I have read and the other I'm now reading. The first is the writing of Philip Henry of England, published in 1691 the first time, titled "Christ, All In All", and how I feasted on the wonderful way he brought out so many things most of us would never have enjoyed knowing of, or enlightenment we all seek after. The other book is by Jonathan Edwards of Connecticut, one of the greatest true gospel writers and preachers of that time (the 1700's) and some of his writings have appeared in past issues of the "Signs". His book is titled, "Charity, and Its Fruits", and what great and good reading it is, not only because he was highly educated (a President of Princeton University) but mainly because he was so well schooled (and inspired) in that great "School of the Lord" where Spiritual knowledge is taught and in none other anywhere. Most of us, me particularly, have thought on Charity, mostly as giving something to the poor and of being of the mind and nature of giving to others here on earth, and so on. He starts off with Paul's words in I Cor. 12:1-3, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing". He brings it out so clearly that Charity, in its true meaning and existance, stems from that great love of Almighty God for His elect and chosen ones, long 'ere the foundations of the world were laid and it follows that "It is the root, the spring, and as it were, a comprehension of all virtues". Thus

God's gift of His Holy Son and His Holy Spirit was that Virtue from which all other gifts and fruits spring, so what Paul wrote is so true, without it,--that virtue being in our heart and soul, what we may do, toward God, as well as toward mankind, "It profiteth nothing". What a treat to read this enlightening book, or recording of the thoughts of that inspired mind long years ago. I likely, later on, will secure other books by him.

I must not tire you with further writings, so I'll end up by saying that we think of all you good people in that area so often and talk of you all, individually, and collectively, often, and so often wish that we could be with you at your meetings. We'll try to be back with you again next spring and summer, the Lord willing.

Our love and affection to you,
Bill & Katherine Hall

Monroe, La.,
March 28, 1954

Dear Sir and Brother (I hope):

Well, Brother----, the Lord willing, I would like to tell you some of the travails of my life which includes nothing but ups and downs, a few pleasant moments at times, and lots of sad hours. I will try only to relate (the Lord being my helper) a few of the things that have taken place since I joined the church, so that you may know what a very sinful and deceiving wretch that I am. I don't know how the good people of the Church put up with me.

Now there was a few years after I joined the Church when I seemed to have lots of pleasant seasons and enjoyed great spiritual blessings which I do thank and praise Almighty God for this wonderful season, which I believe was seen by the brethren to the extent that they gave me liberty to speak concerning the convictings of my heart, and I would like to say here there was an impression of something that I could

not tell just what it was, and I wanted to talk Jesus and Him crucified continually, but I don't know if I ever spoke one word of truth to anyone or not concerning this wonderful salvation. But this did stay with me but did not seem to have enough weight as I felt it should for me to go forth in that Great and Dread Name of the Lord, and I began to feel maybe I should try and exercise what little light did seem to be there and if it pleased God to give me enlightenment I would do the best I could. But, just as this was about to take place, it seemed that all of a sudden all the sins that ever I did came rolling up before me like mountains and I was brought down so low in my feelings that it seemed the Lord was clean gone forever. And I believe right here, if it had not been for the memory of an occasion that took place with me while out in Texas in 1916, when, if ever I was delivered from that bottomless pit of sin, that desert land, and brought into that marvelous light and liberty of God Almighty, it was then at that time. And if it was not for this anchor, may I say, I would have to give up the whole thing. But thanks unto God these memories are still the sweetest of all things that I have ever seen.

Now I went on in this awful and heavy burden of sin and condemnation for several weeks, and I could not talk to anyone, and didn't care to see any of the brethren because I felt too unworthy and torn up and all undone to be in their presence.

Then I had this dream, and I thought I was brought to trial for my sins. It was at Liberty Hill Church and there was a big crowd there and I was called to give an account of all that I had done. There was a Judge in the stand, an old man a little humped and full of wrinkles, very wise and full of power, very lovely and very fearful. I knew he had the power to judge me either on the right hand or on the left, and Oh, how guilty I did feel. In the wrinkles of his face I could see love

and mercy, and oh how I did wonder if there was any for me, but I felt I would soon know my sentence, whether I be freed or whether I be condemned to everlasting Hell. Now there was a semi-circle in front of the altar, it seemed much larger than it really is, and I was given a seat just a little to right of center, Brother Rhodes was to my right side. He had a big book in his hand and full of writing. You were in the circle two seats from the left side and I don't know the names of the rest that were there, but I thought they were all Brethren and Elders. When all were seated and the Judge was leaning over the pulpit looking direct into my face, then Brother Rhodes opened the book and said, Brother Jasper, tell this body what you have to say for yourself. Then I stood up and began to relate everything that ever I had done in all my life, and the Judge was looking direct into my face and all through me, and I knew I could hide nothing from Him, mattered not if I tried, so I knew I must confess all my sins. And Oh how He did frown on me, and those eyes did burn through me, and I confessed all and didn't try to keep anything back. then, when I had finished relating all of my sins, I did beg for forgiveness of all the sins I had committed, and if possible to have mercy on me. Then I sat down and thought I would not hear the sentence whether I be saved, but no, I did not hear this for He did not say a word. He only smiled and gave three nods, one to the extreme right side, one to the center, and one to the extreme left side, and I thought everybody in the house was smiling. Then Brother Rhodes closed the book, everybody got up and went out, and Lo, I was still left to wonder: did not know and did not feel like this nod was for me for He didn't look direct at me in the nod. I followed them out of the house and everybody was smiling and seemed to be well pleased, but no one said a word. The weather was clear and it was a

wonderful day.

Now Brother ——, this took place with me in the summer of 1949 and I am still in wonderment as to what this all is, and I still don't know if I received the Savior's nod, and the liberty of thought I once had has not returned but just in a faint measure and very brief.

I don't know if I should have written these things or not. There may not be anything to it, but it does still have a great bearing on me, and if you have any comment to make on it I would be glad to hear from you, tho I do not feel worthy of taking up your time, not even to read this.

Remember me when at the throne of Grace, if you see fit.

An unworthy Brother if one at all,

J. H. Calk

(This good letter was sent to us by Brother C. C. Wilbanks of Monroe, Louisiana, with a request that we mention the writer, Brother Calk, consented to its publication, but did not request such. Editor.)

EDITORIAL

THE THEME OF THE GOSPEL

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command thee. (Deut. 18:18).

There has never been a mystery in the heart, or on the lips, of mortal man like unto this. Down the steeps of time, even in legend and prose and song, around the smoldering fires of ancient shepherds, and on the rugged mountain sides where sheep and cattle roamed the hills in search for tidbits of forage while their robe wrapped attendant hummed in monologues of the appearing of the promised Messiah. These are they that were waiting in keen anticipation for the coming to pass of this promised Saviour.

As I write, I feel a close kinship with these simple ancient shepherds, for I,

too, have watched through many long tedious watches, looking, ever seeking some small ray of light in the wee hours of the morning greatly fearing, as oftentimes, they greatly feared, that the prophets had been mistaken about the message having been delivered to them of the coming Day of righteousness. Oftentimes, in dismal days in the past, and with such thoughts bringing me up with the horror of such a terror, even in this the advanced evening of my life, I am not free of such experiences, to wit, perhaps I have been mistaken in the whole thing, perhaps I have reached for the substance and only come in contact with the shadow of it. I hope better things, and yet oftentimes the feeling of the presence of an abiding hope is so small that I realize it could be imagination. Yet, as it was with those humble shepherds, so it is now with me.

Speaking of looking back, I want to reach back into the history of Israel, of Jacob's family, of each of my readers. As I contemplate the vastness of such an audience, I do hope that you and I may unite in a brotherly embrace and behold the wonders of the gospel of the Son of God. If I read a text and find gossiping in it, I am as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; if I read a text, and I find in it and assume my being called to straighten out my brethren at home or abroad I am not only deceived but I am deceiving others. Will you remember me to the King that He give me an unction into divine matters whereby we would be comforted together in the mutual hope of our calling.

The most of us, at least the honest ones among us, are free to admit that we felt as Israel did, to wit, and Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." Every man of Adam's race is born into the world thinking that it is easy to comply with what the Lord

has commanded. In all the religious bodies under the sun, they claim the ability to get and keep the religion of Jesus Christ, excepting the Primitive or Old School Baptist people. They all claim, without exception, the ability to stop sinning and continue away from it. Let us remember that. And let us remember that all Israel said, "All that he has said, we will do."

How utterly different that it was when they were brought into His presence on the top of Mt. Sinai and heard the thundering voice of the Giver of the law when he said, The soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezek. 18:3, 20; Rom. 5:12, 21; 6:23). How utterly different it becomes today when Jehovah thunders it into our heart and mind and soul. Certainly our description of it is not a match for the description Inspiration has given us of Israel's pell mell dash down from the presence of that Voice. However, there is not the first one of those that have heard that Voice denounce sin and sinners, that will ever forget it. As our father, Adam, endeavored to do, and as our brethren tried to do at Sinai, even so we desired and tried to get away from it.

What a tragic scene it is today to hear people boasting that they can keep the law and be saved. It has seemed to me that I have felt the depression of mind, and the fatigue of body as he made his way to the debacle which Israel was making of law religion. Unless it was in an Old School Baptist meeting, I have never heard of feigned religion ending like this. Everybody that I have come in contact that have boosted the virtue to be had in the law, and the keeping of it, have been well pleased with the results of that law religion. The evidence is clear that in their case that they had not met the same God that Israel met on Sinai. Every last one of them ran from God that gave them the law. If there is any way to find out whether or not that Israel as a whole, did not flee from that law and the One that gave it I would like to communicate with them.

It is necessary for us to be reminded once again that all of them, each one for himself boasted that everything in that law that was commanded them, that they would do it. Let us find out how well they kept their promise. They thought that they wanted to hear that law; they had no uneasiness about keeping it. Here now, at the foot of this mountain that a Voice thundered death at them, we find this cringing battered nation, begging Moses to shield them from ever hearing it again. I call on those that have an interest in revealed religion, that you notice the difference now in this people, and when they first heard of it by word of mouth. They could keep it, and they would keep every mandate of it. They did not do it; however, there are many in our time that acknowledge the ease with which it may be kept and salvation gained by thus doing.

My leanness, my lack of knowledge, my inability to understand the plain letter of the word is a stumbling block to me. I have always had a tender feeling for Moses. What he represented, and who he represented, early enlisted my utmost sympathy. I have felt to some degree the heavy weight on his mind as he reluctantly agreed to carry their petition to God that they not hear that law again because of their inability to hear it and live. There are times when the fitting of Moses into the panorama of patterns is puzzling. Me thinks, as I watch him trudging up that fiery, steep mountain to the dwelling place of God as it is under His law, that he knew the futility of going back to God. But with their plea still ringing in his ears that they could not hear it and live, he started out to help if he could.

Usually, the surrounding scene of this momentous event would settle forever any case like it. It does seem, since people talk right much about a reasonable doctrine, that they could see what is transpiring here at the summit and the foot of Mt. Sinai, the welfare of creature religion. It does seem, since this

is the law which they are still depending on for salvation, that their failure here would enable them to read and to see, and thus to abandon it as a means to salvation. I have been hearing for seventy years that confession is good for the soul. They all, that is, all Israel, all those under the law, could not hear it and live. Here they all are sending to God a petition that He spare them hearing it again.

I watch this interview between Moses and the fiery and angry God of the mountain. Just for a fleeting second I would ask my reader to note, that while, as far as the law itself goes, it is an inflexible law; there is not any mercy in it. Yet, notice dear reader, a rich nugget of mercy even here. He did receive Moses. That law, within itself, would not have granted that second hearing. But it always has been that way. God has not dealt with us, as His poor frail people according to what we deserve; there has always been a mixture of mercy in His dealings with us, but it has not been on the basis of law, or in any sense because of a legalistic obligation. It has been because of the flowing fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness, and the cleansing power of which reached to both the former and the latter sea. Of that cleansing fountain that even there, God did receive Moses. What a difference is manifested as Moses intervenes in behalf of Israel. Moses speaks with Him about the inflexible edict delivered to them, and their feeling that they could not hear it and live. God in justice, could have angrily replied that is good enough for them, for they had formerly pointed out to me that anything that I had said or commanded that they would do. He could have said, from the standpoint of my law, that it was inflexible, that no mercy could ever be expected from it. I am, I humble trust, writing to those that are troubled about lawyers and doctors (of the law) telling them about the law of God. While justice

would have demanded ultimate and final death for every violation, yet mercy stepped in, and agreed with what Moses told him. He said, "They have well spoken that which they have spoken." They have spoken well. Strict justice would have stopped there; strict justice, would, then and there, have executed the penalty upon them for their sin. But justice did not prevail on them. Justice was not thwarted at all. The rigid penalty assessed against them was not alleviated or amended in the least degree. The longsuffering of God, the mercy of God, the love of God deferred the execution, but it did not forgo the execution of justice. We hear Him say, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of any brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken." (Deut. 18:5, 17).

At this time I bring unto you, one and all of the humble children of God, the theme of the gospel. As I approach the Man of the gospel I first would solicit your close attention to this promised Prophet. I realize that to those that are sitting as critics that it is trite, but, since it is my hope to have been wrought upon and within to the extent that I have been given the same determination of the apostle (I Cor. 1:2), I feel, not only to present every man as perfect in Him (Col. 1:28), but to point out and remove every impediment of the law (Gen. 49:10). This promised Prophet was to come among them, but He was to be like unto God. What a mystery is this. Verily, it is a time to be still and to know that He is God, and that He hath done what He pleased in heaven and in earth and in all deep places.

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles." I do hope that I have been blessed of God to show the utter failure of Israel to keep the law for salvation, to look up, and to feel and experience, as we look, the utter helplessness of any man or woman

obtaining salvation by the deeds of the law. At least by the letter, we have established that God Himself approved of them saying that they could not hear it and live, and further, of the blessed assurance that a good hope was given us through mercy in the raising up of a prophet which we would hearken to. I hope that we have been blessed with an insight into the fitness of this Prophet. He would be a fit Prophet for both of these estranged parties; He would be like unto God that was offended because of our sin, and like unto us, even of us, that had offended by our sin.

Now which one of those two parties brought this divine arrangement about? It is divine, that is assured, and, being divine, it is certain that none of the family of Israel contributed anything to its coming about. Thus, dear brethren, dear wayfaring strangers and pilgrims, it came from God. We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:9, 10). Not only did it become him to this for they having been elected to that end, and He elected to do this by Himself, but it was a becoming thing for Him to do. Everything to this end originated in the eternal mind of God. Nor did any earthly or created thing purpose this, neither did any of them bring it about. From God's eternal design in eternity until the last chosen vessel is safely housed in heaven, it is all of grace. Anything less, even one less than the whole, it would not have been becoming in God the Son, God the Father, God the Holy Ghost.

This Saviour to whom the spirit of Inspiration is calling attention to, is truly the Saviour of sinners. Not the first thing about it was secondary with God.

It was truly His only begotten Son appointed to this work. God was delighted in Him before, long, long before His incarnation in flesh, as the Saviour was long rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth long before He was made flesh. Too, after the incarnation in flesh God was well pleased in Him more than once. (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). While disturbed in his mind about taking Mary, his wife, unto himself, the problem was all solved by an angel coming from God to Him. As in every step of the way, the Lord went before and had everything ready. Not one hand was lifted to help Him; not one hand was lifted to successfully hinder Him.

Thus I have endeavored to set forth the need for the Saviour, and I have shown to you how that God carried out His pledge to send Him. If the Lord is willing, I will show you how the Son carried out His assignment. Will you please remember me when it goes well with you that I know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and again at the right hand of the Father in glory?

Elder W. D. Griffin

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

(Concluded from last month)

An inspired apostle assures us that that rock was Christ. --I Cor. 10:4, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." That is, the Rock, in its spiritual signification, was Christ. As Moses in this figure is the law, Aaron, the Levitical priesthood, the congregation of Israel, the chosen or elect people of God. And God himself stood before Moses, on the rock in Horeb; so God was

manifest in the person of his Son, and as Moses smote the rock with his rod, in anger, so fell the rod of the law, the sword of divine justice, in indignant wrath on Christ the Rock of our Salvation. Here all the wrath of Moses which burned against the rebels was exhausted, and he could curse them no longer; so this conflict secured the redemption and deliverance of all the people of God from the dominion of the law, and from the Levitical priesthood, and being so redeemed they all drank of that spiritual water which flows so abundantly from Christ the smitten Rock. And although justly charged by Moses (the law) with rebellion, they are saved from death, delivered from wrath, and cleansed from all pollution by the streaming waters of salvation flowing from the smitten Savior, which stream has followed them with ample supplies into the promised land.

As the wilderness represents the legal state of the people of God, Moses, or the law, never held dominion over them anywhere else, so the land of Canaan represents them in their gospel relation to Christ, who is the Rock of their salvation. We are aware that some have supposed the wilderness state represented the saints in the militant state of the church, and that Jordan signifies the stream of death, through which the saints are to pass when they enter heaven as the place of their ultimate rest and glory: there are many important reasons why we reject that application of the figure. There was much fighting to be done after entering that land, and a certainty that the conflicts of the Israelites should continue as long as Israel dwelt there with the remaining Canaanites; but we know that in the final consummation of the glory of the saints they shall be free from all turmoil and strife.

In the true application of these figures, Canaan represents the gospel state of the church. Jordan dividing that state from the wilderness--of the admini-

stration of Moses. The law and the prophets were until John, and John came in the wilderness of Judah, preaching repentance, and baptizing such as brought forth fruits meet for repentance, in the river Jordan, on their profession of faith in him who came after John, to baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Here God was manifest in the flesh, as standing there upon the rock in Horeb, here the Rock which was Christ, in the figure, received the smitings of the rod of the law, met all its requisitions, suffered all its penalties, bore all its wrath and indignation, and obtained eternal redemption for his people; then rising from the dead, as our spiritual Joshua, he calls all his own sheep, or people, by name, and leads them to living fountains of water; receives his kingdom, enters into his glory, ascends his Mediatorial throne, while the eternal Father proclaims, "Moses, my servant, is dead, arise go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." (Josh. 1:2) Our risen Savior, our anti-typical Joshua, rising from the dead, assumes his reigning power, and God the Father from high heaven proclaims his inauguration, saying, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." (Psa. 2:6) "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," etc. (Heb. 1:8)

Now, to return to our text. Moses, for reasons which we have seen, had been previously informed, could hold his dominion no longer; now from the heights of Nebo, from the top of Pisgah, he surveys the landscape, and is assured that this is the inheritance secured by oath and promise to the people of Israel. "And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed". The gospel kingdom, the gospel state, and all gospel blessings, and gospel privileges

were secured to the heirs of promise "by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie". "Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, (unto Abraham) Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." And all this assurance is given, "that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth in that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec". (Heb. 6:18-20) Moses, or the law, certainly foresaw and foreshadowed the glorious kingdom of our spiritual Joshua. All the landmarks of the heavenly Jerusalem, were seen in the distance by the eye of the law; for "his eye was not dim, nor was his natural force abated". But he could not extend his dominion into the gospel precincts. He has smitten the Rock with the rod, and now his mission is fulfilled. Israel is now dead unto the law, to Moses, by the body of Christ, and Israel is married to another, even unto him that is risen from the dead, that they should bring forth fruit unto God, that being dead in which they were held. No more under the law, but under grace; under law not to Moses, but unto Christ. "Thou shalt not go over thither". Blessed prohibition. Neither we nor our fathers were able to bear his yoke. If the law could follow us into the kingdom of our Lord, who could stand before it? Moses is not only dead, but God has buried him, and after the diligent research of all the workmongrel world for nearly four thousand years, his sepulchre has not been found. Satan has long disputed with Michael our prince about the body of Moses, and all the children of the devil still dispute with the subjects of that glorious Prince, on the same subject. They desire to be under the law; because they do not hear the law; but the

law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death; 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, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Moses' law was a ministration of death; but the gospel is the ministration of life; how then could we be under both at the same time? The precepts of Moses were written and engraven on tables of stone, but the law of the spirit of life is written in our heart. The yoke of Moses is called the yoke of bondage. (Gal. 5:1) But the law of Christ, our spiritual Joshua, is called "The perfect law of liberty". (James 1:25)

Whether we have succeeded in satisfying the inquiries of our aged brother or not, we have so far complied with his request as to give him, at least, some of our views upon the subject. Volumes might be written without exhausting so rich a subject. We hope that none who are dead to the law and married to Christ will feel inclined to dishonor their living Husband, by attempting to search for or dig up the body of Moses, from whom they are redeemed. *The dead husband when living demanded every thing but furnished nothing; the living husband furnished every thing and demands nothing.* The former always cursed and never blessed; the latter always blesses but never curses. How unreasonable to give the preference to Moses over Christ.

"Israel rejoice, now Joshua leads,
He'll bring your tribes to rest;
So far the Savior's name exceeds
The ruler and the priest."

Elder Gilbert Beebe

PSALMS 92:12

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in

Lebanon."

It is declared in God's word concerning man by nature that none is righteous, no, not one, yet the Lord is graciously pleased to speak of his people, as they stand in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Righteous. Not because of any righteousness in them, but because the righteousness of Christ is imputed unto them, just as their sins were imputed unto him. He is the one of whom Job says, "The righteous shall hold on his way," and of whom David (Psalm 1.) says, He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water whose leaf also shall not wither. Therefore it is declared (Isaiah 65:22), "As the days of a tree are the days of my people," and they are also spoken of as "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."-Isaiah 61:3.

Man by nature is like his first parent, Adam, disobedient, conceived in sin. Springing from Adam, he is just Adam multiplied, which is a multiplication of death and desolation. But we would speak of Christ, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, for from him comes life and vigor, even as from the first Adam springs death and desolation. Thus he is truly the righteous that shall flourish as the palm tree. The Jews looked on him as a root out of a dry ground, for he was not of the tribe of Levi, from whom sprang the priesthood. It is true the palm tree seems to grow in a dry ground, for it is often found in a desert land, but there must be water to sustain it. It will not grow there unless there are springs of water, and the water has to be of a certain kind. For instance, when Israel came up out of Egypt, they came to Marah, where the waters were bitter. They found no palm trees there, yet they had to travel that way and know what bitterness was. It is written that they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. The bitterness of this life, which is a living death because of sin to those by whom it is felt, is such that but for Jesus they could not

endure it. But let us remember that Jesus was given vinegar mingled with gall, and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. He tasted death for every man, for Moses (the law) cut down a tree (meaning Christ) and cast it into the waters. Thus bitterness and death were ours until Christ was slain for us. The troubled and polluted springs of this life could be changed only by the death of our Lord and Savior, and when he appears prisons palaces prove, the bitter is sweet, the medicine is food. Jesus cut down by the law sweetens the cup of the Lord's people. The traveler may go for days and not see a palm tree, neither will he find water fit to drink; so we may go days and travel many miles and there may be those (natives of the place who do not taste aright) who will cry, Lo here is water, but how often we prove it is bitter, for it is all what man can or should do and there is no Jesus preached or set forth crucified, so we do not find palm trees there. In the providence of God there are sweet springs, clear as crystal, from the rivers the streams whereof make glad the city of God, and there are the palm trees, for there the Lord has planted grace in the hearts of his people, and here he sends the streams whithersoever he will to water the plants of his grace.

Thus we would say to the wayfaring man, the palm trees are found in the desert, perhaps miles apart, but at certain places, where the traveler finds sustenance, fruit, shelter and rest. We are in a wilderness world, and there are spots today far apart, but receiving sustenance from the same source: plants of God's planting sustained by the pure unadulterated gospel of the Son of God, which is indeed sweet to the taste of God's tried and afflicted people. Thus the palm tree is found by the sweet springs, not by the cisterns, broken cisterns that man may dig, which set forth creature works and man's power. There is nothing in all such doings to comfort or sustain one poor soul. What

do poor souls need? They need Jesus set before them as the way, the truth and the life of all that live. Jesus is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the root and the tree and the fruit. There must be a root before there can be the tree or the fruit, and as is the root so is the fruit.

Now all the flourishing of the palm tree is in the head, so Jesus also is the head, so when brethren are confessing their unworthiness they are speaking the truth in love, and, as Paul says, They grow up into him, in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Eph. 4:15) Take the head, or top, away from the palm tree and it would leave nothing but a dead stump; take away Jesus from the saints and what is there? One sings,

"Depart from thee, 'tis death, 'tis more;
'Tis endless ruin, deep despair."

So the wayfaring man does not expect to see anything in the stem, but his eyes go up, up unto the head, or top, of the palm tree.

To carry the figure further, one has never heard of the desert traveler carrying a ladder with him, for this tree itself is a ladder, "a ladder from earth to heaven," (Gen. 1:51); for the stem, or trunk, of the palm tree is where the tree has been stripped of its glory, or branches, by man, leaving rough places, setting forth Jesus stripped of his glory, wounded and bruised for our transgressions, and it is with his stripes we are healed. If ever we are to have palms of victory, or have our mouth sweetened by the date which the palm yields, the only way is in and through the wounds of Christ. Our fruit and shelter is in Christ and through him. The church flourishes in Christ, and in him the one becomes a thousand. The temple of Solomon had its doors and walls covered with palm trees within and without (2 Chron. 3:5; 1 Kings 6:29). "Palm trees with open flowers," for under the legal covenant "the time of fruit was not yet come," but the open flowers carry a wonderful truth which

we will mention. The palm trees have male and female flowers, and, when fully open, the wind carries the pollen from one flower to another; so the church waited for the descent of the Spirit, as a rushing mighty wind that filled all the house, and the results were soon manifest. Those fearful apostles went forth fearless, preaching a risen Savior, mighty to save. The Spirit of God, the wind that bloweth where it listeth, must take of the things of Jesus and reveal them unto us.

We have been speaking of Jesus as the righteous, but to us our text is setting forth his people, his church, his house where he dwells, and she shows forth the praise of him who has called her out of darkness into his most marvelous light. The fruitful tree was the female, so the Jews looked upon some women as upright and beautiful as the palm tree, and they called them "Tamar." In this spirit the Lord speaks of his bride, the church, in Song of Solomon 7:7, 8: "This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." In the temples of old the palm trees with open flowers were carved on the doors and walls, but in God's spiritual temple, whose temple ye are, his people are living trees, ever green, showing evidence of life at all times, even though it be by a groan or a sigh; trees that cannot bear fruit of themselves, for the Lord saith, "From me is thy fruit found." They grow in the wilderness of this world, subject to wind and storm, growing from within as the palm tree grows from within. That which is nearest the earth looks rough and dark; there is nothing in the stem to desire, so the Lord's people in relation to this world are often avoided, misjudged as unsociable and narrowminded. Yet far above this earth they tower, rightly seen and known by heaven, though misunderstood by earth. They stretch forth their branches toward heaven, showing forth the praises of him who

has redeemed them, for is it not in his love that they rejoice? His mercy and grace cheer and animate them, and when the wind, the Spirit, moves them how gracefully they respond.

Let us here remember that the palm branch denotes victory. In Revelation the saints are clothed with white robes, and have palms in their hands, and cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." After Israel had gathered the fruit of the land she was to take the boughs of godly trees, branches of palm trees, to make booths for shelter where they rested and rejoiced in the fullness of the harvest. It is as the things of Jesus are blessed to us, and we handle and taste of the word of life, that we find rest for our souls and we rejoice in Christ, our head. Palm branches are from ten to fourteen feet long and are different from the branches of any other tree. They only move when blown by the wind; and does not the church rejoice and sing the song of victory as she is moved by the Spirit of God? When Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, did not the multitude take branches of palm trees and cry, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."—John 12:13. The palm tree often reached a hundred feet high, towering above man, yet if man would sweeten his mouth with luscious dates he must look up for them. Does not this bring to our minds the sweetness we have at times enjoyed when resting under the shadow of the Lord Jesus, hearing the saints of God tell of their hopes and fears? How different to the world and worldly things, which often leave an unpleasant taste in the mouth. When we have heard Jesus exalted above puny man our hearts have rejoiced and we have tasted of the heavenly gifts and the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. It is then the palms wave before the Lord as the Holy Spirit warms our hearts and unlooses our tongues. It is then there is a

flourishing as the palm tree, a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh.

On one occasion, years ago, when we resided in New York City and were kept busy with our daily labor, we left home one Sunday morning for meeting feeling very downcast, unfit to meet with the brethren, realizing in our soul that we were nothing but a lump of sin. We arrived at the meeting just in time to hear Elder McConnell give out hymn 977 in Beebe's collection:

"I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there."

And as he outlined the third verse:

"I want that grace that springs from thee,
That quickens all things where it flows,
And makes a wretched thorn like me
Bloom as the myrtle or the rose."

We were moved beyond words to express, and it was, we hope, what Jesus meant to us that moved us. It is this something secret that sweetens our cup even if it is filled with gall. The righteous shall flourish, not in self-righteousness, not in self-praise, not in the world, for in the world ye shall have tribulation. The water of the word shall spring up in them, for Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (it being from an eternal source); "but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Such will be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of him of whom Paul said, "Who loved me and gave himself for me," and being rooted in his love they will grow up in Christ Jesus in all things; that is, in his teachings and in his doctrine, believing that every word he spoke will stand when this vain world shall pass away. We have said before that all glory and beauty and fruit are in the head, Christ Jesus, and when all around will be dry and burnt up, the palm tree will be fresh and green; and if there be the least

shelter from the storm, or shadow from the heat, it will be from Him.

Now let us look at the latter part of our text: "He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Cedar, because of its durability, was used in the building of the temple, and the cedars of Lebanon were the pride of Israel in its most flourishing times. They stood upon the mountain side, deeply rooted in the rocks and receiving continuous watering from the melting snow which capped the mountain all the year round. Thus while the earth beneath them was often dry and parched, they were ever sustained from above. Here again we have a tree that is evergreen, but differing in some respects from the palm, in that it lasts much longer. Its wood is used for building and will last for hundreds of years. It also has branches which hide the trunk that sustains them, yet such is its wonderful growth, that, from the distance, it stands like a monument towering into the heavens. Like a pinnacle of the temple, pointing to heaven, the faith of a child of God as he walks in Christ points away from this world to that which is to come. Its growth is not with haste, but it is a steady growth, and, though it is evergreen, it has its seasons.

Sometimes there is a fragrance which is spoken of as the smell of Lebanon; at other times, when winter is over, the winds shake it to its very roots, so that, the earth being soft, the roots spread and push deeper, taking hold of the rock to sustain the new growth of the tree which follows. So the righteous shall take root downward and they shall bear fruit upward. We would mention that these cedars are not planted by man, but by God, and, living for hundreds of years, they set forth the trees of righteousness to the glory of God. There is one thing we have noticed with regard to the cedar: as it grows it gets smaller and smaller, and so we have seen in the testimony of Zion, there is a feeling that He shall increase but I shall decrease. Wherever we see such an one he towers

away above a worldling, he is watered from above and is rooted in the rock. The cedar of Lebanon was ultimately to come into the house of the Lord "to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." —Isaiah 60:13.

Thus his children grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, to fit them for his temple, where they shall live forever. The palm tree may go down into dust, yet it is said another will grow up out of its root. Job 14:7-9, says, "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. (Jesus is that one that grows up as a tender branch and he will not cease.) Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." How few such places there are today, where the word of the Lord has free course, without the works of man being mixed in to embitter them, to the sorrow of those who look for better things. Yet today there are a few spots where the people of God are found watered by the unadulterated word of God. Dr. Watts, writing on the latter part of our text, sings,

"Lord, 'tis a pleasant thing to stand
In gardens planted by thy hand;
Let me within thy courts be seen,
Like a young cedar fresh and green.

There grow thy saints in faith and love,
Blessed with thine influence from above;
Not Lebanon with all its trees
Yields such a comely sight as these.

The plants of grace shall ever live;
Nature decays, but grace must thrive;
Time, that doth all things impair,
Still makes them flourish strong and fair.

Laden with fruits of age, they shew
The Lord is holy, just and true;
None that attend his gates shall find
A God unfaithful or unkind."

Elder George Ruston
June 1938

“Salvation is of the Lord.”

Jonah

January 10, 1980

Dear Elder and Sister Poole,

I hope this past year has added many beautiful memories for you and your family. One of the sweetest memories to me was one I was privileged to share with you; and that was the fifth Sunday meeting in July at Hopewell Church near Winnsboro, Texas.

There was something special about that three-day meeting. A feeling of humbleness and a feeling of joy seemed to pervade everything that happened.

If a scripture could capture this feeling, it would possibly be Matthew 18:12-13. Here Jesus is speaking in a parable on Himself when He says, "How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray."

Herein is one of the most meaningful, beautiful, and astounding parables in the Bible.

Let's first look at the magnitude of the flock. We know that, compared to the rest of the world, the sheep represent a small proportion (Matt. 7:13-14). Yet the total number of His sheep represents "a great multitude which no man can number." (Rev. 7:9) So the size of His flock is very, very large.

Now let's take a look at your hope. Sometimes that hope is very strong and surely you feel that the Spirit is bearing witness with your spirit that you are the children of God. And at other times, it almost ebbs away. Yet even at that time, you know you wouldn't trade it for all the riches of this world. Then, by the grace of God, all of you are members of that flock.

And all of you have one thing in common as the prophet Isaiah lamented, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his

own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:6)

Everyone has gone astray at one time or another. Notice that this is in the past tense. It has already happened.

Now we come to the astounding part of the parable. We come to the part that is almost beyond all comprehension. Do you realize what this parable now means to you? This means that He has already done it!! He has left the thousands and thousands and thousands of sheep in the flock behind...left them all behind; and He has gone to get you, and to pick you up in His loving arms, bearing both yourself and your iniquities, and to bring you back to the sweet presence of the flock. Oh, what manner of love is this! What rejoicing in Christ!

If we could only grasp for a fleeting second the full meaning and depth of this parable, it would be sufficient to cause continuous praises and thanksgiving to His Name forever and ever.

It was this same feeling of humbleness and joy in the presence of Christ that was felt at Hopewell Church. Surely we had a season during those three days when that warfare between the flesh and the spirit was made to subside, that we may be raised in the Spirit to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. You could almost see the spirit of love flowing from breast to breast.

All the members of Hopewell Church were happy to hear that you plan to attend this year's fifth Sunday meeting in June, 1980. And we hope to have as many visiting elders and brethren as possible.

For your recollection, last year we had 17 speakers, to include yourself, Elders Lambert, Wall, Haygood, McCool, John Lee Smith, Graydon Smith, Moon, Winfrey, McLaughlin, Daniel, Shipman, Burkhalter; Brothers Lackey, Vaughn, and James Hamrick; and Hopewell's pastor, Elder Joe Hamrick, Sr.

I sincerely hope that the gentle Shepherd will richly bless you and your family for this new year and for many more years to come.

In Hope of Christ,
Joe Hamrick, Jr.

COMPARING THE FLOWERS

My beloved Pastor:

The other day when you asked me about my roses. I have no idea why I answered you in such a foolish way - "that they were like a few Old School Baptists cornered off in a hugh church of the world."

The annuals with their bright colors; gaudy no innate beauty, here today then gone; no life in them to bloom again; they just grow, spreading out to smother the roses if they could.

The roses, with their soft and delicate beauty seem quiet, trusting, and sending up a sweet odor that is pleasing to Him who made them. They bloom; they fade, they bloom and fade again, but life is still in the cane. They come back another year more beautiful than before.

How like our Spiritual life. The annual flowers are so like the one whom God has not touched with His love. They bloom in a fashion and are gone forever. The true Child of God, like the roses, has many enemies, many crosses. Sometimes the blooms are small, but never forgotten by their Gardener. There is still life in the vine, Christ, and it comes forth in His time and in His likeness.

May I thank God for showing me these little Bethels along the way.

With much love,
A Sister in hope,
Maude P. Truitt

A good king carefully observes the law. Christ, the king of Zion, kept the divine law in all respects; and His converted subjects first trust in Him as a law-fulfiller ere they

can obey Him acceptably as a law-giver.

Toplady

OBITUARIES

GLADYS CONNER TURNER

Sister Turner was born April 17, 1912 in Patrick County, Va. She died August 29, 1979 being 67 years of age, 51 of which were in marriage to her husband and my pastor, Elder Cecil E. Turner. To this union was born one son, Elbert. She is survived by Brother Turner, Elbert, his wife, Avis and two grandchildren, Mark and Aleta, all of Bassett, Va. She was indeed a genuine helpmeet to her husband and talented much in industry as well as favored with good judgment to the benefit of her brethren and friends.

She enjoyed some 44 years of membership amongst the Old Baptist wherever her lot was cast amongst them. She was well known up and down the East coast and respected by all who knew her. She was baptized in 1935 by Elder Dan Helms and retained her entire membership with the church at Riverview, Bassett, Va. The report of her church, as well as others of like order everywhere, was that she was a sister beloved and a mother in Israel.

She was fortunate to have only a few days illness, less than a week, before her spirit was called away and the report was that she passed gracefully. Her funeral was held at McKee Funeral Home by Elder Donald Smith, Elder James Hollandsworth and Elder Posey Ingram. Her body was left to rest in Roselawn Cemetery in Martinsville where it awaits what every other subject of grace longs for, that is, the coming again of our Savior.

Sister Turner's gift from heaven was multiple but some of the more visible attributes were patience and perseverance. It may have been possible to find her discouraged but never mad or ugly and I'm sure the young of today would do well to glean from her wisdom, experience and memory.

She had a stability that I verily believe was of divine origin. She knew in whom she believed and was persuaded long ago that he

was able to keep that which she had committed into his hands. She had veins of charity running in her being that made her adaptable to the needs of the day. I'm sure she knew what it meant..."as thy day may demand so shall thy strength be".

Much could be said about this pillar of God's mercy in the earth and still not the half been told but suffice it to say that God sent her here, the church in the earth received her with thanks, she lived and died honorably and may it be our favored lot who are left behind, family and friends, to do likewise by God's grace.

I didn't think I could do an obituary like this at first but I freely say with joy, its been a pleasure. May God's grace preserve us until we go to be with Sister Turner and all others of like precious faith who have gone on before.

Written by request,
James R. Holley

LUCY BOAZE PAYNE

At the request of Old Mountain Church we will try to write a memorial of our dear friend, Lucy Boaze Payne.

Lucy was born September 13, 1907, a daughter of the late Roy P. Boaze and Nora Jackson Boaze.

On June 9, 1923 she married John J. Payne, who survives. Most of her life was spent in Pittsylvania County and for the last 25 years she had lived in Danville, Virginia.

She passed away in Memorial Hospital on March 10, 1979, after several years of declining health. Surviving in addition to her husband of the home are three daughters, Mrs. Katherine P. Rigney, Baltimore, Md., Mrs. Dorothy P. Walton, Dayton, Ohio, and Mrs. Nancy P. Burnett, of Dry Fork, Virginia; three sons, John T. Payne, Morris A. Payne, and Jerry W. Payne, all of Danville, Va.; also five sisters, Mrs. Lula Thomas, Mrs. Annie Mae Ayers, Mrs. Bertie Settle, and Mrs. Mary Christ, all of Lynchburg, Va., and Mrs. Janey McHaney, Naurine; one brother, Garland Boaze of Danville, 14 grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren.

Although Lucy's name was not written on the visible Church book we feel sure it was written in the Lamb's book of Life before the foundation of the earth was laid. This was

observed from her daily walk in life. She dearly loved the Primitive Baptist Doctrine and the brethren and sisters. She loved to hear her husband and others read the Bible and talk on the scriptures, and she went to church as often as her health would permit, and she rejoiced. Her favorite song was "O, How happy are they, Who their Saviour obey." We believe she did obey.

She was much loved by all who knew her. Brother Johnnie, her husband, often said of her, "She is a wonderful companion, a good wife, a good mother, a good cook, and a good housekeeper. What more could you ask."

Her funeral was held in Wrenn and Yeatts Funeral Chapel on March 12, 1979, by Elder H. W. Wray and Elder D. V. Spangler. Her body was laid to rest in Hiland Memorial Burial Park beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the second coming of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Written by order of conference at Old Mountain Church.

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

POSIE LESTER LYNCH

Posie Lester Lynch, the son of Julia Frances and Peter William Lynch, was born January 31, 1890, and passed away February 19, 1978.

Brother Posie married Laura Alice McCall, October 13, 1915. They were blessed with three sons; Cecil D., Guy T., and Posie L. Lynch, Jr., all of Rocky Mount, Va.; three daughters, Mrs. Lorene Thurman, Mrs. Eleanor Woody, both of Rocky Mount, Va., and Mrs. Anne McBride of Roanoke, Va. Also surviving is one sister, Mrs. Pearl Perdue.

Brother Lynch united with the Primitive Baptist Church in Charleston, West Virginia, and was baptized by Elder B. F. Robertson. He was received by letter at Rocky Mount Church on March 24, 1928, and was ordained a deacon on August 24, 1935. He served his church faithfully as long as he was physically able.

His funeral was conducted February 21, 1978, by his Pastor, Elder Cecil E. Turner, who hopes to meet him, together with all the saints, on that great day.

Written by request,
Cecil E. Turner

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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TO THINK OF OTHERS

Lord let me think of others,
And leave myself alone:
To dwell on others comfort,
And never on my own.
Please let me not be selfish,
For that is wrong indeed:
But let me please my neighbors
And think upon their need.

Lord let me help another,
And never cast them down:
But let me spread some sunshine
And never cause a frown.
And if someone is troubled,
Lord let me lift them up.
So that the peace of Heaven,
Will over run their cup.

And when my soul is bowing,
Before Thy Throne above,
Please fill my heart with kindness,
With tenderness and love.
And if a soul is lonely,
And feel there's none to care,
Lord, let me be the someone,
My love with them to share.

By Ethel Gilland

PREDESTINATION

Brother Beebe:--Having understood that several of our Brethren in different places, as well as others, have so construed my pieces on the Absolute Predestination of all things, as to infer that I represent God to be the Author of sin, I have been led to look over those Numbers to see if I did make any slip on that point, and leave any sentence so worded, as to give just ground for their construction. But I did not find a single sentence, which by any fair interpreta-

tion, represents God as being the author of sin in general, or as compelling the creature to a sinful choice by any arbitrary force put upon his mind. I think, if any of our Brethren, who have taken up this wrong idea of those Numbers on Predestination would take the trouble to examine them again impartially, they will find that so far from my representing God as being so the author of sin as to exempt man from guilt in his sinful transactions, I have endeavored particularly to show, whilst the predestination of God determines that sin, and the sinful acts of men and devils shall result in the accomplishment of his own glorious purposes, that this predestination does not destroy the free agency of man, but leaves him free to act, and consequently conscious of his guilt, and justly subject to punishment for his crimes. As in the case of Joseph's Brethren and of the Assyrian (No. 4, Signs No.*) and of Judas and the Jews, (No. 2, Signs No. 5).

Persons who make these objections to my views as published seem to overlook the fact that I speak of God's government in this case, as being a predestination, or pre-determination, to permit such and such acts of depravity to take place, and to cause them to produce certain results, and to transpire under certain circumstances; and not a predestination to compel men to perform those acts.

I know that many persons have, in their minds, so attached to the term predestination, the idea of arbitrary force exerted upon the minds of men compelling them to act as never to attend to any other explanation given to the subject. Whereas by attaching such an idea to the term predestination when spoken of God, they divest him of that infinite wisdom and understanding which belongs to him, and bring him down to a level with us short-sighted mortals. Man when he absolutely pre-determines an act or event, acts foolishly, for he knows not what an hour

may bring forth. Not so with God. He can, and does declare the end from the beginning with all the attendant circumstances.

Persons who suffer their minds to be thus swayed by their prejudices against a term, can scarcely fail of attaching to the combined terms, absolute predestination, everything awful and tyranical. The plain natural meaning of the term absolute is unconditional, in this sense, and in this sense only is it used in this connection. And whilst we contend for an absolute or unconditional predestination, we deny that there is any thing like an arbitrary purpose or act to be found in the government of God.

In order if possible to be more clearly understood upon this point I will offer a few additional remarks:

1. That such is the depravity of human nature, that so sure as he is given up to the sway of any one of his passions, and comes into contact with circumstances exciting him to the gratification of that passion, so assuredly he perpetrates the crime to which his depraved passion thus urges him. David in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah, being left to the influence of his passion, needed but the exciting circumstance of seeing from the roof of the King's house the woman washing herself, to lead him on to that course which resulted in the consummation of his whole crime. David therefore instead of charging this act upon God, was conscious that it was chargeable only to the depravity of his own heart, and therefore justly says to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord". And yet there is no room left to suppose that this whole affair was not embraced in the predeterminate purpose of God, for it was a very important link in that chain by which Shiloh descended from Judah.

Hence, 2d. That whilst the predestination of God extends to every event which takes place in the universe, it puts no other force upon the minds of sinful agents than that of restraint. God has predestinated that men shall not act

out the depravity of their hearts, any further than he, for wise purposes, has predetermined to let them go in sin. For producing this restraint, he employs various instruments, as education, public opinion, etc., and also frequently causes the various passions of man to counteract the undue influence one of another. In a word, the predestination of God secures that so far as he had determined to leave any one to act out the depravity of his heart, so far attending circumstances shall be favorable thereto; as in the case of Pharoah: "Even for the same purpose have I raised thee up, (that is, by my providence, to the throne of Egypt, that full opportunity may be given thee to show the haughtiness and cruelty of thy heart,) that I might show my power in thee, (in causing thy arrogance and rage to work thy own destruction and my people's deliverance.)" So of Judas, the thirty pieces of silver are secured to him for a bait.--On the other hand wherein God has determined to restrain the wrath of man, or to put restraints upon his depravity, he places him in circumstances calculated to exert the necessary force upon his passions.

But from whence comes depravity and sin? Sin exists in the world in the depravity of man and yet in its origin it was a non-existence; not a creature, nor an eternal existence. God is but the innocent cause, if I may use the expression, of its having an existence. Had not God brought intelligent creatures into existence sin could never have had a being; and if God had not created and placed those creatures under a law, and left them to the free exercise of their own wills whether to obey or not, sin would never have become an existence in the world; and yet not God but angels and men, each in his sphere, brought it into existence.

The existence of sin in the world, may be aptly illustrated by the existence of darkness. Darkness could never have had an existence had not God made crea-

tures needing the medium of material light in order to the exercise of their organs of vision. For in God is no darkness at all. But when creatures were produced needing material light to enable them to see, the absence of that light is what we call darkness. In reference to the statement (Gen. 1:2) "And darkness was upon the face of the deep;" I understand it to be spoken in relation to the progress of creation, and to be an intimation that the material light suiting this material world was not then created, and that this darkness or absence of light was no more a direct production of God than was the formless state of matter in its original production. The one was the absence of that order which was afterwards given to the matter created; the other, the absence of that light which creatures would need to the use of sight. It is true God has given to material darkness a permanent being in relation to creatures on earth, by dividing between the light and between the darkness, instead of giving to the light an entire sway over the earth.

So of sin, to go back no farther than its relation to man, God made man upright, but made him a dependent and an accountable creature and therefore laid him under obligations to be holy in heart and life unto God, or in other words, to be entirely and voluntarily devoted to the will of his Creator. And being thus created God gave him a command as a test by which to prove his voluntary subjection to his Creator or his voluntary holiness. I say to prove whether he would be holy to God. I know the general idea is, even among those who we esteem sound, that God created man a holy being, but this is an idea I have not been able (Perhaps from inferiority of intellect), to comprehend, that is, to say in relation to heart holiness or voluntary devotion to God. I know that the word holy is sometimes used to denote mere freedom from impurity, in this sense I cheerfully give in to

the idea, that man was created holy, that he came from the hands of his Creator pure. Man being thus put to the test, he soon showed a destitution of that voluntary holiness, that self-devotedness to God which, his being a creature, laid him under obligation to exercise. This want of holiness was sin, it was a violation of his obligation and a transgression of the command under which he was placed. And I do not know but that Adam's thus preferring his own gratification to submission to the government of God was as much a natural or necessary consequence of his being left to choose for himself as is the succession of darkness to the withdrawal of light. I know that being thus left to his own choice, the very first occasion finds him choosing to set up for himself, for Adam was not deceived; and I know that God with certainty knew that this would be the course of man; hence the setting up of Christ before the foundation of the world. The act was Adam's own, it was not that Satan infused any evil principle into him. Satan was only an instrument in beguiling Eve, or exciting him to a choice upon the point. Man having made his choice to serve self rather than God; the penalty of the command took immediate effect, and depravity runs through the whole human family, and became from the choice of Adam, the reigning power over the human heart, reigning unto death; the penal requisition of the law giving it that power, for the strength of sin is the law. Hence man exists under the law of sin and death, from which he could be ransomed only by the blood of Christ; and delivered only by being brought into a new existence as a new creature in Christ, and that only by the power of God.

Do any ask what has predestination to do with this? I answer that it has this much to do with it; that God predestinated man to be, or pre-determined to make him just such a creature as he was, and to leave him to encounter the

temptation in his own creature weakness, that he might act freely without the restraints of communicated holiness; with the certainty of his falling and becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and thus an occasion should be offered for bringing in the Sun of Righteousness. And here is the counterpart to the figure of darkness. If creatures had not been so formed as to need material light, there would have been no occasion for the sun; if man had not so fallen, as to need a Divine Saviour, the Word had not been made flesh. Hence says Christ, "I come a light into the world". And in the coming of Christ there is "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards man." If glory to God in the highest come through Christ, then predestination has assuredly secured a greater good by man's being left to fall, than could have come to the universe by his being supported and confirmed by the power of God in his original state of uprightness. Thus the predestination of God instead of making God the author of sin, secured that all the glory of redemption should result from the malice of Satan and the native weakness of man.

S. Trott

Fairfax Court House, Virginia
July 7, 1834

RECEIVING MEMBERS

Christ has given commands in regard to the order of his church: who are to be admitted, and who retained in the fellowship of the church. He that believeth and is baptized, whether Jew or Gentile, whatever he may have been; whether a moralist or a murderer, a persecuting Saul or a devout Pharisee; if born again, and recipients of the faith of God's elect, gladly receiving the word, they must be baptized and added to the church, received into the fellowship of the saints, and admitted to all the privileges of God's House.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

708 N. Casa Grande Circle
Duncanville, Texas 75116
CALLING UPON GOD

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."--Isaiah 65:24

If a person is predestinated to be an heir of grace, then he or she will truly call upon God.

There are actually two types of direct calls between God and His elect, one in each direction: (1) God calls His people through Christ's calling them by name (John 10:3), and (2) His people call upon Him and are saved (Acts 2:21, Rom. 10:13, Joel 2:32). Herein let us consider the latter call, the call from God's people to Him, after saying only this about the former call: God does call each of His elect with His effectual, irresistible, direct call before they ever call upon Him. God's call to His child must precede the call of His child to Himself; God is the Prime Mover, the First Cause of all causes and effects, and if He were not pleased to call the sinner to salvation, the sinner would never call upon Him for salvation.

From the dictionary we find that the very definition of an "answer" is linked with a call, a question, a problem, or something else prior to the answer. You answer a call, you answer a question, you find the answer to a problem, you answer a charge or an argument, or whatever. "Answer" implies a previous action by another party. This is the natural order. In nature the call, the problem, the question, or the argument comes before the answer. In the spiritual realm, however, nothing can exist before God's answer because nothing can or does precede God Himself. There is no way a person can call upon the Preexistent, unchangeable God before He answers. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, including our very calling upon Him. Therefore, as He is before all things, and our call is included in "all things," He is before our

call. Also, as He is unchangeable, the answer to His child's call must have always existed with Him and in Him, so He answered before any of His children ever cried out to Him. God, who is before all, of necessity reverses the natural order. It cannot be otherwise. If a person truly calls upon God, God has already answered. If God has not already answered a person's call, He never will, again because He is unchangeable.

In the natural world, most of us have observed people who, when approached with a question, assume they know what an inquirer has in mind and proceed with an "answer" that is totally off of the subject. This is because of the presumption of the finite man's assuming that he knew what was going to be asked before it was asked. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and a shame unto him (Prov. 18:13)." This is only a problem to natural men, but not to the Almighty One, because He not only both hears and answers prior to one's speaking and calling, but it is said of Him, "Thou understandest my thought afar off...there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether (Psalm 139)."

Isaiah 64:6-7 says, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee." That is the rule: unclean, unrighteous, filthy, faded as a leaf, taken away by our iniquities; such will never truly stir up himself to call upon Him. Yet, there are exceptions to this rule, in that every one of God's elect does call upon Him, and each of them is saved. However, according to this verse (Isa. 64:7) they do not stir up themselves either to call upon His name or to take hold of God. There are no exceptions to that part of this rule.

Now, as the heirs of God are indeed

stirred up to take hold of God in calling upon Him, yet none stirreth up himself to take hold of Him, it follows that someone else, some outside force, must have stirred them up to do so. Who is it that does the stirring? It is neither self, nor friend, nor preacher, nor parent, nor beloved companion, but it is God Himself who stirs the hearts of His elect. "As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him and there was no strange god with him (Deut. 32:11f.)"

Before addressing the question of what is God's answer, it would be well to consider briefly what the elect's cry is, or what it is for which they call unto God. Their cry is recorded in many ways in the scriptures: "God be merciful to me a sinner (Lk. 18:13)," "Lord, help me (Mt. 15:25)," "Lord save me (Mt. 14:30)," "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief (Mk. 9:24)," "Lord, save us: we perish (Mt. 8:25)," "Have mercy on us, O Lord (Mt. 20:29)." In a myriad of ways and from countless dark situations they call upon Him. Whatever else may be said about their calling upon Him, it must be said that it is a distress call and a call for help. This is so because the Holy Spirit awakens the elect to their distressful, helpless condition ere He enables them to call upon the name of the Lord for salvation.

Someone may ask, but what if reprobates call upon Him? Will they be saved also? The answer to that question is, they will not call upon Him in the true sense. In a superficial way many people go through the motions: "They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but He answered them not (Psalm 18:41)." Psalm 145:18 tells us, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him," it is true; but the text continues and qualifies this by adding, "to all that call upon Him in truth." Christ said that many would say unto Him in that day, "Lord, Lord..." but this

is not the calling upon the Lord in truth, which Paul meant when he said, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." True calling upon the Lord is further defined and clarified by Paul in II Tim. 2:22: "But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." The difference between the reprobate and the elect in this instance is that the reprobate calls from an impure heart which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9), while the elect call upon Him from a pure (purified) heart. And how do their hearts come to be pure? Not by any merit whatsoever in themselves, and it is by the predestinating grace of God in Christ Jesus. God so works in them that their heart is prepared and their tongue answers to this work of God by calling to Him, "Lord, save us: we perish!" For, "the preparations of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord (Prov. 16:1)."

And now, what is God's answer which precedes their call, even as God's existence precedes man's existence? His answer is that of a predestinated, acceptable sacrifice in behalf of His own. His answer is foreordained redemption, "with the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world... (I Pet. 1:19f)." It was the foreordained Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was every bit as much the answer to the distress of Adam, Noah, Abraham and Jacob as He is the answer to the distress of His harassed and troubled children in this present evil age. The blood of the spotless slain Lamb, foreordained before the foundation of the world, eternally antedates them all. Although the timely enactment of the crucifixion of Christ Jesus was accomplished in the days of the Roman Empire, He is nevertheless "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8)." From that same point, the

Lamb slain possessed a book with the names of those for whom He died "written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Rev. 17:8)." None whose names were written then and there will worship the beast, but they will all be brought to worship the Lamb. It is they who will enter into the new Jerusalem, the holy city (Rev. 21:27).

As God says He will answer before they call, it follows that they will call. If the elect did not call upon Him in time, how then could we be certain that God has already answered them in eternity? Both the eternal answer of God and the elect's calling upon Him in time must stand or fall together, for the same God that promised the one promised the other in this same sentence.

There is no such thing as an answer without a call or its equivalent; but only the God of predestination can and does answer His children before they call!

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

Route 1, Box 318
Eustace, Texas 75124
July 31, 1979

Dear Brethren,

Again I would like to say how good it was to have all of you at our meeting. I certainly feel that the Lord has blessed our little Church to have had a wonderful meeting.

As I sat there Sunday morning my mind turned to the Fifteenth Chapter of I Corinthians: As wonderful as it was, what is that compared to eternity? If we be not included in the resurrection then all is for naught. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (I Corinthians 15:19)

There are those who do not believe in the resurrection of the body. However, I have to accept the teaching of the Scriptures, and the Apostle Paul declares in plain and simple language the body, yea this body, will be raised up

in the last day. He did not say that this old flesh as we now know it, but that it would be changed from a mortal body to an immortal body. What is it that each of us are interested in? Wherein lies our hope? I believe that our hope lies in the fact that due to the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we will be lifted up with Him and housed in heaven and immortal glory. We are concerned with this body and this soul that we are encased in right now. I feel that he had the wisdom to fashion this old body in the first place, therefore, He has the wisdom to fashion it again, if so be His will, in whatever form that would be pleasing to Him. We trust that the change will be like unto the body of Christ, that we may be like Him.

"As by one man came death, so also by one man came the resurrection of the dead." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Paul says, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." He also admonishes them to be not deceived by evil communication, as the foregoing expression is, but natural man will question the wisdom and Will of God. He will inquire as to how that the resurrection can or will come about. The explanation made by the Apostle Paul cannot be improved upon. For he says, "Man can plant a seed and not know what will come up; he only has the bare seed." Therefore, wheat may spring up for oats, or oats for rye, etc. Not so with God. He giveth a seed a body according to His good pleasure and it will be a body according to this Will. Just as sure as He formed the celestial bodies and the terrestrial bodies, He will form the bodies of His people after the likeness of His Precious Son, Jesus Christ. Thanks be unto God that there will be nothing in the presence of God in that day like unto this old body of flesh and blood that we know here. Flesh and blood cannot enter

into the Kingdom of Heaven. "It will be sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The last man Adam bore the sins of His people on the cruel Tree of Calvary that He might be able to raise them up at the last day; and, He will reign till He has put all enemies under his footstool. The last enemy to conquer being death. When on the last day death and hell, Satan and all his angels have been defeated, then can we say, "Oh death where is thy sting; Oh grave where is thy victory?". Then the Son of God and the son of man shall be glorified and all things committed unto the hand of Almighty God to reign forever in eternal bliss.

I believe our little meeting gave us a little fore-taste of that blessed day.

Hope you had a safe trip home and may the Lord bless you to come our way again.

In Christian Love,
Elder B. J. McLaughlin

Patrick Springs, Va.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I want to pay for two more years subscription of the *Signs*. I am 72 years old and I cannot go to church often, and the paper helps a lot. It is sound doctrine.

I was shocked to read in the December paper a notice that the Editors had been accused of publishing unsound doctrine. The Scriptures will back all I've read in the *Signs*. I am going through the Bible my seventh time, and I hope to live to finish this time. I see no unsound doctrine in the *Signs*. Keep chopping the wood and let the chips fall where they must.

Thanks for the good work,
Mrs. Aaron Foley

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Dear Editors,

Thanks so much for reminding me to renew my subscription for the *Signs of the Times*. I am enclosing a check for another two year's subscription. The remainder is to be used as you need it. The dear *Signs* has been coming to me for a long time, and I enjoy reading the contents so much and look forward to each copy.

May the good Lord bless the Editors and writers to continue sending the good news because we don't have a Primitive Baptist Church here.

In Christian love,
Virginia Blackwell

Mrs. Mamie Rose Ferguson

Dear Sister in Christ,

I realize that I have not answered your number of so good letters before, but (and I like that little three-letter word) but our thoughts and minds are often with you.

You mention that I am a lonely pilgrim; well, I am as far as the world is concerned, but I really am not alone, but my Heavenly Father has shown love, tender care, and exciting my heart in all of nature, and most of all in His blessed Word, to my comfort.

I was glad to hear you could be blessed to hear Elder Donald Smith. I have heard about him in the late past, and also Elder Turner, both of which I would like to hear or if someone has taped their sermons, I would be glad to recompence them for the tape or tapes and postage. I cannot understand why the Elder was so bereaved at the loss of a loved one. That is a physical man, and sorrow for self when our Heavenly Father calls. There is a purpose and the comfort of being at last at rest in the Kingdom that has no end.

I marvelled when I saw the letter published in the *Signs* and couldn't believe it sounded so much better. I was crying and brought down in all

humbleness. I am glad, though, that some have enjoyed the message.

I see also you do visiting and I am sure you will find it helpful, joyful and a blessing both received and given freely. I like your reference to Malachi 3:16 and 17. We go to the nursing home two or three times weekly.

Well, Claudia and I have much to be thankful for, though. The leaves that were so beautiful up here in New York State this fall are all gone except the oaks. We have had rains, but no snow as yet and today, Wednesday, November 14, 1979, is quite cold and windy and does feel like snow soon. We have the front of the house and meeting house front cleaned up but the rear of both places have to be finished.

We listened to a minister speak on "Rest" and it so stirred this poor one to search the Word and found much to the glory of our God.

First, there are so many kinds of "Rest" but I would write a little only of only "One Rest". The first "Rest" is found in Gen. 2:1-3. "Thus the heavens (plural) and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." So now turn to Hebrews 3:11 and 4:3-5. Paul in writing to the Hebrews in this chapter was speaking to Holy Brethren, as it reads, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man (Christ Jesus) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man: but he that built all things is God." In

reading both chapters we find these words, "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart: and they have not known my ways." This is so true yet to this day, and then he says, "So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." (A promise).

So dearly beloved, what about us, you or I? Let us return to the blessed Word. It says, "Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today: lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin". And then this, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end".

So let us go to Chapter 4, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." This is most certainly a cause for us all to fear and tremble. But it says, "For unto us (you and even I) was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Now we come to the real matter of "Rest". The third verse says, "For we which have believed do enter into rest". Yes, and by no works that we ever do, for it says, "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." For, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, (Christ Jesus) He also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." In this Christ is exemplified and because of this we can take comfort in that it says, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of

the heart." There is therefore, I feel, in our hearts a desire to press on to that high calling in Christ Jesus, that through His word might enter into rest, into His Kingdom that shall have no end. We but continue to watch and pray and praise Him from whom all blessings flow, He who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

May it please our Lord to watch over you and all with you with tender loving care.

Claudia and E. K. Adsit

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PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fifth Annual session of the Pigg River District Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Chestnut Church, commencing on Friday before and continuing through the first Sunday in August, 1980. (August 1,2,3).

Chestnut is located near Rocky Mount, Va. Coming from Rocky Mount, go south about three miles, take the left on State Route 619. Then, go three miles and turn right onto State Route 724. From Martinsville, Va., go north on Route 220 approximately 22 miles. Then, turn right off of Route 220 onto State Route 724. Follow the signs.

The brethren ask that every one please bring their folding chairs as there will be none provided.

For more information contact Elder Cecil Turner, Route 3, Bassett, Va., (Phone: 703-629-2286) or Jessie O. Tyree, Route 2, Ferrum, Va., (Phone: 703-365-2509)

All lovers of the truth are invited.

Jamie E. Cooper, Clerk

ORDINATION

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." (Isa. 30:21)

At the regular business meeting of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church, December, 1979, at Mayfield, N.C., the church voted to call a Presbytery to set apart Brother Reuben French and Brother Bobbie Collie to the office of Deacon, on the fourth Sunday in January, 1980.

On that date a presbytery composed of Elders C. B. Davis, Jr., Leonard Key, Julian Williams, Haywood Wray, and D. V. Spangler proceeded to set apart these brethren to the office of Deacon.

There were twenty visiting Deacons present, from three Associations, and a number of independent churches.

(Elder) D. V. Spangler, Moderator
Boyd Minter, Clerk of Dan River Church

PINE CREEK MEETING

Pine Creek Primitive Baptist Church will again have all-day services on July 4, 1980, the Lord willing. All lovers of the Truth are invited.

Anyone needing information or instructions to the meeting house should contact:

Elder Roy Agee
Route 1
Copper Hill, Virginia 24079

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF ELDER D. V. SPANGLER

We, the undersigned Committee appointed by the Board of Trustees of the *Signs of the Times*, at their meeting in Danville, Virginia, November 23, 1979, have examined the records of the Treasurer from 1941 through November, 1979, and do certify that all transactions to be in order. We forward the records to the new treasurer as correct after an examination conducted to the best of our ability.

(Signed)
Kenneth R. Key, Sr.
Haywood W. Wray
Burnell B. Williams

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The one hundred thirty-ninth session of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association will convene, according to appointment, with Mt. Ararat Church on July 11, 12, 13, 1980, which is the second Sunday, Friday and Saturday before.

Mt. Ararat Church is located on Highway 750 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, about

7 miles N.W. of Danville, Virginia. We cordially invite our corresponding brethren and friends for this meeting and all that love the doctrine of salvation by grace.

Burnell B. Williams
Association Clerk

(Selected From An Old Gospel Standard)
ON THE PASTORAL OFFICE

Messrs. Editors, - To know and clearly see the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus in its genuine harmony and unalloyed purity, is very important and momentous, but to be enabled to claim our own personal interest in it, and to call its sweet promises and invitations ours, is infinitely more important, at least for the present comfort of the soul. The former I have been enabled for some time past to realize, but the latter I verily believe I have never yet been able to come at, but I have often thought my experience was like nobody's else. I can hear some tell with what condemning force and terrifying horrors the law has come home to their conscience, and what deep insufferable convictions they felt when the Lord first began with them, and that they can tell the time and place when he did begin with them, and I am far from saying this is not the way the Lord is pleased to bring some of his children; but if ever the Lord has begun with me, this is not the way I have been led. I cannot tell any particular place, time, or even means by which I was first convinced of my sins, only I remember (it is some years since) I began to feel I was not fit to die, and that I was an unholy creature before God; and I thought some change must take place in me, some way or other, or I could not go to heaven. With these feelings I firmly resolved to be better and holier. Accordingly, I set to praying, as I thought, more fervently and sincerely, and reading my Bible regularly, attending preaching, and attempting to remember all the preacher said, and was determined to practice it. For some time

I followed this course, striving hard to keep up to this standard, but often falling far short, which always gave me great anguish of soul, but would again make fresh resolutions and fresh attempts to be good and holy, and would watch and guard my thoughts and words, but the more holy I strived to get, the oftener I came short, and consequently, felt distressed and grieved in my soul. In this way, striving and doing, I went on about eighteen months or two years, without one particle of gospel hope or peace. I had no more knowledge of the gospel way of salvation, and of Christ as a complete free grace saving Redeemer to poor helpless sinners, than a ranting Arminian has, though at this time I was among the Independents, and with a view that I might get holier, I joined their church; but I was only the more miserable, for I thought they should feel very holy and pious when they received the Lord's supper, and I felt myself really a vile wretched sinner before a heart-searching God, and could not be persuaded but I was an unworthy receiver. I passed amongst them as a very pious young man; whereas, I felt wearied and sick of my filthy corrupt heart, and was burdened and grieved because I could not feel holier and better, according to the preacher's doctrine. Thus it is, if ever the Lord convinced me of my sins it was in this gradual way. Still I am persuaded, if the Holy Ghost ever did convince me, it was in a moment of time, though I knew it not. Some can not only tell the exact time when they were quickened and convinced of sin, but they can tell equally as exactly the time and spot where and when the Lord set their soul at liberty; when they felt justified, pardoned, and accepted of God. Now whether this cut me off as being a Christian or not, solemnly in the sight of a heart-searching God, I can no more tell this than the former; and if none have a right to be called Christians but those who can thus set their seal to their

adoption, I frankly confess I have no right to be considered one. When I was in the very height of labouring for inward holiness to fit me for heaven, consequently miserable in my very soul, (because I could not feel I got any better before God,) I met with a friend who held the doctrines of grace, I believe in their purity. He laid them before me very plainly and simply, and I was enabled, without much hesitation or opposition to them, to see them very clearly; and by and bye, with some persuasion, I began to preach them, and have continued so to do ever since, as the Lord has enabled me, (if indeed he has sent me), and since then I have often rejoiced to know the doctrines of sovereign grace. My heart has leaped within me to know there are such glorious truths for poor, helpless sinners, and a clear sight of the harmony of grace sets my soul on wheels up to this time; but mind you, I do not thus rejoice in the truth because I see if for myself, and can claim my interest in it. O, no; for I believe I never was solidly able thus to see it. I rejoice simply in the knowledge of the truth itself, and I do love the truth, to hear and see it; but I cannot tell you for why, for I really cannot see my interest in it. When I have been in the pulpit at times, I have said, "I know I am interested in Christ and his finished work", but almost as soon as I have said it, I have keenly questioned whether I was not lying, and afterwards I have thought I said it more by way of bravado in the face of Satan, than from an assurance of the fact. At times I have thought I had a little resting hope on Christ as mine, and just about to cast my soul upon him, and rest with a full assurance in him, when a gust of doubts and fears has come like a whirlwind and blown all away, and left me in misery. This is just as much as I can say respecting my knowledge of my interest in Christ and his gospel. I am indeed very far from being able to tell the time or place when I felt justified, pardoned, and my soul set at liberty. I

cannot say any such thing without making myself a lying hypocrite. Indeed, I cannot say I ever felt my soul thus set at liberty. As I have said before, I feel a pleasure and delight in seeing and knowing the truth, and I feel Christ precious for the sake of his work, but not because I know my interest in that work, for I do not; only I have a longing hope to know it to be mine.

Such has been my conviction of sin, and such is the knowledge I have of the truth for myself; and in this stage of matter I have to preach, or try to preach, Christ crucified.

Now, Messrs. Editors, I have told you as plainly and honestly as I possibly can, a little of my past and present experience, God being my witness, whom from my very heart I solemnly wish to be judged by, for man in general I am afraid of. Still I could wish you, or some of your experienced correspondents, to answer me, and tell me the genuine proofs of a man's being sent to preach the gospel; whether it be, as some say, that a man has no right to preach till he knows Christ assuredly for himself, by the Spirit of adoption, and be able to say, "I am his and he is mine". and to realize his own interest in the gospel; or if feeling preaching heavily impressed on his mind be a proof; or if the Lord owning and blessing his own word by him, with unction and power, to the hearts of his poor broken-hearted children be a proof; or whatever else may be the real proof, to state it. For me to preach, if I thought the Lord had not called me to it, I think I could almost rather suffer death, for false preachers I know are so abominable in God's sight, so hurtful to the church of Christ, and so abundantly at this day. Which ever of you answer me, I hope the Lord will enable you to be faithful, and speak on the subject scripturally, impartially, and plainly; for these are solemn realities, not to be played with; and may the God of never ending mercies be the comfort and consolation of poor

mourning souls.

Yours,
Sept. 22, 1837 Worse than Nothing

Carthage, Mississippi
Dear Ones of the Staff,

I hope I can call you my brothers in Christ, although I feel so unworthy to call you my brother in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I see it is time to renew for the *Signs of the Times*. I don't want to miss one copy of the good paper. I enjoy its contents more than words can say. I love what you dear ministers of God contend for. I hear so much false, so called preaching until it is sickening. I once enjoyed false preaching for I didn't know anything else, but praise God, who showed me the old paths and led me to the true church. I've loved it above anything this world has to offer.

I feel that we are nearing the end of time so fast, and for my part I hope the end is very near. We are in perilous times that makes me long to see the end of time come.

I love the Lord's people for Christ's sake.

Mrs. Lillian Faulkner

EXPERIENCE

About 3:30 P.M. in March of 1918, I was plowing in the field. I turned at the end of the row, as I had turned many times before that day. I had not gone far when I was burdened with a great depression. I knew something great and terrible had happened. Immediately I saw I was a vile and wretched sinner before the great God of heaven and earth. I saw my sins had reached to heaven, and the Lord had come in remembrance of me and looked down, seeing my wretched state of being, would have nothing more to do with me. I felt He would cast me into eternal darkness and that this condemnation was just and right, for that was where I belonged. It was very grievous, to the

extent my mind was never free of the through, "O my awful, lost, and ruined condition, if I had been better the Lord would not have condemned me, but it's too late now. Nothing can be done about it now, for the Lord has already passed sentence."

As I went on it became more and more grievous, when alone I would cry, on waking up in the night my first thought was "O my awful lost and ruined condition." My mind was never free of that dreadful thought. I would not ask the Lord to have mercy on me because I had read of wicked kings, after having made a decree, then seeing they were wrong, would not retract their decree. For me to ask the true and living God to undo something he had already done would be adding sin on top of sins, of which I already had too many. I absolutely refused to pray to him for my condemnation was just and right. About the month of May, I awoke one morning and looked out the window, it was the most beautiful morning I had ever seen. The sun was almost up, the birds were singing, the cool breeze was blowing, and I thought "O what a beautiful day." I started to say what a beautiful day the Lord has sent us, then I knew the Lord wouldn't send me anything, for I didn't deserve it. Then I said what a beautiful day the Lord has sent somebody.

I went on in grief and sorrow, believing of all the cruel criminals that would be cast into torment I would sink lower than any of them. I thought I would probably live to be an old man, and all of my days and hours would be in that same grief and sorrow, for there was no hope for me. I said "O if I could die while I am young, that I might have a few more days of peace and rest in the grave, before the resurrection when my doom was outer darkness."

I believe it was in the month of June of that same year (1918), one evening I was going from the house down to the field to hoe in a tomato patch. The family was already there. On my way I had a vision.

I was standing at the edge of a cemetery and saw the saints after they had been raised from their graves. They were going by me to meet the Lord. I didn't try to go with them because I didn't feel like I belonged with them. They were all happy and rejoicing. They knew I was there and knew I was not going with them, but that was their heavenly Father's will and were satisfied with it.

I came to myself and found I was about fifty yards on down the way. As I went on to the field and went to hoeing with the family soon I was behind. I was so worried, grieved, and condemned it seemed I could no longer take it alone. I had to tell someone, and as I was about to drop my hoe and go to mother to tell her the Lord had condemned me and cast me out, there was nothing to be done about it now, it is too late, my sister came by with a bucket of water and offered me water. I shook my head. She gave the others water that wanted it and set the bucket down nearby. She had not been hoeing but just a minute when Dad, who was ahead of the others, said "What about some water?" Things quit for a while, when sis said "I just brought a bucket from the house", and things quieted for a few seconds, and mother said "and besides we will be through here in another two hours and we will all go get some water" and things quieted for a few seconds, then Dad, in a commanding voice said "Clarence go get some water". I dropped my hoe and started toward the house, Sis said "come back and get this bucket." I went back and got the bucket and she said "pour out that water you will not need that." I dumped the water out and started on.

You can see from the above, I was very confused in mind. I went out to the end of the row and turned toward the house, along the fence row, when I became more worried and grieved, such grief I had not known before. I could no longer cry, but I hurt. I stared into space over the horizon of the hill. That was as far as

I could go. I had come to the end of my road, to the end of all things with me. I couldn't go on so I made a step to the left to fall and give it up. As I made that step I heard a voice to my right and above my head some forty or fifty feet away. The voice said "The Lord has saved many like you". I turned to see the one that spoke to me, I saw no one, but at that very instant the grief, the pain, the misery I was in left me. Then and only then I began to pray. My prayer was this; "Take away my sins O Lord and I will be free, wash me O Lord and I will be clean, turn me around about O' Lord and I will be turned, all the days of my life will I wait until my change come."

I went on to the house praying these same words over and over. I got to the well and drew a bucket of water, and poured it in the bucket that was sitting on the ground. I raised up and looked in a northward direction, over fields, fence rows, timberlands which I had seen many times before, but this time it was different, there was beauty there, there was the glory of the Lord there. I was looking through the air that had been purified by the righteousness of the Lord. I looked up into the sky and said "some day I will live up there". I told no one and went on thinking I was the only one in the world that such things had happened to. I felt nobody had ever been as mean as me, though I had no more tears or pain, or grief because of my awful lost and ruined condition.

I went on through the summer, and into the winter months thinking I was alone in such things as had happened to me. It was Saturday, and must have been the first Saturday in December. The day was cold, cloudy and damp. It was meeting day at the Church, there weren't many that came out that day, they sang a few hymns and as the Pastor, Elder D. W. Stanley, who was advanced in age, started toward the stand, an elderly deacon, old Uncle Jim Burcham, just stood up and began to tell his experience when he was a young

man. The few words he said gave me so much comfort and did me so much good I wanted to jump up and holler, but I held quiet. I don't know what the preacher said, but I still remember the words of Uncle Jim. I spent that hour rejoicing in the Lord, that I was not alone in the thing that happened to me. As soon as they said Amen I left the house and went the long way home, I just wanted to be alone.

There have been a few times since then that I have been so happy and that was when I have been under a shower of the gospel message, being delivered by one of God's humble servants, when it seemed that heaven was almost in sight, just around the corner.

I still have trouble with the law of nature, and the law of the Spirit. Yea, I know why John the revelator wept when he saw there was no man worthy to open the book or look thereon. (Rev. 5:4) I know what he meant in Rev. 21, "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away". And in verse 4 "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away". I know the above could take some explaining, but I will make it brief. After I heard the voice in the air, I had no more tears, or pain, or crying because of my awful, lost and ruined condition. Death was no more than eternal death that reigned over me before, for the former thing had passed away, behold all things became new. I love the scripture that says "The time is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. Marvel not at this, for the time is coming when they that are in the grave shall hear his voice and come forth. I believe some day I will hear that same voice again, not me only, but all you who are looking and waiting for his coming.

Yours in hope,
C. A. Stegall

EDITORIAL

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 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, received up into glory.” (I Timothy 3:15-16)

I would like for us to take note of this fact regarding this chapter, that it, almost exclusively, gives us the qualifications of bishops and deacons, or the elders. For that reason I think it was appropriate for the Apostle Paul to crown the chapter with the last verse. In the 15th verse as he wrote to Timothy he told him that all he had written (before this verse) was to tell him “how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.” Then Paul sets forth six things he calls “the mystery of godliness”. One thing I would like to make clear; man has never gone to God of himself. Man goes to God when God bids him come. And when God bids a man come there is nothing that can keep him away. God comes to man and draws man to Him. In all the preaching of the gospel of the Son of God, nothing stands out more than the eternal and everlasting love of God for the Church of God which is the Body of Christ. But Paul with all that had been said in the preceding verses in this chapter crowned it. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness”.

Now the Bible speaks of wicked mysteries; the mystery of Babylon, the Anti-christ who is in the world today. Paul speaks also of the mystery of the resurrection of the dead. He says, “And behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed”. That is a mystery. Writing of preaching the gospel he said, “But we

preach the wisdom of God in a mystery” Now if God will enable me to bring before you this morning what is contained in the six items in the chapter we will see what is the “mystery of godliness”.

Godliness is a great mystery. For when we speak of godliness we have reference to the realm of salvation whereby God saves sinners. I will turn and read Second Peter 1:1, “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” Now whatever a man has in his life that pertains to life and godliness the Bible says it is according to God’s divine power. No wisdom of theirs can obtain it. No zeal of man can obtain it. There is only one way that the godliness of man is set up in a man and that is according to his divine power. And divine power is the power of God. Now what does that divine power do? “According as his divine power hath given unto us”. You see who he is talking to? He is talking to “them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” That is who he is talking to. And then he is not leaving any question in the mind as to how people receive Him, and what they receive. “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things (all things; we can’t over-stress that) that pertain unto life and godliness.”

Now how does it unfold is the next question? “Through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”. To the degree of your knowledge of salvation, no matter who you are or where you are, will depend upon the

revealed knowledge of Christ in your heart. There is power, divine power, in Him. And you have this knowledge through the Holy Ghost working in the lives of His people. Divine power! There has never been any power except Divine power in all the realm of salvation. There has never been any power except Divine power of God in the world. The power that rules the world, the power that speaks to the winds and they obey, the power that comes to a poor sinner and says, "This is the way". Now, without controversy, this is the real fulness. If we understand it we have no ground for further question. If something is incomplete then there is grounds for controversy. If I should bring out a certain item and leave out one thing then it is open for controversy, isn't it? But if the complete matter is presented and all the details in its fulness, there is no grounds for controversy.

Now let us see what the mystery of godliness is. It is not what the world will tell you. The mystery of godliness is centered alone in the Person and the work of God. The mystery of Godliness. There is nobody on earth who can give a satisfactory reason why God would make His Son, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. But the Bible says that, so it is, "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." My hearers, the first phase of the mystery of godliness is, God would send His Son into the world and provide His people a way to heaven by the dying of His own precious Son. I would say ten thousand times ten thousand times, away with any thought that God would send His Son to live and die a life of humiliation in the eyes of men and then fail to land anybody in heaven, and Him be there by Himself with question as to what He had accomplished. If I didn't believe what I do today, I still couldn't accept the theory that Christ went to heaven not knowing how many He saved or what He saved them from. How many of

us believe that God, who has provided a way of salvation would do such a thing? Send His Son for all the sins of His people to be borne in the body of His Son, every one of them. If your sins were not in the body of Christ when He died you will never see heaven. Actually in His body! Peter said, "He bare our sins in His own body and put them away on the tree of the cross". How dare man stand up and try to tell you that Christ has gone to heaven to perform the work as far as He can go, and then leave it up to you to finish. Then might heaven be empty and hell overflowing. Do you believe in a salvation like that?

I want to see the way to heaven that reaches even the gates of hell so that none for whom the Lord of glory died will ever land in that place. Any other doctrine is a God-dishonoring doctrine. Somebody said, "Let's move on". I do want to move on. God was manifest in the flesh. It is hard for us to comprehend, and yet it is truth. It is verily true that for the Son of God to reach and deliver us from the curse He had to take a body like ours, with the exception of sin. The question arises, "Why would it be needful to take a body like ours? Because he was made like unto His brethren, sin excepted. Another question then, "Why would He who is the Son of God from all eternity leave heaven and come and live upon the earth, taking a body of humiliation to relieve us from the curse of God? I don't know why. But I know it is true. I know it is the truth. Christ redeemed the Church of God, and the Church of God is the Bride of Christ, and He is the glory of His church.

As I said when I rose up, this is the greatest family reunion I have ever been to, and so it is every Sunday when I meet with the family of God. We never had a family reunion, and I don't object to them, but if we did have one, I would be at meeting that day before I went.

God was manifest in the flesh. Jesus Christ took the likeness of our flesh and

our bone. Jesus Christ took part of the body of His mother, and when He became the Incarnate Son of God, Paul said, "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took the seed of Abraham and as the children were partakers of flesh and blood He Himself likewise took part of the same; that He might through death destroy him that had the power of death which is the Devil." God was manifest in the flesh. When we go to the root of the matter, when the world was made Christ was with God, and the world was made by Him. This world was created by Jesus Christ. Paul, in the first chapter of Hebrews said, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" How many of you listening to me believe that God, who made the world, has ever been short of power? The one who made the world (the Word of God) said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth."

We turn to the first chapter of the book of John and you will find that Jesus created the world. It says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Oh, if you follow this pathway there will be some marks for you along the way. I don't like to start on a journey without a roadmap, yet the roadmap wouldn't do me any good if I couldn't understand it. As I go along a journey with a roadmap I want to find some markers along the way telling me I am on the right road. That is the way it is in preaching the gospel. I want eyes to read and see and then I want a voice to say to me along the way, "This is the way, walk ye in it". And I have had both in my travel. ***There will be a voice***

behind you also saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it; turn neither to the right or to the left". I want some assurance along the way that I am in the highway of holiness and that I am on my way to the celestial city. I know I'll never turn back. I may feel to turn back but we won't turn back from this way. In following this highway we are talking about, Isaiah told us, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up a highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." (Isa. 62:10) This is the highway to heaven. God almighty has ordained this way and He shall never fail. First of all, it is not our way. If you have seen that way the voice has said, "This is the way". The voice, itself is the way. God was manifest in the flesh, and the fullness of the Godhead bodily was in Christ. The fullness of the Godhead ***was*** Jesus Christ. Even so the eternal word of God was made flesh; a flesh that could be wounded as Christ was wounded. His was a flesh that had a brow with great drops of sweat like blood falling on the ground when He prayed in the garden. We are but worms of the dust, and He dwelt among us.

John said, "And we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) This was God manifest in the flesh. A thousand sermons could be preached on that text and then we wouldn't have told the half. God Almighty was made flesh. He came to be under the law for us to be our Saviour; to pay the debt that God demanded for sin. To come under the law He must be born of a woman. An angel couldn't do this. Angels had never been under the law.

He was made sin in the eyes of God, who knew no sin, to reach His people and raise them high. Yes, to raise them high. He was justified in the Spirit. Much has been written about our justification, and here is one scripture where it says Christ was justified. How do we understand that? You mean He needed

justificaton for sin? If we are saved and go to heaven it is because we have been justified by the blood of Christ. So Christ Himself must be justified. We are justified by the blood of Christ, from all things that we couldn't be with the law of Moses. Then Christ Himself must be justified. He was justified in the Spirit. When Jesus said to the Father, "Father, I came to do thy will", this was just as much as saying to God, "Every fiber of my being is in accord with your will." He was justified in that spirit. He came wholly to do the Father's will. That is the way that Jesus was justified. He was justfied when He said to God, "Not my will, but thine be done". And every part of Christ's life and work and deeds was in accord with God's purpose. "Thy will be done"! He was justified in the Spirit in the last moment when He said to God that He had finished the work He gave Him to do. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He was justified in the Spirit, and then he was dead. He layed His life down at that moment.

"Seen of angels"; let us not forget, my hearers, this is also a part of the mystery of godliness. "Great is the mystery of godliness". First, God manifest in the flesh, second justified in the Spirit, third, seen of angels. Somebody may say, "Well, why would God show His Son to the angels?" For many reasons. For God was not a man; and as the Son of God He never lacked any power, but He took upon Him our flesh and blood. As He was born in the world God's angels were there to see Him. And the Bible says "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Oh, my friends, this morning, it is a wonderful time in your life if everything fades away but Jesus. It is a wonderful time when Christ gives the evidence of Himself in your soul; when you can say with the poet, "Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all". That is a wonderful time. Do you know anything about it? Does Christ have the pre-eminence in your soul? Does all of mankind fade away?

When the wonderful love of God does appear and when the blood of Christ is seen, is it not a wonderful time? "Seen of angels".

Immediately after Christ had been tempted of the devil on the mountain, angels came and ministered unto him. My friends, the angels of God are still in this world. Why do I say that? Because the Bible says the angels are sent forth to be ministering spirits. Do you believe that? I believe it for two reasons. I believe it because the Word of God has said it, and I believe it because I have some evidence in my heart about it.

He was seen of angels, and in the garden He was talking with His Father about paying the debt for sin and the angels came and comforted Him. Also, the Lord had said unto His disciples to not offend one of His little ones, for their angels always appear before His Father's face. There are angels and I believe it. I believe that every child of God has an angel. I don't want to offend a child of God. Of all the people in the world, I would rather have a millstone tied around my neck and be drowned than to offend one of God's little ones. They have angels looking over them. And when Christ was buried an angel came and rolled the stone away, and then sat upon it. The angels do the bidding of God. "He was seen of angels." And when Christ ascended back into heaven, never to be seen by mortal eyes again until He returns, the disciples were gathered together and stood looking up into the clouds into which He had gone. Two men stood by and to my understanding, they were angels. They said, "Ye men of Galilee why stand ye here gazing up into the heavens. This same Jesus whom you have seen go away, in like manner shall come again." Praise the Lord , my dear hearers this morning, if you know what I am talking about. Praise the Lord.

"Believed on in the world." Yes. Who was it that believed while Christ was here? You know, there is a great effort in

the religious world to get people to believe. What do you believe about anything but by the evidence that you have of the truth of it? All the men in the world combined and all the preachers in the U.S. couldn't cause one to believe, because a man cannot believe in Christ without the work of the Holy Spirit. But He was believed on in the world, and who was it that believed on Him? The Bible says, "As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed". (Acts 13:48) That is who it was.

"Preached unto the Gentiles". You know, there is a great effort to raise money. Money! Money! Money! They are trying to gather it up to send the gospel to the heathen. I would say that the heathen are better off than America is today. Men running all over the world with the plea to give to save the heathen! A heathen is anybody who doesn't know the truth. God sent the gospel and in His own time and in His own way He causes it to be preached to the Gentiles. And men can't hinder it and men can't help it. If God was to command me today to go somewhere to preach the Gospel He would open the way for me to go. And if He opened the way for me to go He would open somebody's ears to hear it and they would be alive. God doesn't have any worries. He said, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Read the 55th chapter of Isaiah. God said, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater."

I remember several years ago going to a church and there was a lady there that morning that had never attended an Old Baptist preaching before. Her husband would go to meetings and come home and she would say, "What did the preacher preach about?" And as he

would start telling her she would say, "Stop! Stop, you just want to start an argument". So he would stop. She had never heard an Old Baptist, and she said she didn't want to hear one. Finally she became dissatisfied with what she was doing and she said one morning, "I am going to hear the Old Baptist preach this morning." Her husband said, "What do you want to go for?" (This was in the State of Maryland.) She said, "I don't know." But that woman's face looked like an angel's as she listened to the gospel. I preached about the Manna that fell in the wilderness and those that God fed had enough and those that gathered much couldn't carry it over. And you know, I baptized that woman a long time before I did her husband.

"Preached unto the Gentiles." God opens the door for His ministers and he doesn't need a mission board to send them out, either. You know, God visited Paul one night and said, "Paul, you testified of me at Jerusalem. You shall also bear witness of me in Rome." Then Paul was put on a ship for his last venture, for he was going to Rome; for God had said he would. He had said before arriving in Rome. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift." I long to see the people of God, also. I want to live with them, also. I want to die with them, and I don't say that except by the grace of God. "Preached unto the Gentiles". This is the mystery of godliness.

And Paul said, "Without controversy". There can never be a word of controversy about this because this is the only way to heaven. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness". This is godliness. And last but not least in this text is, "Received up into glory". All I have said about the text would mean nothing if there was doubt on this point. He was received up into glory. Returned unto glory. The glory of Him who performed the will of His Father. The glory of Him who represented His people all the way from

Bethlehem to Calvary. The glory of Him who fills Heaven with His person. The glory is that he was received up into glory. And I am glad to say to you in closing today, my brethren, that if you love Him you shall see Him in glory some day. Thus we see the mystery of godliness. This is His promise to His people, "That where I am there ye may be also". "And they shall behold my glory".

Transcribed from a tape of a sermon
preached in Reidsville Church by
July 1973 Elder D. V. Spangler

Shady Spring, W. Va.

Dear Kindred in the Lord,

I see my subscription is past due so please find check enclosed for a renewal of two more years and do with the balance as your conscience dictates to you, and all will be well with me. The January, 1980 number was exceptionally good for it dealt on the old time doctrines of Christ and the Apostles, of which nowadays most have forsaken and went whoring after strange gods. So keep up this good doctrine for it still has a resting place among the called and chosen people of God. And when the whole world turns it down ship all you can by the discretion of Almighty God to me, for it is a doctrine of love, mercy, and truth.

Thanks,
Wallace Harvey

January 8, 1980

Dear Editors,

Enclosed is a check for \$10.00 to renew my subscription for two more years. It expires this month. May the New Year be a blessing to all who love the comforts of this paper and bless the Editors for their labor of love in publishing it.

Remember this poor worm of the dust
in prayer when at the Throne of Grace.

Your Sister in Hope,
Mae B. Hiatt

OBITUARIES

SISTER SALLIE ENNIS

Sister Ennis was born June 4, 1892. Her parents were Lamm and Sarah Byrd. She joined the Besadia Primitive Baptist Church the first Sunday in August, 1915, at the water and was baptized the same day. She married Donnius Ennis and to this union was born nine children, six boys and three girls. She loved the church and attended as long as her health permitted. She was a faithful member to the church and also to the Association. She is missed by the church and the many friends that knew her. At the time of her death her membership was at Liberty Primitive Baptist Church.

She passed away from this life February 22, 1979. Her funeral was held at West Funeral Home in Benson, N.C. by Elders C. D. Turner, W. D. Godwin, and Allen Johnson. Burial followed in Besadia Church Cemetery beside her husband.

The church agreed for three copies to be made, and one sent to the family, one for church record, and one sent to the *Signs of the Times*.

Written by Sisters:
Liddie Gart
Lydia Byrd
Magdalene Messer

DUNN HORNE

Brother Dunn Horne was born April 22, 1895 and died August 26, 1979. He was a World War I veteran, having served overseas. Returning home he married Sister Mamie Batchelor who preceeded him in death in 1977. He is survived by 3 daughters, one son, 10 grandchildren, one great grandchild, one brother and one sister.

He was afflicted for several years and asked a home with Cypress Creek Church June 13, 1975. He enjoyed attending meeting whenever he was able, and his favorite hymn "O land of rest for thee I sigh", tells much of his desire. He was a firm believer in salvation by the grace of God. He is missed at church and in the community, but we trust our loss is his gain.

Funeral services were held at Cypress Creek Church by Elders D. B. Stokes and

Harmon Brown. He was laid to rest beside his wife in the family cemetery.

Done by order of November 1979 conference; that three copies be made, one for church records, one given to the family, and one sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Elder Harmon Brown, Mod.
Velma Horne, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

On January 15, 1980, Our Heavenly Father saw fit to call our dear Brother Washburn T. Coker.

He was blessed to join our church 1st Sunday in November 1966. He was a true believer of Salvation by Grace and he praised his Lord until his death. To know Brother Washburn was to love him and it was well shown of his friends and loved ones at his funeral.

He was blessed to have a loving family, as he was well cared for during his illness by all of them.

He was born February 14, 1918 and was blessed to live on earth for almost 62 years.

We the Church at Tarboro send our sympathy to his family and we trust God will send the Comforter, as He has promised not to forsake or leave us. God knows our feelings and without Him we can do nothing.

We also request that three copies of this Resolution to be made:

- (1) for the Church
- (1) to be sent to the family
- (1) to be published in the *Signs of the Times*

We trust God will bless His family to feel free and welcome to attend His church. We feel also our loss is His eternal gain.

This done by order of conference at the Tarboro Primitive Baptist Church at our February, 1980, meeting.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
John H. Coker, Clerk

MINOR OGDEN

Funeral services for Brother Minor Ogden were held on January 20, 1980, at the New Hope Primitive Baptist Church at Spearsville, La., with Elder David E. Turner officiating. Burial was in cemetery at Spearsville under the direction of Bailey

Funeral Home of El Dorado, Arkansas.

Mr. Ogden was born in Union County, Ark., on October 6, 1882 and passed from this life January 18, 1980 at the age of 97 years, 3 months, and 12 days. He was a member of New Hope Primitive Baptist Church and a retired butcher. He leaves behind one sister and several nieces and nephews, plus many friends.

It was my blessed privilege to have visited in the home and in the nursing home of this precious brother for several years. I do believe his mind was as clear on the scriptures along with the doctrine of salvation by Grace as anyone I ever knew even three months before he passed away. He actually preached to me, and his text was, "I am the Lord and change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed". I have every reason to feel that his soul is in perfect rest and peace right now with God the Father and his body is at rest in the grave now and is awaiting the general resurrection of the which, after the Lord's children shall all hear these words again, "Come ye Blessed of My Father and inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". It was a great witness to me to have conducted the funeral of such a wonderful brother as Brother Ogden was.

In love, I hope
(Elder) David E. Turner

SISTER OLLIE M. BAREFOOT

With a sad heart I attempt to write of the passing of my dear sister in the flesh, and I hope in the Spirit.

It pleased our Heavenly Father to call Sister Barefoot from this scene of action on April 3, 1979 at the age of 58. Sister Ollie was born to Monroe and Sister Mahalie Webb McLamb on May 22, 1920.

She married Martin B. (Buddy) Barefoot, January 21, 1939. To this union were born one daughter, Edith Gray Johnson, and a son, Bobby Ray Barefoot, of Linden, N.C. also two grandsons. This was a family that was dear and close to each other. Other survivors are three sisters and two brothers.

Sister Ollie was steadfast and faithful supporter of the churches in Seven Miles Association for many years before she joined. Brother and Sister Barefoot, in a

called meeting in their home, joined Liberty Church on August 8, 1978, and were baptized August 10, 1978.

All through a long time of suffering but with meekness she ran with patience the race that was set before her, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of her faith.

Her Pastor, Elder C. D. Turner, and Elder W. D. Godwin conducted her funeral in Liberty Church, and she was laid to rest in the Devotional Garden Cemetery, Harnett County.

Sister Ollie was respected and loved in the family, church, community, and all who knew her. We miss her greatly and hope to meet her again some sweet day.

Written by her sister in the flesh and I hope in the Spirit - also her daughter, Edith Gray Johnson.

Committee: Sister Earlon Flowers
Daughter Edith Gray Johnson

time". Now, I am comforted to believe that her soul is in yon paradise, her spirit reclaimed by Him who gave it, her body planted low in the ground awaiting that day when the voice of the Archangel shall declare time to be no more; when it, in dust, shall obey, be raised and reunited with her soul and spirit to dwell forever and eternally with her God -- no more longing to hear the resurrection preached but being a part of it and its reality!

May God bless her children and her grandchildren and cause them to rejoice in the knowledge that their mother and grandmother was not ashamed to own her Lord, and never shunned to declare His goodness towards her.

Written at the request of her devoted daughter and in loving memory of mine own sister, I humbly bow to God's will.

Lavonia W. Lee
P.O. Box 209
Huntland, Tn. 37345

ANNIE LOU BREWER

On November 11, 1979 the Lord called home my dear earthly and spiritual sister, Annie Lou Brewer of Birmingham, Alabama.

She was born in Madison County Alabama on March 7, 1903, the third child of the late Brother G. W. and Sister Price Stone Williams.

Her husband, Brother George Brewer preceded her in death by several years; and her oldest child, a son, preceded her by three years: and although the loss of her loved ones caused her grief, she still could say with much faith, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away - blessed be His name".

Her membership was at Zion Church in Birmingham and her pastors, Elder Claude Hand and Elder Allen Bailey, conducted the service in the presence of her three surviving sons, Floyd Brewer of Florida; Harold and Curtis Brewer, both of Birmingham; and one daughter, Mrs. Betty Jones of Birmingham; her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many other relatives and friends.

Sister Annie Lou was a firm believer in Salvation by Grace and some of her last words to me and another one of our sisters when we visited her in the nursing home a few months prior to her death were, "I'd like to hear the resurrection preached one more

BROTHER HENRY T. BROWN

With a portion of my heart empty forever because God our Heavenly Father called my (our) highly esteemed Brother Henry T. Brown, Deacon of Great Swamp Primitive Baptist Church, home to rest from his labor on January 9, 1980. He was the son of the union of the late John T. and Lydia Corbett Brown. Brother Henry was born October 22, 1897 in Edgecombe County. He was married to Mary Lether Flemings on February 2, 1921, who preceeded him in death March 27, 1964. To this union were born three lovely children, Eleanor B. Cherry, Ruth B. Braddy, and Henry T. Brown, Jr., all of Greenville, N.C. Brother Brown later married Magalene Marshall of Robersonville, N.C., on February 11, 1967, which survive him. He is survived also by three sisters, Miss Sarah Anna Brown, Greenville, N.C., Mrs. Florence B. Brown, Indianapolis, Indiana, Mrs. Rosa B. Mitchiner, Henderson, N.C.; ten grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Brother Brown united with Great Swamp Primitive Baptist Church in May, 1950, and was ordained a deacon in December, 1950. He was a man of deep firm convictions, called of God, steadfast in the gospel of the Son of God, principles of the truth and

practices of the Church of Jesus Christ. His dear family, the membership of Great Swamp Church, all of the brethren of the same faith and order that knew him both far and near, suffers a great void which can never be filled here in this world and especially the writer, his Pastor, who came up under Brother Brown's guidance and care.

Brother Brown was widely known and highly esteemed from the high hills of the mountain, to the Eastern Shores of Maryland and Delaware down the eastern coast to the Keys of Florida. Brother Henry will be missed greatly because he walked about Zion considering her bulwarks, what his hands found to do he did with all his might. He was slow to speak in regard to the doctrine, principles of the church, the welfare of the brethren, but when he did speak, he spoke with power and authority given him by his Heavenly Father and he was heard by all and peace was restored among the brethren.

I would to God that the Lord send forth in our midst more of the old soldiers of the Cross to continue to uphold the doctrine of salvation by Grace, and Grace alone; the Truth, principles and order of the brethren.

Though we mourn his passing, we do fully believe his death brought him into the full realization of God's sweet promises to His children. Brother Brown in his later years suffered much pain and failing strength; but now in the presence of his Saviour, he sings praise to Him who was his strength and salvation. He fought a good fight. He kept the faith.

Funeral services were conducted at Wilkerson Funeral Chapel, Greenville, N.C., by Elder Marvin E. Garner, his pastor, and Elder Joseph A. Leggett, Moderator of the Kehukee Association. His body was placed in that from which he was made and under a mound of beautiful flowers and tears that flowed as the River of Jordan overfloweth it's banks.

Written at the request of the family and by one that loved him very much.

(Elder) Marvin E. Garner

HARRY DEMOSS UNDERWOOD

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from our midst by death our beloved

brother, Harry Demoss Underwood. He was born in Franklin County, Virginia, March 23, 1901 and departed this life January 11, 1980, making his stay on earth 78 years, 10 months, and 20 days. He was the son of the late Robert and Allieann Nichols Underwood. He was married to Mattie Hatcher June 22, 1922. To this union four sons were born, James Warren, Ernest, H. D., Jr. and Morris Ray. He leaves behind his wife, four sons, and ten grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. One granddaughter preceded him in death, Vivian Jeanette Underwood. Also, he is survived by one sister, Mrs. Georgia Thompson and two brothers, Charlie Underwood and Frank Underwood.

He was a strong believer in the doctrine of Salvation by the Grace of God, a brother who had a wonderful gift to discern the truth from an error. If a minister made a mistake, he could tell him of it in a way not to offend him. I knew him long before either of us had a home in the church. He united with Republican Church September 15, 1973, and was baptized September 23. The day I baptized him he told me, "I have been wanting to have this done for forty years". Many a time have we walked into the house of the Lord and taken sweet counsel together.

My wife and I visited in his home the day he was in the funeral home. From the tears of sorrow that I saw in the eyes of his four sons, I knew he was a father that was going to be missed, not only by his family, but his church and friends as well. We feel we have lost a loving brother, yet believe our loss is his eternal gain.

His funeral was preached at Collins Funeral Chapel, Bassett, Virginia, by Elders Amos Hash, Hale Terry, and J.R. Hollonds-worth. His body was laid to rest in Rose Lawn Burial Park, under a mound of beautiful flowers to await the coming of our Blessed Redeemer, who will present His church faultless before the throne of His presence.

Written by his pastor who loved him very much. Done by the order of the church this 16th day of February, 1980. One copy for the church record. One copy for the family. One copy to be sent to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Elder W. M. Holland, Moderator
Grey Ingram, Clerk

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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JOHN 15:2

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

If there was one thing that was consistent with the teaching and preaching by Christ while here on earth that was the simplicity of His speech, the compassion in His tone, and the ability to cause everyone in His hearing to believe that He was describing them in His discourses. There was nothing personal, no harshness, no exaggeration, or colouring in His descriptions of spiritual dealings with the human conscience. "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables they perceived that He spake of them." (Matt. 21:45) And again, "and they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last". (John 8:9)

The parable of the vine and the branch is one of the best examples of our Lord's way of instructing. He who formed the human heart, knew how vile and how deep in evil man could and does go in an outward profession of His name, yet live and die without regenerating Grace. In the parable alluded to, He lays bare the evil to which man is exposed; the self-deception, and warns of the dangers of the teaching of false disciples, false prophets and teachers. "I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

There can exist a state such as the

fruitless disciple of the Gospel that show how completely degenerate, how vile, and to what depth of deceit lies within the human heart. It is possible for an individual to appear as a believer in Jesus in an external way; such as attending church, etc., in his outward moral appearance and still remain among the dead. Of all the states to be in, in this life, this is the vilest - yet there are thousands of them living in this world now.

May we, if it be the Will of Almighty God, attempt to expound upon the expressions alluded to in this parable. First, the fruitless branch as being united to himself. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit". We are not to understand this as a vital union, such as a spiritual grafting into Christ. The word of truth does not bear out such interpretation. The word of God declares that living faith brought by the Holy Spirit does bear fruit. We therefore conclude that the attachment here referred to is of external being, by profession of His name, by an outward zeal for His glory. If we, however, graft a dead branch to a live vine we may deceive the casual observer for a short time, but time will show that it is a dead branch and there is no fruit there even though it be externally fastened to the tree. How do we know? Where is the separation between the individual and his own self-righteousness; where is the breaking of the fallow ground of a hard and stony heart? Where is the humbleness; where is the meek and lowly creature; where is the hell deserving sinner? Is it any wonder that when we look for fruit in such a branch, we do not find it. We speak of no special sect, but look at the world today. Look at the case of Simon Magus: he was a fruitless disciple who had neither part nor lot in the matter. Look at Demas; "Demas hath forsaken me" writes the apostle. Judas Iscariot: in reference to whom Jesus prays to his father "all thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them

is lost, but the son of perdition." In these the union in Christ was only external. Once the master of the house has risen up and hath shut to the door and ye stand without. Then will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. And when ye knock upon the door, then will He say "depart from me ye workers of iniquity for I never knew you." The end thereof is to be cut off and cast into the lake of fire.

Now, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it". Here we see life; here is true union with Christ. How do we see it? "We shall know them by their fruits." Here we see the fruit bearing branch in Christ, grafted into him, united to him, and dwelling in him. Here we see the humbleness, here we see and feel the contrite heart; here we see the abandonment of all self-righteousness. Here we see a complete dependence upon the Lord God through Jesus Christ wrought by the Holy Spirit. Here we see faith enlarged within us by the pruning of the husbandman. Here we feel the rod of discipline administered justly upon us. Here we see the surety of the eternal covenant of grace made by Christ as the surety and mediator of His people. Here we see His people as a "peculiar people". For "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1:3-4) Here we are made to hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ. Here we are made to feel for a little season the indwelling spirit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, made to feel "Christ in you the hope of glory"; made to feel to be one in His mystical body. Oh blessed state of being "in Christ". Who would not experience it? Who would not enjoy it? "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." (Rom. 8:1) These are the

living branches united to the true vine which bear fruit. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." If it were possible for man within himself to continue this feeling or acquire it in the first place, then Armienus was right in his delcaration of doctrine. But, not so. Just as it is continually necessary to prune a fruit tree in a natural sense that it may bear more fruit, in the mind and purpose of God it is necessary that a continual pruning of the spiritual branches be made. The child of God is continually exposed to and confronted by sin and degradation in the ways of this world. And of himself, that is naturally, he cannot at times resist the temptations of Satan and this world. Yea, he must be continually pruned to be able to withstand the trials and tribulations inflicted upon him that he might suffer just as surely as did our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Just as the children of Israel took possession of the land of Canaan and conquered its inhabitants, yet could not entirely remove all the former occupants. Just as the "strong man armed" has been deposed, the natural corrpution of our fallen nature, the evils of the heart, the heathenish lusts, passions, and infirmities that were former occupants of the soil, still dwell there and shall never in this life be entirely disposed. Pruning, however, does not in any way weaken the vine, nay, only to make it stronger and more fruitful. Who in all time could have been pruned more than Job? Yet his faith remained, and yea waxed stronger. Once the seed of grace is planted, it cannot perish. Divine life in the soul is indestructable, it cannot perish nor can it be corrupted. The Apostle Paul was given to pray thrice for the removal of his infirmities and thrice the Lord denied his request saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee". Let us remember, tried believer, that supporting grace, in the season of trials,

is a greater mercy than removal of the trial itself.

May the pruning continue, if ever it was, with us. May we be given, by the Grace of God, the faith to carry on throughout the remaining days of our lives in a manner and way that is pleasing in the sight of God is my prayer.

Elder B. J. McLaughlin

ORDINATION OF
BROTHER MICHAEL NEIKIRK

Moved and agreed to go into conference.

Moved and agreed to call Sister Nina Pearson as Clerk.

The following Deacons were called to sit with the Presbytery: Brothers Earl Rudd, George Pearson, George Williford, Leon Griffin, Amos Williams, Marcus Armstrong, Harold Pittman, Johnny Griffin, Elmo Lupton, Ernest Stone, Cleveland Coleman, Aubrey Dickens, Jack Brown, and Odis Daughtridge.

The Presbytery was called, composed of Elder Henry Jones and Elder C. B. Davis. Elder Jones was chosen to act as moderator.

Elder Jones opened conference with hymn 530 and prayer. The ministers and those liberated were asked to sit on the front seat; Elder Reeves Smith, Brother Clyde Debow, and Brother Leroy Arrington.

Brother J. Carroll Williams and Brother Alvin Lancaster, Deacons of Pleasant Hill Church, presented the candidate to the Presbytery. Brother J. Carroll Williams said that they were satisfied with Bro. Neikirk and asked that the Presbytery examine the candidate. Elder Jones had no questions of the Brother as he has proved well and has preached what we believe by the Grace of God. Elder Davis read from the book of First Timothy the qualifications of a Minister. We are qualified by the mercy of the Eternal God. He should take care of the Church of God, and not rule over the flock. Brother Davis charged the brother; there will be times you will feel the Spirit, and other times you will not. Be mindful of how you conduct yourself where ever you go. Be mindful of the needs of the flock. Seek God in all things. Fulfill the duties that are required. Have the

earnest desire to serve rather than to be served. Look to Christ as the Author and Finisher of your faith. To the candidate's companion; if you find him walking and weeping, stick by him and serve him as a help mate.

The Presbytery placed their hands on the candidate in prayer. The Presbytery asked the church if it was satisfied with the work of the presbytery. They were satisfied.

The candidate was returned to Pleasant Hill Church as an ordained Minister of the Gospel. Hymn # 16, 5, and 298 were sung as the family of the Elder, members and friends gave him the right hand of fellowship.

Moved and agreed a copy of these minutes be sent to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy for the church records. Moved and agreed to read the minutes. The minutes were received as read. Moved and agreed the Presbytery be dismissed. Moved and agreed to adjourn conference.

Elder Henry Jones, Moderator
Nina Pearson, Clerk

II Corinthians 10:18

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

In retrospect I see that I have spent most of my life commanding myself, for I felt to be "as good as the best and better than the rest." But thanks be unto God, who works all things according to his sovereign will and purpose, He has shown me that I am nothing and less than nothing. May He always keep me humble and begging at His feet and always esteeming my brethren better than self.

I would not dare compare myself with the great apostle Paul who oft admonished the saints because of their errors, but he tells us (Rom. 15:14) that we are able to admonish one another: and I believe we should do so - if we do it in a brotherly way. I pray the Father, who knows our thoughts and intentions from afar, that He remove all malice from my heart and give me grace to write this admonition in love only.

There are many gifts in the Church of God and all are necessary; for we are the body of Christ, and members in particular. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles; secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (I Cor. 12:28). In Eph. 4:11 we read, "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." You will note that God did the setting and giving and not the church or some individual.

For what purpose did God give these gifts? "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:12-13).

Each member of the church of God has a gift differing according to the grace that is given us of God. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Eph. 4:18) "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James. 1:17). Each and every gift is of God; and yet we see in most churches envy, jealousy, variance, boasting, etc. among the members as well as the ministry. Brethren, this should not be; and we should bow our knees daily and continually to the Lord in prayer and supplications that this condition cease. We should esteem our brethren better than self and follow after charity, which is Godly love; and "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

There is never a need for one to declare that he has a spiritual gift: and most certainly it is not meet for the brethren to try to prove otherwise, even should they believe his declaration to be false.

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own works, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not another. For every man shall bear his own burden." (Gal. 6:3-5). If a man has a gift it cannot be hid. Paul wrote Timothy, "Some men's sins are open beforehand; going before to judgement; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." (I Tim. 5:24-25). And Solomon wrote, "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." (Pro. 18:17): and he followed with, "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him."

Brethren, we are approved only if we are commended of God; therefore let us not commend nor exalt ourselves, for we can of ourselves do nothing. Jesus himself said, "I can of mine own self do nothing." And, "For without me ye can do nothing." And on three separate occasions Jesus said, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11 & 18:14 & Matt. 23:12.)

Brethren, let us examine ourselves. Are we envious, jealous? is there variance? Do we boast? We should ask these and many other questions concerning our behavior and then search diligently for the answers. God is the One to whom we must look and the One to whom we must answer. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James 3:14-16). God is not the author of confusion, but of peace; therefore let us look to him and seek peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Dearly beloved brethren, let us take

heed to the scriptures and, "Let nothing be done thru strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themself. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Phil 2:3-4). And, "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Gal. 5:26).

If we have been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever; then let us lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, and as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby.

Brethren, I greatly need and desire your prayers.

Clifford Wilbanks

Lillie, La.
Aug. 4, 1959

Dear Brother Calk,

I came across your real good and much appreciated letter today and am not sure, but doubt I answered it, so I decided to write you, the Lord willing. Hope you and family are all well. We are about as usual I believe at this time, except my aged mother, who is very feeble, both mentally as well as physically. She will be 93 years old in November if she is with us that long.

Now as to the scripture you asked me about, it is found in Isaiah 4:1 and reads as follows, "And in that day seven women shall take hold on one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach." And I am of the opinion that this scripture has alusion to the entirety of those who are professors of Religion, but depending on their own Righteousness, which is their own self-righteousness, and their bread, I think, is their

doctrine as is very clearly set forth in Matt. 16:12. So from this direct statement of the Blessed Savior, we can readily conclude that these seven women are not interested in either His righteousness, or His doctrine to be called by His Name (Christian) to take away their reproach by the world. The world professes His name, but substitutes their own righteousness, and then sets forth the doctrines and commandments of men.

So this circumstance is certainly a demonstration of the obnoxious doctrine and commandments of men and devils being all they wanted, and their self-righteousness they felt to be sufficient for them; but the poor Publican, who was not sufficient of himself even to draw near the Lord, and because of his felt sense of sin and condemnation, he would not even look toward Heaven, but stood afar off and smote upon his breast and said, God be merciful to me, a sinner. And Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. So the seven women stand exactly where the proud Pharisee did when he stood and prayed thus with himself, God I thank thee that I fast twice a week, and pay tithes of all I possess, and I thank thee that I am not as other men, or even as this Publican. So I had rather be the one who did not have any righteousness of his own, or any bread (Doctrine) of his own, but he was the one who went down to his house justified rather than the one who was righteous in his own eyes, and which held to the doctrines and commandments of men. I feel that this is a plain case of the position of the seven women, and I think they represent the fullness of the modern religious combination of Arminian Church professors. They do not care for the Righteousness of Christ, neither for His Doctrine.

So dear brother, Christ the Lord said in the sermon on the mount, Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the

Kingdom of Heaven. Now we know anyone who was or is in the position of this vaunted Pharisee could not be poor. He possessed much riches in his own eyes; he even thanked God that he was better than others, even better than this poor Publican who couldn't do anything of himself, and who confessed to be a sinner. So we can see who of these two Bible characters was poor, and we can also see which one of these was wearing his own righteousness, and the one who was satisfied without the Doctrine (bread) of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Lord bless us with that Bread which is from Heaven and that Precious Garment of the Righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord and that Precious Doctrine and commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we find in the new covenant in Heb. 8th chapter, which is written in the hearts and minds of the Lord's people, and His sweet promise is that these Laws are in them, and the Lord alone puts them there, and His promise is, That I will be to them a God and they shall be unto me a people, for I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more, saith the Lord.

Now according to the Pharisee he was not poor, he possessed so much righteousness of his own that he did not need anything the Lord had; but on the other hand the poor Publican had no righteousness of his own, but he possessed and confessed his unrighteousness, and that is what the New Covenant promised, that the Lord would be merciful to their unrighteousness; and it seems to me that the Pharisee had no unrighteousness of his own, but was so much better, and that humble, helpless, dependent, unrighteous one is the one who went down to his house justified rather than the other.

Hope this may suffice to at least show what my understanding is on this subject (if it is understanding). I also saw the article in the *Signs of the*

Times, on this subject, and I do not agree with it at all, but I am truly aware, I hope, that without the Light of God's Holy Spirit we are helpless in our understanding.

Yours in hope,
(Elder) R. W. Rhodes

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fifth Annual session of the Pigg River District Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Chestnut Church, commencing on Friday before and continuing through the first Sunday in August, 1980. (August 1,2,3).

Chestnut is located near Rocky Mount, Va. Coming from Rocky Mount, go south about three miles, take the left on State Route 619. Then, go three miles, and turn right onto State Route 724. From Martinsville, Va., go north on Route 220 approximately 22 miles. Then, turn right, off of Route 220 onto State Route 724. Follow the signs.

The brethren ask that every one please bring their folding chairs as there will be none provided.

For more information contact Elder Cecil Turner, Route 3, Bassett, Va., (Phone: 703-629-2286) or Jessie O. Tyree, Route 2, Ferrum, Va., (Phone: 703-365-2509)

All lovers of the truth are invited.

Jamie E. Cooper, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The one hundred thirty-ninth session of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association will convene, according to appointment, with Mt. Ararat Church on July 11, 12, 13, 1980, which is the second Sunday, Friday and Saturday before.

Mt. Ararat Church is located on Highway 750 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, about 7 miles N.W. of Danville, Virginia. We cordially invite our corresponding brethren and friends for this meeting and all that love the doctrine of salvation by grace.

Burnell B. Williams
Association Clerk

PINE CREEK MEETING

Pine Creek Primitive Baptist Church will again have all-day services on July 4, 1980, the Lord willing. All lovers of the Truth are invited.

Anyone needing information or instructions to the meeting house should contact:

Elder Roy Agee
Route 1
Copper Hill, Virginia 24079

PLEASANT VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The thirty-fourth annual session of the Pleasant Valley Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Mount Olive Church, Stockdale, Texas, commencing on Friday before, and continuing through the first Sunday in August, 1980. (August 1, 2, 3)

For additional information contact Elder G. D. Shipman, Route 2, Box 128, Von Ormy, Texas 78073. (Telephone 512 624-2148)

Elder G. D. Shipman

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Strong, Ark.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

It is time to renew my subscription, and enclosed you will find a check for one year made out to the *Signs of the Times*.

I hope the Lord continues to bless you all to publish the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, to His people in the future, as you have in the past. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. (Isa. 52:7)

Also, this is precious to hear, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The Apostles wrote in their Epistles to the Churches these lovely words, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!" "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

To read, or hear the gospel preached is my meat and drink, when blessed of the Lord with ears to hear and a heart to understand a little portion of His precious truths.

Remember this poor sinful worm of the dust, when at the Throne of Grace, is my prayer.

Love,
Mrs. Lula B. Fox

THE BLOOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST

How I have felt my soul delighted with the blood and righteousness of Christ! not with the notion and head knowledge of them, as many; not with the distant sight and acknowledgment of them, as Balaam; but with the close feeling sensibly of them.

O! I have felt my sin and destitution to be met by the blood and righteousness of Christ; and what was the effect?—my sin vanished, and my nakedness of soul vanished. And unutterable beauty and a whole world of charms have spiritually come in their place. Then that scripture bloomed: "To the praise of the glory of his grace." Dazzled with the beauty of putting on Christ sensibly, overcome with the dress of his blood and righteousness, as my wedding-dress or marriage garment, I have said, "Where am I?" Then I felt my soul as naturally to fall to Christ as lead falls to the ground. Then I felt the sweetness of that scripture, "Ye are not your own." "No, Lord," said I, "I am dazzled and afraid of looking at myself". And, dressed in the wedding garment of Christ's active and passive righteousness, the beauty of the soul then is such that it is overpowering. At least, I have found it so. "O! take me, Lord", said I, "for I cannot bear to look on myself; the glittering grandeur and beauty of thy blood and righteousness on me overpowers me: see, my soul! darest thou look on thyself? O! I swoon, I faint." "To be admired for ever in all them that believe", then was felt. Innocency, truth, wisdom, a single eye, divine honesty, and all manner of excellencies beamed on my soul as being part of the communicable divine nature." "O! where am I?" said I, "it must be heaven, and it is heaven." And let me tell you, when the blood and righteousness of Christ are accompanied, (as they are in the elect,) with the power of the Holy Ghost, it is heaven absolutely in measure. And I doubt not but the kingdom of glory is merely an

enlargement infinitely, as God sees fit, of these surprising joys.

The Holy Ghost, the seven spirits of God, is inseparably annexed to Christ's blood and righteousness, and to nowhere else. (Gal. 3:2) Startle at that, ye Arminians, ye self-righteous. When these seven spirits (that cloven tongue of fire) rest on a soul, and reveal there Christ's blood and righteousness, what surprising effects! Oh! the startling glory! the sweet effects! the wonderful presence of Christ felt! the beauty, the glory, the sweetness! Heirs of another creation! Such souls become bewildered with delight; yea, even the bitter operations of this Testifier of Christ become even sweet in a sense; as it is written, "We glory in tribulations, and take pleasure in distresses." Soul! hast thou received the Holy Ghost? if not, all thy knowledge of Christ is mere Scripture without power. If thou hast received the Holy Ghost, he will dig into those heavenly mines, the Scriptures, for thee; he will open streams in the desert for thee. Scriptural knowledge under his divine influences will breathe. Then, thou wilt know somewhat of Him that garnished the heavens testifying to thee of Christ. Enwrapt in beauty, grandeur, and wonder, thou wilt see the blood of Christ and his preceptive obedience to the law to be worth ten thousand worlds, and infinitely more. Confined to the elect, and being absolutely efficacious, the blood and righteousness of Christ thus assumes ten thousand beauties; and when thou seest thyself to be one of the elect,--wonder-struck, thou hearest the Holy Ghost, that garnished the heavens with inimitable beauty, say to thy soul, "Sinner! this is thine; the blood and righteousness of the Second Person in the Trinity incarnate! Will not this do? See thy sins vanish under his blood, and thy destitute nakedness enrobed in his positive deeds, all wrought out for thee; made over to thee as thy own by imputation from God to thee? Will not this do?" Then the soul, fainting with

rapture, gratitude, and a strange compound of feelings, says, "But is it true? can it be true?" "Yes," says the Testifier of Jesus. And with that gradually, and more or less, faith baffles, through the Spirit's power, unbelief. And a whole train of consequences, more or less, begin to arise in the soul. Godly fear, sweet peace, happy hope, comfortable joy, begin to spread their wings, and scatter away misery, woe, and sorrow. As we read, "Healing in his wings." And no tongue can tell all that follows. Gospel obedience will begin to bud. Tenderness of conscience will begin to shine. The indwelling of Christ's Spirit will begin to be felt. Happy sensations as to future bliss will begin to be felt. The poverty and suspicious happiness arising from creatures will begin to be felt. The superiority of the happiness arising from God in Christ will begin to be felt. The sweetness of God in Christ will begin to be felt. These, and a thousand nameless sweets will begin to spread their mild tranquillity through the soul. Now you will begin to call yourself a thousand fools for having been cheated so with earthly things, to think of making happiness out of them which are part of the bondage of corruption, and, in a sense, so under God's curse. Now, you will see that the world is fallen, and that your first-Adam nature is in that fall. Now, you will begin to see and feel that there is a certain feverishness in terrestrialism, of whatever sort it is. Now, as Hart says, you will thus see this feverishness.

"This lurking leaven ferments the mass;
All nature's sick; creation's spoil'd."

Now you will see what fools all men are, as Solomon's Proverbs show, building for happiness beneath the skies. Now you will see this world is a pro-tempore building, hastily run up to be pulled down again; that God has made terrestrial things of a feeble texture; that God intends to burn up the world; that this world is not our rest; that through

the fall it is polluted thoroughly. Crucifixion to the world and the world unto you, and crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, begin to be and shine as something desirable. Now to "tough a dead body and be unclean," is antitypically fulfilled to you in a thousand different ways. You can scarcely think, speak, act, or look, etc., but you contract guilt. All is death, vanity, and vexation out of Christ. Now, hearkening through grace to Christ's Spirit who "leads" you is your glory. He tells you, "love not the things that are in the world; die daily." Which, says the worldling, is no doubt the essence of melancholy. It is not so. Partaker of a better creation in Christ through his blood and righteousness, you are new-created in Him thus. You begin to taste the nature of the new creation in Christ; and you gradually begin to say, "What intolerable deformity! what poor empty work! what an unsatisfying want of solidity there is in this world I am now living in! I would not live always. I suffer the most from my own heart, wherein is the cruel and incurable poison of asps." You become weaned from the world. One touch of carnality in you brings up a whole troop of things friendly to the devil. You see the flesh is corrupt. All things, decay, wax old, and are ready to vanish away.

Now you turn your mind to the last scene of Christ, as your Resurrection; when redemption will wave its last and final flag of immeasurable triumph over every foe. I mean the last general resurrection of all the celestial bodies of saints. Now, when God has turned the world into a ruin, and swept it with the besom of destruction, "Now," say you, "interested in the blood and righteousness of the great Redeemer, I, with the spirits of all justified men made complete,--now we shall be clothed upon with our heavenly houses, our bodies of glory." Say you again, what intolerable imperfection our present stay on earth is much and oft! Interested in the blood

and righteousness of the great Redeemer, and with his sweet Spirit indwelling in me, turning all my soul by springs of fear and love into somewhat like a healthly garden, you say, "How happy I am!"

Watching the hand of God, waiting on him, hearkening to him, you must be builded together, by the Spirit, in Christ by the predestinated method, sorrow and joy. You must not pick and choose. You must say in a gospel sense,

"Whatever is, is right."

Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. Have no communion so far with men who profess they can grow in Christ without the Spirit's influences sensibly enabling. Take heed what thou hearest. And may the blood and righteousness thou hast had from necessity to trust to, shine more and more to thee, till thy whole soul created therein (in this blood and righteousness) cries out, "I know that all that the Scriptures speak of the blood and righteousness of Christ is true. For I have got the springs on happiness arising therefrom in my own soul, and which I believe will arise there to a never-ending eternity, as sure as there is a God.

Abingdon, 1847

I. K.

(I. K. were the initials of John Kay, minister of the gospel among the Particular Baptists in England. After seceding from the Church of England he was taken into the home of William Tiptaft and there he spent most of the remainder of his life. He was rejected by his former friends and family, and being very sickly, he could only supply the pulpit occasionally. His short articles show the deep, Spirit-taught feelings he possessed. Editor)

February 22, 1980

To the Signs of the Times,

Greetings to you, and to our loved ones that have passed on and to the living.

I received the March issue and enjoyed its contents from the beginning to the end - which is sweet to my taste.

The price is paid and the victory has been won. Now let us praise Him for all He has done; to God for sending His own

Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Galatians 5:1 says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." And in Luke 12:31-32, "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

There is quite a difference between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world. (Notice the plural.)

In Matthew 4:8-10 it says, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

I have heard it over the television from some and read it in other writings that God had sent them to preach, telling the people to accept Christ and be saved before it was too late. Also, they say that now was possibly their last chance. Away with such doctrine. We Primitive Baptists don't believe in a chance system. But we go by the wills and shalls of God. Nothing is too late. Nothing is too hard to be accepted of Him. Eph. 4:4-6 says, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

May God continue His love and mercy

on all of His children and loved ones, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life." (Matt. 7:13-14), and may He keep us from evil.

Mattie Underwood

January 26, 1980

Dear Brother Williams,

I am enclosing \$2.00 for contribution to the *Signs of the Times*. Keep the good work up. The truth shall hold on its way and I was so glad to see the names that are standing for the truth of absolute predestination. I believe in it all the way and hope and pray that I am one of His children. I love God's people, if I know my heart, and hope to stand up for the truth as long as I live.

We had wonderful preaching at Pleasantville Church the first Sunday in this month and I really enjoyed the service at Reidsville Church, and am happy to be a member there. May God bless each and every member and editors of the *Signs of the Times*. It is a wonderful book to read and have in my home. I hope you all will pray for all of God's people everywhere and myself, too.

Brother and Sister Spangler had lunch with me in November and I enjoyed them very much. He is a wonderful pastor, and if he doesn't preach the truth, I don't know anything about the truth. I like a plain person with no put-on and no big style. We don't have anything in this world, only what is loaned to us while we are here.

I would like to visit all the churches more but my husband is not a member, but is a strong believer and has a wonderful experience and reads the Bible a lot. He is good to take me the first, second, and fourth Sunday. I hope I am thankful for all the blessings I have.

In love,
Sister Reva Smith

EDITORIAL

ANNointing JESUS

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whosoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always, she hath done what she could: she is come afore hand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (Mark 14:3-9).

It has been said by critics that this lesson was limited to the Jews only. The critics do not have any right to interpret, change, misapply, take away, from the Gentile churches, what the Spirit saith to them. To me, this is a part of the inspired Scriptures, and, while I do not, nor have not, intended to toot my horn as being a man of God, I do have a hope to that end, and I do believe with all of my mind that the Gentiles are men of God when brought into that divine relationship by the New Birth. Believing this, I will not, God being my upholder and present help, be deterred from applying it to the church today.

This is an episode in the life of sinners, and it is a thing of interest to sinners. Inasmuch as the Comforter was promised to take the things of Christ and show them unto us (John 14:26; 16:14, 15), and this being a part of those things, a part of the life of Christ, it

necessarily follows that it will be shown to all those that this Comforter is sent to. I am not pointing my finger at anyone, decision making having been left out of my hands (Mat. 29:23).

The setting for this lesson is certainly encouraging to poor ruined sinners. The apostle Paul, with all of his eminence as a learned man, would have enjoyed being in attendance at this meeting. The discussion of these sacred things would have been uplifting when he was inspired to write Romans 7:18. It was not by chance that this meeting was in a sinners home, even a leperous sinner. Doubtless there are nice people today that would say this woman should have waited until a more opportune time to have poured the ointment of the Saviour; it is certain that some found fault with her having wasted such precious ointment on what they thought was a harlot's son. That kind of people are not acquainted with the urgency of serving the Saviour, for, to those with whom the Spirit is working, there is no time like now. Putting off or putting on the work of grace in the heart, as well as into action, in not handled as men handle commodities like turnips and potatoes. This woman was not moved on, but she was moved to have a will, and the movement caused her to break the box and to pour the precious and costly ointment upon the head of her Maker.

Imagine someone being filled with indignation at such devotion. It is not a matter that we must let our imagination play about, but we are seeing cases wherein men having given many long years in service to the Lord and to the brethren, are being made the object of brutal challenge, are being subjected to cruel gossip and adverse publicity because that they have done what they could. This woman was indeed highly favored of the Lord. She had done what she could. He did not arraign her before the bar of Satanic humanity and ridicule her for not having done better.

No, no, that kind of treatment comes to those that toot their horn to a gainsaying world. The Pharisees (and they are many in this nation, as well as surrounding nations) hurled vile epithets at this poor, certain woman on every occasion. They did not give the virgin a moment's rest from their vile tongue nor pen; these on this occasion taunted her, and reviled the Saviour for allowing her to do what she could; another poor woman, whom men (and how cruel men, even professing men, can be) was castigated before men, and the same was attempted before the Saviour, but it did not take. She complied with the Saviour--she did what she could.

Me thinks that time will often reveal the indignation of divine Justice because of the putting of something other than Jesus as being worthy of the great price. The poor were ever at hand, and doing something to relieve the poverty-stricken is certainly commendable, unless service is rendered the poor, which are always present, rather than the blessed Saviour who was working before night came, the works that would be accepted in behalf of elect sinners. We must always remember that in service, which is acceptable with God, that it must be His kingdom first. There is not to be a second choice, a secondary work. Both His doing that acceptable work, as well as our walking in those things of the kingdom, that they must be done. We do them because we are able through the strengthening of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do all that is thus wrought in us--we all do what we can.

Another outstanding fact is that the grace of God prompts us to do good. We do all the good that we can do. If we could do more, and did not do it, then it could not be said that we did what we could. We can do, we do do, all that Christ enables us to do. If He enables us to do more, and we did not do it, then it could not be said of us, as it was said of her, that we had done what we could.

The reason for us not doing more than we do is simple; it is because He has not enabled us to do more. We cannot do anything without him (John 15:1-5) The argument is over; the discussion is ended. It is not that I desire to appear that I have a closed mind, and yet, I do that. My Master closed the discussion; there is not anything more that can be said. What He says concludes all arguing, reasoning, closes all mouths--and minds. My mind is closed. It is not open for further discussion. Only God is good, therefore He alone must make the true good, only He can plant a righteous branch in a righteous Vine; only in and through and by the miracle of God's grace can we ever get into the Vine, to abide in Him. No branch has ever produced good fruit save in Him, for without Him we can do nothing. The Son could do nothing of Himself; the apostle, while the chief of the apostles, could not, nor did not, know but in part, and while he did not know, within himself, how to perform that which is good, yet, by the grace of God he did what he did, and what he could, and ended up in the faith of the woman in our text, that did what she could, having fought a good fight.

What a great contrast in the life of poor sinners. How they deplore their leanness, their barrenness, yet a man or woman can not do any better than they do, but they do all that they can. The argument is also over about whether we can do more than we do. Paul closed it more than nineteen hundred years ago. Let him talk to us. By the grace of God, let us listen to his experience of grace. In his experimental work of telling us about his, and our travel he clinches everything in favor of poor sinners, and in his describing this condition in the lives of poor sinners, he does not take a run out powder, nor does he make any exceptions for himself or anyone else. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lascivious-

ness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I tell you before as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:19-23)

Unless the Saviour was mistaken (but he was not) a natural man is inclined and bent and is in subjection to these works of the flesh. Regardless of how many are tossing pitchforks and barbs, it is still true that no man can rise above these works of the flesh. He cannot turn and do anything good within himself. His heart is desperately wicked, and that coupled to its deceitfulness, places it in a state to where it cannot be known. this being true, this kind of a heart does all of the wickedness that it can do. It is utterly impossible for this kind of heart to do anything else, for it is evil continually. Not only does it have a continual tendency to do evil, but, being accustomed to doing what it can, it will continue to do just that, no more, no less. This being the state of mankind at the beginning (Gen. 6:5) it follows that the state of the woman in our text was such that she was doing what she could do of the works of the flesh. Will you please advise me by what spirit or by what power she could have or would have done otherwise? The studying of the catechisms, the fathers in Israel, being under tutors and governors would never have taught her to leave her waterpot at Jacob's well; all of the doctors and lawyers under the law could not have enabled her to even know who Jesus was much less to worship Him by pouring costly spices and ointment on Him. But she did do what she could. Without a knowledge of sin under the law, but now, under the teaching of the lowly

Galilaean she is now taught and enabled to do that which she could.

Ah, what warfare comes into our lives at the beginning of our first lessons at His feet. It seems that we are a helpless and hopeless case. Sin is still mixed in all that we do and say. We cannot go forward, we cannot turn back. It looks like to us that in spite of all His care, and in spite of all the interest of the family of God, we cannot do as we would desire. Do not give up, dear child. He is patient, He is kind. His teaching, like His yoke, is easy. Only when we try to do as we would, only when we try the teaching, do we find terror. But as line upon line, as precept upon precept, as a little comes in this little visit, as a little more next time, even so we learn of Him and by Him. In this we do what we can. It is a predestined journey all of the way. He goes before us and we follow Him, we do what we can. However this "can" will stand a close scrutiny. It is not a conditional can, we do what we can, and we can because he works mightily in us both to will and to do His pleasure. In this the opposition of our flesh is subdued, brought under subjection to every commandment given us, thus, when our course is finished, and we come to leave this world, we will have done all that we could do, and we will have left undone every sinful word and way and deed that is derogatory or impairing to the walk of a child of grace.

Her act of breaking the box of ointment and pouring it on His head was a good, commendable act. It was an act that was good to do to the poor at any time they were present, but this was the appointed time for her to do it to Him. He was there for that time, and she came along at the time in which she could do what she could. There is not any difficulty thrown in her way, although the Pharisees tried to make it difficult for her. Christ Jesus thwarted one, and blessed the other. The unbelieving Jews could not prevent the costly spikenard being poured on Him, and He enabled

her to do it, thus she did what she could. The fruits of the Spirit had no law against her doing it, and the works of the flesh were thwarted to where not anything was present to keep her from doing it, therefore she did what she could. Her whole being was absorbed in worshipping her Master; of following Him through thick adversaries or legions of devils. It was easy and delightful for her to do what she was enabled to do; to do what she could.

The faithfulness of this poor sinful woman is preached today when the gospel is preached. He that wrought effectually in her, enabling her to do what she could, sets an example for the household of faith. It is not her so much that is always mentioned, but her faith. She was a blessed woman, a faithful woman. The evidence of acceptance was not in her having acquired faith, or sought faith, or exercised faith, for, if so, the acceptance of her would have never been made manifest, but to the contrary, she would have been commanded to depart from Him as a worker of iniquity. One thing we can be sure of, God has never given His approval to, nor accepted any work save that which He has wrought (Job 14:15/Luke 13:27).

The secret of all acceptable services is found in the difference that grace makes in the lives of God's children. It is His grace that enables one and all to do what they do in following Him, in doing all they have done, in doing all that they do in serving Him. Once again, at the expense of being called trite, let me urge that all of this result in this poor woman, and the poor sinner, is the direct and immediate work of God. It is not nine tenths His work and one tenth ours. It is by grace from the beginning to the end; it is by grace that we do what we can, all that we can.

He works in His children. His work is an effectual work. I used to work at getting my little pupils to behave; years later I worked at getting my offsprings to behave themselves; and I do believe

that was a good work, and that it was the best, and all, that I could do. This is the gift of parents for their loved ones, but, bless His holy and righteous name, He works and gives much better things and gifts. He works in them all righteousness by which they are able to do His commandments, which is all that they can do.

(Elder) W. D. Griffin

THE SAMARITAN

We have been asked what we understand is taught in the parable of the Samaritan and are glad to give such views as we have.

In this connection, we remember a paragraph in an Editorial by Elder Chick in the Signs of August 15, 1887 which reads as follows: "Almost all the discourses of our Saviour grew out of certain circumstances which had occurred, or were replies to things said or done by others; and if we would at any time know the real drift and bearing of his words, we must know the circumstances and ascertain the thoughts, ideas and words of those to whom he spoke. This is the only safe way of interpreting anybody's words; and it is very manifest that the same words spoken under different circumstances may bear a great diversity of meaning. In the words of Jesus under consideration it is therefore needful that we know the occasion of their utterance, and to whom they were spoken."

Elder Chick here expressed our own thoughts on these matters so well that we feel to quote him; and, although he was not writing on our subject, what he said is so very true that we would do well to heed these particulars whenever we are considering any portion of the Scriptures. How true it is that a jewel of gold in a swine's snout is out of place, for it's beauty and value is utilized only when it is properly set. (see Prov. 11:22)

A careful reading of Luke 10:21-37, is necessary for an understanding of the

circumstances which gave occasion for the utterance of the parable of the Samaritan; and it would be impossible to understand the parable if we should fail to note two things especially. First, that the parable was addressed to the Lawyer; and second, the concluding remark by the Saviour: "Go, and do thou likewise." It was not addressed to the disciples; and the conclusion, though simply stated, no doubt stopped the mouth of the gainsayer.

Several important matters are disclosed in the parable, chiefly the contrast between the actions of the priest and Levite, on one hand, and the Samaritan, on the other. But it is noted that this difference is directed to the lawyer and, of course, to those whom he represents.

Jesus was talking to his disciples concerning many wonderful and glorious things which they were blessed to see and hear, which prophets and kings in other ages had not seen, though they desired them. Then the lawyer, who no doubt had heard him talking, "stood up" to tempt or provoke him, and asked, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

It was so characteristic of the lawyer and his kind, in their feelings and deportment, to stand above and apart from those who believed in and followed Jesus, for they knew nothing of the need of grace and redemption. Being a son of Abraham and keeper of the law, as he thought, his conscience did not question his righteousness. Desiring, therefore, to tempt or entangle Jesus, he would boldly have Jesus know his position, and demanded to know what else was necessary; for, to him, Jesus was teaching a strange and ridiculous doctrine. Therefore, in the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life," we can almost hear him putting emphasis on "I", for he was so very complacent about it.

How easy it was for Jesus to be master of every situation. He simply asked the

lawyer, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" It was easy for the lawyer to reply to this since he was acquainted with the letter. He quoted, "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." Then Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live."

Any difficulty in this answer of Jesus is resolved if we bear in mind that Jesus was, for the moment, taking a stand on the lawyer's own ground, allowing him to "dig his own pit" and unwarily to fall into it.

By this time the lawyer felt that he was doing quite well for himself in the conversation; so he continued by asking, "And who is my neighbor?" This was a further effort to tempt Jesus, and was his downfall, since it gave proof on the very face of the question that his religion lacked vitality, — an outward appearing with no inward marrow. If indeed and in truth he had loved the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, strength and mind, he would have likewise loved his neighbor as himself; for it is to be noted that the loving his neighbor as himself is connected with loving his God. The question need not, therefore, have been asked.

Though men may say, "These things have I kept from my youth up," there is a "One thing thou lackest." Jesus said on another occasion, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the others undone." How true it is as said a poet, "Long sanctimoneous faces oft hide hearts that are foul."

The purpose of the parable which followed was evidently to portray the difference between the fruits of a naturally religious man and the fruits of a spiritually religious man; that is, the fruits of one unregenerated and one

regenerated. In all his teaching Jesus had declared the necessity of a change in heart, — a being born again. The change is within, and is acquired when a new covenant is made with the sinner; or rather, when it is manifested to the sinner that the new covenant is made with him, the laws thereof being written in his heart and put in his mind. This, and this alone, produces new "externals", as shown by the new walk, new talk and new actions. The "externals" of an ascetic life, the pretensions of piety, evidenced by routine fastings and prayers, can never change the heart; yet these are the ways in which men would acquire righteousness, and are quite satisfied with this appeasing balm in their un-broken hearts.

When the priest and the Levite "passed by" the man half-dead, neither were moved with any degree of compassion. They no doubt saw his condition and his need, but had no "fellowship" for it. Without a doubt neither had ever been left for dead, or robbed, or wounded experimentally: nor felt the need of comforting ministrations of a fellow traveler. They probably felt they were glad they were not as this publican, as one did on another occasion; so they passed by. They were entirely self-centered, and strict in their deportment; they felt that if others would do as they, others would not fall into divers straits as this man had. This seems to represent the feeling of carnal security; and self sufficiency to be righteous in the sight of God, which is inherent in all who have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, and hearts and understand not. These characters are vividly portrayed in the Gospels and in the Acts; they are as much among us today as they were then, for none can show forth the fruits of any spirit except that which they have; and these have only the spirit of man.

There comes another man upon the scene, however, whose spirit is entirely different. He shows it by his actions, though he was practically an

"untouchable", being a Samaritan. There was an immediate response from his heart, half-dead man's troubles became his troubles, his wounds became his wounds. A fellowship for the sufferings of the wounded one was quickly apparent, — was he not a sufferer, too. His understanding and feeling for his fellow took not just a mere form of wellwishing, but there was a giving of his all. Love, a heart felt love, prompts a laying down of our lives for our brethren. And we cannot but understand that this is what the Samaritan had. He is typical of all those who are brought to know themselves as they are in the sight of God, and who have felt and experienced the love and mercy of God shed abroad in their hearts, and a forgiveness of their sins. In this there springs up a real loving of the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, soul, strength and mind, and our neighbors as ourselves. We do not have to inquire "who is our neighbor." There is an attraction of kindred spirits to each other, and a going forth of love and fellowship, so that there is not only a rejoicing with those who rejoice, but a weeping with those who weep, and a mourning with those who mourn. The poet wrote:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love:
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes;
Our mutual burdens bear:
And often for each others flows
The sympathizing tear."

When this so great a contrast was shown the lawyer in the parable, he could but say that the neighbor was the one who showed mercy. Then Jesus said, "Go, and do thou likewise." We see in this a plain and severe rebuke to the lawyer, just as he had rebuked others of his kind on other occasions for their

pretensions of religious zeal and piety. It was the same as saying to him, if your religion were not vain, you would show the fruits of it as the Samaritan did.

It is not difficult to see that this stopped the questioning of Jesus by the lawyer, for the rebuke was so pointed that he probably was glad to end the conversation.

From the above we will be understood to see in this parable a showing of the works of the flesh and the extent or limit of those who are working under the law for righteousness, as it is contrasted with the fruits manifested by those who, by grace, are delivered from the futility of self righteousness into the righteousness which is imputed. This is the difference between law and grace; between those who are dead and those who are quickened. The actions of the priest and Levite show the very best which may be found in anyone yet under the bondage of the law of sin and death; while the Samaritan shows the fruits of the Spirit in those quickened ones who have the love of God in them, which fruits are manifest in the love and compassion one toward another.

The half-dead one represents any with whom we come in contact in our journey of life who is in need of succor, whether a word of comfort to a troubled soul, or assistance in the necessities of life. Jesus is, of course, the true neighbor, for he came to minister and not to be ministered unto; but his brethren who walk in the Spirit, through grace follow in his footsteps.

Are we not all concerned often as to whether we too are but mere pretenders, seeing that we walk in the flesh much of the time. But what a blessing it is to know the difference and to feel so condemned for our carnality. Do we not oftentimes examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, and seek at the throne grace and wisdom that we may walk worthy of our profession in quietness, meekness and humbleness? If we think more highly of ourselves than we ought

to think, and esteem any of our brethren less; if we shut up the bowels of our compassion and with covetousness seek our own rather than our brother's welfare; if we are right and everybody else is wrong, and we would rather have our own way than to see the brethren at peace; or if we are fault finders and busy-bodies, then we are walking in the flesh and shall of these things reap corruption. But, if we are blessed to remember that it is by grace that we are saved, and that we have nothing but what is given us of the Lord, and have nothing to boast of ourselves; and feel the love flowing out to the brethren which makes us esteem them far better than ourselves, and feel that we could not live without them, but must have some humble place among them, then we are "clothed in our right mind". This is the fruit of the Spirit.

That brother who is greatly concerned whether he is a deceiver, and is afraid he will do or say something to offend, proves by his very anxiety that he is not a deceiver. As long as he is thus afraid, he will not cause trouble.

Nov. 1952

Elder John D. Wood

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

FROM AN OLD SIGNS

Montgomery Co., Ind.

June 15, 1863

Dear Brother Beebe:—I have only been a subscriber for the *Signs of the Times* since last January, and I am well pleased with them. They afford a medium of communication through which God's children, or many of them, are still permitted to commune, and in them can give an account of their travels while in the house of their pilgrimage, and through which, I also, will drop a few lines in regard to my own experience.

I was born and raised in Montgomery County, Kentucky, until I was about

twenty-one years old. My mother was a member of the Mt. Carmel Particular Baptist Church in Clark County, Kentucky. And my father, before my remembrance joined the same order; but not receiving the doctrine, he left them and joined the Arminian Baptists at Mt. Stearling and continued with them until about 1825 at which time Alexander Campbell's theory began to be taught by the Arminian Baptist, which resulted in a large number going into what was called Campbellism, and my father was one of that number. He had become an ordained preacher previous to that time. As I, like all of Adam's posterity by nature, was dead in sins, I thought but little about religion; but being the youngest son, it was my lot to accompany my mother to her meeting; and from some cause I could often find myself shedding tears under the preaching. But my father having embraced Campbellism, and many of the Arminian Baptist ministers were preaching it, I was induced to believe it was the true doctrine. We lived in a Campbellite neighborhood, and my associates were mostly of that faith; I was surrounded by that influence.

When I grew to manhood I became a warm advocate for that doctrine, and took much delight in throwing stumbling blocks, and putting naughty questions to those whom I called Antinomian Baptist. It gave me pleasure to ask questions they could not answer. In the fall of 1831 we came West and settled in Hancock County, Ind., where we found Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Campbellites, and as I was an especial hater of the Baptists and Methodists, I sought every opportunity to argue with them. Although I hated the Baptists, I loved my mother, yet I abominated her doctrine, and the people she was united with. My venom was so great, that I thought, and frequently said, if I had a cause to try in court, I would, under no circumstance, permit one of them to sit on the jury; for I

believed they were the most ignorant of creation, and so contrary and head strong, that they would contend against reason, knowledge, and common sense, and that they were always wrong.

In the spring of 1834, I went to Kentucky and married. My wife was under the Methodist influence. My regard for her caused me, in a great measure, to drop my opposition to the Methodist; but I retained the same malignant spirit against the Baptists, up to February 1842, at which time I was coming, one evening, from my brother-in-law's about one mile from my house when the impression came to me, "You must die. What is your condition? Are you ready for death?" Brother Beebe, I had often thought of death, and of dying, and of how I wanted to arrange my affairs, and of how I expected to prepare for death, perhaps a thousand times; but never in all my life did the thought strike me with such awful force before, as these words; "You must die! Are you prepared", etc. My mind at that instant became restless, and uneasy. I began to ask myself what I must do to prepare myself. My natural mind seemed to reply, go to the church and tell them, you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be baptized in his name, and spend the remnant of your days in piety, and you will have a sure promise of heaven. For although I was such a Campbellite, I had never taken initiating steps to go to heaven. But while I was meditating about going to the church something said to me: Do not do it: for that is not the way to heaven. This made my mind still more restless and uneasy; and I began to search the scriptures to learn what I must do to be saved; for I verily thought my salvation depended on something that I must do. The more I read my Bible, the more restless I became, for I could not find what I must do to be saved. I then concluded to go and hear all the preaching I could, for I thought all of God's ministries knew all about it; so I

went to hear the Campbellites, Methodists, Presbyterians, Middle-ground and Arminian or Missionary Baptists, there being no Old School Baptists nearer than twenty miles, but all the preaching gave me no relief.

I had been somewhat of a politician, and on third Saturday in April, 1842, I was nominated as candidate for the State Senate. At first I thought I would decline the nomination, but through the urgent persuasion of friends, I consented, hoping that it would draw my mind away from what was troubling me, and relieve me from any uneasy feelings. I tried to turn my attention to politics, and made appointments for speeches, and filled them.

On the second Sunday in June, 1842, I went to hear one of the Middleground Baptists preach. After preaching, a door was opened for reception of members. A woman came forward and told her experience. I was anxious to hear it, and unconsciously pressed in the crowd. While she, in relating her exercise, was telling what a vile sinner she was, it seemed to me that a brilliant light shone into my inmost soul; and seemed to manifest to my view all the sins I ever committed. I was uneasy and restless before, but I had never known what trouble was before. I thought the earth would open and swallow me, that I must sink into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone—that I had sinned away the day of grace, and now it was everlastingly too late for me. I thought that this light which had appeared to me, had made known to all the congregation what a sinner I was.

As I went home, something said to me, Go to the woods and pray God for mercy: but another thought occurred, What is the use, for God is a just God, and can not look on sin with allowance? and you are a mass of sin. Still I felt urged to go to some secret place and ask God for mercy, and I went into the woods and there fell upon my knees, and tried to pray. As I arose, it seemed to me that if

there had been any chance of acceptance for me before, it was now out of the question. That I, a mass of sin, had now attempted to pray to a holy and just God, in which I had committed the unpardonable sin, for I had taken the name of God in vain. All nature seemed to be in mourning, even the trees of the forest seemed to hang their leaves in gloom.

I started for home, meditating on my condition. I thought if I had sought religion when I was young, I might have obtained it; but as I had grown old in sin, there was no hope for me. When I got home, I found my wife in tears, but dared not ask her the cause for I thought she knew my condition, and was grieving on account of my wickedness. That night I had a serious time in meditation. Among other things, I was standing as a candidate for the State Senate. Although my chance for election was considered sure, since I was such a sinner, I had no confidence in myself, and as everybody knew what a wicked heart I had, they, of course, could have no confidence in me. I determined to go to those who had put me on the ticket, and withdraw my name, and get them to select some one else, which I did on the next day. This I thought would afford me some relief. But, alas! it seemed there was no relief for me.

When I returned home, I again found my wife in tears, but still I could not ask her what was the matter. This produced much serious reflection for some time, in so often finding her in a flood of tears. Some times I thought she was grieving because she had married one whose heart was so sinful, at other times I feared that I had, at some unthinking moment, said something that had hurt her feelings. Sometimes I would wish that I had died in infancy, or that I were like the brute creation, that death might be the last of me. I often went to some secret place to try to pray, but all seemed to be to no purpose. Many times I would think of the worst of men, the thief, the

robber, and the murderer; but I could think God could be just in saving them, as their sins were outward practices, but could see no hope for me; for my wickedness was in my heart, the seat of vitality and affection. I now believed my case was sealed, and that I must be banished from the presence of God, and his people, and sink down in torment, with wicked men and devils, for evermore. Still I did not feel willing to commit another sin against God. But how could I avoid it, as all that I thought, said or did, was wicked, for it all proceeded from a heart which was a fountain of wickedness and sin. And-

"If my soul were sent to hell,
The righteous law approves it well."

It then occurred to me, as hell was my portion, to try to reconcile myself to it as best I might. While thus meditating, a portion of a hymn came to my mind, which was thus--

"When any turn from Zion's ways,
Alas, what numbers do,
Me thinks I hear my Saviour say,
Will thou forsake me too?"

And with this, something said to me, Go once more and try to pray. I thought of a place, and went to it, but could not make the attempt--then I thought of another, but, as at the first, my heart failed me; at last I concluded I should never get back to the house; I was just ready to drop into hell, with this thought I fell upon my knees, and I think I said: "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner". At that moment these words came to me: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." My burden was gone! My heart was made to leap for joy. My soul was filled with wonder, joy, and love, and praise to God for his wonderful works and ways in bringing rebel sinners home to himself. I could then view all the providential dealings of God with me through the course of my life, and that, had it not been for his almighty power and grace, I should still have been left to perish in my sins; but his almighty power and

grace were more than a match for my stubborn will, and he, therefore, brought me into subjection to him in the day of his power. This scripture came to my mind, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God: speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." But I can not now speak of this and other passages, which have come to my mind; but I may at some future time. Suffice it to say, I thought I saw my way so clear, through the merits of Christ's blood, that I thought I could show it to others. I wondered why I had not discovered it before. I desired to see my mother, and all my christian acquaintances, and even those who did not profess religion, for I thought I could make it so plain that they could not help seeing it.

But I particularly desired to tell God's people what the Lord had done for my poor soul. This manifestation occurred December 12, 1842, in the afternoon. I then thought I should never doubt any more. I loved God, his cause, and his people; and I loved sinners too; for I thought they were of his good creation, and shewed forth his work. This illumination continued until after I went to bed. I told my wife about it, and that I had a mind to join the church. She burst into tears, and said she did not want me to do so, but she said no more. While I was reflecting on her objecting, a dark cloud came over my mind, and I began to fear that I had been deceived in thinking my sins were forgiven, but it might be a delusion. This threw me into trouble. I began to hunt for my burden, but it was gone. I sought it with prayers and tears. I thought if I could have it again I would know the next time how it would leave me, and then I would be sure. But it was gone, and I could not get it back. This dark cloud continued until some time the next day, when, I trust, my soul was again illuminated with the

light of the Sun of Righteousness. O, I was happy then, and could sing--

"Tongue can not express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love."

I had found the pearl of great price. Yes, I had found in Jesus a full and complete Saviour, and sweet to my soul, just such a Saviour as my poor soul needed. It was impressed on my mind to follow his footsteps.

I began again to go to the meetings to seek for a home. I went to hear the Methodists, Presbyterians, and the Missionary and Middleground Baptists, and the Campbellites, but none of them now suited me; for they did not give all the glory to God. I heard of an Old School Baptist that was going to preach about twelve miles off, and I went to hear him. He preached Jesus as a full and complete Saviour, and this suited me. I then determined to cast in my lot with that people, which I had once so much hated, for my hatred was changed for love. On the fourth Saturday in July, 1843, my wife, and myself went twenty miles to an Old School Baptist church, (for my wife had also obtained a hope). We talked to the church that day, and on the next day, we, with several others, were baptized by Elder William Hogan, since which time the Old School Baptists have been my people.

But I must stop for the present. I have written a much longer letter than I expected to; but still I have only given a sketch; for there are many incidents connected with my experience that I can not now speak of without making my letter too long. Brother Beebe, is this the travel of christians, or is it some strange phantom of the brain? Some there are who tell us that what is called christian experience is all but a whim of the brain, but I can not believe them. If you think the foregoing worthy of a place in your excellent paper, you can put it in, but do not exclude better matter, or if you disapprove, throw it aside, and I will be content. I am, as I hope, your sincere

brother, in gospel bonds.

William H. Darnall

My Dear Brother and Sister Spangler,

First, I would like to say that I have had a very painful back problem for almost a month - which explains why I have been unable to attend this area church meeting. I would be remiss, however, if I did not acknowledge our Lord's goodness unto me. This year has brought with it much physical suffering, but I have been given such sweet assurances and lovely meditations on Christ and His wonderful love and goodness - these previous things have much, much more than compensated for all the sufferings which was appointed unto me!

While writing, let me tell you dear folks a little experience I had at our October meeting. My soul had rejoiced as you preached so beautifully about the "fulness and glory of Christ". As we were singing the last song, "Home, Sweet Home", suddenly my dear departed son's characteristically smiling face appeared before me which said to me, "I am safe at home", and he seemed to be beckoning me on, saying, "This is the way home, by the way of the Cross". (Suffering and heartbreak) Needless to say, my poor heart soared away, and my very soul longed to go to that beautiful Home of rest. I thought that surely this is my Lord speaking through him.

The 22nd Chapter of Second Samuel has meant much to me in recent days. It seems to be a message especially befitting to us in these troubled times.

May God's Holy Spirit permeate our lives in a manifest sense is my prayer for Christ's sake.

With fervent love,
Mamie P. Aldridge

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thess. 5:17

OBITUARIES

SISTER BUENA WHITE

"The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart. . . none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come"
Isaiah 57:1

It has pleased the Lord to take unto Himself one of His faithful, Sister Buena White, my aunt, who passed away recently. After being stricken two years ago with a long seige of pneumonia she was raised up for a short time but quickly then began to fail. Thus the Lord in mercy gently took her body down until she peacefully fell asleep December 18, 1979 at the age of 90 years.

In her notes she wrote of her own life:

"In all my travels along this uneven, and eventful, journey of life the Lord has led me on-sometimes over rough and stony places, at other times thru pleasant and prosperous places. No matter how stormy or tiresome, it has all been for my good and God's glory, I hope. My pathway was laid out in the beginning of time and I was not consulted as to what way I had rather go, and even though I have been very rebellious, at times, I was none the less encouraged to keep plodding on until I have almost reached the end of my sojourn here...My mother has told me when I was but a few hours old they closed my eyes the third time for dead and yet I am still here through the Grace and Mercy of an all wise and merciful God. Just why He saw fit to restore me to life and keep me here these many years is known only to Him and it is not for me to question Him about it."

It was this quiet simple faith which graced her long life and served her so well through many afflictions.

Her moment in time began April 24, 1889 in a one room log house near Quitman, Texas where she was born Buena Ann Eliza Wright. She was one of seven living children born to Jeptha Monroe and Sarah Elizabeth Wright, early settlers of the small Wood County community and, of these, three sisters and one brother survive her. Some of her fondest memories were of her carefree childhood when she roamed fields and woods in search of flowers and bird nests all under the loving discipline of godly parents.

In 1910 she married Oscar White and to them were born four daughters and one son,

one daughter dying in infancy. But faith must be tried, and the Lord saw fit to take her husband in 1931 at a time when seemingly he was needed most, and left her to raise her baby son alone. Thus she was brought to quietly trust in Him who is as much Husband and Father to His people in their material needs as He is Redeemer of their souls. She is survived by her four children, nine grand children, eighteen great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

Aunt Buena was blessed at an early age to believe in the free grace and electing love of a Sovereign God. She joined Cana Primitive Baptist Church on the day of its organization October 29, 1915 and was baptized the following day by the late Elder R. E. White (no relation). Her daddy was elected clerk of the newly formed church and served until his death in 1941. At that time Aunt Buena accepted the office and faithfully executed its duties until the church disbanded in September, 1977. She had a ready pen and a love of poetry and sometimes wrote poems of her own.

As I thought upon her long widowhood, I remembered the words of Paul as he spoke of the widows who are an honor to the church and whom the church is to honor (1 Tim. 5:3, 9, 10) and I was struck by the appropriateness of these words to her own life as her years were spent in the devoted care of her family and of the saints of God, all with love and warm good humor. As her long years of service came to an end, being the last remaining charter member, her own infirmity seemingly marked the end of her church also. Once the scene of large congregations and joyful gatherings of the whole community, it at last succumbed to the changing times and a dwindling membership, and, with the recent disposal of house and land, Cana church was also laid to rest.

Aunt Buena was buried at Myrtle Springs Baptist Church cemetery not far from where she was born. Her faithful pastor, Elder John L. Smith, was unable through infirmity to attend, and her funeral was conducted by Elder Lloyd Wall, assisted by Elder Joe L. Hamrick, both of whom extolled not the virtues of the creature but of Him in whose sight her death was precious, and comforted the living with the greatest of all comforts, the hope of the Resurrection which anchored her soul throughout her long journey in this life.

So in the presence of many friends and

family members her body was tenderly laid in the grave beside her loved ones who had gone before. Her gentle kindness and wise counsel shall be greatly missed. The fruits of a godly upbringing, piety of daily walk and unworthiness testifying to a love of God within are not much witnessed in the present generation, and their loss to the church of God is keenly felt; nevertheless, we mourn not as those who have no hope, and through the sadness and tears what a mercy and rejoicing to know her spirit has flown to the long awaited call "Child, come home."

Written by her niece at the request of her loving family.

Respectfully,
Kelsay Wright Swain

BROTHER A. MORDICA PERKINS

It was with sad hearts that we at Old Mountain Church received the news of our beloved Brother Mordica Perkins' death. Brother Perkins was born September 30, 1902, in Caswell County, N.C., and he was a son of the late William A. Perkins and Lucy Strader Perkins. He was married to Matty V. Perkins.

Brother Perkins, Rt. 1, Dry Fork, died at his residence on Saturday, August 25, 1979. In addition to his wife of the home, Brother Perkins is survived by one son, William Perkins, Dry Fork, VA., two daughters, Mrs. Willie Gibson, Yanceyville, N.C., and Mrs. Marshal Johnson, Danville, Va.; two brothers, John Perkins, Elon College, N.C., and Doyl Perkins, Danville, Va.; one sister, Mrs. Esta Lovelace, Reidsville, N.C.; five grandchildren, and ten great grandchildren.

Brother Perkins joined Old Mountain Church on September 14, 1968. He was a faithful and devoted member until his health failed, and then he attended when ever possible. He was a firm believer in salvation by grace and grace alone. The writer has enjoyed hearing him tell some beautiful experiences, and talking on the Scriptures in his home. He was very humble and loved by all who knew him. He was a retired Dan River, Inc., employee, and he was also a farmer.

The funeral was held August 27, 1979, in Towns Funeral Home Chapel by Elder H. W. Wray, Elder Wallis Smith, and Garland Chenault.

His sleeping body was laid to rest in Danville Memorial Gardens, beneath a beautiful mound of flowers, to wait the second coming of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We hope our loss is his gain.

Be it resolved that a copy be sent to the family, a copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy be kept in the church records. Done in order of conference at Old Mountain Church.

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

BROTHER HARVEY R. PASCHAL

Brother Harvey R. Paschal was born Sept. 7, 1900. He departed this life on December 31, 1979.

Brother Paschal joined the Bunker Hill Primitive Baptist Church on the fourth Saturday in September, 1970, and was baptized on the following Sunday. The gift of a deacon was seen and felt by the church in Bro. Paschal. In January, 1972, the church called for a Presbytery to examine and ordain to the office of a deacon. He served the office well. He was a humble man, slow to speak, but when he spoke, he was blessed to speak wisely.

Brother Paschal is survived by his wife, Nona Murphy Paschal, who was a kind and loving wife to him, who was always ready to serve when duty called. Also, one brother, Brother Roy Paschal, survives, along with one sister, Mrs. Myrtle Carter, several nieces and nephews, and many friends.

We, the Church at Bunker Hill, feel our loss of him very keenly, but realize our loss is eternal rest for him. May the Church be blessed to bow in humble submission to thy will, O God, and thank Him, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for His mercy given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

This church, while seated in our January conference, appointed the Moderator, and Clerk to write this memorial of Brother Harvey Paschal, and one copy to be recorded on our church book, one given to his wife, and one to be sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Elder Z. L. Rhue, Moderator
Sister Lillian Rhue, Church Clerk
Brother H. B. Briggs, Assistant Clerk

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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GENESIS 2:16-17

"And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and everything therein. He spake it into existence by the word of His power. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1:31). And he said, "Remember the former things of old for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isa. 46:8-11). "For of him, and thru him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. 11:30) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11).

This is the God in whom I hope I trust; the One who hath loved me with an everlasting love, and hath taught me thru the Holy Ghost all things that I may know of Him; if indeed I know anything. And if I do know anything, I am sure that it was not taught me by the wisdom of man: for it is the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the

princes of this world knew: for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. (I Cor. 2:7-9)

God has at least one purpose for everything in the world; and they show forth His glory and praise Him, and are for His pleasure; even the wrath of man praises Him and the remainder He restrains. (Ps. 76:10). By this we know that God is the first cause of all causes; but that does not remove the second causes. When God formed man from the dust of the ground, he was a creature made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. (Rom. 8:20). For one to be subject to anyone or anything, one must of necessity be under the power or authority of someone or something. If Adam, the creature, could have successfully resisted vanity, it could not be said that he was ever under its power; but we know he fell, and all his posterity with him. Some will say, "Since He has made us subject to vanity, why doth he yet find fault? For we have not resisted His will." Paul answers, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor?" (Rom. 9:20-21). In other words, does He not have the right to do with His own as it pleases Him? Who would deny Him this right?

Adam ate of the forbidden fruit willingly, and therefore transgressed the only law God had given. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4). "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so

death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12). By this we see the entering of sin into the world, and it was by man. As I said before, God has a purpose in all things, even sin and the devil. If God had no purpose of sin or the devil, surely He would not have created the devil, and surely He has the power to keep sin out. If He does not have such power to keep sin out of the world, then how can He keep it out of heaven? But God overrules sin to the good of His children. A good example of this was the selling of Joseph by his brethren into Egypt. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:20)

"For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Although the Arminian says that Adam had a choice of eating or not eating, God did not say, if thou eatest, but, in the day thou eatest: for God knew he would; else God did not know and was ignorant of something that would come to pass. (I shudder at the thought.) And, the Arminian says, **Adam did not die in that day; but, as I heard one say, he was only made very sick.** In so saying, they declare God a liar. But it is impossible for God to lie, (Heb. 6:8), therefore they died in that selfsame day. No, they did not die a corporeal death; but a spiritual death. Death means, to be separated from; therefore they were separated or cut off spiritually from their Creator and driven from the garden of Eden.

Had Adam never sinned he would yet be in the garden of Eden; because it is sin that brings forth death, (Jas. 1:15), and he still would not be a fit subject for heaven and immortal glory; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. (I Cor. 15:50). And Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (St. John 12:24). Therefore we conclude that it was necessary for Adam to die; that the

world might be populated, and that he might be born again.

Brethren, there is no end to this great text, but I feel to stop here. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation," (II Pet. 1:20), and knowing the weakness of my flesh, I cannot declare with any certainty, as have some, that this writing is in perfect harmony with the Holy Scriptures; but I exhort each and every one of you to search the scriptures to see if these things be so; and may God grant you wisdom and knowledge to discern between truth and error, and also rightly divide the word of truth.

I greatly need and desire your prayers of faith.

Clifford Wilbanks

SERMON ON HABAKKUK 3:13
AT NASSAONGA
OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CHURCH
BY ELDER C. C. MORRIS

(Edited for publication)

It seems that since I have been going before God's children I have been made to walk with a limp, spiritually speaking, feeling my weakness when I come to this place, but never more so than at the time when the communion, or the Lord's Supper, is observed. I don't know that it should be that way, because each time we come together should be equally sacred and holy. Yet, the Lord did give us this memorial with tangible elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine, to observe His death and to do this in remembrance of Him until He comes. I hope that, whether our words be many or few, what is said and done here today would be in remembrance of Him.

The text I have turned to is found in the prophet Habakkuk, the third chapter, verse 13, at least as a starting point. Being timely creatures we need a starting point, but there is no beginning or no ending of the One with Whom we

profess to have to do. There is no beginning or ending of His eternal Being. Habakkuk makes that abundantly clear. The text says, "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah." The first portion of this text is what I would have before our minds. Of course, the latter portion of it, "Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck," ties in with the destruction of Satan. It is linked with the prophecy that was given to Eve in the garden of Eden. "Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked," and who would be the head out of the house of the wicked if it were not the one who is referred to as the deceiver, Satan, that old serpent? God had told Eve the prophecy of the seed of the woman which was to be Christ Jesus, and said that he would be the seed, the woman's seed, who would bruise the head of the seed of the serpent, and that the serpent would bruise His heel. This is where Habakkuk touches on the same subject, "Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck." The serpent's head is crushed, his neck is broken by the power of the One who is referred to in the opening statement, "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed."

Here we have a reference to the Triune God who has a people referred to here and elsewhere (as we have attempted to bring to the remembrance of many of you these past few days), referred to throughout the Scriptures as "Thy people." They are the sheep of His pasture. They are not self-made people, but they are His people, His sheep, who confess, "It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves (Psalm 100:3)." These people are the objects of God's grace,

love, mercy, and salvation, and here God is represented as going forth with the intention and for the purpose of the salvation of these people. We trust we are speaking to a people who have some hope that they are a part of these people, who do have part and lot in this matter. This three-one God is spoken of as going forth for the salvation of these people, even for salvation "with thine anointed." And this Anointed One is the One that we have uppermost in our minds today. He is the One whom Elder Poole mentioned in the opening words of his prayer (which we trust and believe was indited by the Spirit of Almighty God), mentioning His everlastingness, His eternality. Habakkuk referred to Him in the first chapter, saying, "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction," as he looked for a moment at the enemy that oppressed national Israel in his day. But his eyes looked past the temporal difficulties and the sorrows that nation was going through, the sorrows that made Jeremiah lament and mourn and say, "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" His eyes looked beyond these things to the One of whom he said, "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?" He was looking beyond any temporal thing in this life, whether it be what we are prone to call good or evil, or whatever it might be; he looked to the everlasting One, "O Lord my God." He continued, and in the third chapter he said, "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid." The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the wisdom of God is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who, the Apostle Paul says, "is the power of God and the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24)." And Habakkuk said, "I have heard thy

speech, and was afraid." There is no spiritual fear until a person has been brought to the place where they have heard the voice of the Lord. He said, "Oh Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Such an one had been made to touch and to taste the wrath of Almighty God; at least in some measure they have been brought close to it; to feel, and to understand, and to see the justice of the wrath of Almighty God against them. He continues in his description of the mighty power of this three-one God as He comes in His vengeance, in His glory, and in His power, and he says, "And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting." Adam and his fallen race are only "come-lately" on the scene. This God is the One who is from everlasting, whose ways are perfect. And this everlasting and eternal God came forth, not as though in some way there was an abstract God out there in the universe, ruling over all things (as indeed the true and living God does, but not remaining is some far-distant way); but He came for salvation, and He came with the one that He refers to as "Thine Anointed." It was not that God remained, as it were, at a distance in some place which Paul vaguely referred to as the third heaven; but this is the one who took upon Himself flesh and was found in fashion as a man, and He humbled Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a servant. He tabernacled among men, and we beheld His glory as of the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace. You see, in this matter

which we have before us that it takes grace multiplied, it takes grace compounded. It is not just an offer of grace, it is not grace just laid out on the table or laid out upon an altar, or laid out in some sort of a vague offer, that 'God had done His part, now you must do yours; you must avail yourself of this grace.' But he says, "And we have all received of this, and grace for grace." In other words, it is grace multiplied, and grace effectuating or making effectual the grace of God as it is in Christ Jesus, and applying that grace, else it would never be applied. And in this Anointed One whom we have before us, the salvation of these, "Thy people," is all wrapped up in Him. Twice in this little phrase he has mentioned this salvation: "Thou went forth for the Salvation of thy people, ever for Salvation with thine anointed."

We now think of the anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ, going back in the Old Testament (and I am well confident that your pastor has called to your attention the doctrine, the teaching of the Old Testament of the anointing, which sets forth in types and shadows Jesus Christ, so we will only refer to it here in passing and we trust briefly). There were three offices in Old Testament times that received the anointing. They were the prophets, the priests and the kings, and each one was anointed in a particular way, by having oil poured upon his head. We have these three offices set before us in the very word "anointed," because Jesus Christ is to His people, as you sang this day, your "Prophet, Priest, and King." And the anointing in the Old Testament times was an official recognition and inauguration of the person to that office.

The office of a prophet, a priest, or a king, was not something in any case that was lightly to be taken unto oneself. A person just didn't wake up one morning and decide, "I want to be a king," and set out to become a king--or for that matter, a prophet or a priest. As Paul

said in Hebrews 5:4, "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." They were called to these offices, selected by God Almighty, whether it was prophet, or priest, or king. And each of these were anointed, or publicly touched in some way with this oil which was placed upon them in a public inauguration which set them apart before the people.

Such was the case of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not with anointing oil as in Old Testament times, which only spoke of the Holy Spirit, but rather God Himself poured out His Spirit upon Him to anoint Him as Prophet, Priest, and King of His people. John tells us, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him (Christ)." There was no limit to the power, the grace, and the glory of the Spirit of the Almighty God that was put upon the Anointed of God, Jesus of Nazareth.

Here, may we briefly touch upon these offices of Jesus Christ. As Prophet we think of the Old Testament prophet in one peculiar way, in that primarily he was a man sent from God and bearing the message of God to the people. That was primarily a one-way trip from God to men. And he came bearing a message. More than anything else associated with the Old Testament prophets, perhaps, was this phrase which they would come saying, "Thus saith the Lord." They set forth and told the message of the Lord for the hour, for the day, for the situation. But Jesus Christ, the fulness of all in all, was the One who came forth and comes forth speaking to His people and bringing, in His own voice--that still, small voice which speaks in the depths of our hearts and soul--His words of comfort. He speaks in our mind and conscience where the audible voice of your friends and your elders can never reach. That still, small voice, speaking in the depths of where you really live; that is where Jesus Christ speaks His words of comfort and

peace.

It is there that He speaks as He goes before His sheep, calling them by name, with the God-given assurance that "they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." When He calls them as He called Zacchaeus, to name no other (we would turn briefly to the account of Zacchaeus) -- I believe it was in Luke the 19th chapter where Jesus was passing through Jericho; and, Zacchaeus was a man little in stature, perhaps identifying somewhat with the lowliness of God's children. And yet, no matter how low you are in your own circumstances and how low you have been made to feel, nevertheless there is also that tendency within our nature, like Zacchaeus, to exalt ourselves and climb up. And when Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming, this stuck a responsive note within his heart. Who knows why Zacchaeus, of all the publicans, wanted to see Him, to see this Jesus? Who can explain it from natural reasons? It cannot be done. But there was something that had been at work in the heart of Zacchaeus. It was the Spirit of Almighty God preparing him for the occasion which was about to transpire. So, he ran down the road before where Jesus Christ was to come, to get a good seat, we might say, to get a good station, a good place from which to observe. He climbed up into a sycamore tree because he was so short he couldn't see through the crowd, so he took a seat up somewhere in a sycamore tree, and when Jesus came to the place, Jesus looked up and saw him, and he said unto him, "Zacchaeus," (always calling His people by name; not just some blanket, generalized invitation as it were, but always calling His sheep by name) "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house." Here again is one of those "musts" that must be accomplished. And you know, Zacchaeus did not come back at Jesus Christ and say, "No, you

must not!" If I, a mere human being, come as a stranger into your midst, and if I were to come to any one of you and say I "must" go home with you, you have (speaking as the manner of men) the freedom under the providence of Almighty God, that there would be nothing to prohibit you from saying, "No, you must not!" But that was not the case here, and it never is when the words of Jesus Christ come in Spirit and in power. And He said, "Make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house." "And he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully." When Jesus Christ speaks as the Prophet of Almighty God to His people, then certainly they do respond just exactly like Zacchaeus did. Using him as that one example, we would go ahead and think of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If a prophet came from God to the people, the priest went the other direction, as it were. This may be an over-simplification when you get down to the details of their lives, but nevertheless, primarily the priest was the representative of the people, going toward God. He was the representative because the individual could not, according to the Old Testament economy, the people could not go into the presence of God by themselves, and go directly; but they must have a priesthood, a fit representative to go into the presence of God for them. The book of Hebrews points out that even the priest must abide by all of the law's requirements; he must be a fit representative of the people. He could not be ceremonially unclean. He could not be unrighteous in any way according to the Old Testament law which God had set up. But here, Paul was talking in Hebrews the 9th chapter of the high priest who would go once a year into the holy of holies. And he said, "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priest went always into the first tabernacle accomplishing the service of God." The

tabernacle was divided into a holy place (referred to here as "the first tabernacle") and the holy of holies. And in that holy place was the table of shewbread which spoke of Jesus Christ as the bread and food of His people. In there also was the golden candlestick, which spoke of Jesus Christ as the light of the world, and the light of His people. And the third article in the holy place was the golden altar of incense which typified His intercessory prayer and approach unto God in behalf of the people. But of the holy of holies it says, "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." That is, in Old Testament times the way into the presence of God was never open, and it remained that way until the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This Prophet, Priest, and King of His people, He went as the High Priest, alone, from the people and into the presence of His God and their God, not without blood. The blood He carried was not the blood of bulls and goats, which Paul said in this same chapter, "could never take away sin," but it was the blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. It was His own precious blood as of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And He went into the presence of His own Father, and there received the vengeance which justly would have fallen upon all of the elect family of God and which would have destroyed them for all eternity, if it were not for the grace of God shed abroad in their lives by the Saviour, and His shedding of His precious blood in their behalf. Because without the shedding of blood, again this chapter tells us, there is no remission. There can be no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. This, of course, requires, in effect, the death of

the sinner. This is, as Elder Poole set forth so simply and so eloquently and so beautifully, the actual, the literal swap, as it were, Jesus Christ stepping into the law room and stead of His bride, His body, the church of the living God, and placing her in that glorified position that He had occupied in all eternity. Lifting her up without spot, without blemish, or any such thing, that she should be holy and without blemish before God, and He taking upon Himself the sins of the multitude that no man can number, he went down under all of the sins of countless millions. Sins that cannot be numbered. Sins beyond number in their own individual lives. Jesus Christ took the sins of millions like me, if not mine unto Himself, and went down in all of the sufferings that man and God combined heaped upon Him. Men, by wicked hands, took Him, according to Peter, and crucified and slew Him. It was not anything that man could do, ultimately, however, for this was a covenant action being acted out in agreement between the Father and the Son, and Jesus Christ said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." This was something strictly between Him and His Father. And Peter on the day of Pentecost, that opening day of the church age as we now know it, in his keynote address said, "Him," (because "Him" is the only subject we have before us, after all is said and done) "Him, being delivered"—by what? By the wicked hands of Judas, and by Caiaphas, the High Priest? No! "Him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

And then, just a few chapters later in the book of Acts, after they had undergone some persecution, Peter and some of the other apostles being let go, went back to their own brethren. We have the first recorded prayer that is in the book of Acts after the day of Pentecost, and they came together and they said, "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ" (this quote is from the second Psalm. You will recall in the second Psalm it says, "against His anointed"--His Prophet, His Priest, and His King.) "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together"--they did not gather themselves, but they were gathered together--"for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." And what was it that was determined before to be done, and enacted on the cross of Calvary? It was this: That the High Priest would go alone into the presence of God; not without blood, but with His own precious blood; that He would stand good for all the sins of the people; that He would fulfill all of the types and shadows; that He would be the sacrificial lamb; He would be the altar that would sanctify the gifts; He would be the High Priest that would carry it out; He would be the scape goat which assumed the blame and carried the sins of the people out into the wilderness, and He would be that fit man that led the scape goat out there. He would be the All in all. This was all determined before by God's hand and His counsel to be done. A Prophet, coming to the people with the message of God, and a Priest coming from the people with their sins, going to

God and answering for every one of them.

The third office is that of the King. He is not only the King of some little nation over there, postage-stamp size on your globe; but rather He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and He receives the worship of men and angels. He sits exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high where He from eternity belongs. May the Lord enable us to rejoice in His finished work, and to rest only there, and to worship Him both in time and eternity. This is, as one of old has said, "For this is all my salvation, and all my desire." May that be our salvation and our desire this afternoon. May God bless you, and may He bless His truth, is my sincere desire.

(Edited for publication from a sermon by Elder C. C. Morris, tape-recorded at Nassaonga Old School Baptist Church on June 17, 1979)

Deatsville, Alabama

Dear Brethren,

I am enclosing a check for \$12.00 to extend my subscription and that of my son, Mike H. Carter, for one more year each. Use the balance as you see fit.

On March 9, 1980, we had a program at my home Church, Elam, to dedicate a historical marker commemorating the 150th anniversary of the constitution of the Church. The church is among the oldest institutions in Pike County, having been constituted not too long after the Indians were moved West following the War of 1812.

My Mother, Ruby R. Carter, Age 92, passed away March 10, 1980. Some of the brethren from other parts of the country will remember visiting in her home. She was a member at Elam Church.

Sister Minnie Lee Godwin, age 93, passed away on March 20, 1980. At the time of her death she was the oldest member of Elam Church in point of membership, having joined there May

13, 1911.

You may publish this as information to the brethren if you see fit.

A Brother in Faith, I hope,
A. C. Carter

FROM AN OLD SIGNS

Box 275, San Juan, Texas

I, James B. Reid, the subject of this sketch, began my career July 24, 1871. I was born in Miss. and was nine years old when my father moved to Texas in 1880. As a small boy in Miss. mother would take us to meeting, the Primitive Baptist, she being a member of the Primitive Baptist before I can remember. Father never united with the church or any order, but was a strong believer in salvation by grace. They never taught their children any kind of religion, but did try to teach us good morals. Father being a poor man we labored hard for our sustenance.

At the age of thirteen or fourteen I began to have serious doubts about my hereafter. I had never heard a Primitive Baptist preach, in spirit of course. There were Old Baptist ministers in the country, but nothing for me. I being the oldest of seventeen children very soon father looked to me as leader. We would go to Sunday School I suppose more to be with young folks than anything else, and in my boyhood days I could see nothing good in it. Father and mother did not object to our going, neither did they compel us to go. I began to have serious thoughts concerning my future condition and I really thought, as others, that I could do something pertaining to a better life, but it seemed the more I tried the worse I got. I would go to what they called the mourner's bench. I heard others say they had gotten religion, and now, as I look back over the scene, with the most of them it seemed to last only through the summer time. The preacher would say, "give your heart to Jesus," but even in my youth I did not believe that God needed

anything I could give him. I believed he was the giver and not I. I could see my doom and it was sealed and I thought it just and right. I thought how could he be so good as to save one like me; I was mourning and I did not know what to do, having made every effort possible but all in vain. Once in a while I would try to read the Bible, but I did not want any one to see me reading it. Down into the pit of sin and condemnation it seemed I had gone. I did not know how to pray, but would say, Lord be merciful to me, a vile sinner, save or I perish. I hope in July 1885 the dark clouds of gloom rolled away, and O what a dear Savior had found me in that wilderness of woe and shame. Then shone all about me the brightest light that I had ever seen. It being night and I away from home my first thought was I will go home and tell mother for I did confide in her, but before I got home something within me said, hold on now you are going to deceive your dear old mother so I did not tell her. Looking back on it it seemed mother knew there had been a change in me. I went on in this condition until I was nearly twenty-two years of age.

I married one of the fair girls of the South and we raised seven children. She was taken from me in Oct. 1918. The Lord directed me to another dear companion. I united with the Primitive Baptists fifty-five years ago. On what little I told them they took me in, and it seemed when I came up out of the water I left something behind. I felt to be the happiest mortal in the world, I said, "now my trials are all over." Dear friends, it was then I wanted to be as good as I saw my brethren, and I had not been a member very long until something else came my way, yes, worse than the first, and that was to try and tell what great things the dear Lord had done for me and all the blessed people of God. Yes, I thought then if I could just tell it like they did I would never quit. I was so wearied I could hardly sleep at night and even lost my appetite. Could

not eat and my wife would ask me what was the matter and I would tell her a falsehood, saying there was nothing wrong with me. I was then twenty-eight years old and I said, "Lord I will never preach, I said Lord I know you can kill me but you cannot make me preach." I read in the Bible where he made the dumb beast speak with man's voice and forbade the madness of the prophet. I then said, "Lord if you can make the dumb beast talk you can make a poor sinner man talk" and this coming July fifty years ago I made my first attempt before an intelligent congregation of people. I remember the first text I used on Sunday at our regular meeting. It was the language of David, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

Dear friends, I got up and forgot myself for awhile, but when I came to myself I saw the people all over the house shedding tears so I said when I left the house "I'll never do that again." I thought the people were sorry for me and were pitying me and were crying. Just one month from that I was just as anxious, if not more so, to go back to the meeting again and that day they liberated me to preach against my will.

Not long after that they ordained me and now I thought I knew they had made a mistake. Dear brethren, I know if the Lord don't keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain, and in my tottering condition I look back on my past and say my days have been few and evil, and we will soon have to go hence, but I do hope I can say with Paul, "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." I hope and believe I have contended for the doctrine of God our Savior. Dear friends, I have told more falsehoods

about preaching than everything else put together. I would say I was through, I did not intend to go any more, but the old prophet Jeremiah said about the same thing. He said, "I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name," but later he said, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with foreboding, and I could not stay." Many have been the times when I would leave my wife and children to do the work at home and I would go to my regular appointments to meet with those that I love, and try to comfort some one; but, dear friends, it was sometimes a hard go with me financially, but I have been blessed beyond my comprehension.

In looking back over my past experience, my blunders, and my short comings it looks like I could have done better than I have, but it has been one continual blunder.

I will go back to my young ministry if I dare call it that. I got very rebellious. I was determined that I would quit trying to preach; I would leave the country and go where I was not known; I would leave these Old Baptists and forget it. I chartered a car and moved to the north plains of Texas. The first thing I knew I had met the same kind of folks spiritually that I had left. I stayed one year and came back to North Central Texas and yet I was not satisfied. I made another trip to west Texas, thinking to get away where no one would ever find me. I lost all I had except my wife and children. I drove to the little city of Childress, Tex. I walked up the street and saw two men about fifteen feet away from me talking, one of them seemed to be very highly wrought up and was a Campbellite. I walked to within six feet of them not saying anything at the time. Very soon this Campbellite said he did not want to talk to a man like that and left. I stepped up to the man that was left and asked him, "Do you believe what you were telling that man?" He said "I most certainly

do." Then I asked him, "Are there any more of your kind here?" He said, "Yes, there are a few of us scattered around. We have a church about twenty miles from here, down on Peas River." He told me his name but it is so long I have forgotten it. I told him my name and he said, "Our preacher will be here in a few minutes and I would like you to meet him." He came, we were introduced, and it was dear old Elder Harris, Elder W. N. Green's father-in-law. Elder Harris said, "Next Saturday and Sunday are our meeting days and asked me to go with him about twenty miles ride in a wagon." They had found out some way that I had tried to preach. Again the Lord had followed me. I found out that I could not hide from an all seeing God. Like Jonah I was thrown overboard, I was found out. Again I moved back to North Central Texas, and now it came to me, go preach that preaching that I bid thee. But, O Lord, I am still too ignorant and unlearned. I found the same God was ruling there, and now realized that God was everywhere present and nowhere absent, the same God yesterday, today and forever; "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." I had made two long trips to try to get out of preaching, but when I returned home the second time I said, "I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

Now dear friends, you that chance to read this can see just a part of my travels, and many times in my career I was like those two kines (or cows) that had the yoke upon their necks which I understand to be a yoke of duty. They left their calves at home shut up, carrying the ark along the highway which we understand is a type (or a figure) of the duty upon the new cart, and they went lowing. Yes, it is typical of the poor, old preacher mourning, and he does not know when he gets there what he is there for, but sometimes we hope that it pleases the Lord to stop the ark in

Beulah Land which we sometimes understand to be the proclamation of the gospel which is glad tidings to the beloved children of God. We never know whether it is of the Lord or not, we only hope He has directed our steps and so far He had made a way for our escape. A few more days on earth to spend and all troubles and sorrows will end, and we only hope to be carried where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary will be at rest. We are now living in a house our good son-in-law built for us on his lot in San Juan, Texas. He is so good to us, treating us like we were his own mother and father for which I hope we are thankful to the giver of every good and perfect gift. Many things have been left out but we will bid you all farewell for now. Your unworthy brother.

July, 1950 (Elder JAMES B. REID

March 4, 1980

Dear Editors,

I notice my subscription to the *Signs of the Times* expired in November. I thank you for continuing to send it although you had no obligation to do so. I am enclosing a check for \$25.00. Please renew my subscription for a period of two years. Also, please send the *Signs* to Willie J. Smith, for a period of two years. The balance is to be used as you see fit.

I look forward each month for the *Signs* and enjoy reading all the articles and letters. Willie Smith is my Aunt (My Mother's sister) by natural ties and my sister in Christ (If I am one of His). She is also the daughter of the late Elder W. N. Green (my grandfather). She has been a precious source of comfort and strength to me all of my life by exemplifying great faith, humility, and unswerving devotion to her God. She has been in poor health for a long time but by the grace of God still maintains her home and is able to live alone. She loves to read the *Signs* and we were both thrilled to read an article in the February issue written by Elder Green.

May the Lord bless you Editors to continue in this labor of love for the edification and consolation of God's believing children.

Yours in hope,
Bob Champeau

CIRCULAR LETTER

Dear Brethren,
Greetings.

It is that *time* of year again in which we meet in the associational capacity for worship and fellowship. We trust that our coming is of peace and our voices are in harmonious praise unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins.

Now you will note that I have emphasized the word *Time*. "It is that time of the year again, etc., etc."

As believers we are concerned with time. We are students of Divine Providence and its application to us in this time would. In addition, the Bible speaks extensively on the subject.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

(Eccl. 3:1-8)

In the above text, Solomon acknowledged that we live and move in terms of time, and that we are subject to its measurements, limitations, and dimensions. And of course, all of us will ultimately fall victim to it in the aging process.

Now because we are predisposed, we invariably accomodate its demands by adopting ingenious devices for measurir

our "goings" and "comings". Such devices are of utmost necessity for the regulation of an orderly life style.

But the most repulsive and repugnant regulatory system suggested by men and imposed upon a child of God is that concept which teaches that our salvation is subject to *time*. For the sake of brevity, I shall refer to it as "*Time Salvation*."

Proponents of this system advocate two salvations: (1) eternal and (2) time. The one is predestinated and secured in Christ while the other is obtained by the merits of the creature. One is said to be of faith, while the other is by works.

Now I wholeheartedly endorse the concept of eternal salvation which is predestinated and secured in Christ by faith, but the works system confuses me.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is SIN."

(Rom. 14:23B).

While I endorse "good works" and believe the Bible teaches such, I have been shown that it is not the works and merits of the creature, but God's.

"For it is God which worketh *in* you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13).

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh *in* us." (Eph. 3:20).

Note: God works both *to will* and *to do*, and in view of Scripture, I will boldly declare that I believe in works for salvation. But it is God's works and not the labours of man.

Advocates of Time Salvation suggest that believers merit or forfeit the attendant blessings and fruits of the Divine Covenant made in Christ before the world began, and that our blessings are contingent upon a responsive act of obedience toward the overtures of the gospel, and forfeiture of these blessings is the result of our "sins of disobedience." My dear brethren, I trust we shall not be swept away in a flood of erroneous rationale as that. We know that our obedience is in Christ and we reap the blessings of the Covenant because of His grace. Moreover we know that our "sins of disobedience" were dealt with in Christ and will never rise to haunt us again.

"The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." (Rom. 15:3).

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. 8:12).

Is it the wisdom of flesh or spirit that would suggest that a mortal man can disannul and thwart that which God has ordered in an everlasting Covenant? "Ordered in all things and sure."—(II Sam. 23:5). Evidently those who embrace this *time salvation* and its applicability have a greater understanding and depth than the inspired Apostle Paul. He advocated one **salvation** (an eternal one) and declared this **great salvation** to be in Christ before the world began, and that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ*:

According as he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him *in love*:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children *by Jesus Christ* to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted *in the beloved*.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things *in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even *in him*:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."—(Eph. 1:3-7, 9-11).

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together *with Christ*, (by grace ye are saved;)

And hath raised us up together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace *in his kindness* toward us through Christ Jesus:

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

gift of God:

For we are his workmanship created *in Christ Jesus* unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:5-8, 10).

Note: our salvation and the fruits thereof are said to be a product of Christ no less than 15 times in the above quoted text.

Thanks be unto God that our salvation is *in Christ*. Not in the wisdom of flesh (lest we be puffed up), nor of the will (lest we vacilate and waver), nor is it subject to time (lest it fade when the Angel cries out "Time shall be no more"), but in Christ who is neither susceptible nor vulnerable for He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

"Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of god; abideth a priest continually." (Heb. 7:3).

In hope of the Gospel,
Jack H. Dawsey

FROM AN OLD SIGNS

Michigan

August 9, 1863

Brother Beebe:—If I may so address you, although we are strangers in the flesh, I have felt impressed to write you of some of my religious exercises, and if we have been born of the same Spirit we can soon become acquainted, by hearing of the dealings of the Lord with our souls. Although I feel very incompetent to write any thing to be sent abroad, I still feel it to be a duty to relate the reason of my little hope, and cast it in with others; and I desire, above all things, to be found on the Lord's side, and on the side of truth; although I hardly dare open my mouth to claim any right to the tree of life. I feel so very unworthy, for my whole life is sinful, and when I would do good, evil is present with me. But yet I think I love God, and love his people. I love to try to serve him, and I love his precious cause; and there is, I hope, in my heart a spark which lights up at times, and causes me to rejoice in God

my Saviour; and to hope that I shall one day bask in the smiles of his face.

I was but ten years old when I trust the Lord began to show me that I was a sinner. It was at a Presbyterian Sunday School, the school house was in a bush lot in which there were many wild flowers. I had got there before the school commenced, and so I walked out among the wild flowers. The sun was shinning brightly, and while amusing myself among the flowers, all at once the sun, and all nature, looked gloomy: and a small still voice said to me that I was a sinner, and sinning against a holy God. I had never seen myself a sinner before, and hardly knew what sin was. But now something told me, I must be born of the Spirit, or be forever lost. I went into the school, but did not enjoy it as formerly. There seemed to be a load of guilt resting on my mind. I returned home, feeling very sad. The poet expresses my state better than I can--

"Awak'd by Sinai's awful sound,
My soul in guilt and thrall I found,
And knew not where to go."

O'erwhelmed with sin, with anguish slain,
The sinner must be born again,
Or sink in endless wo."

The sun being nearly set, I thought I would take a walk, and I walked on until I thought I was where none but the eye of God could see me, and knelt down, and in my childish way, tried to pour out my soul in prayer to God; but Satan seemed to be there, and seemed to say if I did not leave that place, I would be torn to pieces. I rose up, and walked to the house, and it appeared to me I could hear footsteps behind me. I went to bed, and wept myself to sleep; and when the morning came my load of guilt remained. All nature seemed to be right before heaven, but it seemed that God looked on me with a frowning face. From day to day I went mourning with a heavy heart.

Soon after this, I went to a Baptist meeting, this was the first time I remember of ever hearing Baptist preaching,

and it seemed all to be preached for me. The preacher said, "The sinner must be born again, and born of the Spirit, or he could never enter the kingdom of God." I wept all through the meeting, but tried to hide it from every one as much as I could. I attended meetings as often as my parents would allow me to; we generally had to go three miles on foot, but I was willing to undergo any hardship for the sake of meeting with christians. I thought they were happy people, and I desired to be one of them. When Sundays came, if I could not go to meeting, I chose to take my Testament or some good book, and go away by myself and spend the day in reading, and in mourning over my wicked heart, hoping that God would in some favored hour meet me, and cause my poor soul to rejoice in his love and mercy. I took no comfort in youthful sports, like others.

When I was in my twelfth year, my mother united with the Baptist church by baptism, and I then felt that she was going to heaven, and I alas, was left behind. There was a great revival among the Baptists. I desired to attend the day she was baptized, but could not. I felt that I was alone, and forsaken, and that God had forsaken and cast me off forever. I went out in the garden and spent the most of the time. That day all nature seemed to be praising God, all but me: even the little birds seemed to make the air resound with the praise of God: but poor me--I could not so much as look up--could only cry, O Lord have mercy! O, the thoughts of everlasting banishment from the presence of so just and holy a God, and of the blessed Redeemer on Calvary!

"I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And help'd to nail him there."

Thus I was led along through many changes, which time would fail to mention them all. When I was sixteen years old, my parents, brothers and sisters, moved from New York State to Michigan, where my mother united with the Old School Baptists, and I attended

their meetings every Sunday, unless away from home. They had a good preacher, and good meetings; but they afforded no comfort to me. I wanted to be with them, and often wished that I were a little fly that I might see and hear, and not be perceived. I found that all the christian admonitions, and all the preacher said, only increased my grief.

"The saints I heard with rapture tell
How Jesus conquered death and hell,
And broke the fowler's snare;
But when I found this truth remain,
The sinner must be born again,
I sank in deep despair."

When I was returning from the meetings, and feeling my grief to be so great I often resorted to the woods, or to some lonely place, where no eye but that of God could see me, and there I would implore the mercy of God: for I felt myself to be totally lost. It seemed to me that I had sinned away the day of grace, and was given over to hardness of heart; and that there was no mercy for me. In this way I was led along a year or two longer; all the time trying to do better, and trying to work myself into the favor of God.

When I was in my eighteenth year, the Baptists held a protracted meeting, in this place, where I hope the Lord had mercy on many poor souls. I attended, but did not go expecting to find mercy for me; but I wanted to see and hear what the Lord had done for others. I attended night after night, until my grief became so great I could hardly endure it. Every night they invited all who wished to be prayed for to come forward; but I kept concealed as much as I could. ***I felt that if the Lord could have mercy on me he could find me anywhere,*** and I did not want any one to know that I had anything on my mind. Sunday morning came, and I went to meeting, desiring and praying that God would meet me there, and set my soul at liberty, or strike me out of existence; for I felt that everlasting banishment was my doom. While the

preacher was telling of the blessed inheritance of the righteous in heaven, and of the doom of the wicked, if they did not repent, and turn to the Lord, I felt that I had never repented, and that I could not; for I could do nothing but cry, Lord have mercy on me. I felt to say--

"Here Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do."

Hell seemed to me to be my portion, and that God would be just in sending me there. I felt as though I never wanted to rise from my seat again, but that I might sink into the earth, where no human eye could see me again; for I felt sure that my doom was with the wicked. But I returned home, and went again that evening. I made up my mind, during the meeting, that I would arise and be prayed for, and not hide myself any longer; for I had read that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much. And when the sermon was over, a call was made for all who desired to be prayed for to arise, I rose up, for the first time, and that moment my burden of guilt was gone, I felt calm. They were singing the hymn--

"O, how happy are they,
Who their Saviour obey," etc.

It seemed as though the house was lit up with the Glory of God's countenance, and resounded with the praise of the Redeemer. I felt that I could sing with them, Oh, what a happy change! I now felt that God was my God, and I desired to live, and love, and serve him, all my days. I felt that I could fall down at my Saviour's feet, and wash them with my tears, and wipe them with the hair of my head. I felt that I could look christians in the face, and take them by the hand, and go with them heart and hand in trying to serve our Lord and Master.

Soon after this, I went to a Baptist church meeting, which was the first I ever attended, a number related their experience, and my brother, and myself, among them, and we were received for baptism, and on the next day, after

hearing an excellent sermon, we repaired to the water, where we were buried with our Lord in baptism, and it was the happiest day I ever enjoyed. I felt as though there was no more trouble for me. We had good meetings, and on church meeting days a common house would not be large enough to hold us all. Sometimes this wilderness land, as it was then, seemed to bud and blossom like a rose. But, ah! the scene has changed! Many of us have sat down by the cold river of Babylon, and hung our harps on the willows, and myself for one. God's people have been scattered to and fro, up and down, in the earth, and you can judge of the cause. We have had some times of rejoicing, and others of mourning. I mourn that true religion is no more sought for, nor looked up to. I feel that there is a great lack in me; but still I can but hope in the mercy of God. There is no merit in me. To me, the true followers of the Lord seem to be very few; but I must not be their judge. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and the foundation of God standeth sure. God's people are a tried people; but though we pass through the furnace of affliction, and meet with many difficulties by the way, if we are his, he will take care of us, and bring us off more than conquerors through him that hath loved us, and given himself for us.

It is a happy thought that when all the ransomed family of God shall be brought home, we shall receive a crown of righteousness, and have palms of victory in our hands, and shout thanksgiving to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, and dwell forever in the New Jerusalem, and eat of the tree of life, and drink full draughts of the water of the river whose streams make glad the city of God, and sing of redeeming grace and dying love forever more. The happy thought brings joy and gladness to those who have the faith of God's elect to the poor tempest tossed and afflicted saint amidst the cares and fiery trials incidental to the

christian warfare.

But I must close, lest I weary you. When I began I did not think of sending this to you for publication, but designed only to write my experience to leave behind for some of my relations, as a witness of what the Lord had done for me: hoping it might be made of use to some of them. My health is poor, and I feel as though I have but a little more time to spend in this world. I have been a Baptist member twenty-seven years. My faith has ever been firm and unshaken in my Saviour, and in the doctrine of the Bible. As I have learned Christ Jesus my Lord, so, in my feeble way, I have tried to walk in him. I like your paper very much. They contain the best preaching we have here. I threw in my mite this year, and I think I shall send for them next year. If you see anything in this worthy of a place in your paper, you can publish it. If not, do with it as you think best, and all will be right with your poor unworthy sister, if one at all. Excuse me for withholding my name this time.

(Since there was no name on this when originally published, we cannot furnish one now. We hope we will not be accused of sinisterism or secrecy for reprinting this excellent piece. Editor)

Tennessee Ridge, Tennessee
Dear Editors,

As my subscription for the *Signs of the Times* expires with the April issue and I am past my 85th birthday, I do consider it one of the many more blessings that our Lord and Saviour has blessed me to continue on one more year. So please renew my subscription for one more year, too.

I would also like for you to send the *Signs* to a new subscriber I have listed below. Enclosed is my check to cover both subscriptions and use the balance as you will.

Yours in hope,
Harvey Vick

EDITORIAL

"And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant."—Ezek. 20:37

I received a request some time ago from W. A. Chandler, Jonesboro, La. to write upon the text of scripture quoted above. I undertake to do so fully aware of my inability, trusting that God will grace us with his Spirit to illuminate the mind with spiritual meditations. I have found by sad experience that I cannot command the Spirit at my will.

We desire to consider first, the people to whom this is addressed. — the "You" in the text. We find this addressed only to the house of Israel. God spake through the prophets in olden times to the Israelites—national Israel. These same words are now applicable to spiritual Israel, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Spiritual Israel is now scattered in every nation, kindred, tongue and people throughout the earth. God is not speaking to every one of Adam's race, only to the Israelites. All the scriptures, both Old and New Testaments are addressed to God's children. They are the only ones who can receive them. You will note that all letters recorded in the New Testament are written to a people of certain characteristics. There is not a command, exhortation, invitation or promise recorded in the Bible without a character description attached thereto. I feel that I would be guilty of high treason before Almighty God should I attempt to apply any of the Scriptures as addressed to all of Adam's race. So, in this treatise I want the readers to consider that the "You" in the text applies to all who are included in the *everlasting covenant*, all those who shall finally be saved in heaven and immortal glory. Sometimes I think it may be boresome or monotonous to those who sit under the sound of my voice, or read my writings for me to

stress the fact that all Scriptures contained in the Bible are written to God's people only.

Let us notice next, the "I" in the text. As stated above it is God speaking. The One who created the heavens and the earth makes these assertions. The One who worked all things after the counsel of his own will is the author of these expressions. The One who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth decreed these things. The One who said, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," spake these words. He that speaks and it is done, commands and it stands fast made these declarations. He has spoken it; he will also do it; he has purposed it; he will also bring it to pass!

Jehovah says, "I will cause you to pass under the rod." What does he mean by this statement? What is the rod, anyway? When I think of a rod I am reminded of the adage "Spare the rod and spoil the child." I think of the proverb, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son." The Lord chasteneth and scourgeth every son that he receiveth according to Hebrew 12:6. When I think of a rod I think of a whip. I think that troubles, trials, temptations, afflictions, tribulations, and all things that sorely oppress God's children are the smartings of the rod. These things do not come about accidentally. They do not occur haphazardly because God caused you to pass under them. They are in your path and you cannot escape them. God has ordained them for your good and even though they are not good to you they are good for you. Some people would have you believe that trouble is solely of the devil, but I am persuaded that it is a blessing of God. He says through the Psalmist, "I will be with him in trouble." I dare say that your brightest experience immediately

followed your greatest distress. According to the Psalmist, He makes the clouds his chariot. It is in the darkest hours that he appears to his people as their deliverer. We would not appreciate the bond were it not for the rod. We would not appreciate the staff were it not for the rod. David said, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The rod beats us down to lean upon the staff, Christ Jesus. The chastening rod of Almighty God causes us to know the filthiness of our own righteousness, and how destitute we are of ability thus fitting us to call upon him. When we are given to trust in him, our past troubles then become a comfort to us for we learn that God used even these as means to bring us unto this trust in him. Paul said, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience experience," etc. Paul realized that these tribulations were necessary means that God used in bringing us into that hope that maketh not ashamed. The rod is not applied to us in order to punish us for our sins because Christ paid the penalty. This penalty is not against those who are encouched in the covenant for Jesus satisfied the law in our stead. The rod is applied to us in order to *make right*. It is applied to us to whip us into the right path. It beats pride out of us and makes us humble. The effect of the rod is that we learn obedience. Paul told the Hebrews that Jesus learned obedience by the things he suffered. If Jesus was taught obedience by the things he suffered is it a terrible thing that we should learn obedience the same way? Then surely it is a wonderful blessing indeed that he causes you to pass under the rod!

The last portion of the text is "I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." You will notice that our Lord said, "I will bring you into the bond of the covenant," Not into the covenant. I think all God's children were in the covenant in eternity before time. They

have always been embraced and included in the covenant, having been chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world, but they must pass under the rod before they can embrace the covenant and come into its relationship. You were chosen into the covenant but you must be brought into the bond of the covenant by the power of Almighty God.

What is the bond of the covenant? Could it be that precious hope that is experienced by you? When hungry and thirsty your soul fainted in you and you were without hope and felt hell would be your just doom, God was gracious to you, he restored your soul and spoke sweet peace to you. Could the bond be that personal stamp of mercy and grace that is imprinted in your heart? Could the bond be the fruits of the spirit that characterizes God's children such as: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance? Could it be the *shall*s and *will*s of Jehovah that makes the covenant sure and certain to all those embraced therein?

I like to think of the *shall*s and *will*s of Jehovah. It is expressed in this covenant that "I *will* be to them a God, and they *shall* be to me a people." God says in Psalm 91, I *will* set him on high. *****He *shall* call upon me, and I *will* answer him: I *will* be with him in trouble; I *will* deliver him, and honour him. With long life *will* I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." Jehovah promises, "I *will* put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Space will not permit me to list the many *shall*s and *will*s of Jehovah that is now flooding my mind. Suffice it to say that there is not a single condition left for man to perform. Could the setting on high be the *bond of the covenant*? The rod brings us low and makes us to realize that we are in the miry pit sinking down, seemingly, into perdition. All our feeble attempts sink us deeper and deeper. He comes to our

rescue, takes us up out of the pit and sets our feet upon the rock, Christ Jesus. Is it not a setting on high to see Jesus as our Savior? Is it not an elevation to be raised from the fellowship of this world to the fellowship of the children of God? I well remember the joy experienced by me when the church received me into their fellowship. It is indeed a high place to be graced by the Spirit to sing praises unto him, to pray to him, to meditate upon his wonderful promises to the children of men, to write and preach his wonderful doctrine of love and grace! Could the *bond of the covenant* be the full fruition of it? Could it be heaven and immortal glory that awaits you who are kept by the power of God? Could it be the final fulfillment of all the obligations and vows expressed in the covenant that will be experienced in eternity after this time world?

I am persuaded that the *bond of the covenant* is the *earnest* of the inheritance that is experienced by God's children here in time. This foretaste of his love is sweet. The experiences of these many deliverances are wonderful. The few moments spent in prayer are sacred. The joy of His fellowship is sublime. The tie that binds us together in sweet fellowship one with another is great. All his gifts are matchless. These fleeting moments of enjoyment make us yearn and look forward toward the prize of the high calling when we shall quit the walks of men and be received into the full fellowship of God and all his dear little children.

I submit these few columns over my signature to the readers of the *Signs* trusting that God will bless as he sees fit. May I add that I have been much concerned about this periodical. I feel it a high honor to be on the editorial staff because I feel that God has blessed it to the comfort of Zion for more than a century. Its writers are contending for the same things that the writers were in 1832. May God bless us to make an attempt to enlarge its circulation. God

has blessed it to be the oldest and best periodical of its kind among us and I deem it worthy of our support.

Now may the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, be ours to grace us with a godly walk in this life, choosing our changes in this life, and making us submissive to his choice. May he comfort us across the chilly waters of death and finally receive us up into that better clime where no sin or shame shall be is my prayer if not deceived.

Sept. 1950

Elder E. J. Lambert

Alum Ridge, Va.

Dear Editors,

I received my *Signs of the Times* today and it is the last one I will get until I renew. I am sending a check for another year. I don't want to miss any issues.

I live alone and I get so much comfort out of my paper. I am now 83 years old. I joined the church when I was 19 years old and I am still a strong believer of the Primitive Baptist doctrine. I go to church when I can.

May God bless each and every one. Thank you all for your kindness and my love to all.

Mrs. Lena Akers

Castor, La.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I am enclosing a check for \$7.00 to renew my subscription for the *Signs of the Times* for one year and use the balance to distribute the *Signs*.

I don't get to go to church very often and I really enjoy the *Signs of the Times*. I can't write very well about the way I feel, so I like to read the letters of able writers in the *Signs*.

A little Sister in hope,
Mabel Thomas

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

EDITORIALS OF
ELDER GILBERT BEEBE

Elder Beebe:—Please give your views on Luke 16:9. There is a command given by Christ to make friends with the "Mammon of unrighteousness", and when they fail, these receive them "Into everlasting habitations." Who are those that are to make friends with the "mammon of unrighteousness"? What are the "everlasting habitations"? You will greatly oblige by giving your views on the above mentioned verse.

Port Fear, August, 1863

Philos

REPLY TO PHILOS

Mammon, according to Webster, signifies riches, wealth, or the god of riches, and in this signification the term seems to be used in this text, as also in the sermon on the mount. The unjust steward in the parable, had charge, so long as he held the stewardship, of his master's goods, and was empowered legally to appropriate them. He was unjust, first, because he had wasted what he was in duty bound to faithfully take care of, and secondly, in making a fraudulent settlement with his master's debtors: but he manifested a commendable wisdom in so using his office while he held it, as to secure the permanent friendship of those on whom he was soon to become dependent. We presume this parable, as well as that of the Prodigal son, which immediately preceded it, had a primary reference to the Jewish nation, which was very soon to fail, and loose its nationality, and be removed from its special stewardship of the oracles, covenants, worldly sanctuary, carnal ordinances, etc., but the special admonition to the disciples has a much broader application. God has made his children stewards of so much of the riches, or mammon, of this world, as lawfully belongs to us, and Paul says: "Moreover, it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." God in his wisdom, knows—and in his

providence, commits to us the exact amount of worldly wealth, of which it is his pleasure to make us stewards, and it is not wrong for us to hold it in charge, as faithful stewards, to be disbursed by us as his word and Spirit shall dictate. But we are restricted as stewards, and solemnly charged to use these things as not abusing them, knowing that their fashion passes away. We really possess nothing independently of God, for the world and the fulness thereof, are his, and we ourselves are not our own, we are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Now then, as the unjust steward was commended by his lord, in that he acted wisely, in disposing of the goods entrusted to him in such a manner as to secure the good will and permanent friendship of those on whom he was so soon to become dependent; so it would have been wise in the Jews to have secured, as far as possible, the friendship of the Gentiles, among whom they were so soon to be dispersed, and on whose favor they were soon to become dependent. And the disciples of Christ should receive from the parable a lesson of wisdom in regard to their stewardship of the riches of this world, and so use the uncertain and transcient things of this world, as to secure a reciprocity of kindness, when they should themselves become poor, and destitute. So Jesus taught his disciples on the mount, saying unto them: "Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete out withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38, Matt. 5:42.)

Our stewardship over, and possession of worldly treasure, is brief at the least; but, we are liable at any and every moment to fail, or to be deprived of it all, and then to become dependent on the charity of those who have the means to relieve our necessities. Therefore, as we would that others should do to us, we are told to do even so unto them. That when

ye fail, when your stewardship of the things of this world shall fail, and yourselves become needy and destitute, your deeds of hospitality will be remembered, and your bread cast on the waters shall be gathered after many days.

Perhaps we have our best illustration of this subject in the course pursued by the saints at Pentecost. Their persecution was raging against christianity at that time, and all who confessed their faith in Jesus were liable to loose their property, and we are told that all them who had possessions sold them and brought the proceeds and laid it down at the feet of the apostles. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need". Acts 2:44, 45. Thus as their stewardship of their own possessions and goods was to be taken from them, they acted wisely, in making provision, while it was their undisputed right to do so, for their future support. That when they failed, or were reduced to dependence they were received into everlasting or a permanent and reliable home.

We, therefore, conclude that the mammon of unrighteousness, is the wealth, or possessions of this world. Mammon not of righteousness, or to those who righteously possess and use them, but mammon or idolatrous, when unrighteously held, desired or used.

That the disciples of Christ were those commanded by him to make to themselves friends of the mamon of unrighteousness.

That their failing was when they should be deprived of the treasures of this world, and become dependent.

That their reception into everlasting habitation, is their being received into permanent homes, after the manner of those disciples at Pentecost.

We have thus briefly answered the several interrogatories of Philos. If what we have written shall be of any use to him, and others, we shall have cause

for humble gratitude to the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

Before dismissing this subject, we feel constrained to call the attention of the saints to some further considerations having a bearing on this subject:

In his sermon on the mount, and in the thirteenth verse of this sixteenth chapter of Luke, Jesus distinctly tells his disciples that they can not serve God and mammon, and by the repetition of this instruction, almost in the same words, in Matthew 6:24, and Luke 16:13, we may infer its weighty importance, and in order that we may clearly understand and duly obey this divine instruction, and at the same time make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, we must carefully mark the difference between the one and the other.

It is one thing to make to ourselves friends of the riches or treasures of this world, and quite another to serve them as idols. If, in the providence of God, we are put in possession of earthly treasures, we would make friends of them, we should use them as not abusing them, knowing that their fashion passeth away: "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving". I Timothy 4:4.

Receiving them with thanksgiving is an acknowledgement that we regard them as the gifts of God, for which we are obligated to thank him, and to use them in his fear. But to set our affections on the things of the earth, and forego our religious duties and privileges for their acquisition, and make them the paramount object of our pursuit, is to serve them as a mammon, or idol of unrighteousness. Then they cease to be our friends, but become our idols. The loving apostle John, in his last admonition, said, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols". With such an earthly nature as we possess, we need the admonition, for we are informed that

covetousness is idolatry.

Look to this, brethren, and sisters. Have you not some times been so eager for obtaining riches, as to sacrifice some religious principle for their attainment? Have you at no time absented yourself from the house of prayer, or from some of the solemn feasts of Zion, to serve this mammon? If so, this mammon has, so far, become your master, not your friend; for his servant ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey. Paul charges the saints to avoid the example of Esau, who, for a morsel of meat, sold his birthright. We have precious birthright privileges in the church of God, which we should not barter away for carnal gratifications lest we be found servants of the mammon of unrighteousness. Have there not been cases where brethren in comfortable circumstances, and living in the bounds of a gospel church, for the sake of making a little more money, or of accumulating more wealth, have pulled up stakes and moved to some country where they could gain more wealth, but lose all the social privileges of religious society? Do such brethren serve, or make a friend of the mammon of unrighteousness?

Brothers, except when compelled by actual want, who relinquish spiritual privileges for worldly gain, forget, or at least neglect the instruction which Christ gave the disciples in his sermon on the mount:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other; ye can not serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is

not the life more than meant, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air", etc. Matt. 6:19-21, 24-26. We read also to the end of the chapter. Here we have the commentary of our Lord upon the text, and the text also.

We do not understand, however, that our Lord commands his servants to be indolent, neglectful, or lazy; for Paul commands the saints to be "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord". Not serving mammon, but the Lord. By serving him as our Master, and making friends of the good things of this world, which, under his blessing, crowns our labors, we shall make the discrimination required. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness". These are of the first and highest importance to christians. "And all these things shall be added unto you." All these things, such as food and raiment, or whatever our Heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of. Relying on this gracious promise, trust all consequences to him, only see that he is our supreme Master, and he will make these earthly things our friends.

There are many ways in which the fidelity of christians are tried as to their choice of masters. The poor, the sick, the destitute, the widow, the orphan, ask for our sympathy; the Saviour says, Give to him that asketh. Mammon says, You had better hold on to what you have, you may need it. Which master will you serve? Can you obey both? Jesus says, and you find the saying true, Ye can not serve God and mammon.

Again: If we would make friends instead of masters of what is called the mammon, or god, of unrighteousness, we should regard ourselves as stewards of those things, that they occupy a position of equality with us, inasmuch as both we and they are the creatures and property of God, only temporarily entrusted to our stewardship for a trial of our fidelity; both we and they are our Lord's goods, and if we would have them for our friends, let us so use them that

when we fail, or become destitute, those who have shared in our bounty will be ready to reciprocate the favors they have received at our hands. This we will do, not by defrauding our Lord, as the unjust steward did his lord, but by using our stewardship as our Lord has commanded us, by holding all his goods as only entrusted to us, and at all times subject to his order.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Middletown, N.Y.
September 15, 1863

SEVEN MILE ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Seven Mile Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, at Liberty Meeting House in Harnett County, North Carolina, beginning on Friday before the third Sunday in September (September 19, 20, 21, 1980).

Liberty Meeting House is located 3 miles north of Dunn, North Carolina at junction of State Roads No. 1822 and 1705. State Roads 1822 and 1705 lead off from 301 between Dunn and Benson, N.C. Those coming on Highway 13 to Newton Grove take Highway #55 to Dunn then to 301 North and look for signs. Those coming from West on Highway #50 take Highway 301 South and look for signs.

All lovers of the Truth are invited to attend.

Elder W. D. Godwin, Moderator
Route 1, Box 98
Wade, North Carolina 28395

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the Smith River Primitive Baptist Association will convene with Paynes Creek Church, located in Floyd County, Virginia, on September 5, 6, 7, 1980. Services will begin at 11:00 A.M. on Friday.

Paynes Creek Church is located just off Blue Ridge Parkway between Mile Marker 150 and 151. Those coming on 221 South from Roanoke, just beyond Check turn on #664 and about 1½ miles to Church.

We invite all that have a mind to come and be with us.

James Agee

ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS ASSN.

The next session of the Original South Arkansas Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing with Pilgrim Rest Church on Friday before the third Sunday in September, 1980 (Sept. 19, 20, 21). Pilgrim Rest Church is located off Highway 167 North of Fordyce, Arkansas. Take Highway 273 about ½ mile to the church.

We dropped the business part of the Association and hold three days meeting at this same time each year.

Elder J. C. Townley
Route 2, Box 245
Fordyce, Arkansas 71742

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

The next session of the South Ouachita Association is to convene, the Lord willing, with New Hope Church, located near Spearsville, La., commencing on Friday before the 4th Sunday in September, 1980, and continuing three days (Sept. 26, 26, 28).

All who love the true Gospel of Jesus Christ are welcome.

C. C. Wilbanks, Clerk
217 Bastrop Drive
Monroe, La. 71203

PLEASANT VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The thirty-fourth annual session of the Pleasant Valley Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Mount Olive Church, Stockdale, Texas, commencing on Friday, before, and continuing through the first Sunday in August, 1980. (August 1, 2, 3)

For additional information contact Elder G. D. Shipman, Route 2, Box 128, Von Ormy, Texas 78073. (Telephone 512-624-2148).

Elder G. D. Shipman

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Thirteenth Annual Session of the Five Mile Creek Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held with Shady Grove Church, located in Cullman County, Alabama, on Friday, Saturday, and third Sunday in September, 1980 (Sept. 19, 20, 21).

To get to Shady Grove Church, going south on Highway 69, turn left at Wilburn, turn right at the first road to the right, go to the second church on the right of the road.

All lovers of the truth are welcome.

Elder H. C. Moon, Moderator
Route 1, Box 167A
Breman, Alabama
Phone 205-287-1603

NOTICE TO READERS OF
THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Calion, Arkansas

Dear Editors of the Signs,

It is with a sad heart I am writing. We have had two great losses this month. On Tuesday night, May 6, our beloved Bethel Primitive Baptist Church burned down. It was built in 1903. It can never be replaced in our hearts, because it held so many precious memories. Then on May 11, Brother Clyde Copeland passed away. This only added to our sorrow.

We are few in membership at Bethel, but we are going to build another Church, God willing. There have been three buildings there in the almost 138 years the church has been in existence, and we hope to have a fourth one.

If there are any who wish to help us, it will be greatly appreciated. Make checks to:

Bethel Primitive Baptist Church
and mail to any of the following:

J. A. Davis
P.O. Box 306
Calion, Arkansas 71724

Barney Evers
Box 116
Norphlet, Arkansas 71759

Doyle O. Murphy
Route 1, Box 86A
Smackover, Arkansas 71762

A brother & sister in hope of life eternal,
J. A. and Annie L. Davis

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April, 1980

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Hurricane, West Virginia

Dear Editors,

I am enclosing a check for two more years subscription to the *Signs of the Times*, and use the balance as you wish.

I enjoy the *Signs* very much and they give me comfort and hope. I hope you will be blessed to continue publishing the good news in the coming years.

Yeoman W. Wade

We cannot heartily love the distinguishing truths of the gospel, without experiencing them, and we cannot experience them without loving them.

Toplady

The word of God will not avail to salvation without the Spirit of God A compass is of no use to a mariner unless he has light to see it by.

Toplady

Signs of the Times

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“The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon”

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Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Va. 24566

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 9/80
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

sufficiency of his Son in whom and by whom they do the thing enjoined upon them to love one another and to let that love continue.

In Egyptian bondage the Israelites had to furnish the material with which to serve the king, and under the law of Moses that which they brought could not make their service acceptable nor obtain their release from the bondage of sin, but under the reign of the King of righteousness, by his rich and justifying grace, the subjects of whom he requires allegiance and service are made perfect in the King and by him their service is full and complete, their hearts being filled with the most wonder-working and effective principle of divine substance known to existence, the everlasting love of Almighty God, producing in their hearts an exercise most glorious, revealing an unction more sublime than is known by seraphs, an intelligence superior to that conferred upon angels, a simplicity never conceived by the wisest men of earth, a virtue which science nor sages never knew, and yet the only and simple requirement of them by the gracious giver of this blessed earnest is that they let it continue. This divine inheritance is a joint heirship possessed and enjoyed by each and every one alike, and therefore it must and should continue. It is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. These streams are to be kept flowing. They must not be checked. Consolation should flow without hindrance to every inhabitant of this heavenly city.

The children of God are born of him and are therefore brethren. They have upon them and in their hearts the love of God with which they love God with all their heart, and with it they are to love one another with a pure heart fervently. In it they recognize and feel flowing from heart to heart this blessed heaven-born, God-given love, and in it is revealed the sacred kinship which makes them brethren, hence it is a brotherly love. "We know we have

passed from death unto life because we love the brethren". It is in this knowledge that we are to let this ever continue. Its continuation consist in the transmission of the knowledge of its existence, character and objects. See that ye love one another. It is brotherly love, let it flow in a brotherly manner, let brotherly love continue. What a gracious privilege. How blessed this letting. There is no labor in it, nor burdens attached to it, but its possession is a blessing, its exercise a privilege and the sweetness of its consolations a most gracious favor. How would one go about taxing up cost or expense supposed to accrue in that peculiar service by which we let brotherly love continue? There cannot possible be any loss whatever sustained in this service, but on the contrary there is an increase of strength, and enlargement of our comforts, and we become more decided in our privileges, established in our hope, confirmed in our faith, and our communication becomes more ready and easy, and our mutual joys more abound, and in the pleasure of the Lord we prosper and sit under his shadow with great delight. This is a service in which there are no degrees, but all are alike qualified for letting brotherly love continue. One does not have to be wise, nor rich, nor great in this world to be able to love his brother, nor to let brotherly love continue.

Love, uncommunicated, like faith without works, is dead. There can be no fruitful results of undeclared love. Purposes cannot ripen, anticipations cannot be realized, nor can the mutual pleasures of reciprocation be brought within the scope of real joy unless we reveal the emotions of our hearts to those, the thoughts of whom, and whose presence arouse these emotions in our hearts and move us to declare them. What real good could accrue from the fact that I love the children of God--the brethren, if I do not let them know it in the sense of the text? My purposes,

desires and anticipations would become like plants growing in the cool cheer-less shade, and what might amount to much in my brother's heart with respect to me can but lie dormant, but if I tell them there is a pleasure in it to me and to them, and to find in response that they love me is a far greater pleasure in some respects, and thus our pleasure increases, our joys abound, and brotherly love continues.

The communication of the knowledge of this love does not consist altogether in word, but in deed as well. For a confirmation of this love there must be action according to the word, and there are things which should be shown as tokens of this love in order to a suitable, reasonable, consistant, continuation thereof.

In the true relations of husband and wife what would all the husband might possess amount to toward the happiness of the wife if she did not know in some way that he loved her? If he should tell her that he does is well enough if his conduct towards her is such as to confirm it. If she is made to feel that he is happy in making her happy or that his happiness consists in her happiness then she is indeed happy. Show me a husband who belongs to various secret orders and clubs and spends much of his time in their gathering places and I will show you a wife in that community who can by no means swear by the love of her husband. I can think of no one more destitute of the real virtue of domestic life than the wife whose heart is made to ache and suffer hunger for the love of her husband. If a man loves his wife there is no reason nor excuse for his not keeping her mind well and constantly refreshed by assurances in every reasonable way that he does love her. Even so ought the brethren to see that there is no lack of assurances by word, act and deed that they love one-another.

It is not enough for one born of God to profess to love the brethren, but he should as surely and substantially love

them as he feels that the Lord loves him, and thus let brotherly love continue.

What is a mere profession worth? Are you satisfied with having been baptized and having your name enrolled in the church book? Do you not feel to go to your church meetings and that you ought to attend them, that you want to see the brethren and take some pledge of them of their love to you, and to show some token to them of your love for them?

As a good way to let brotherly love continue, Paul, we suppose, suggests the entertainment of strangers. But some will say "we do not take in strangers". Well what have you accomplished by taking in anyone else? The stranger is without a home or the knowledge of one at hand, therefore he comes to you. He knows there are those of whom it is said: "I was a stranger and you took me in," and he thinks perhaps that you are one of those, but how sad must be his heart as he turns from your door, not simply because he failed to find lodging with you but because he mistook your character, as shown by your announcement that you do not entertain strangers. Shall it come to pass some day that you shall have to enquire: "Lord when saw we thou thus, and did not minister unto thee?" If so, he might say never according to any good you have done but one of my little ones whom you professed to love, and thus to love me, came that way, and you took him not in, you gave him no meat, you did not wash his feet, you gave him no medicine, not even a cup of cold water did you give him, but turned him away, and thus did you do unto me and turned me away. This seems to me to be a strait gate at which we are to strive to enter in. If we really love the brethren we ought to prove it according to the scriptures, and if we are of a contrary spirit the church ought to know it, and does know it according to our conduct oftentimes, and it may be all the time.

Another way to let brotherly love

continue is to remember them that are in bonds. How shall we do this? As being in bonds with them. If we love a brother and he is in distress we must necessarily be in distress with him, because we love him, and in that love we are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. He is our brother, we must love him and must suffer with him, and should visit him and show to him to his satisfaction that we are bound together with him in his afflictions, which will give him to feel that according as he loves us he is bound together with us in the bundle of life, and thus brotherly love continues to his joy, which when we see we can but repeat with him. We should be as ready to share of the poor man's poverty as we find ourselves ready to share of the rich man's wealth. We should be the same in the adversity as the prosperity of our brethren. We should weep with those who weep as well as to rejoice with those who rejoice. We should visit our brother when he is well and not forget him when he is sick to specially visit him then.

We are to let our conversation, turn or manner, be without covetousness. That is we should do nothing grudgingly. Our actions should be clear of hesitancy or halting, as though by our words we say we will do so and so while our actions show that we are not hearty in it. It is bad enough indeed when covetousness dominates our feelings which should be to our shame, but it is worse when our actions advertise the fact to the marring of the peace and good will of our brethren. Covetousness is a species of idolatry and is, in my opinion, the accursed thing in our camps today. There is nothing more blinding to our eyes, more chilling to our sensibilities, more benumbing to our privileges and liberality than is this spirit or principle of greed. If our hearts were open and naked before each other and the world as they are before him with whom we have to do, what kind of a spectacle do you suppose they would present? We may withhold that which should be a

blessing to our brother and our hearts through much persuasion may not condemn us, but there is one who shall judge that heart who will not be thus persuaded, but who will most certainly render to every man according as his work shall be.

P.G.L.

Zion's Landmark, April 15, 1902

(Submitted by Sister Catherine A. Houchins)

SERMON STEALERS

About the close of the year 1801, I visited Kingsbridge, to see some of my relations; and by their influence I was invited to preach at the chapel in Lady Huntington's connexion, and I found no reluctance on my part; for I had been somewhat favoured in my meditations as I walked thither. At the time appointed, I went to preach to a much larger congregation than I had been accustomed to preach to, yet my great natural timidity was removed, and I found much freedom of speech, and I think I felt much pleasure in my own soul in showing to my hearers how we stood righteous before God, and the blessed safety of those who were accepted in the Beloved. Many of the people expressed much satisfaction; and I was, by the leading men of the chapel, pressed to preach again; and in the warmth of the moment, I consented. Thus far, all went on well; but losing by degrees my enjoyments, I fell into a reasoning spirit; and under a strong temptation, I said to myself, "I have been carried through my last exercise much to my own satisfaction, and to the people's, but what shall I do for the matter the next time? I have said all that I can say." I laboured and toiled in my mind, sometimes at old texts, and at other times at new texts, to see if I could pick up anything; but the more I toiled the greater was my embarrassment and confusion, so that I knew not what to do. I had made a promise, and, therefore, it was too late to say Nay. In this state I

was tossed about like a vessel in a high sea, until I was happily relieved by a sudden thought. It was this, "I have heard Mr. Jones preach from this text, 'With loving-kindness have I drawn thee;' why, I had better preach as much as I can recollect of his sermon. It is sound truth, and much better than I can produce." I found, it is true, a questioning in my mind whether it was right for me to preach Mr. Jones' sermon; but I soon silenced the clamour in my conscience by saying, "What am I to do? I have nothing of my own. And if I attempt to take a text, and preach from it of my own devising, I shall be put to confusion; and what will the people think and say of me? Will it not be much better for me to preach a good sermon, though another man's than darken counsel by words without knowledge?" Thus I settled the business; and to call into action all the powers of my memory. I had good ground to hope for success, because I had heard Mr. Jones preach the above sermon, first, in London; second, at Bristol, and third, at Devonport; so that I suppose it was an old favorite of the preacher's; and my memory, as well as Mr. Jones', being pretty strong, I recollect that he delivered the whole of his four heads with about sixteen subdivisions, nearly word for word every time, which I thought much to my advantage. Thus furnished, (and well, too, I thought, for if the sermon would do for London, Bristol, and Devonport, surely it will do for Kingsbridge!) I mounted the pulpit at the given time. If I recollect right, I was rather confused in my prayer. I had been in the habit, from the commencement of my preaching, to entreat the Lord to assist me, both as to matter and manner; but having a sermon already made, as I thought, I could not honestly beg for God's assistance; neither could I beg of the Lord to assist my memory; for that would have discovered me to the people at once. I therefore got through my prayer as well as I could, and,

perhaps, the hearers saw nothing amiss. After the people had sung, I gave out my text with a tolerable emphasis, and proceeded, after a short introduction, to divide my text in the same order as laid down by the aforesaid Mr. Jones. You will observe, reader, that I had four heads, and about sixteen divisions to get through. The number of hearers happened to far exceed the former time of my preaching and several classical men, I understood, were to be present, as well as the regular minister, who had been polished at Cheshunt Academy; so that I had quite work enough before me. Well, with all these difficulties before my eyes, I get to work as well as I could. But, alas, for me! I had not spoken long before the most dreadful guilt, hypocrisy, pride, and confusion possessed my mind. Mr. Jones' sermon was completely taken from my memory, and though I used every artifice to recover, at least some part of it, I could not; and after labouring like a thresher, for I should suppose not more than 15 minutes, quite exhausted, I sat down in confusion, not knowing where to hide my head. After the conclusion, several persons came round me to encourage me not to be dispirited on account of my embarrassment, and they expressed such sympathy for me, seeing that I was but a stripling, and young in the ministry; but I was sensible I deserved no pity. I, however, concealed the cause of my embarrassment and acknowledged my error before God in secret. I was ashamed of my unbelief, that I could not depend upon the Lord, as he had been my help. I was condemned for my pride in attempting to raise myself high by another man's stilts. This mortification of my pride taught me a lesson that I have not forgotten yet. I said to myself, "I will never attempt to preach Jones's sermon, nor any other man's, any more as long as I live!" I am persuaded, that if sermon stealers were served as I was on this occasion, they would be of my opinion.

Blessed be God, who over-rules the errors of his servants for their good, and for his own glory! I have mentioned this circumstance, and designed it as a caution to young preachers, never to wish to appear in things already made to their hands, lest they should be beaten with many stripes, as I was. I fear that the fleshly scheme I tried to carry into execution is too much practiced by many, who shine in other men's robes, who have the knack of altering a little of a sermon here and there to escape detection. The voice may resemble Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's.

April 1, 1864

Henry Fowler

SELECTED
A GRIEVANCE

Amongst the various characters that are ever moving up and down in this busy world, we sometimes encounter that peculiar and by no means pleasant one which we may call a man with a grievance. Even amongst your own relations and friends you may find him; for he is usually not very far to seek. Most of us know some querulous, discontented individual who is the worst used person in the world, who is always being injured, and whose general conversation is a tissue of complaints against everybody - but himself.

Most of these complaints are purely imaginary, and the mere suspicions of a soured mind, the workings of a proud unhumbed heart, the heavings of a restless, fretful, discontented spirit. But it sometimes happens that this not very amiable person has a real ground of complaint--that some injury, not perhaps a great but a substantial wrong, has been done him. Now he is a man with a grievance, a real, well grounded grievance. And now he is happy. He is like a married woman who, after a long series of disappointments, at last gives birth to a living child. She has now something to nurse, to look at, to

press to her bosom, to shew to her husband and friends. So our discontented friend has now a living grievance to nurse, to press to his bosom, to feed, and to show about. An imaginary wrong is like a stillborn child. It cannot be nursed or shown about. Nobody will take it up; and though the mother pine over it, it must be put out of sight, buried, and forgotten. But the living child may prove to the mother a worse sorrow than all her previous disappointments. Better have no child than an untoward one; better be ever barren than bear a son to his mother's grief and bitterness. (Prov. 17:25)

I have put an extreme case to show the point more clearly and vividly; but many minor instances will recur to the mind of most. Assume, then, that our friend has a real, substantial grievance, and assume that, with all his wretched temper and disposition, he does possess the life of God in his soul. Now, what shall he do with his grievance? He cannot bury it, for it is alive, and he has not sufficient grace at once to crucify it. He is determined, therefore, to nurse it; but if he nurses it, it must be at the expense of the life of God in his soul, for a more untoward brat mother never bore, one who, when strong enough, will not scruple to rob her of everything she possesses, and of her own life too, unless it be miraculously preserved.

Christian reader, have you never had a grievance--a real, substantial grievance? Were you never wronged by some professor in pocket or reputation? Were you never wounded in the house of your friends? Has no Christian brother ever treated you unjustly or unkindly? Has your minister, or the deacons, or some one in the church, or the church itself done you what you believe to be a real, substantial wrong? And they will neither admit it, confess it, nor repair it. Well, now you have a grievance--a fair, legitimate, honest grievance. You are not naturally of such a temper and disposition as has been described, and

yet you have solid ground of complaint. Now what do you do with your grievance? Do you nurse it? Do you brood over it? Do you press it close to your bosom to keep it warm? Do you listen to its cries and complaints, and do you continually feed it that it may not die away, but thrive and grow, and get stronger and stronger? But be honest with yourself, and see how matters really stand between the Lord and your soul. Do you not find that this overgrown child which you so carefully nurse, which is scarcely ever out of your arms and never out of your mind, which you show about so much to all your friends and visitors, is secretly draining away all the life of your soul. Where is your patience, your forbearance, your broken contrite heart, your submission to the will of God, your love to the brethren, your meekness and quietness, your forgiving spirit, your godly fear of displeasing the Lord by hating your brother, your obedience to gospel precept and walking after gospel practice? You have been wronged, grievously wronged, cruelly and unjustly treated. Well, all the more reason why you should shew your Christian spirit by forgiving those who have wronged you. Will you never forgive? Will you go down to the grave in your unforgiving spirit? Will you nurse your grievance till, like a spoiled child, it becomes your master, and ends in robbing you of all you possess worth having? Do you not see how lean you are getting, wasting away like a youth in consumption? Do not you find how barren your soul is, what little access you have to God in prayer, what little enjoyment of his presence and the smiles of his face? Do you not feel how dark your mind is, and how long it is since you had a visit from Jesus? But why all this darkness, barrenness, and death? Is there not a cause? Do not these increase the more you brood over your wrongs? And should not this lead you to fear lest you be holding an enemy to God to your

bosom? In nursing your grievance, could you see the real state of the case, you would find that you are nursing enmity, pride, and self-righteousness; that you are walking contrary to the spirit and the precepts of the gospel; that you are acting against the mind and example of Christ who forgave his murderers; and yet you who call yourself a Christian cannot forgive your brother! "Yes, but he has treated me so unkindly, so cruelly, so unjustly." All the more reason why you should forgive him. "But he has acted so inconsistently". Well, reprove him for it; but let not his sin be an occasion for you to sin, too. I dare say you think you have more grace than he, for you are sure you would not have treated him as he has treated you. Then show the superiority of your grace by freely forgiving him, if you believe him to be a brother. But whether you have sufficient grace for this or not, take this friendly piece of advice, if you can—do not nurse your grievance; for depend upon it you can only do so to the eventual grief of your own soul, and to the inflicting upon yourself of a deeper wrong than that from which you are suffering, and an injury worse than any that your worst enemy could inflict upon you.

A well-wisher to the Church of God.

FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Burlington, N.C.

Dear Editors,

I see that my subscription to the *Signs of the Times* is due at this time, so you will find a check for another year, and use the balance as you see fit.

I love the writings of the good people in the *Signs*, and I don't want to miss one copy. I believe the doctrine if I believe anything, and hope to be able to take it as long as I live.

May the good Lord bless all of you in my prayers.

Sincerely,
Mrs. J. F. Thompson

May 4, 1980

Dear Elder Spangler and Wife,

I hope you both are well. I thought to try to write a little about my brother. He was not a member of the church here, but I do believe he is with his Lord now. He went to church as long as he was able. He quit school in the third grade, but he could read his Bible. He would read it until he got to feeling so convicted of his sins, and then he would get in his old truck and ride down to see us. He did this as long as he was able to go. He sure did suffer but he didn't complain. He talked much about going home. Someone told him it was to damp and cold to go to his home but he said, "I don't mean that home".

He had lots of troubles in his lifetime. His wife died and left him with two children still in school. He was sick a lot, but the nurses at the hospital said he was the best patient they had ever had. Just before he died he asked one of them to rub his shoulders, and then he said, "I've got to go home now".

We miss him, but the good Lord knows best. He knows all things and He controls all things.

Brother Spangler, I hope I love you both for Christ's sake.

My brother's name was Ray Smith, and he died October 25, 1979. Please put this in the *Signs*, if you have room.

From a Sister in Christ, I hope,
Rosa S. Page

Atlantic, Va.

Dear Editors,

I believe that it is time to renew my subscription to the *Signs*, so enclosed please find my check for two years and use the balance as you see fit. It is my sincere desire and prayer that a way will be made for the continuance of this dear paper, for surely it has been a source of sweet comfort so many times for myself and so many others. Yet we do know that this publication has come under severe persecution and attack lately, as

seems the case with so many of the brethren near and far. There are distresses and troubles on every hand, confusion and even indifference. We do not understand these things of ourselves and at times feel hurt and bewildered, but we do know, having been taught, that He has a good purpose in all of this, and pray that we may be blessed with patience to wait and see what His hand hath wrought.

With many personal woes of late, I feel to say, "It is well", for indeed my precious Saviour has been and is the source of all my comfort and I have been made to rejoice in the midst of storms and distresses and could never tell even a part of what He has done for me. Words fail me to express the thankfulness I feel in my heart and praise sits silent on my lips.

May our all-wise Father keep you in that perfect peace, which passeth understanding, and bless you in all your efforts.

In bonds of His love,
Sister Dixie Davis

Gladehill, Va.

Dear Editors,

Enclosed is a little check to use to help send the *Signs of the Times* to some one. Would you also change my box number, as the post office has changed the numbers on my route.

I hope everyone is in good health.

I wonder if anyone in California knows of Mrs. Ethelene McCullough, of 5250 Palm Avenue, Riverside, California 92506. I had the *Signs of the Times* sent to her for two years in the mid 1970's. She called me on the phone and said she had enjoyed reading them so much. We wrote to each other for a couple of years, but the last I wrote her I didn't get an answer to my letter, so I called her on the phone. She was sick in bed and couldn't see to write. She was also weak and was going into the hospital shortly. I haven't heard anything

else, but would love to hear of her if anyone knows about her. I never met this lovely lady but love her from her talk and writing. I hope God continues to bless you editors to keep publishing the good *Signs of the Times*. It is so good to read. I enjoy it and my Bible, too.

May God bless you all with good health.

Nannie P. Arrington

May 4, 1980

Dear Brother Williams,

Praise to our great God and Saviour; to Him be glory and honor forever and ever. I find my words inadequate to render to Jesus the glory that belongs to His Name.

This past month has been so wonderful for me. I talk so selfishly, but our God has blessed me beyond measure. The first Sunday in March, 1980, I asked for a home among the Old Baptist at Little Flock Church at Polk City, Fla. The first Sunday in April, 1980, I followed my Lord in the liquid grave. It was a delightful experience for me. On the day that many remember the holy resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I experienced a spiritual resurrection (deliverance) of all free will, work system religion. A great load was lifted from me and a blessed peace flooded my whole being. If I have a little hope for only a moment, what a precious moment it is to me. After almost fourteen years walking in the Missionary maze and serving as a minister in that order, the reality of free grace is so sweet to reflect upon.

Today, the first Sunday in May, 1980, was our Annual Meeting at Little Flock Church. The meeting house was filled and several standing outside. Oh, how sweet and refreshing was the presence of our King and how humble did the little lambs partake of the bread and wine and then bowing at another's feet to wash them as our Servant-King, Jesus, exampled us to do. The Holy

Spirit was so near and as our friends and loved ones sang the old songs of Zion, sweet fellowship was enjoyed by all. The day was enjoyed by all and many commented that visions of the "good old days" were seen. I cannot praise Him enough, who has all power and authority over all things!

Enclosed is my money order in the amount of \$15.00 to pay the two year subscription for my uncle, C. E. Futch, of Plant City, Florida, who has been ill, but I am thankful to report that he is some improved. Use the balance as you see fit. I enjoy the Signs so much. It is wonderful to know that there are many throughout the land who proclaim the Sovereignty of our God and His absolute predestination of all things and are faithfully contending for the faith and doctrine once delivered to the saints.

May God bless your work and endeavor to His glory. Please remember this undeserving worm of the dust that is made to believe he has a little hope from time to time.

Pray for our little churches in this state. There are so many running after popular religion, but our great Lord has promised to never leave His poor little ones. Pray for us.

Yours in blessed hope,
Jesse A. Albritton

FROM ALABAMA

Mt. Meigs, Alabama
Dear Elder Williams,

Enclosed is a check to renew my subscription for two more years. The extra is to be used in any way that you deem it to be a help in publishing our much treasured *Signs of the Times*.

I read and enjoy every word of this dear paper; the old as well as the new. May the Editors be blessed for their labor of love in publishing such a marvelous paper to so many who have a little hope.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Roma H. Smith

Arab, Alabama

Dear Editors:

Enclosed you will find a check for one year renewal for the *Signs of the Times*. The balance is to be used as you wish.

I want to say I enjoy the *Signs* very much and would not want to be without it.

I have not been very well over the last year and have had heartaches over the loss of loved ones. I have not been able to go as much as I once did and now can see why I made all these tape recordings several years ago. I have spent a lot of time this winter listening to them, and I re-live each of the occasions of each recording. I have many, many tapes and of several of our greatly blessed preachers that are no longer with us, such as Elders Matt Brock, Biggs, Darnell, Rhodes, Norris, Wilder, and others. Too, I have several sermons of Elders Griffin, Lambert, Poole, Spangler, Morgan, Moon, McCool, Turner, Jones, Hudson, and others.

You see, I live alone and get very lonely, but I realize I am not as thankful for my many blessings as I should be. I find myself wishing for more. No one, surely, has been as wonderfully blessed as I have. What a great blessing it is to be able, or made to believe the wonderful doctrine the Old Baptist teach! What a privilege!, and to be blessed to attend all the wonderful Associations, and meetings I have since I was united with the Church on the second Sunday in June, 1945. Even it pleased God to show my husband the Truth, and he was deep in the Bible, until his passing in May, 1966. We were not blessed to have children, but that too was in God's hands.

I have no close relatives near me. I have only two brothers left, and they are far away, but I feel God directed me here, and do not feel He has directed me to leave. It is all in His hands.

I was so proud to see the re-assertion of the truths Old Baptist stand for in the

Signs. I sometimes go to some of these so called "Old Baptist" meetings and sometimes they preach a real good sermon that I could find no fault with, but it is sad to say that most of the time they ruin what they have said before they stop. But, too, God has a place for them to fill:

May God bless each of the Editors. I wish Elder Lambert would write more for the *Signs*.

May it please God to bless the Editors and the whole staff of the *Signs* and keep the paper coming for many years to come.

Love and best wishes to all Old Baptists everywhere.

Unworthy yours,
Fannie R. Hyatt

A good king carefully observes the law. Christ, the king of Zion, kept the divine law in all respects; and His converted subjects first trust in Him as a law-fulfiller ere they can obey Him acceptably as a law-giver.

Toplady

SEPTEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS ASSO.

The next session of the Original South Arkansas Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing with Pilgrim Rest Church on Friday before the third Sunday in September, 1980 (Sept. 19, 20, 21). Pilgrim Rest Church is located off Highway 167 North of Fordyce, Arkansas. Take Highway 273 about 1/2 mile to the church.

We dropped the business part of the Association and hold three days meeting at this same time each year.

Elder J. C. Townley
Route 2, Box 245
Fordyce, Arkansas 71742

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Thirteenth Annual Session of the Five Mile Creek Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held with Shady Grove Church, located in

Cullman County, Alabama, on Friday, Saturday, and third Sunday in September, 1980 (Sept. 19, 20, 21).

To get to Shady Grove Church, going south on Highway 69, turn left at Wilburn, turn right at the first road to the right, go to the second church on the right of the road.

All lovers of the truth are welcome.

Elder H. C. Moon, Moderator
Route 1, Box 167A
Bremen, Alabama
Phone 205-287-1603

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the Smith River Primitive Baptist Association will convene with Paynes Creek Church, located in Floyd County, Virginia, on September 5, 6, 7, 1980. Services will begin at 11:00 A.M. on Friday.

Paynes Creek Church is located just off Blue Ridge Parkway between Mile Marker 150 and 151. Those coming on 221 South from Roanoke, just beyond Check turn on #664 and about 1½ miles to Church.

We invite all that have a mind to come and be with us.

James Agee

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

The next session of the South Ouachita Association is to convene, the Lord willing, with New Hope Church, located near Spearsville, La., commencing on Friday before the 4th Sunday in September, 1980, and continuing three days (Sept. 26, 27, 28).

All who love the true Gospel of Jesus Christ are welcome.

C. C. Wilbanks, Clerk
217 Bastrop Drive
Monroe, La. 71203

SEVEN MILE ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Seven Mile Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, at Liberty Meeting House in Harnett County, North Carolina, beginning on Friday before the third Sunday in September (September 19, 20, 21, 1980).

Liberty Meeting House is located 3 miles north of Dunn, North Carolina at junction of State Roads No. 1822 and 1705. State Roads 1822 and 1705 lead off from 301 between

Dunn and Benson, N.C. Those coming on Highway 13 to Newton Grove take Highway #55 to Dunn then 301 North and look for signs. Those coming from West on Highway #50 take Highway 301 South and look for signs.

All lovers of the Truth are invited to attend.

Elder W. D. Godwin, Moderator
Route 1, Box 98
Wade, North Carolina 28395

OCTOBER ASSOCIATIONS

SULPHUR FORK ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred thirty-fifth session of the Sulpher Fork Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Providence Church, on Friday and Saturday before the first Sunday in October. (October 3, 4, 5) Providence Church is located 5 miles south of Mt. Vernon, Texas, on Highway 37 at sign.

All lovers of the truth are welcome.

Elder Loyd Wall, Moderator
Route 1
Bivins, Texas

BUTTAHATCHIE ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fifth Session of the Buttahatchie Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Bethel Church, Steens, Mississippi, the Second Sunday in October, Friday and Saturday before (October 10, 11, 12, 1980). For information and directions to the church contact the Moderator.

All lovers of the Truth are invited to attend.

Elder Eulie McCool, Moderator
Route 1
Stees, Mississippi 39766

HOPEWELL ASSOCIATION

The Hopewell Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Salem Church the third Sunday in October, Friday and Saturday before (October 17, 18, 19, 1980).

Directions are as follow: From U. S. Highway 82 east of Gordo, Alabama (just inside Police Jurisdiction), turn south on

Pickens County Road 86. Travel approximately 4 miles and turn left onto gravel road. Go approximately 2 miles to church which is located on right side of road. Signs will be posted.

Elder A. H. Brock
13 Bariwood
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35406

BLACK CREEK ASSOCIATION

The one hundred fourth session of the Black Creek Association will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Old Beulah, the fourth Sunday, Friday and Saturday before in October, 1980. (Oct. 24, 25, and 26).

The Church is located on State Road 2143, about 4 miles S.W. of Kenly, N.C. The Saturday and Sunday meetings will be held at North Johnston High School which is located on Highway 301 about 3 miles South of Kenly, N.C.

KEHUKEE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Two Hundred Fifteenth annual session of the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association is to be held, the Lord willing, at Smithwick Creek Church, Martin County, North Carolina, the first Sunday in October, Saturday before and Monday following (October 4, 5, 6, 1980). The church is located at the intersection of SR No. 1106 and SR No. 1516, Martin County, North Carolina. Those coming from the north traveling U.S. 17 & 13 to Williamston, N.C., turn left on U.S. 17; travel seven and one-half miles to Corys Cross Road (SR No. 1106); turn left on SR No. 1106 and go two and nine-tenths miles to Church. Those coming from the west traveling U.S. 64 & 13 to Williamston, N.C., turn right on U.S. 17 South, travel seven and one-half miles to Corys Cross Road (SR No. 1106) turn left on SR No. 1106; go two and nine-tenths miles to Church. Coming from the south and east traveling U.S. 17 to Washington, N.C., continue on U.S. 17 north fifteen and one-half miles to Corys Cross Road (SR No. 1106) turn right, two and nine-tenths miles to church.

All the brethren of the same faith and order, who are in peace at home are invited to meet with us. All friends who love the Truth of salvation of Grace and Grace alone we

extend to you an invitation to come and be with us.

Elder Marvin E. Garner
Association Clerk

CONTENTNEA ASSOCIATION

The Contentnea Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Pleasant Hill Church on Friday, October 10, 1980 and Saturday and Sunday following.

The Friday meeting will be held at the meeting house beginning at 11:00 a.m. and the Saturday and Sunday meeting will be held at West Edgecombe School.

From Rocky Mount, N.C. to the meeting house take N.C. 43 South approximately five miles from the city, turn right at caution lights onto rural road 1144, meeting house is located about one-fourth mile on left.

Those coming through Pinetops will travel N.C. 43 North approximately ten miles to caution lights, turn left onto rural road 1144, meeting house one-fourth mile on left.

From Rocky Mount to West Edgecombe School take N.C. 43 South approximately two miles from city, turn left directly in front of West Edgecombe Baptist Church onto rural road 1224, school will be two-tenths mile on right.

Those coming through Pinetops travel N.C. 43 North approximately twelve miles, turn right directly in front of West Edgecombe Baptist Church on rural road 1224. School is two-tenths mile on right.

Anyone arriving in Rocky Mount needing assistance may call J. Carroll Williams, 442-8886; Marvin Joyner, 446-7543 or Elder Henry Jones, 446-7370.

All who have an interest in our meeting are cordially invited to come and be with us.

(Elder) W. W. Stallings, Clerk

EDITORIAL

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

(Text: Ezek. 37:1-14)

The first application of a text should generally be its natural meaning and we do not view this text as an exception. Israel had long been captives in Babylon and the prospects of their deliverance was as dim as the prospects

of these bones having life once again. But what was impossible with men was no task for the Lord, and He being sure to His promise, did bring them to their land again. We would look, however, beyond the first application of this text to show how great are the prospects of the elect, or spiritual Israel when God breathes life into them.

Ezekiel was taken by the hand of the Lord. He had not gotten up the desire himself, probably not even knowing that there was such a place as this valley of bones. He had not casually strolled into the midst of them, but rather God took him there, as the following shows; "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me". (Verse 1) No mission board sent him out to secure the bones he would see. No religious enterprise financed his way in the manner hirlings are sent out. God took him. It says He set him down in the midst of the valley, which was full of dry bones.

There are several things of major importance to be seen in these Scriptures. It would not be practical, or even possible, to cover all. First, observe the expression, "*The valley*". At the outset there comes to mind several prominent valleys in the Word of God. (1) There is the Valley of Baca David speaks of, which is the valley of tears; a place of sorrow. (Psalms 84:6) (2) There is the valley Hosea spoke of called the Valley of Achor. That means the valley of trouble. (Hosea 2:15) (3) There is another valley David speaks of; the valley of the shadow of death. (Psalms 23:4) Three prominent valleys, and all of them speak sadness to us. We would consider then, the valley of bones would also represent a dismal scene. There is little question the key to understanding all this is found in Verse 11, "These bones are the whole house of Israel". That is what the bones represent - the whole house of Israel.

Were we to take the strange view held by some that the word "Israel" here means restored Jews of the now

dispersed nation of Israel in some future day we would have to literalize and carnalize a great deal of the word of God. We understand Ezekiel's use of the word Israel in the same light that the Apostle spoke to the Roman brethren, "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". (Rom. 9: 6, 7) Thus we view this Israel as the Israel of God, spiritually, and not the descendants of the twelve tribes. These bones figure the whole elect house of Israel. There will be no Israelites left out of this house. All spiritual Israel, not Israel after the flesh, is represented in these bones.

When Ezekiel is set down in the midst of the bones, one prominent feature he sees is their dryness. "Lo, they were very dry". (V-2) They are all spread out in this great valley with no discernable order. That, however, was to come shortly. You will notice, too, it was an open valley. It is impressive that he uses the expression, "open valley". Usually we think of a valley as a recessed place with mountains or hills surrounding it. This is, rather, a valley in an open area, as it were in a desert or waste land. This suitably describes the environment where Ezekiel is made to view the bones. The bones here are many, and they are open, or naked before God. The valley is full of bones. This is an open area where they are exposed to the elements; the winds, the sun, the rain, whatever, so that they may be dried and bleached, and come to desolation and waste. Imagine, if walking along somewhere you find an old bone that had been there for years. You might pick it up, look at it, and then with little concern toss it aside, and the bone will soon be forgotten. That is the end of that. But Ezekiel looks at these many bones, and as the text says, "He caused me to pass by them round about". (V. 2) He was not permitted to look and run, to look and flee, but rather to circle them with

serious observance. He went round about, observing the bones, noticing the lack of life, and viewing the complete absence of any hope that they may be restored. The bones represented, no doubt to him, life that was past. There is nothing about the bones to speak of life present, or life to come. Every bone suggests the same theme to Ezekiel, ".....behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts." (V. 11)

It might be well in this connection to consider several other scriptures in relation to bones, that we might more carefully identify them. You will recall in the second chapter of Genesis. God took a rib out of Adam after He caused a deep sleep to come upon him. Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones". (Gen. 2:23) He was, of course, speaking of Eve, the mother of our race. Out of Adam, the first man, came all of the rest of the family of man. Every bone that ever came after that was Adam's bones. You can trace every bone of humanity back to Adam. That is the beginning. Next, we read the Psalmist David speaking in prophecy of our Saviour in Psalm 22, "They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me". (Vs. 15, 16) "I may tell all my bones". Truly, a prophecy of our Lord dying upon the tree, and yet saying, "I may tell all my bones", for he was to live again and gather all his bones (children). Adam had a family, "bone of his bone" beginning with Eve. Our Lord has a family, and He says, "I may tell them all", yes, every one of them. In a later Psalm (Psa. 34:20), David prophetically speaking again says, "He keepeth all his bones", "not a bone of him shall be broken"; signifying that Jesus not only had no literal bones broken in His fleshy body, but that when He died none of his spiritual bones (His elect children) suffered or were harmed. A broken body would separate its members, and that could not be.

Another remarkable text on the subject of bones is as follows: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." (Gen. 50:24-26) How touching to hear Joseph say, "I die". But then he relates to them God's promise to deliver them and takes of them an oath to "carry up my bones from hence" (Egypt). We surely see a figure of God's full deliverance in their oath. Though dead, Joseph, soon to be reduced to mere bones, would be carried away to his promised land with his brethren. It is striking to see the book of Genesis close with these words, "A coffin in Egypt" 2300 years before, (approximately) man was in the paradise of Eden. Genesis begins with God in eternity and closes with a coffin full of bones in Egypt. Sin, it would appear, had abounded. (See also Heb. 11:22)

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:21) Summing up these things we may say that the dry bones in this valley were a figure of the family of the election of grace - the whole house of Israel. But we see them initially in their dry, barren state. We see them without life, or the hope of it. Ezekiel walks round about them - there were very many of them. He sees them all together in one place. This tells us something, also. The bones were all together and jumbled up, no doubt, so that Ezekiel could only gaze in wonder. He couldn't put bone to bone, or bring them back together like they once were, but they were all every one there. They were countless in number; not a bone was missing, but alas, what can Ezekiel do with or for these bones, for they are all dead! "As in Adam all die." (I Cor.

15:22) so every bone here was dead. As every bone of Adam has gone back to the ground from which it came, even so did all these bones lay in ruin.

Compare now Paul's next words to the Corinthians, "Even so in Christ shall all (his bones) be made alive". (I Cor. 15:22) There is a family which has come from Adam - all the human race, and they all must die. There is a family which stems from Christ - all the chosen family. All the chosen family are figured here in these bones. They died in Adam, but in Christ they shall all be made alive. God then asks this question of Ezekiel, "*Son of man, can these bones live?*" Must not Ezekiel be staggered by such a question? He sees their condition. For his part it is absolutely hopeless. Can they live? Not if it is left up to Ezekiel.

As God queries Ezekiel regarding these bones, let us consider the question as if it was asked of us. "Son of man can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest". That is a beautiful expression, "O Lord God, thou knowest". Ezekiel takes nothing upon himself, nor does he afford us room to do so. "Lord God, thou knowest". He didn't know if they could live, nor could we unless God instruct us, but he knew he was speaking to One who did know. He knew that he was in the presence of his God, who had taken a rib from Adam and made Eve. He knew he was standing before Him who had taken him out in the spirit and set him down in the midst of the valley of bones by the word of His power. He dare not place a limit on God. Ezekiel could not answer the question, but it is plain to see Ezekiel believed God knew the answer.

Around the world today you can find swarms of what might be called seminary-manufactured preachers. They have no such reluctance as Ezekiel had, and are most eager to answer this vital question. Filled with pride and bloated with presumption they proceed to reply, "Of course these bones can live, if they will just obey". These lucid little

angels of light would continue: "All the dry bones have a chance to live, provided we can reach them with the free-will gospel. However, this takes a lot of money. Give us money and we will save every bone in existence. And God is just waiting to save them." That is not the language of Ezekiel, is it? Ezekiel knew no doctrine as this, and brethren, is it not a blessing that we don't. Is it not a comfort to realize that He has given us a sweeter hope than to assume that we knew that these bones can live by any power other than the power of God. "*Oh, Lord God, thou knowest*".

When God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live", they surely were dead. Just so is the elect family of God, or Spiritual Israel dead in sin until God the Spirit quickens them. The Elect have always been safe, as regards God's purpose, but they have not always been saved. The bones Ezekiel saw were all safe, for God had purposed to raise them up, but when he saw them they surely were dead, very dead (dry, as Ezekiel expressed it). Nothing but bone, no life, no visible sign of life about them, and yet God shall quicken them. Very similar are the words of Paul where it says, "And you hath He quickened who were dead". (Eph. 2:1)

God says, "Son of man, prophesy". Now the next word is as important as any word in all the text. We must not mistake the text to say, "Prophesy unto these bones", for it doesn't say that. It says, "Prophesy **upon** these bones". Can you see the difference between "prophesy unto" and "upon"? Later on He does say "unto", but at the outset it is "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." (V. 4) At this stage of events Ezekiel could prophesy upon these bones, but only God could prophesy unto.

Think now of the everlasting love of God. "Dry bones", God says, "hear the word of the Lord". God loved these bones before the breath of life came to

them and He sends His Prophet Ezekiel to prophesy upon them, and his message was, "Hear". John, in writing the fourth Gospel said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." (John 5:25) Now who was going to hear the voice of the Son of God? The dead. Make no mistake about this. As regards this text, only the dead hear the voice of the Son of God. They must be dead to hear it. And as soon as they hear it they live. This may appear to be backwards, but it isn't. Dead in sins precedes life in Christ. The same voice that spoke the universe in existence from nothing, speaks life into existence from death. They that hear the voice of the Son of God live. And as soon as they hear His voice and live, then they are capable of hearing other voices that can prophesy to them concerning Him who liveth evermore. Ezekiel was not prophesying life into these bones. Ezekiel was prophesying to them that they would (certainly) hear the word of the Lord. Listen to Ezekiel, carefully. He does not say, "O ye dry bones, hear the voice of Ezekiel". "O ye dry bones, listen to this prophet". "O ye dry bones let me tell you how to be saved". No, he says, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord". How satisfying to believe that our King has spoken and where the word of a king is, there is power: power to hear and power to live. "Hear the word of the Lord". "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones". God is speaking to the bones and Ezekiel is the mouth-piece to foretell or prophesy that the Lord God shall speak life into these bones. "Behold I will cause breath". Ezekiel prophesies what God says, but Ezekiel does not say it of himself, or for himself. "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live". (v-5) This is God speaking.

From our text we see first the bones, next the purpose of God to revive them, and now the promise to make them live

with His breath. (See Psa. 139:13-16) "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live". The prophesy is that they shall live for God shall cause the breath to enter them. Is there any other power that can give them breath? As yet they don't have any breathing facilities. Nothing but bone. Ezekiel's breath won't help them. Only such breath as God puts into them will do. Do we not rejoice in the sweet truth that however dry and dead we may be in sin and the world, if we are bone of His bone, and embraced in the everlasting covenant, God will cause breath to enter into us? "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul". (Gen. 2:7) Of the first creation the order was first, forming man of the dust, and second breathing the breath of life into him. Only then would he become a living soul. So in the new creation the requirement is that God breathe into the elect the breath of life, as we find in the figure represented by the bones.

About 150 years ago our people divided from the Fullerites (advocates of the missionary, soul-saving scheme) over this very point; is God or man the agency of the breath of life? The lie was being propagated among the people of God everywhere, that poor perishing man had no hope of life unless a preacher came to his assistance; unless evangelists covered the territories of the globe, and preached the "offer gospel" whereby dead sinners might live, if they would accept it. The people of the living God stood against such doctrines as that, for they knew the same thing that Ezekiel knew - that only God could breathe the breath of life into a poor dry bone and cause that bone to live. "Son of man can these bones live? Oh, Lord God, thou knowest."

Next we find Ezekiel in verse 7 doing as he was told. "**So I prophesied as I was commanded**". Ezekiel, Jeremiah,

Isaiah, and all other called ministers never prophesied but as they were commanded. They never added to, and they never took away from the commandment of the Lord. They had nothing to say but that which God bid them say. Ezekiel prophesied as he was commanded, and as he prophesied there was a noise. There was a shaking. The bones came together, bone to his bone. What an amazing sight it must have been. There in an open valley full of dry bones Ezekiel prophesied, and Ezekiel knew he had no power. Ezekiel knew he was but a man; he was but a sinner like others, but as he prophesies there is a rattling, there is a shaking. An amazing thing begins to take place here; bones moving one toward another, a bone here and a bone there, and they form a skeleton. What a great noise, a great sight. Bone to his bone. Is it not a wonder to see here not just any bone going to another bone. They didn't decide for themselves where they would go, but each bone went where it belonged. Every bone was in place. Every bone had its location. It could not have been otherwise. There was order and there was government, invisible though it might have been. Bone to his bone. It was a solemn marvel.

"And when I beheld, lo the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above." (Verse 8) They began to take shape. They had a bodily form, but there was yet no breath in them. They had everything, yet they had nothing. One thing more was needful. What good was a mere skeleton? What good was all the sinews and skin upon these bones if there was no breath in the body? When someone dies, the mortician may prepare the corpse so well that you are made to feel if they could open their eyes they surely would live. But there is one thing we know, positively; the dead have no breath in them. We cannot communicate with them. There is no warmth, and we no longer have any

relationship with them. It has been severed by death. The breath of life is absent. Until God breathed the breath of life in him, Adam was but dirt. He had a form, and an appearance, but he had not life. So these bones, representing the whole house of Israel, had a form and they had a promise, but until God breathed the breath of life in them they were yet helpless.

"Then he said unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." If any honest being reads verse 9 and reads it with an open heart, he could never again subscribe to the system of soul winning, free will, Arminianism, works, or any other creature effort doctrine. God's plain word will always drive away error. Ezekiel's business now was to prophesy to the wind that the Lord God was bidding it (the wind) to "come". Ezekiel does not say "come", nor do the dry bones say, "come to us". It is God Himself that says to the wind, "Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live". There they are in the open valley slain. They are dead, and Ezekiel is little more than an observer until God instructs him to prophesy to the wind. His prophesy is that the Lord God has said to the breath, "Come". You will note, too, that it is not the other way around. He did not say to the bones "go to the Lord for breath", but rather, for the wind to come to these bones, and breathe upon these slain, that they might live. The reason the message from the Lord God is "come" is plain to see. God has always been with the bones. He has never forsaken His people (in our text, the bones) even while they were dead in sin. When we were dry (dead in sin) as the bleached out bones of the open valley, God was with us to uphold and protect us. He preserves His people with His very presence, even in the

waste howling wilderness.

God does not say to the breath "go", but He says "come", because He is there. Can you see the difference? There is a difference, isn't there? "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live". All that is necessary for life for a poor sinner is for God to breathe on them. But what is that breath? There is really no question what the breath is when we compare scripture with scripture. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:21-22) "Receive ye the Holy Ghost". The breath is the Spirit of God. When breathed upon by the Holy Ghost we then are partakers of the life of Christ.

"O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live". Every bone there in the open valley had been slain, and well may we ask, what slew them? Sin! Sin had dominion over them. But now the breath came, and they lived, and sin no longer had dominion over them. "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them". (Verse 10) Now here is another word worthy of our attention. "I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them". If it said "unto" them it would leave some room for us to wonder if they were going to receive the breath or not. The doctrine of the world is "if you will accept; if you will receive; if you will open up your heart, God, or Jesus or the Holy Ghost will come in". But the breath from God's command came to them, and came "into" them; "and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army".

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel:" (Verse 11) Sufficient proof may be found in John's Gospel that Ezekiel was speaking of spiritual, not natural Israel in this text. "While I was with

them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17:12) There was one, natural Israelite, if there never was another, that won't be in heaven, and that was Judas. He went to his appointed place, a place of torment. The whole natural house of Israel won't be in heaven, for we know Judas won't be there. He was born a natural Israelite, but having never been born again, he was never a spiritual Israelite. But the whole house of spiritual Israel will be there. Paul wrote the Romans that, "So all Israel shall be saved". (Rom. 11:26) All Israel; the Israel of God, the Israel of Spirit, the Israel that is born of the Spirit of God. "Son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel". Well then, it is just as certain as God is honest and true, if He has recorded your name in the book of Life of the Lamb from the foundation of the world, you shall be saved. All of your sins, all of your wickedness, and all of your failings and faults notwithstanding, you shall be saved, for He will give life to the whole house of Israel.

"Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts". It is a lovely thing there; that is, the groanings and burdens of Israel. It always has been, "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost." Sometimes we would scarcely wonder if we have a hope at all. "We are cut off for our parts". We seem to be cut off from the whole house of Israel. "Therefore prophesy and say unto them Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people". Is there not a precious thought there? "O My people". God is mindful of them while they are yet bleached out in the desert. "O my people, I will open your graves." He did not send Ezekiel to do that. We cannot overemphasize that.

Much more might be said on this lovely scripture, but here we shall conclude.

(Elder) James F. Poole

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

EDITORIALS OF
ELDER GILBERT BEEBE

You are also requested to re-publish the following Riddle, which appeared in your ninth volume, for 1841.

A constant reader

A RIDDLE

We have for many years been partially acquainted with the inmates of a house, whose history, if we were able to do justice to the work, would be interesting and perhaps profitable to some portion of our readers. The house itself is fearfully and wonderfully made, and has stood in its present form a little more than forty years. The materials of which the house is made were originally very good, but now appear to be in rather dilapidated state. It has been thought by good judges that there is contagion in the building; and this conclusion has been confirmed by the appearance of "spots of leprosy in the walls", like fretting sores. Now what we wish to relate is in reference to the tenants of this house. And what think you of two families occupying one house? You know unless they agree pretty well they must live very uncomfortable together. Well, we know this to be the case; for although the house is inhabited by but two individuals, it frequently seems to contain, as it were, the company of two armies. We have known them to be engaged in such deadly strife that, without foreign interference, they would certainly have destroyed each other.

It will answer our present purpose, without calling names, to designate these fighting neighbors the Old man and the New man; for the eldest tenant of the house has in reality had possession of the premises ever since the house was built; but the other took his residence in the same house some years

afterward, having the consent of the builder and owner of the house. On the occasion of the new man moving into the house, we shall never forget what a dreadful uproar took place.—The old man is not only old, but he is a strong man, and being armed had kept his palace and his goods were in safety until that memorable struggle took place. No tongue can tell nor pen describe with what awful desperation that battle was fought. It was the most sanguine and dreadful conflict, between the most powerful disputants, and attended with the most thrilling and effecting circumstances that we ever witnessed. Incredible as our description of this scene may appear, we do assure our readers that the very heavens grew dark on that occasion! Loud thunders shook the world, and vivid lightnings played around!! The voice of words was heard, until the reeling walls of the disputed house seemed ready to dash into a thousand pieces, like a potter's vessel.

The old man contended for the exclusive possession of the house, and set up a plea that as he had held a peaceable possession so long, it was his lawful property. Moreover he found certain passages of law which he interpreted to mean that no such tenant should be allowed to occupy any part of the premises; from ancient records he also showed that the house had been mortgaged to his king, whose name was Death, and by his will, he claimed the exclusive right to the house; but he was foiled by the Wonderful Councillor for the other, who proved beyond dispute that the bond was cancelled and the property redeemed from all incumbrance, excepting that he, the old man, might by the suffrage of the proprietor remain in the basement story for a short time. He also contended that he was able to defend his right and that he would never go out alive. But as the result of the struggle has abundantly proved, the old man was mistaken; for one, stronger than he, came and the old man was

bound and his goods spoiled. The victorious warrior, (for he was a man of war) who had made bare his arm in vanquishing this potent enemy, claimed the right to dispose of the premises as he pleased, and he assigned to the new man all the upper part of the house, to have and to hold from that day forth, during the pleasure of the landlord or as long as the house should stand. When the new man entered his mansion, how different was the scene! The conflict was over, the old man was in chains; and it was whispered that he was dead, and the new man made great reckoning on having the house completely purged, purified, set in order, made pleasant, peaceable and beautiful: but scarcely had the work of reform and improvement commenced when the new comer thought he could perceive signs of life in the carcass of the old vanquished foe; nor was he at all deceived in his apprehensions, for suddenly the old man revived and in a most surly, insolent and quarrelsome manner, bid the new man leave the house. The new man trembled convulsively at this treatment; plead that he had been put in possession by the lawful owner of the property, and that he had obtained liberty to hold possession of all the upper part of the house as long as it should stand; and that when this earthly house should be dissolved, he had a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. But the old man disputed his plea, and insinuated that he was laboring under a delusion, in regard to having been put in possession of the house or any part of it; and declared that the new man had not been put into the possession, and that he could not in justice be. Finally the artful language of the old man was such that the new man began to fear exceedingly that he was truly under some dreadful delusion.—Under these impressions he wept, and prayed and fasted, and labored, and struggled for many days, until his Lord

again appeared for his deliverance, and gave him a renewed evidence of his goodness and mercy. After this conflict was over, things went smoothly on for a short time; but after certain days, the old man brought home with him some old comrades, (among whom was a celebrated and ardently pious Mr. Charity, D.D., and a few of his neighbors, Good Works, Carnal Mind, Law Righteousness, and one very shrewd old fellow called Human Reason, A.M.) and insisted on entertaining them in the upper part of the house, as they were all used to high living. At first the new man objected; but seeing that the company were all very pious and being fond of religious company, and fearing that he would be thought uncharitable if he should reject them he consented, and they all came in, and seemed to enjoy a merry time;—indeed, the old man himself began to be very religious, and he and his guests, soon found occasion to chide the new man for backwardness, inertness, a want of zeal, and activity, etc., and he, poor fellow, began to feel something of his leanness and barrenness; he confessed the justness of their censure, and begged them to aid him in an attempt at reformation: to this, they being of the benevolent order, readily consented, and forthwith began a course of lectures, in which they told him that he was entirely too tight laced, in his religious principles; that he was trusting too much to grace, and that he did not lay a sufficient stress upon good works; they read off to him a long chapter upon duty religion, duty faith, and duty prayer, etc., and urged that he must be up and doing, that he must use the means of grace. They told him moreover that thousands, by tight lacing had become sickly, had brought on consumption and even death.

It was the unanimous opinion of the gang that the New man must make brick without straw, and when he complained they told him he was idle, and they applied the lash until his

groans and sighs became indescribably dreadful; and it is our sincere opinion these thievish imps would have worked the poor distressed New man to death if it had not been for an interposition of the Lord; for they had already got him to consent to change apartments with his fellow tenant, and he had moved down stairs, quite into the cellar. The new man had been persuaded to believe that for and in consideration of his kindness in changing rooms with his neighbor, he would be exceedingly happy and enjoy great peace of mind, etc.; but to his mortification he found the rooms very dark, the light and warmth of the sun being shut out; and he had only light enough to perceive that the room was dreadful filthy, and that it contained innumerable reptiles, serpents and scorpions. This exercise threw him into a cold sweat, and he was dreadfully tried to his mind to account for his troubles: he made some attempts to maul these serpents with carnal weapons, such a good resolutions, large quantities of formal prayer, and many other weapons of the same kind that he found among the lumber of the old man--all to no effect; for he found himself only beating the air. In this dreary condition he remained until the next visit of his Lord and Master, who came to his relief, opened the prison door, took his feet out of the stocks, set him in a large place, thrust the old man down into the nether apartment and raised him (the new man) again to the enjoyment of former light, life, and liberty.

We might continue our parable ad infinitum for the old man and the new man can not get along peaceable together, the new man having received an order from the court of King's bench to crucify the old man with all his comrades; and in his attempt to execute this sentence they have had some awful combats, and the old fox has often played the possum and made his antagonist think he was dead; but as soon as a favorable opportunity

presented, he would revive, and in many instances bring the other into subjection to the law of sin, that was written on the walls of the house. The new man in some of his struggle has been heard to cry out, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But we are credibly informed that he has received assurance from his Lord that a few more struggles will end the strife,--when the old crazy walls of the disputed tenement shall be torn down, and he shall then inhabit an incorruptable building far from the noise and rage of the old man.

Reader, do you understand the riddle?

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O B I T U A R I E S

JAMES A. ROEBUCK

In loving memory of our brother James A. Roebuck, who was born in Martin County on February 15, 1896. He was the son of the late Samuel H. and Sallie Blount Roebuck who

were also faithful members of the Flat Swamp Church.

He died at the age of 83 on January 6, 1980 in the Pitt Memorial Hospital after being in declining health for several years.

Brother Jim made his confession and sweet hope in the Lord Jesus Christ and united with the Flat Swamp Church, the Saturday before the first Sunday in August in the year 1932 and was baptized the following Sunday by the Elder John N. Rogers.

He was a faithful member to his Church and all the Sister Churches. Association with him will be greatly missed by all who knew him but his memory will forever remain with us.

He was married to Ella Taylor Roebuck who preceeded him in death.

Left to mourn his passing are two sons, Clifton and Curtis Roebuck, two daughters, Ruth Murrell Gasboult and Jannice Hubber, two sisters, Ethel Roebuck and Johnnie Gray Everett, several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held from Flat Swamp Church on Monday, January 9, 1980, at two o'clock in the afternoon by his Pastor Elder Reeves Smith who was assisted by Elder J. T. Prescott and Elder Joseph Leggett. He was laid to rest in the Robersonville cemetery under a mound of beautiful flowers and in the presence of a host of friends and relatives.

The Flat Swamp Church extends deepest sympathy to his dear family and friends and prays God's richest blessings. May he rest in peace.

Done by the order of the Church on Saturday before the first Sunday in February, 1980.

Elder Reeves Smith, Moderator
Hassel Allen, Clerk
Ethel Roebuck and Johnnie Gray Everett
Committee

GEORGE THOMAS WEBB

Pleasantville Primitive Baptist Church acknowledges the death of our dear Brother in Christ, George Thomas Webb. Brother

Webb was 88 years of age when he passed away on October 23, 1979 in Annie Penn Hospital, Reidsville, North Carolina. His funeral was held in Pleasantville Church-house and burial was in the cemetery there. Elder Haywood Wray and Preacher Robert Turner officiated.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Maud Carter Webb; daughters, Mrs. Myrtle Dye of the home, Mrs. Pete Hall and Mrs. Gertrude Lynn of Greensboro, N.C., Mrs. Elbert Humphrey of Summerfield, N.C., Mrs. William Sharron, Reidsville, N. C.; son, Woodrow Webb, Summerfield, N.C.; 11 grandchildren; 16 great grandchildren; one sister, Mrs. Lizzie Carter, Madison, N.C.; brother C. K. Webb, Wentworth, N.C.

Brother Webb spent his life in Rockingham County near Madison, N.C. He was a farmer. He served the office of Deacon until his health failed during the last few years. He was a member of Pleasantville Church over 30 years. He was blessed to manifest the love and grace of our Lord in his walk of life. He was faithful and devoted to his lovely family and Church, and through all trials and afflictions he showed great patience and love. It can be truly said, "A good name is better than great riches." "Blessed are those who die in the Lord."

Written by request of Pleasantville Church.

Sister Rachel P. Wray

ROY HARRISON

It is with sadness of heart I attempt to write this obituary of our beloved Deacon Roy Harrison who departed this life January 18, 1980. Brother Harrison was born October 2, 1902 in Martin County, Bear Grass Township, the son of the late William Reuben and Sallie Ann Gurganus Harrison.

He was married to Lavinia Cowin January 23, 1923 and to this union four children were born: Benjamin Harrison, Rachel Coltrain, Vader Hodges and Rebecca Boyd, all whom survive along with his widow, Sister Harrison.

Brother Harrison was baptized in the fellowship of the Bear Grass Primitive Baptist Church third Sunday in August 1958 having joined at the waters edge. He was

chosen Deacon in 1959 and served his church well. He was sound in the faith and enjoyed the sweet fellowship of the brethren. His home was a haven for visiting brothers and sisters.

Funeral services were held in Biggs Funeral Chapel by Elder Noah L. Ambrose, Elder Billy Everett and Elder Reeves Smith on third Sunday in January 1980 with interment in Martin Memorial Gardens near Everetts.

By order of the Bear Grass Primitive Baptist Church while in conference Saturday before third Sunday in February 1980.

Elder Noah L. Ambrose, Moderator
Maggie Harrison and
Theresa R. Ayers, Committee

ELDER HOMER LUTHER BALLARD

Elder Homer Luther Ballard was born February 25, 1899 at Princeton, West Virginia and died December 10, 1979 at Sequin, Texas, which made his stay here 80 years, 9 months, and 15 days. Elder Ballard was married to Rachel Angle in Fayette County, Indiana on January 4, 1937. He had two sons; John D. of San Antonio, Texas and Don J. of Bryan, Texas; one daughter Mrs. Linda Lundquist of New Braunfels, Texas; five grandsons and two granddaughters; and two sisters (surviving); Mrs. Esther Williams of Thorntown, Indiana and Mrs. Edith Shockley of Camden, Ohio.

Brother Ballard joined Mount Olive Primitive Baptist Church of Christ on Third Sunday in April 1954 and was baptized by Elder E. B. Ault. On third Sunday in June 1954, he was licensed to preach and in December 1955 was ordained to the full work of the Gospel Ministry. He served as pastor or co-pastor of Mount Olive Church between July 1956 and January 1965. His entire church life was spent in Mount Olive Church except for one year when he was lettered out to Fellowship Church in East Texas.

Elder Ballard's favorite points of doctrine were: the Sovereignty of God, predestination of all things, and the total depravity of man. How many times have we heard him say how he wished that he could be a good

man but knew not how. Brother Ballard believed in the resurrection of the dead both the just and the unjust. His hope being that Jesus had paid the price for his sins and transgressions and that he would be housed in Heaven for ever more with the Son of God.

Done by order of conference on third Sunday in December 1979. This obituary to be recorded in the church book, send to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy be given to the family.

Elder G. D. Shipman, Moderator
Sister Eva Lee Souter, Clerk

SISTER PEARL HOLLAND DUDLEY

Pearl Thelma Holland was born in Franklin County, February 3, 1901. She was the daughter of the late S. Thomas and Alice Smith Holland. She was married to Walter D. Dudley of Hardy, Virginia, on May 20, 1921, and to this union was born 8 children. She was left a widow at the age of 34, with 7 living children.

She is survived by 3 daughters, Mrs. Cora Dudley Berger, Union Hall, Va., Mrs. Ruthie Dudley Walker, Rocky Mount, Va., and Mrs. Mary Anne Dudley Berry, of Roanoke, Va.; 2 sons at home, Paul D. and Charlie D. Dudley, of Hardy, Va.; 3 grandchildren, and 1 great grandchild; 4 sisters, Mrs. Ethel Belcher, and Mrs. Hattie Holland, Rocky Mount, Va., Mrs. Gladys Arrington and Mrs. Helen Altice, Sarasota, Florida; two brothers, Nelson Holland, of Rocky Mount, Va., and Norris Holland, Bassett, Va.

She united with Roanoke Primitive Baptist Church on October 4, 1936, and was baptized by the late Elder James F. Stegall the same day. She was a true and faithful member and came to Church as long as she was able. The last time she was there her son, Charlie, a member of Roanoke, brought the car around to the door to pick her up. She was so crippled with arthritis it was all she could do to get in the car. Her Pastor, Elder Cecil E. Turner, watched her and remarked, "That is faith in action". She had faith to believe she could come again.

Sister Pearl was a kind and loving mother and bore her affliction without complaining, even though she couldn't walk for more than five years. She loved company and was always interested in the welfare of the Church.

Her house caught on fire February 10, 1980, and she and her daughter, Lorene Dudley Heck, age 51, suffocated from the smoke. The house was burned to the ground in just a few minutes.

A double funeral was held at Lynch's Funeral Home, Rocky Mount, Va., by her Pastor, Elder Cecil E. Turner, and Lorene's pastor, Mr. W. Carlton Smith. They were buried beside their husbands in the Dudley Cemetery near their home. The graves were covered with a mound of flowers.

Sister Pearl will always be missed by the members of her church. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Our loss is her eternal gain.

Written by a Sister-in-Law,
Florence Maxey
and Hassel A. Hale
Clerk of Roanoke Primitive
Baptist Church

ELDER ERNEST BREEDLOVE

It is with a very sad heart that we try to write of the death of our dearly beloved husband and father.

Elder Ernest Breedlove was born February 26, 1907 and God saw fit to call him home August 3, 1979, at the age of 72 years.

He is survived by his wife, Okley, and seven children; sons, William Allen, Giles Edward, Paul Dwight, Kenneth David, and Ralph Breedlove; two daughters, Mrs. Doris Jean Harr and Mrs. Mary Rose Henson; fifteen grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

He united with the Old Regular Primitive Baptist Church in the year of 1932. He felt the call to the ministry and was ordained to preach in the year of December, 1953.

He was loyal to these churches, and always filled his seat. He loved to be among the brothers and sisters.

Later in the year of 1973 he moved his membership to the Fairview Primitive Baptist Church in Teays Valley and remained there until he was called home to be with our blessed Lord.

He loved the Church and was a faithful member. I have often heard him say that he would love to take the Church in his arms, if he could.

He was a true believer in salvation by the grace of God, also that God has all power in

Heaven and on earth. Elder Allen Smith conducted his funeral services, and his body was laid to rest in Valley View Cemetery at Hurricane, West Virginia, there to wait for the great resurrection call when his soul, body, and spirit will be reunited to live with God in that blissful home for ever more where there will be no more sorrow, and all will be peace and joy.

May God bless all the little churches he loved so well, and children, remember Daddy and his love he had for his little family will always be around about us.

May God bless you all.

Written by his wife and children,
Mrs. Ernest Breedlove

SISTER CALLIE CARTER

On the 4th day of March, 1980, our dear Sister Callie Carter passed away. We trust it has pleased our Heavenly Father to take her from our midst. We trust she has been called home to our dear God and her trials and suffering here on earth is over.

Sister Carter was born February 28, 1909, making her stay here on earth 71 years. She was blessed to ask for a home in our church on June 1, 1956. She was a faithful member until her death. We miss Sister Callie so much, as she had a certain place in church to sit, and now that seat is empty. She was a great believer of salvation by grace, and she always praised her God for all the blessings He had bestowed upon her. To know her was to love her, as she was always willing to give a helping hand in everything the church would undertake to do.

Now to Sister Callie Carter, we trust she is resting in peace and love. We feel she has done her duty here on earth as God has purposed for her to do.

Now may it be resolved: That three copies of this resolution be made: one to be put in our church record, one to be published in the *Signs of the Times*, and one to be sent to her family.

We send our sincere sympathy to her family and trust God will bless them to carry on as she would have wished for them to do.

This done by order of conference at our April meeting at the Tarboro Primitive Baptist Church.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
John H. Coker, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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ELDER E. J. LAMBERT

It is with much sadness that we announce the death of Elder E. J. Lambert, of Winnsboro, Tx.

Elder Lambert was for many years Associate Editor of the *Signs of the Times*. He was Pastor of several churches in Arkansas and Texas and was widely travelled.

A suitable obituary will appear in the November issue of the *Signs of the Times*.

The Editors

I'D RATHER BE A HARDHELL

I'd rather be a Hardshell, than anything I know,

A band of holy brethren, they love each other so.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, because in them I find

A lovely, happy people, all of the same mind.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and with the gospel fed,

Than be the King of England with a crown upon my head.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and hear the gospel sound,

Than be the greatest statesman that walks upon the ground.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and suffer all reproach,

Than be a railroad president, and riding in his coach.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and suffer scorn and shame,

Than to be a dandy preacher, with D. D. to my name.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and live from hand to mouth,
 Than to be all the Right Rev. D.D.'s either North or South.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and live on bread and water,
 Than to be a fancy preacher to please Old Babylon's daughter.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and be behind the times,
 Than have my pockets full of husks, feeding to the swine.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and wear a ragged coat,
 Than to be a swine feeder and milker of the goats.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and labor for my bread,
 Than to have all the gold of Ophir to leave when I am dead.

I'd rather be a Hardshell the balance of my life,
 Than go down into Babylon to seek my master's wife.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and with a little few,
 Than to be a high tide Baptist, hunting something new.

I'd rather be a Hardshell and grub for my living,
 Than to be always a blowing about the spirit of giving.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and live on locusts and honey,
 Than to be always begging the poor people for their money.

I'd rather be a hardshell, the Bible for my guide,
 Than to be the Czar of Russia, and all the world beside.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and be esteemed a fool,
 Than to be a false religionist, brought up in a Sunday School.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, even from my very youth,
 Than be brought up in a Sunday School, and learn to hate the truth.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and see my children die,

Than send them to Sunday School to learn to love a lie.

Hardshell, Hardshell, I glory in the name;
 I'd rather be a Hardshell, than have all Passha's fame.

I've been a Hardshell seven years, a Hardshell I'll remain;
 I want to live a Hardshell, I want to die the same.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, than to have all this world's goods;
 I don't want to be anything else, nor couldn't if I would.

I'd rather be a Hardshell, and eat that living bread,
 These be the sentiments of H. J. Redd.

Submitted by Elder E. J. Lambert
 (This Poem was not printed to promote the expression "Hardshell", but rather to set forth the writer's sentiment, with which we agree. Editor)

June 16, 1980

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I am sending a check for renewal of my paper. I am 79 years old and can't get around much so I don't want to miss one paper. I enjoy the paper so much. The writings are so good. Elder Spangler's article was extra good.

I was blessed to attend Durham Church last meeting day and it was wonderful. I now live in Morehead City with my daughter and don't get out much, so you know we appreciate things more, especially the Editors getting out the papers and the good writings.

I hope I'm not late with my renewal. I am so forgetful. Excuse the bad writing and the mistakes.

Humbly,
 Narcissus J. Barbow

It is a difficult thing for us to keep the doctrines of the gospel always in view; and harder still to make use of them, and live up to them, when we want them most.

Gill

Route 4, Box 21A
Winnsboro, TX 75494

"WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?"

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:23-26. The above scripture is also recorded in Mark 10:23-27. Luke 18:25-27.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Job were all blessed with an abundance of material riches. No wonder the disciples of Christ asked, "Who then can be saved?" However, the love of the patriarchs and Job settled not upon the riches, but upon their source: God, from whom all blessings flow. It is therefore not riches, but the love of them which is the root of all evil. Some men who have riches have used them for the cause of truth and show fruits of being born of the Spirit of God, viewing their riches strictly as a gift of God and are thankful unto Him for them. Other men in selfish love cling to their riches and these will never enter into the kingdom unless given a new heart with a new love.

There appears in this scripture a deeper spiritual meaning beyond the natural one. The spiritual meaning seems to be referring to such as are rich in their own opinion, rich in self-righteousness, self wisdom, creature strength feeling to stand in need of nothing as to their eternal salvation. They knoweth not that they are wretched and miserable, poor, blind and naked. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:14. Strait means tight, close, limited in space and restricted. A person who is wearing a robe of

self-righteousness, a robe of creature wisdom, a robe of creature strength and all the other robes of the carnal flesh cannot enter in through this strait gate. Before entering we must by the Spirit of God be stripped of all our fleshly filthy rags as conversion and regeneration must take place before entering through this gate. It is impossible for man to come here under his own strength. He must be drawn by the Holy Spirit, for this is the way to Christ and "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." To come out of a state of being dead in trespasses and sins, into a state of grace we must be quickened and drawn. There must be a new heart, and a new spirit, and old things must pass away. You must come in as a little child. The gate is strait and the way is narrow and leads through a wilderness. This involves enduring many trials and tribulations, hardships and difficulties yet one hour in heaven will more than compensate for forty years in the wilderness.

"Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, with man this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Let us view three examples of how God manifested that all things are possible through Him. First: David going against the giant Goliath, a Philistine. "And Saul said to David, 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." 1st Samuel 17:33. David related to Saul the times that God had delivered him from the paw of a lion and the paw of a bear and said, "He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." 1st Samuel 17:37. King Saul armed David with his own armour but David could not use Saul's armour. The apostle Paul likens the pathway of a child of God to a wrestling match. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of

this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12. He also likens this to a battle and a footrace; but we must use the armour that God has given each of us. We cannot fight with another man's armour. Wherefore "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11. If we read the seventeenth chapter of 1st Samuel, we find how David slew the giant after taking his sling and five smooth stones. David said, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts: This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand." 1st Samuel 17:45, 46. With David this would have been impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Another example is when Daniel was cast into the den of lions. This act under normal conditions would have meant sudden death, but as king Darius spoke and said unto Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." Daniel 6:16. The next morning when the king spoke to Daniel while still in the lion's den, Daniel said, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions mouths, that they have not hurt me." Daniel 6:22. With Daniel this would have been impossible. "But not with God: for with God all things are possible."

The third example is found in Daniel 3:20. "And Nebuchadnezzar commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace." The furnace was made so exceedingly hot that the flame and intense heat slew those men who threw them in. The king said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Daniel 3:24, 25. When the three men were called forth by the king, it was found that "the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor smell of fire had passed on

them." Daniel 3:27. "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Why is it so impossible with man? Scripture tells us in Romans 5:12 "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." What was the consequence of this original sin of our first parents? Alienation from God. A breach was made so wide and so deep that no man can pass over it. Adam fell not alone as a single solitary individual, for the whole human race was in his loins and fell with him. We read in the scriptures that Adam "begat a son in his own image, after his own likeness." All beget after their kind, and a sinner begets a sinner. Job asked "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" No one, for "a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Matthew 7:17. Thus we are born into this world alienated from the image and likeness of God, and this alienation is our birthright, our miserable inheritance. Being alienated from God, we are alienated from all spiritual things, spiritual knowledge, fear, faith, love, and hope. "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." I Corinthians 2:14. There can be no way to measure the depth of man's fall. Let us not think there is such a thing as a half or partial fall. The fall of Adam and his posterity was to the lowest depth of ruined human nature, for he lost the image of God and became a slave to Satan. "And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works," Colossians 1:21. Man coming into this world is not only alienated and separated from God, but dead in trespasses and sins. How is he to be saved? If a person is dead how can he be a partaker to something he is dead to? If a person is dead in body void of natural life, how can he perform natural acts such as walking, talking, eating, or

drinking? We all know this is impossible. Though a person is alive naturally and may have much worldly wisdom, he is just as unable to perform in a spiritual sphere as a naturally dead man can perform in a natural sphere. "Who then can be saved?" "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah 13:23. For when "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Psalms 14:2, 3. "For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." Ecclesiastes 7:20. God's holy and just law requires perfect obedience. What man can render this perfect obedience? "With man it is impossible." And it is written, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things with are written in the book of the law to do them." Galatians 3:10. If man is dead in trespasses and sins, cursed by the law, standing under the wrath of God's justice, how can he be saved? "With man it is impossible." but thanks be unto Christ "all things are possible."

Regeneration is a necessity which must take place in fallen man if he is to be saved. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5. How can man give himself spiritual life or cause himself to be born again of the Spirit of God when he is completely void and dead to all spiritual acts? How can a man give himself natural life if he is dead and completely void of natural life? "With man it is impossible; but with God all things are possible." "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickened them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." John 5:21. If man is ever to be quickened the Lord, and the Lord alone, must do it through

his Holy Spirit, for it is Christ that gives sight to the blind. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father. Galatians 1:4.

"Thou shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. All that the Father chose and gave to his son from before the foundation of the world shall be saved in Christ Jesus, for it was for them and them alone that he came into the world. Therefore, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6. For all of the Adamic race are powerless and incapable to deliver themselves from the power of sin and Satan. If we are given by the grace of God to see our lost, ruined condition and our own inability to perform one good act, then we can say from the depth of our hearts, "with man it is impossible." Have we been blessed by the grace of God to experience this truth in our hearts? Have we been given Divine knowledge to know the necessity of being quickened by the Holy Spirit for a blessed hope of eternal salvation? Those whom the Spirit of God has not quickened and made alive to see their ruined lost condition will "know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness." Psalms 82:5. They do not feel themselves to be spiritually dead. They believe what the Devil said in the garden not what God said. God said, "in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die." The Devil said thou shall not surely die but your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Most people seem to believe this lie today. They are not dead but alive to accept, reject, or whatever their wishes may be concerning their salvation. They are rich. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Luke 18:24. A man's riches are his own self-righteousness which amounts to nothing. Yea, less than nothing. His old religion produces work and duties which are as filthy rags in God's sight. But this

"son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" Galatians 4:30.

All of God's ways and all His dealings in the salvation of His people are impossible with man, everything that is done in the salvation of a sinner is done by the triune Godhead. It was God the Father who chose a people in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and placed their names in the Lamb's Book of Life. It was God the Son who fulfilled God's Just and Holy Law to a jot and tittle, satisfying justice and bringing in mercy. It was Christ who died upon the cross, pouring out his precious blood to redeem all those given him of the Father. It was Christ who rose again the third day and ascended up to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father making daily intercessions for his people having completed the full work necessary for their eternal salvation. It was the Father who sent the Holy Spirit down to quicken those dead in trespasses and sins, chosen of the Father and redeemed by the Son. "And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. 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." John 14:16, 26. It is the Holy Spirit and He alone who quickens God's people. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing." John 6:63. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Ephesians 2:1.

After being born of the Spirit of God and having his Divine Light to shine into your hearts, can you not say with Paul, "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present within me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Romans 7:18, with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner", and with Isaiah, "Woe is me for I am undone." "I

am a man of unclean lips." Can we obtain faith whenever we desire it? Can we cause our hope to flourish, our love to abound, pray with a good heart, or be a partaker of any of the fruits of the Spirit at our own desiring? No, it is beyond man's reach in and of himself. "With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

In hope of mercy,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Fulton, Ky.

Dear Brother Williams,

Thank you so much for your nice letter and the happiness it brought me to know you will continue to send me the *Signs of the Times*. My father, John W. Moon, was a Primitive Baptist Preacher and he was a subscriber as long as he lived, and then our Mother continued to subscribe.

I will be 90 years old in August, and in a Nursing Home and can't go to church, and the *Signs* will be a great blessing to me. I love everything in it.

Truly,
Mrs. Lola Howard

Route 2, 312
Dittmer, Mo.

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I am sending my check for two more years subscription for the *Signs of the Times*. I notice it will expire next month. I enjoy reading the *Signs* very much. I feel it is a help to me and a great comfort. I am thankful to the Lord to be able to receive this wonderful paper. I still remember some of the things I read in the *Signs* when I was just a boy growing up. My Dad always received the *Signs of the Times* until he passed away in 1963. I have some of his copies that he sent me back in 1952 and 1953.

That was in his latter years. I remember reading the *Signs* in the 1920's and 1930's.

It seems like I have come to a place where life is more bitter than sweet to me anymore. I just don't hardly know what to do or which way to go to do anything about it. I don't know if anybody else feels that way or not. I seem to be troubled on all sides. I am a widower with five children in school yet. I sure do have my ups and downs, and it seems there are more downs than ups. I would appreciate any letters from any of you people there that might be of some help to me.

From your Brother in Christ, I hope,
Hugh C. Harwell

EDITORIAL

And now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him (I Cor. 12:8).

I had been in a low state of mind, somewhat in a murmuring and complaining frame of mind. As I went about my morning tasks out of my melancholic meditations a voice spoke to me. While I do not claim to know anything as I ought, much less as I desire, yet I say with conviction that it was not in a faltering, listless, unconcerned voice, but a power that arrested my mind so that from then on I performed my work involuntary, even as an automaton. In the outset, I confess to having used the wrong word for the most of people's set of religious principles, for they, so they say, have command of themselves, having a freewill and power to perform the will. I speak not derogatively alone of the world at large, for in the nominal household of faith there are many that do not know the difference between law and grace.

This voice does not have any counterpart on earth. He speaks from

heaven about heavenly matters. It is the God of all grace, the One from everlasting to everlasting, the first and the last, that is the Creator of all things and the disposer of all that He created. This voice that spoke, and yet speaks, as man never has and never can speak, also now takes the things of Himself and declares and shows them unto us. My soul would mount up and praise His high and lofty name for bringing to me in my low state the things of Christ, that is, that He has done, and yet makes manifest, that the members are set (lithema) in the body as it pleases Him.

It is much too late for any fallen creature to participate in the setting of these members in the body. It is useless for any voice to speak about helping in this pleasant work. It was pleasant to Him to do the setting up in purpose of His body before fumbling man arrived on the scene. Paul declares by inspiration that it has been done before His day. In the glorious hymns or songs of Solomon we have a complete record of the house of the Lord. The house, the subjects of it, and an outline of the language and doings of those subjects or members, and in the manifestation of that body of the Lord in New Testament days, it is reckoned as already in existence, with every member of the body set in it according to the pleasure of God. He had, at the time of the apostle, already set every member in it according to His own will. In the time of Israel, and in the life of Samuel, the Lord had made with him an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, a covenant set, established, and the outstanding feature of it was that it was not to grow from the time of its being made or ordered or set. In union with His divine purpose, every member of the mystical body of Christ was then there, set by divine decree. How mistaken we are when we limit God's predestination to the eighth chapter of Romans and the first chapter of Ephesians. The eternal fixedness of all things is written on

every page of the Bible, and the law of it is indelibly written in the hearts of believers in every age.

Paul assures us that God had, in his day, set every member in the body as it pleased Him. As already established, this setting of these members in the body is a sure work. In connection with this setting of these members in the body, there was not one set more than was pleasing to God; furthermore, there was not, nor never has been, any power but of God (Rom. 13:1), and not anything or anyone could keep the least one of the elect vessels of mercy from being set in this sacred body. He declared the end from the beginning (to put before) the things not yet done (how many things?), saying--now what did He declare? Did He declare that He would try to get His counsel to stand? Did He say that there were enemies that might complicate matters to where He might not have a perfect body?--no, no, not that. If the body of Christ was predicated on such a weak counsel as that, instead of writing to you about the sure mercies of God, I would be hustling around trying to get ahead of Satan and in the good graces of God so as to get set in His body. Furthermore, not only has God declared the end from the beginning, but He has done whatsoever hath pleased Him (Psa. 115:3). He was pleased when He set the members in the body, and since he does not change, He is still pleased with His work, and the love that was set or fixed upon His people in Christ before times curtains were let down. How precious is the setting by God of each member in the body before the world. Thus, may God give us to speak a wholesome gospel, even to assign us a hiding place, a place for the setting of us in Him before time. Regardless of who carps about this sure assignment, this sure setting, it is the foundation, the backbone of the child of God. How uniform this setting of every member in the body becomes as we are led to reap the benefits of this glorious work. It is perfect, it is fitting, it takes

care of the functioning of the whole body, and that body, from the least member, to the most needed and useful, is in lofty praise to Him that gave each their assignment in the body.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." The apostle is writing as he was inspired. He would not have these members to be ignorant. We must remember that this is inspired man writing to the body of Christ, those who are members in particular. Is it presumed by men that inferior members are set in the body? Are we supposed to believe that He set them in the body as it pleased Him, and are we supposed to believe that he does in heaven and earth what pleases Him, and then have to fall back on the man created doctrine that He set inferior members in the body? No, they were, and are, all perfect members in Christ. Those Corinthians, as all other Gentiles, were unbelievers in themselves, and all carried away with dumb idols. It is utterly impossible to visualize men and women of Adam's race as able to say that Jesus is the Lord, save by the Holy Ghost. Solomon tells us in no uncertain terms that "as we do not have power over death, neither do we have any power to retain the spirit (Eccl. 8:8)". The issue is closed. There is not anything else to be said--the thing being born is entirely passive in getting into the kingdom of heaven--in fact, they were not contributing factors in getting into it, for they were born of the Spirit, delivered by the Spirit, have their beings, and every movement, yea, their living in Him, is altogether of God. Our text is based on the sovereign work of God. Every gift that is acceptable is from above; from God.

As far as I am aware, no genuine taught child of God has advocated that all of these members are gifted alike. In the first place, the members are not set in the body and cast on their own resources to become deacons or ministers, or this or that or the other.

The members in the body are not of One, and the gifts of those members something that they decide on and prepare themselves for. Again, all the gifts, callings are of God that repenteth not, changes not, is not on an uncharted sea or course in the wilderness. Rest assured that there is a diversity of gifts. Rest assured that they all were given by the Spirit of God. To those thus taught of God, they are resting in the finished work of the Three-in-One God, that is perfect in all of His ways. They fret in their flesh; they worry in times of adversity, but I have something precious to tell you-in the day of prosperity rejoice, in the day of adversity consider. Consider what? Ah, consider Job, and every other troubled sinner: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God (Job 37:14), and may it ever please Him to keep us reminded that we receive both adversity and prosperity from the hands of our heavenly Father (Job 2:10).

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. How foolish and absurd it is to attribute these gifts as being products of the earth, of the flesh, of the hard and stony heart, and equally so is it foolish and absurd for us to say the works of the flesh come from the fountain that flows sweet water. May the Lord bless us to discern the difference between the things of the flesh and the things of the Spirit. The diversity in the gifts of God is equally as broad and complete in Him, as are the diversities in the works of the flesh; however, one set of gifts is from above, the other comes from below; one set is good and perfect, the other is sensual, earthly, fleshly.

For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to

another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

It is not any wonder that the Queen of Sheba was charmed by the house of Solomon. It is a house of precision with everything in its place, and a place for everything. It is a house of consistency; it is a house wherein the silken tapestry does not have any dropped stitches and every board is in place (Exo. 36:30, 34) And here we see displayed to our astonished gaze every gift displayed by James (James 1:17), and each set member in the body with such a fulness in the Spirit that are displayed to our enraptured mind the true pearls of service displayed by the glorious liberty in the Spirit.

The meat on the table (I Kings 1:5; Pro. 9:2, 5), the sitting of each servant and member, the attendance of the ministers and their apparel (garments of salvation) and especially that they are all reaching upwards, going up to and in the building of the Lord, each serving according to their own gift, and the desire to go up to His house, and desiring to walk in His statutes and commandments; here is the most beautiful building, the most glorious site wherein Zion is builded (Psa. 4:1, 2).

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink in one Spirit for the body is not one member, but many.”

Here is a description of the functioning of the church of Christ which is His body. May God enable us to

ever retain this glorious picture of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in action. If so, we will ever be free from idolatrous practices. It is the body of Christ; if we have relationship, any connection, any part in the service of our Lord and Saviour, certainly, for it to be approved, it will have to be authorized, and us enabled to walk in the precepts and examples by the Spirit of our Head and Husband; for if we are members, we are set in His body according to His will and pleasure, and if his work in establishing us in the body is not satisfactory to Him, me thinks that He does not get pleasure out of the setting of us in Him.

How blessed indeed is that nation whose God is the Lord, who has taught them that their union with Him, their dwelling in the body with fellow members, is the most wonderful work that has ever united the voices of Jews and Gentiles, of the bond and the free, in hymns of praise and adoration to His great name. And I tell you fearlessly that a realization of our weakness and sinfulness, proneness to do evil, would not cause brethren to be attacking brethren from afar, they would not be sold on themselves and their ability to destroy the usefulness of brethren nor to pull down periodicals or faithful work of many days and years. Rather, every member set in this body of Christ would be constantly inquiring as to whether they themselves were in the body or not. It is a strange matter that those who were set in this royal body of believers, and confess their dependence on the being preserved in Christ Jesus by the mercy of God, can forget from whence they are digged and hewn, and suddenly turn on fellow members and seek their destruction. Without fear of contradiction I say boldly and unabashed, and that without reservation, that one who is conscious of having been set in the body of Christ will not do that way.

There are poor afflicted club footed members, there are those without an

eye, or even with either eye, there are those who cannot hear, would you, if you were in that condition physically, how would you like it for those that are not thus afflicted to destroy you because of your handicap? Come on now, for you know that I have your number, and you also know that I am writing to the right number. Just because that you are sold on the idea that you have stood, and still able to stand (I Cor. 10:12) for the sake of Zion, do not force your way on the poor, the weak, the helpless.

Now a word in general to our dear people. As given grace let us sue at the throne of grace that the Lord send forth laborers into the field, but should it be His will to leave us destitute in this way, let us still abide and wait His turning and coming and tarrying. Remember that He that set us, as we hope, in the body, even His body, will not, nor cannot, deny Himself, and that He will come again with quickening and energizing power and will undertake for you, His body, ever keeping in mind that not only has He set every member in His body as it has pleased Him; that He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased (Psa. 115:3). May God bless us to tarry at the mercy seat in prayer and in thanksgiving--in thanksgiving that He has set every member in His body, and that every visit to us in this low estate is by set times; that He has set these times according to His eternal purpose which He purposes in Himself in eternity.

W.D.G.

Crandall, Georgia
Dear Brother Williams,

I see that it is time to renew my subscription to the *Signs of the Times*. I have enclosed a check to renew it for another year.

I have been taking the *Signs* for two years and I have enjoyed it greatly. It is worthwhile literature for God's people,

and there is so little of that in this day and age. Of course, I understand that the Scriptures are sufficient in every way and for every need of God's little children, but I believe that such papers as the *Signs* are also profitable for God's little flock to comfort one another and to be comforted by His ministering servants - especially for those who by reason of infirmity or age are no longer able to attend meetings as they once did.

May God bless your efforts to continue to publish the truth in the *Signs*. Thank you for your kind attention.

Your little brother in hope,
J. L. Herr

FROM LOUISIANA
Ruston, La.

Dear Editors,

I am sorry to be late with my renewal subscription, but I am away so much and I just overlooked the expiration date.

I enjoy the *Signs* and look forward to reading each number. Please find a check enclosed for a renewal. Keep up your good work. It is so soothing to read and feel to have a part of the experience similar to our dear writers.

In Hope,
Rosa R. Patterson

Palmer, Texas

Dear Editors, and dear people in Christ,

Enclosed is a check to renew the *Signs of the Times* for two more years, and use the balance as you see fit.

My wife and I enjoy the paper very much. We have been reading it for some time, and we want it to continue on. May our heavenly Father continue to uphold you all with the power of His love and mercy.

A Brother in Hope,
A. B. Hones

Williamstown, Kansas
Jan. 28, 1952

Dear Brother Winfrey:

I am writing you my views on the absolute predestination of all things.

We are living in an evil age and a terribly disrupted world. Wars and rumors of more wars. Blood shed and all manner of debauchery, graft, and corruption is being practiced on every hand from our highest public officials and down to men and women of low rank. Truly it was foretold in the Scripture, — "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived." And again, "Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter day perilous times shall come." One need not be a sage to see the development of these divine prophesies. Recently the doctrine of God's absolute Predestination has been assailed. And having a faint hope that God has placed me as a watchman upon the walls of Zion, I feel it is my duty to at least sound a warning and to offer what defense God will enable me to render. I feel it is no small matter when God's wisdom and power are assailed for these are some of the very attributes of God.

His very name, "God Almighty" implies there is no power but of God, and I find this agreeable to Scripture testimony, to wit: "There is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God." I can find no exception to this divine expression. Therefore the influence of these powers, whether it be for good or evil, it is irrefutable, they were ordained of God. But though evil is everywhere extant there is no danger that it will ever get beyond the control of God who ordained it. These ordained powers are limited while the power of God knows no limit. Thus He has ordained that "The wrath of man shall praise Him and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain." Just why one should doubt or deny the absolute government of God is beyond me. Indeed, one cannot deny this without

acknowledging another power somewhere that controls that part that is not controlled of God, or else to say a certain part just goes at random, which, of course, would be the height of absurdity; or to say God has a superior rival. I would say Superior rival from the fact there is a great deal more wickedness extant in the world than there is good. Therefore, this fancied power, whatever or wherever it may be has great superiority over God Almighty. This idea is no less absurd than the other and it is easily defeated by a thus saith the Lord. "I am God, and besides me there is none else, I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure." "Yea, thou art worthy, oh Lord, to receive glory and honor and power for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Who would dare make the claim that these things, or any of these which are and which were created for His pleasure should react to the contrary.

Satan, the serpent, is a conspicuous element in God's creation. God endowed him with a power and subtility such as none of the beasts of the field possessed. He was ordained to perform his work which none other could perform and all of his devilish work from Eden down through the ages responded to the eternal purpose for which he was created. Through his influence, man sinned, but consider well. Was this a sign of laxity in the government of God; Was it the part of wisdom or lack of wisdom on the part of God when He placed these elements all in the garden of Eden; Did the serpent sneak in unawares to God; Was God disappointed in the outcome of this venture; If so, then we must yield the point and confess that God is not absolute. We must confess that matters begin to go awry right from the start and

that God had created a something that he could not control.

Such a conclusion is worse than folly. God is absolute. His purposes are laid deep in divine wisdom. The devil and all his creation cannot thwart Him in one of His purposes. He created the devil and He created man and made him susceptible to the wiles of the devil that in the end Jesus should be glorified in saving His people from their sins. To say that man, or Adam, was made able to stand but liable to fall would be equal in substance that God willed that he should stand but the devil overruled Him in that purpose. Why did the law enter; Does this betray a lack of foresight in God: Was it not that the offense might abound? And why should the offense abound only for the paving the way for the operation of sovereign grace. It is written, "The law entered that the offense might abound but where sin abounded grace did much more abound." It is therefore quite evident that God had a purpose even in the entrance of sin into the world. How could Jesus have been glorified otherwise? One might inquire, Why did God create an evil nation. Was it not that His power over evil should be made manifest? His decree to Abraham was that his seed should serve an evil nation 400 years. Their bondage was timed, I should dare say, to the very moment when they should be liberated. Was this Predestination? What power but that of God was at the controls in this affair. It was no accident that the seed of Abraham came down to this evil nation, for inasmuch as God had decreed it everything else must of necessity work in harmony with that decree. It necessitated suffering on the part of Israel to bring them to this evil nation but their deliverance was also predestinated just as surely as their bondage.

The arrangement for their sustenance while they were there was also fixed and this involved suffering on the part of

Joseph. It was not a voluntary act of Joseph that he dreamed dreams that caused his brethren to hate him. But as a brilliant type of Jesus they hated him without a cause. They abused him and they meant it for evil but God meant it for good. Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart repeatedly and effect his final destruction in the Red Sea? God, Himself, gives the answer: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show My power in thee and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." Israel could not come forth until their bondage was complete. They were a long time in bondage but God is not slack concerning His promise; 400 years and after that they shall come out with great substance. "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven."

Why did not David allow his servant to slay Shimei as he cast stones at David and cursed him as he went along? David said let him alone. God hath commanded him to curse. Should one question the justice of God in this and similar acts? God is absolute. His decree and His government, His predestination and indeed, all the attributes of God are absolute. He governs the movements of all His creatures yet He Himself is above reproach. All creation is His and He holds the undisputed right to use His creatures and dispose of them in any way as it may seem good unto Him.

Why should anyone heap this indignity on His pure and holy name by saying, "If you say that God predestinated the evil acts of man you make Him the author of sin." Since God is under no law by what law can He be judged and tried? By the law, no man, of course. But this verdict will not stand in the court of divine justice. He has declared, "I am the Lord. That is My name and I will not give My glory to another, neither My praise to graven images." God has reserved unto Himself the right to do His will and this He doeth "In the armies of

heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, what doest Thou?" "Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor." "What if God willing to show His wrath and make His power known endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction or that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He afore prepared unto glory;" What if God does this? Must His divine wisdom suffer impeachment in the laws of puny man?

It cannot be questioned but that God could have softened the heart of Pharaoh just as well as to have hardened it if that had been agreeable to His will. But it pleased Him to harden his heart because His decree must be fulfilled. Some will say God is unjust if He has not given every one an equal chance to be saved. But the Scripture answers this contention: "Nay but oh man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?" God has declared "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and whom I will I hardeneth." Does this make God the author of sin? The deeds of a man do not make him either good or bad but they reveal the true character of the man. His deeds are commensurate with his nature whether they be good or evil. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Jacob and Esau, which is Israel and Edom, God loved and hated respectively before they were born. Thus it cannot be established that their works were a factor in shaping their final destiny. Their destinies were sealed before they were born," neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might stand. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." The purpose of God in this as in all cases is preeminent. No power but of God was employed in

shaping this allegory. So may I repeat, their works are merely commensurate with the nature God has given them.

Now to the climax of the whole story culminating in the crucifixion of our Lord. God has said "Awake oh sword against My shepherd. Against the man that is my fellow. Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered and I will turn My hand upon the little ones." The wicked are designated as His sword. Hence the wicked come and go at His command and are made just as subservient to the will of God as the weakest saint. So in response to this divine command, wicked men led Jesus as a lamb to the slaughter. Hence it is recorded: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God Ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And again, "For as a truth against thy Holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. They could do no more and they could do no less, for in the words of Jesus, "How could the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be."

Thus we see a glorious triumph for the complete Absolute Predestination of God, overruling the powers of darkness to His glory and ultimate salvation of all His elect people. Jesus died but it was not possible that He should be holden of death. He is risen from the dead, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through the fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. He thus addressed His elect, saying, "I am He that was dead but behold I am alive forevermore and because I live ye shall live, also." So to the wicked all down the line it may be said as it was said to Pharaoh: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show My power in thee and

that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." Christ crucified is our theme. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can do helpless sinners any good.

I have by no means exhausted the great array of testimony relating to the Absolute Predestination of all things, but this may suffice for the time being. Thanks be unto God "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

L. L. Schenck

Mayfield, Ky.

To the Editors of the Signs of the Times,

If my memory is right my time was out last November, but I am still getting the paper and I sure do enjoy reading it. I do not get to go to Church to hear what I believe in, and my hearing is so weak I seldom hear any thing but the singing.

I was born December 27, 1894, so I am going on my 86th year, if the dear Lord sees fit for me to live the year out. The way my health is, I doubt if you will ever be able to read my handwriting.

I am enclosing money to finish up 1980 and go into 1981, if I live that long. Do as you see best with the rest.

If the Old Baptist is not right then I am surely lost. The older I get the plainer they are to me, if a child of grace at all. The Bible and the *Signs of the Times* tells of my hope.

Farewell,
Acton Perkins

Selma, Alabama

Dear Elder Williams,

I am enclosing a check for my subscription to the *Signs of the Times*, enough to pay for the past due and also some future. I'll try not to let it get behind again.

Also, if you would care to print this, it might be of help to someone who has

believed on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I have been informed that some of the brethren think that being born of the Spirit does not affect the flesh. The Bible says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God." (Romans 6:1-4; 12:13)

"Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1:2-4)

Howard Poe

NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE

Dear Elder Simpson,

As I sit today I have on my mind some Biblical numbers I would like to write down. When I was 50 years old I joined the Old Baptist Church (This was the first Church I ever joined.) The 50th year is the year of Jubilee, called "acceptable year of the Lord." (Isa. 61:2) "The year of liberty". (Ezek. 46:17) "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord". (Luke 4:19) "And ye shall hallow the 50th year and proclaim liberty through out all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall

be a jubilee unto you: and ye shall return every man unto his possession and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Lev. 25:10) I have a hope I have returned to God's family.

About a year or so after I joined the Old Baptist Church, Sister Annie Tash gave me some old (1948) "Old Faith Contenders". In reading them I saw my Daddy's obituary in one. It was then I saw that I had joined the church 40 years from the same week-end Daddy joined the Old Baptist Church. Also the church set me aside to ordain me a Deacon 40 years from the same weekend Daddy was ordained a Deacon in the Old Baptist Church. But the ordination didn't take place until the next meeting, one month later. "And the flood was 40 days upon the earth". (Gen. 7:17) "Jacob embalmed and 40 days were fulfilled for him", (Gen. 50:3) "And the children of Israel did eat manna 40 years". (Ex. 16:35) "God led thee these 40 years in the wilderness". (Deut. 8:2) "And he was there in the wilderness 40 days tempted of Satan". (Mark 1:13) The Number 40 pertains to test and temper. I believe I was in the wilderness "40 years led by God's unseen hand", at times now I feel I have crossed Jordan and now am looking toward Zion's hill. (This is my hope.)

In the early 19th century seven brothers came to America. One was my great-granddaddy, (making me the third generation born in this country.) Another seven was to appear. I was my Daddy's seventh and last child. It is said that seven is a complete number. "And on the 7th day God ended his work; he rested on the seventh day". (Gen. 2:2) "For yet 7 days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth 40 days and 40 nights." (Gen. 7:4) "Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters". (Ex. 2:16) "Speak unto the children of Israel saying, the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord." (Lev. 23:34) "Seven days shall thou consecrate

them" (Priest) (Ex. 29:35) "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days" (Paul) (Acts 21:4) "And the seven years of plenteousness." (Gen. 41:53) "And the seven years of dearth began to come". (Gen. 41:54) "And seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most high ruleth in the Kingdom of men." (Dan. 4:32) "John to the seven churches which are in Asia". (Rev. 1:4) "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Rev. 1:20) Being number seven and the last child in the family, I completed my earthly father's family. It is my hope that I will be complete in my Heavenly Father's family.

I was a third and last son of my Daddy, who was the third generation to marry in this country (America). My Mother was his third wife. (He out lived three wives by six years. When I think of three I think of the Trinity (The Godhead) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "For there are three that bear record in Heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." (I John 5:7) "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity." (I Cor. 13:13) "And Noah begat three sons". (Gen. 6:10) "A three-fold cord is not quickly broken". (Ecc. 4:12) "Him God raised up the third day and shewed him openly." (Acts 10:40) "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost (third in the Trinity) fell on all them which heard the word." (Acts 10:44) It is my hope that in my fiftieth (50) year the Holy Ghost fell on me.

I being the third and the last son of three generations of three sons born in this country makes me be the ninth son born in America. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour". (Acts 3:1) "Then Peter said Silver and

gold have I none but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk". (And he walked.) Is not this perfection? (Acts 3:6) "At the ninth hour I prayed in my house and behold a man stood before me in bright clothing." (Acts 10:30) "And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour." (Mark 15:33) "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, iam a sabachthani? Which being interpreted, My God My God, why has thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost." Is not this perfection of perfection? (Mark 15:37) It has been said that the number nine is a number of perfection. So it is my hope that at the ninth hour that I will be a ninth son of the Heavenly Father, made to perfection unto salvation our Lord by grace. Not of anything I have done. It is a gift to whom He will.

A brother in hope,
Fred Murphy

FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Fayetteville, N.C.
Dear Editors of the Signs,

Enclosed you will find my check to renew my subscription to the *Signs of the Times* for another year. It expired in April 1980. Use the balance to help send the *Signs* to those unable to pay.

Due to illness and hospitalization it has not been so that I could send my remittance sooner, but I do regret the delay.

The Lord has been so merciful in my illness and I feel so unworthy of His goodness to me. I would praise Him acceptably, but realize I am not able to do so.

With my kindest regards.

An unworthy sister if one at all,
Amie H. Benson

Star City, Arkansas

Dear Editors,

I am sending my renewal to the *Signs*. I am sorry I am a bit late. Please renew it for one year and use the extra as you see fit.

At times the way seems very dark, but it is all in God's hands. May we be reconciled to His will, for His will shall be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

May He keep us in that strait and narrow way.

In bonds of love, I hope,
Mrs. Havis Donaldson

Salem, Virginia

Dear Editors of the Signs,

I am sorry I am late on renewing my subscription. I want to renew my subscription for two years. I am sending a money order and hope this will take care of this.

I enjoy reading the *Signs* and hope the Lord will bless you to continue to publish the *Signs* for many years to come.

Mrs. Dorothy Craighead

SELECTED FROM AN
OLD GOSPEL STANDARD
INQUIRY

Dear Sir, - Will you have the kindness to give your opinion on the following questions: Is it strictly in accordance with the rules given by Christ and his apostles to suspend any member of a Christian church for immoral conduct? If so, should it be for a given time, say 10 to 12 months, just as the church might think proper to decide? Or should suspension be until the disorderly member makes confession of his faults and repents of such conduct? Would the church do right in then permitting him to fill up his place in the church as before? Or would it be more proper, or

consistent with church discipline, not to hear any confession, nor yet to receive such member until the expiration of the time for which such member has been suspended?

By giving through the "Gospel Standard" your opinion, you will greatly oblige.

A Constant Reader

ANSWER

As four or five distinct questions are here asked, thought they have all a bearing on each other, we shall endeavour, according to the ability which may be given us, to answer them separately.

1. "Is it strictly in accordance with the rules given by Christ and his apostles, to suspend any member of a Christian church for immoral conduct?"

A Christian church has undoubtedly a right to separate or suspend any member for immoral conduct. The church at Corinth, for instance, was expressly commanded by Paul, "to put away from among them"-that is, separate from their body, "that wicked person", who had taken his father's wife. (I Cor. 5:13). And that the whole church took part in it, is plain from the words, "Sufficient for such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many", that is, it was not inflicted upon the offender by the authority of a few in the church, whether deacons, or leading men, but by the "many", in their corporate capacity as a church. But upon the man's sorrow and repentance, which had come to Paul's ears, they were bidden to forgive and comfort him. (2 Cor. 2:7) From this we clearly gather the power of a church to restore a member as well as separate him. Thus, also, the apostle speaks: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (Gal. 6:1) These, then, are general principles, from

which may be drawn particular rules for our guidance; for here, as elsewhere, the Scripture gives us only general principles, leaving us at liberty to deduce rules from them. But these two rules are subject to these two restrictions:

1. They must be fully in harmony with these general principles; and 2, they must be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the gospel.

Now applying these general principles to the other questions before us, let us seek to answer them scripturally.

2. Separation, the severer punishment, implies suspension, the minor, on this simple ground, that the same legislature which has authority to punish a heinous crime, say murder, with death, has authority to punish a less crime, say robbery, with imprisonment. We therefore fairly assume that a church has power to suspend a member for inconsistent conduct, as well as "put him away", that is, separate him, though the Scripture does not expressly name suspension as a church punishment, or give us an instance of it.

But now the question arises. Should this suspension be definite or indefinite—that is, for a fixed time, or until the disorderly member be brought to repentance and confession? We certainly think it should be for a fixed, definite period; for suspension is a "punishment" as well as a "censure" (2 Cor. 2:6, text and margin;) and on the same principle that the judge sentences the convicted criminal to a fixed period of imprisonment, so should the church define the time of the suspension. This view, then, of the case, if correct will furnish the answer to the next question.

3. "Would the church do right in permitting the member to fill up the place as before, if he repent and make confession before the time fixed is expired?" To this we answer, that no rules can be laid down to meet extreme cases. The suspended member might be "swallowed up with over much sorrow", as was the case with the member at

Corinth; (2 Cor. 2:7) and the church, feeling for his distress and trouble, might wish to restore him, as a brotherly act, before the time was fully elapsed. None could blame this act of brotherly sympathy and love, for it would be carrying out the spirit of the gospel even at the expense of strict church discipline. But such cases would be rare, and can only be met as they occur. It would be better, therefore, in our judgment, in all but this extreme instance, to let the original sentence remain until the time be fully expired, and that for the following reasons.

Church censures are painful things, and they are meant to be painful things; they are punishments, and are intended as punishments. They should therefore be well weighed before administered; but when once determined on, they should remain unaltered. It is good for the suspended member that he should feel the guilt of his sin, and the weight of his punishment. Let him see and feel what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against the Lord, and that the church is determined to mark its sense of inconsistent conduct, and not dally or trifle with the honour and glory of God. It is besides good for the church itself, as a warning to all the other members, to let them see there is a weight in church censures, and that they are not lightly to be repealed. It is good for the congregation which will thus see that the church does not wink at sin, which it might readily suppose was the case if almost as soon as a punishment was inflicted, it was removed. No; let all see that the church does not think lightly of sin, but observes a strict impartiality in censuring and punishing it.

It is so generally understood that the member should, before his restoration, acknowledge his sin before the church, that we need not enter upon that point. The Lord keep us from ever incurring church censures, or bringing any reproach on his holy and blessed name.

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BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Pittmans Grove, the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in November, 1980. (November 29 and 30)

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

The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death. (Ps. 118:18)

HOPEWELL ASSOCIATION

The Hopewell Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Salem Church the third Sunday in October, Friday and Saturday before (Oct. 17, 18, 19, 1980).

Directions are as follow: From U.S. Highway 82 east of Gordo, Alabama (just inside Police Jurisdiction), turn south on Pickens County Road 86. Travel approximately 4 miles and turn left onto gravel road. Go approximately 2 miles to church which is located on right side of road. Signs will be posted.

Elder A. H. Brock
13 Bariwood
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35406

KEHUKEE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION

The Two Hundred Fifteenth annual session of the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association is to be held, the Lord willing, at Smithwick Creek Church, Martin County, North Carolina, the first Sunday in October, Saturday before and Monday following (October 4, 5, 6, 1980). The church is located at the intersection of SR No. 1106 and SR No. 1516, Martin County, North Carolina. Those coming from the north traveling U.S. 17 & 13 to Williamston, N.C., turn left on U.S. 17; travel seven and one-half miles to Corys Cross Road (SR No. 1106); turn left on SR No. 1106 and go two and nine-tenths miles to Church. Those coming from the west traveling U.S. 64 & 13 to Williamston, N.C., turn right on U.S. 17 South, travel seven and one-half miles to Corys Cross Road (SR No. 1106) turn left on SR No. 1106; go two and nine-tenths miles to Church. Coming from the south and east traveling U.S. 17 to Washington, N.C., continue on U.S. 17 north fifteen and one-half miles to Corys Cross Road (SR No. 1106) turn right, two and nine-tenths miles to church.

All the brethren on the same faith and order, who are in peace at home are invited to meet with us. All friends who love the Truth of salvation of Grace and Grace alone we extend to you an invitation to come and be with us.

Elder Marvin E. Garner
Association Clerk

BUTTAHATCHIE ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fifth Session of the Buttahatchie Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Bethel Church, Steens, Mississippi, the Second Sunday in October, Friday and Saturday before (October 10, 11, 12, 1980). For information and directions to the church contact the Moderator.

All lovers of the Truth are invited to attend.

Elder Eulie McCool, Moderator
Route 1
Stoons, Mississippi 39766

CONTENTNEA ASSOCIATION

The Contentnea Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Pleasant Hill Church on Friday, October 10, 1980 and Saturday and Sunday following.

The Friday meeting will be held at the meeting house beginning at 11:00 a.m. and the Saturday and Sunday meeting will be held at West Edgecombe School.

From Rocky Mount, N.C. to the meeting house take N.C. 43 South approximately five miles from the city, turn right at caution lights onto rural road 1144, meeting house is located about one-fourth mile on left.

Those coming through Pinetops will travel N.C. 43 North approximately ten miles to caution lights, turn left onto rural road 1144, meeting house one-fourth mile on left.

From Rocky Mount to West Edgecombe School take N.C. 43 South approximately two miles from city, turn left directly in front of West Edgecombe Baptist Church onto rural road 1224, school will be two-tenths mile on right.

Those coming through Pinetops travel N.C. 43 North approximately twelve miles, turn right directly in front of West Edgecombe Baptist Church on rural road 1224. School is two-tenths mile on right.

Anyone arriving in Rocky Mount needing assistance may call J. Carroll Williams, 442-8886; Marvin Joyner, 446-7543 or Elder Henry Jones, 446-7370.

All who have an interest in our meeting are cordially invited to come and be with us.

(Elder) W. W. Stallings, Clerk

BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Pittmans Grove, the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in November, 1980. (November 29 and 30)

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

SULPHUR FORK ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred thirty-fifth session of the Sulphur Fork Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Providence Church, on Friday and Saturday before the first Sunday in October. (October 3, 4, 5) Providence Church is located 5 miles south of Mt. Vernon, Texas, on Highway 37 at sign.

All lovers of the truth are welcome.

Elder Loyd Wall, Moderator
Route 1
Bivins, Texas

OBITUARIES

MAMIE WOODRUFF RICKS.

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call from this life our dear Sister Mamie Woodruff Ricks on March 21, 1980. Sister Ricks was 78 years old. She joined the Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church the second weekend in November, 1970. She attended her meetings regularly and loved to be with the brethren, talking of what the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had done for her, and her love for members and friends she met along the way. She was a humble woman and an attentive mother to her children.

She is survived by four sons, all of Rocky Mount, Ishmael; Benjamin W.; Joseph A.; and Glenn; one sister, Mrs. Alma Daughridge, of Rocky Mount, N.C.; seven grandchildren, and 10 great grandchildren.

Her funeral was conducted from Johnson Funeral Home Chapel by her Pastor, Elder D. B. Stokes; where many friends came to pay their respect to one we loved. She was laid to rest in the Family Cemetery. The great display of flowers and those attending gave evidence of her goodness and how

much she was loved. She will be missed not only by her family, but by those of us who loved her in the Spirit of the Lord.

She is at peace resting in the arms of Jesus waiting for the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Resolved: A copy of these resolutions be sent to the family; a copy to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy for the Church records. Done in conference on June 7, 1980.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
Nina Pearson, Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

Since our last report our Heavenly Father has called from this life of sin and sorrow seven of our beloved members.

So be it resolved that we the members of Dan River Church hold in sacred memory our dear beloved ones that have departed this life and have shown by their walk and testimony that they sought that city whose Builder and Maker is God, therefore we bow in humble submission to His Divine will, thanking Him for these gifts which have so enriched our lives and inspired us to press onward to the mark of the prize of the high calling as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We pray that our Heavenly Father will be with the families of each departed member. May His richest blessings ever be with them who so keenly miss their departed, and they grieve not as them that have no hope, but look unto Him who by His grace is able to reconcile them to His eternal will.

The deceased are:

Sister Delia Phillips 10/17/78
Brother James P. Carter 3/3/79
Sister Nannie Vipperman 3/27/79
Sister Viola Walker 4/30/79
Brother Harley C. Woods 10/3/79
Brother Percy M. Strader 10/20/79
Sister Beaulah Weatherford 4/3/80

Be it resolved that a copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, and a copy be retained for Church records.

Written by order of the church at our conference meeting May 24, 1980.

Written by:
Elder D. V. Spangler, Moderator
Brother Boyd Minter, Clerk
Brother Harold Weatherford, Deacon

Stockdale, Texas
August 2, 1975

Dear Brethren and Sisters of the Pleasant Valley Association:

I'm so sorry I can't be with you for this meeting, but I know it is the best for you - I am just a blot on the scene when there. I have been blessed far beyond what I deserve to attend every session since it was first constituted. Please accept this small check and use it as you need it. Remember me in your prayers and come to see me and visit our little church when you can. May the dear Lord bless and keep everyone of you. We are all in His care. now and always.

Lela Culpepper

Note: This is the last letter Sister Culpepper wrote to church people.

SISTER LELA MYRTLE CULPEPPER

Our beloved mother in Israel, Sister Lela Myrtle Culpepper passed away at age of 88 years on October 1, 1975 at the Stockdale Nursing home. Sister Culpepper was born April 6, 1887 at Martindale, Texas to William Lafayette and Martha S. (Dykes) Hawk. Sister Lela married Mathew John Culpepper at her home in Lockhart, Texas on December 19, 1908. He preceded her in death (March 19, 1959). To this union were born nine children of which a daughter, Norma Fay and two sons, Winston A. and Francis G. preceded them in death. The other children were three sons Ira Lee of Pleasanton, Nebraska; Matthew Vernon of San Antonio, Texas; and James Lloyd of Refugion, Texas and three daughters: Mrs. Roy Ermine Meek of Houston, Texas; Mrs. Nina Luker of Pharr, Texas; and Mrs. Malcolm (Joy) Welch of Pharr, Texas. Sister Culpepper had 20 surviving grandchildren, 30 great grandchildren, one brother (Murphy Hawk of Stockdale), three sisters Mrs. V. O. (Edna) Hatcher of Abiline, Texas; Mrs. William H. (Nan) Milligan of Cuero, Texas; and Mrs. Virgie Roberson of Stockdale, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Sister Culpeppers funeral was conducted by her co-pastors Elders W. M. Burkhalter and G. D. Shipman and was buried in the Stockdale City Cemetery beside her husband.

Sister Lela Culpepper joined the Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church at Martindale, Texas in April 1912 and was baptized by the late Elder J. B. Bowden. In March 1921, transferred her membership to the Mt. Olive Church. This dear Sister was a member of the Primitive Baptist church for over 63 years. Sister Lela became clerk of the church in April 1925 and served in this position until her death which was over fifty years. Mt. Olive Church services were held in her home for many of these years.

This lovely sister saw many times the high of Zion when blessed with the Spirit of God and also, saw the gloom of despair when down in the valley but even then trusted only in the great God of Israel. This dear one wrote many obituaries, church letters to the association, and several letters to the *Signs of the Times*. Her experience was published in the *Signs*. Her many kind and thoughtful words and letters has lifted me (G. D. Shipman) from the depth of despair. This mother in Israel entertained many of the Primitive Baptist people in her home which was always open to any wayfaring stranger who believed in Salvation by Grace. Her greatest joy was attending church services and always attended her association except for the last one before her death which she wrote a special letter to the brethren attending the association expressing her grief in not being able to attend. Her heart was very sad when she was no longer able to maintain her home because of the fact she could not entertain the Old School Baptists there.

Sister Culpepper believed in a God of love who had all power in Heaven and on the earth and a God who asked no one for advice. She loved the singing of the Old Baptist Hymns and the preaching of salvation by Grace. How sweet the name of Jesus was to this dear sweet sister. This writer can not express in words what this dear one meant to him and others who knew her. Yes, she has been missed and will continue to be but our loss is her gain. Our hope is to meet her on that great day when Jesus shall come to claim His bride. Yes, she surely believed in the resurrection of the dead and her hope was to be one of them which were given to Jesus in covenant before the world was.

Written by one who loved her,
Elder Gerald D. Shipman

SISTER JOSIE ISABELL PITTS

Sister Josie Isabell Pitts, age 77, passed away Saturday, February 2, 1980, at the Lamar County General Hospital in Vernon, Alabama. Funeral services were held at Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church with burial in the adjoining cemetery. Officiating ministers were Elder Eulie McCool, Elder W. D. Griffin, and Mr. Bob Spiegel.

She was a dear sister and sweet mother. She left four sons and three daughters.

She believed in the only true and living God, the Father, and that God chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world. She believed, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; not according to our own works but according to his purpose and grace which were given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." "Whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified."

Written by her daughter

SISTER

NANNIE BELLE DAVIS PARSON

Sister Nannie Belle Davis Parson died in the Roman Eagle Nursing Home on March 23, 1980, at the age of 101.

She was married to James Allen Parson who died April 4, 1960.

She joined the Danville Primitive Baptist Church the fifth Sunday in September, 1918, and was baptized by Elder J. F. Spangler. She was faithful to the church and attended regularly until she was prevented by ill health. She never lost patience in all of her afflictions. She enjoyed the sweet fellowship of the people from the church, and loved to talk of how good God had been to her. So often she would raise her right hand, look up and say, "I do not pray to die, but I am ready any time it is the Lord's will to call me". I truly feel that she could say, "Come welcome death, I will gladly go with thee".

Her funeral was conducted at Swicegood Funeral Home by her pastor, Elder H. W. Wray, whom she dearly loved. Her body was laid to rest in Highland Burial Park, Danville, Virginia.

Written by one who loved her,
Nettie Rice
Elder H. W. Wray, Moderator

SISTER NELLIE TART

Sister Nellie May Tart was born April 28, 1905, to Jessie Martin Tart and Kizzie Barefoot who lived in Harnett County. She has three sisters living and two brothers who are dead.

On November 9, 1924, she was married to Z. M. (Mac) Tart. To this union was born three daughters, Willa May Tart, Sarah Autry, and Barbara Tart; two sons, Rayvon and Sherwood Tart, and one son is deceased, Robert Leon Tart.

Sister Tart joined Liberty Church in June, 1963. She was a faithful member as long as she was able to go. God called her from our midst on March 19, 1980. Our lost is her eternal gain. Funeral services were conducted in Roses Funeral Chapel by Elder C. D. Turner, Elder T. Allen Johnson, and Mr. Jim Bost. She was laid to rest under a beautiful mound of flowers.

Committee:

Brother James Young
Sister Bessie Hall
Sister Dorothy Barefoot

BROTHER CLYDE BANKS ROGERS

Brother Clyde Banks Rogers, who was born to Cary R. Rogers and Edna Berry Rogers in Person County on July 20, 1900, departed this life on February 25, 1980. He was married to Myrtle Blaylock on January 31, 1932, and to this union were born four children, Curtis, Carl, Richard, and Mrs. Edith Pelmon, all of which survive along with seven grandchildren.

Brother Rogers ran a general merchandise store which caused him to move to Yanceyville, N.C., in Caswell County. He served as County Commissioner for ten years. He was well esteemed in Yanceyville and throughout the counties of Person and Caswell.

Brother Clyde and his wife attended Primitive Baptist Churches for many years and seldom missed a meeting at Moons Creek Primitive Baptist Church. He spoke of the burden he had for so long while talking to the Church, and what he said caused us to feel he was a true believer in salvation by grace and grace alone. Sister Nellie Key, our Pastor's wife, burst into tears, and I believe they were of joy at his coming. He was

received into the church and arrangements were made for his baptism at Greensboro Church pool.

When we gathered for the baptism his wife, Myrtle Rogers, came forth and said she loved the church and its members and desired a home there. She had shown her faith by her works. She had invited the members of Moons Creek Church to her home for meals with her, and for singings. They were both baptized at the same time and always occupied their usual seats in the church until Brother Roger's health failed him and he was unable to attend. He was sick several years, and eventually he had to be put in Evergreen Nursing Home. All that loving hands could do had been done by his wife and children. He enjoyed the members of not only Moons Creek, but other churches visiting him, along with his Pastor, Elder Kenneth Key, who was a frequent visitor. who was a frequent visitor.

Brother Clyde and his wife supported Moons Creek Church, and helped with the cleaning of the church and yard. When we started remodeling, Brother Clyde rode his car soliciting and raising money to help do the job. He was the first one to do any real work towards the remodeling. He was blessed to attend some after the remodeling was completed.

His funeral was preached by his Pastor, Elder Kenneth Key. Two songs were sung. They were "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "How Great Thou Art". Brother Key was blessed to say such beautiful things that were true and comforting to the family. His body was laid to rest beneath a mound of beautiful flowers in a Greensboro cemetery, there to await the resurrection morn.

Written by Ema Sartin

ELDER BENJAMIN H. MARTIN

Whereas, it seemed good in the sight of Almighty God to remove from our midst our dear brother, Elder Ben Martin, and:

Whereas, we desire to manifest our respect for the sweet memory of Brother Martin and our sympathy for his family and loved ones;

We do hereby publish the following record of his life and labors in the ministry and

declare our intention as to the disposition of that record.

Elder Benjamin Harrison Martin was born to Green M. and Martha Shelton Martin on February 24, 1890, near the community of Critz, in Patrick County Virginia. As a very young man he was united in marriage to Mary Susan Hopkins. To their union of 37 years were born six children; Willie H., King E. (who preceded him in death), Harrm M., one infant son who died at birth, Sister Ellen Adams, and Sister Dora Adams.

During the lifetime of Sister Mary Musan Martin, Brother Ben moved to Henry County, Virginia, and settled a few miles from Xassett, where he operated a country store for several years. Sister Martin, after a lengthy illness, was called out of this life on December 28, 1943. Brother Ben was not left comfortless. The kind Providence of God moved in his behalf. In April of 1944 he united in marriage to Sister Dovie Cox of Patrick County. To their union were born two sons: Benjamin F. and Jerry L. Martin.

Early in life Brother Martin was taught of God to know that he was a sinner and that he must look to an omnipotent God for all of his salvation. He received a hope in Christ and a strong impression that he must declare the whole counsel of God among the ranks of Old Baptists, and he joined at Old Spoon Creek Church. Being led about in a way he could not see the outcome of, he obtained a letter of dismission and placed his membership at Liberty Church on the first Saturday in July, 1920. The following month he was given liberty to exercise publicly at his home church, and in November of that year was licensed to preach wheresoever God cast his lot.

Brother Martin was large in stature, little in his feelings, and blessed with a tremendous speaking voice. He strived diligently to "make his calling and election sure", and he spoke boldly and plainly "The Word" of God and admonished his brethren to do likewise. On the first Saturday in October 1923 his qualifications for the full work of the ministry were examined by a presbytery consisting of the following Elders: Lemuel Gilbert, J. G. L. Hash, J. D. Cockram, John Cassell, Samuel Koger, Dan P. Helms, James Creed, and W. M. Conner. Being found qualified he was set apart and

ordained as an elder in the Smith River Association.

In the years that followed Elder Martin traveled far and wide among Old Baptists, preaching the Gospel and "doing the work of an evangelist". He visited churches in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. For brief periods of time he was called to serve various churches as pastor, but he soon gave them up because he felt his calling was to the Lord's people scattered abroad.

During the last several years of his life Brother Martin was afflicted with poor health. The time came when he was no longer able to get out and go to the churches as was his longstanding custom. He was at length confined at home, where he was faithfully attended by his wife, children, and grandchildren. He suffered very little pain, as he confessed on many occasions, but he strongly felt that his earthly frame was "wore out" and he wanted to go home. On February 28, 1980, the God of Glory granted his desire at Patrick Reynolds Hospital at Stuart, Virginia. Truly could it be said of him as it was said of King David - "He served his generation by the will of God and fell on sleep".

By request of his family Brother Martin's funeral was conducted at Center Church on March 2nd by his Pastor, Elder Bennie Clifton, assisted by Elders Thomas Brammer, Leonard Cassell, and Calvert Fulcher. He was laid to rest in the church cemetery to await the second coming of the One he loved and tried to serve with all his house.

Be it now resolved that: We the Primitive Baptist Church of Christ at Liberty, acknowledge the gracious designs of our Heavenly Father in removing from among us our beloved brother and elder, Ben Martin.

Be it further resolved, that we publish a copy of this memorial in our church records; that we give a copy to his companion and each of his children; and that we submit a copy to "Zion's Landmark" and the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Done by request of Liberty Church in conference the 5th day of April, 1980. Read and approved in conference May 3rd, 1980.

Elder Bennie Clifton, Moderator
Elder John Wingfield, Moderator
Clara Freeman, Clerk

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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FAREWELL TO TIME

(Supposed to have been uttered by a dying Christian, at the close of the year 1827.)

Farewell, old Time: ere thou hast reached the morn,
Thy sun shall gild his wings in Capricorn;
Life's narrow, stormy frith I shall pass o'er,
And cast my anchor on the eternal shore,
Where all is dateless, endless, infinite,
And being has no measure but delight!
Farewell thou sun, and yon bright planets,
all

That roll in silent beauty round this ball;
I go, I go to that celestial sphere,
Where Jesus shines through one eternal
year!

Farewell thou earth and all that earth
contains,

Thy graceful hills, green meadows, flowery
plains,

I leave thy wave-worn shores without a sigh,
A Father's mansion house, a Master's joy,
Invite me hence; I unreluctant go
Where pleasure never wear a fringe of wo!
Farewell to gold and silver,--wealth adieu;

Ye fly from others but I fly from you.

Farewell to honour,--I'm enrolled above,
My plume, my crest, is love redeeming love;
By his dear hand that bled, I read my name
Wrote 'mong the living in Jerusalem.

Farewell to houses, gardens, orchards,
lands,

I have a house above not made with hands;
A spotless mansion, built of precious stone,
A crown of living light, a Jasper throne.
Farewell to knowledge, first of earthly

things,

I go to drink it where the fountain springs
Clear from its source, pellucid and refined,
The dregs of muddy error left behind.

Farewell to death, I shall forever bloom
In youth's fresh loveliness beyond the tomb.
Farewell to sickness, all the aches and pains,
That crowd my vitals and consume my reins;

No hectic flush shall on my cheeks disclose
The transient blushings of a dying rose;
This aching, burning heart shall throb no
more,

And these sharp stitches in my side be o'er.
Farewell to friends, I leave the social ring,
And fly to Eden on a seraph's wing;
I soon shall join the ranks of the "first-born"
Whose robes of light and crowns of life
adorn.

Farewell, thou dearest of my joys on earth,
The church of God, my place of second birth,
Of second life and nameless comforts too:
More dear than gold, more sweet than vernal
dew

Have been thy verdant pastures to my soul,
Where flowers appear, and dreams of
pleasure roll.

I go to see the saints in beauty bright,
The saints embowered in love, enshrined in
light.

I go to see the Lamb upon the throne,
And that dear land, the beatific zone;
That land of sweet delight and calm repose,
Of Gilead's balm and Sharon's fragrant
rose;

There ceaseless bliss, and sun-bright know-
ledge reign,

No fiends to vex me, and no vice to stain,
But friendship formed by love,—oh, angel
powers!

Receive a weary pilgrim to your bowers!
Oh! let me listen to your golden lyres,
And burn, like you, in love's seraphic fires;
Adore the Lamb, in each soul-thrilling
chaunt,

Your ardours feel, and still for greater pant,
The Weakest, meanest, poorest sinner take
To your sweet fellowship for Jesus' sake!
Farewell to books, and all polemic strife,
My name is written in the "Book of Life".
I blush for holy men, and haste above
To see a pure society of love,

Through which the mystic dove pours holy
oil,

While seven-fold heaven beams from
Immanuel's smile.

Farewell to party and each various ism;
My soul, anointed with the sacred chrism,
Has found a clime untinged with party gall,
Where all are one, and One is all in all!
Farewell, ye demons, who my ruin plot,
And vex my soul as Sodom, righteous Lot:
Blush, fiends of hell! through my Redeemer's
care

I've 'scaped your fangs, as birds the fowler's
snare.

I soon shall sing on yon celestial shore,
I'm safe! I'm safe! I'm safe for evermore!
Farewell, my dearest children, fare ye well;
What pangs I feel to leave you, none can tell;
But I have drank the bitter parting cup,
And now, thank God, can freely give you up:
Love, fear, adore, and serve the Lord alone!
Soon we shall meet where farewells are not
known.

Farewell my dearest wife! I'm loth to part
With thee, the dear companion of my care
And bliss, when I had any bliss to share;
So round my heart with many a fibre bound,
To give thee up inflicts the deepest wound;
But Jesus calls me to his blest abode,
I go the first, but thou art on the road:
"Tis but a moment, love, repress thy tears,
And then we're married through the eternal
years.

Well now the bitterness of death is past,
That pang of souls untwisting was the last,
The cast is clear, my mortal race is run;
Angels, bring near the chariot, all is won;
Step in my soul—I go with all my heart,
"Now let thy servant, Lord, in peace depart".

Joshua Marsden

Signs of the Times

January 15, 1836

708 N. Casa Grande Circle
Duncanville, Texas 75116

OF WALLS, WATCHMEN, AND WOLVES

*"In that day shall this song be sung
in the land of Judah; We have a
strong city; salvation will God
appoint for walls and bulwarks."*

Isaiah 26:1

In the Old Testament scriptures the church was typified by a flock, a vineyard, and the city of Zion, each of which was protected by walls. The sheepfold was a walled pen, an enclosure into which the shepherd brought his flock for shelter each night; and the vineyards were walled to protect the vines and their fruit from both men and animals who would harm them. At this time, however, it is the city of Zion which attracts our attention; Zion, beautiful

for situation, the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great King, surrounded with walls and bulwarks. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

Nowadays, the walls of our homes and buildings are barriers which form a place of retreat and protection for those within. Protecting us from cold, heat, dust, rain, wind, and snow, as well as from poisonous insects and snakes and beasts of prey, walls form a refuge from thieves and other criminals who would do violence to others. Much of what the walls of our homes do for us now, the walls of ancient towns and cities did for their entire citizenry in the days of antiquity. And what the walls did for people then, and what they do now, in a natural sense, shows forth what God's walls of salvation do for His people in a spiritual way in every age.

The stone walls around Zion were magnificently high and perhaps fifteen or more feet thick in places, with battlements and towers in strategic locations. The only means of entering or leaving the city were the gates through these walls--heavy wood and metal gates which were shut and locked each night and whenever danger threatened. At each gate watchmen were stationed to guard against an enemy's approaching under the cover of darkness. The watchmen were not only to guard against foes who would come from the outside seeking entry to the city at night, but also they were required to guard against any enemy who, disguised as a citizen or a traveller, might have entered the city during the day with the intention of unlocking the gate at night so that alien armies might enter while the citizens were asleep.

The Lord said, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence..." (Isaiah 62:6). He also said in Isaiah 52:8, "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall

they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

Thus, in addition to the watchmen stationed by the gates of the city, other watchmen patrolled the tops of the walls where, from far above, they could look down and clearly see any movement or activity either inside or outside the city walls. In times of peace these men would cry out to each other at regular intervals that all was well, each one passing the good word along. Far from being a disturbance to a sleeping city, these familiar voices were comforting and reassuring to the drowsy people who knew that faithful men were guarding them, watching protectively over their city both day and night.

Then, beyond the walls, a network of other watchmen were stationed on vantage points from which they could see approaching danger throughout the entire countryside and sound the alarm to their neighbors, to the other watchmen, and to the residents of the city. In times of peace and safety these men, too, would regularly sound the good news that all was well; but they were to spread the alarm whenever they saw any danger approaching or when they heard the warning cry of another watchman. In biblical days there was such an effective network of these watchmen that it was impossible for a person or a group to approach the city from any direction without their being observed along their entire route by a series of watchmen who constantly monitored and reported their exact location and progress. And, where the view of one watchman ended--whether from sheer distance or from its being blocked by a forest, a mountain, or some other obstacle--another watchman was placed to supplement the entire system. No one man could see everything, but together all of the watchmen could see the entire countryside. This is what is meant by their seeing "eye to eye"; where the eye of one man failed, the eye of another man took over.

These Old Testament watchmen typify the New Testament gospel ministry, the overseers of the flock of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. From their vantage-points upon the walls of salvation, these overseers whom the Holy Spirit has called and qualified are enabled to be watchmen over the spiritual city, the church. God said, "Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence..." This symbolism goes beyond the secular watchmen of olden days who either reported that "all is well" or sounded the alarm at the approach of danger. The watchmen on Zion's walls, nowadays and in every age, are those who make mention of the Lord, whose desire is to say continually: "My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day...My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long..." (Psalm 71:15, 24).

In relation to the walls, people could be either inside the city, surrounded and protected by the walls; outside the city and its walls; or upon the tops of the walls. Since these latter men upon the walls were watchmen of and for the city, they would be counted as being within the city's walls. Therefore, there are two locations of the people to be considered: those within the city and those outside it.

The inhabitants or citizens of the city were those who permanently lived there (typifying the member-residents of the New Testament church, those who have professed that their only refuge is within the walls of the salvation provided in and by Christ Jesus), and their guests--those travellers who temporarily sought the refuge, protection and safety of the city's walls.

If the old city of Zion typifies the church, then the enemies of Zion typify the enemies of the church. It must be clearly realized that, whether we are speaking of the enemies of Zion or those of the church, there are always two basic types of foes who use two entirely

different methods of attack. The external enemies of Zion were those invading armies of aliens who through open warfare sought to destroy the city and its inhabitants. Using any means available, the attackers would attempt to destroy the walls, or scale and cross them, in order to kill or capture the inhabitants of the walled and fortified city. The walls that successfully withstood the alien attacks were truly the city's salvation in a natural sense, by the protecting providence of God.

On the other hand, the internal enemies of Zion were those who, having gained access to the city and having been accepted by its people, would subvert and destroy the city, its government and its people from within. Of the two types of enemies, external and internal, the internal foes were the more devastating if successful; for, as long as the walls withstood the attacks of the external enemies, the people inside were safe and were only drawn closer together in bonds of friendship and love as they stood against a common enemy; but in times of peace when no outside attack was threatened, the internal enemies would cause strife, envy, jealousy, dissention, and treason. Whereas an external war unites people against a common foe, an internal strife will divide the same people by subtle whispering campaigns. "...a whisperer separateth chief friends...he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends (Prov. 16:28, 17:9)."

Applying the strategical truths of the old walled cities to the experience of the church, it is clear that spiritual enemies also attack it from without and from within.

Paul, in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, warned them of these two groups of adversaries. In Acts 20:29 he spoke of the external attacks which would come: "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." In Acts 20:30 he then spoke of the internal attacks: "Also of

your own selves (that is, from among the elders themselves) shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

The former, the grievous wolves, typify the persecutors who would literally destroy, maim and kill the followers of Christ, doing violence to them with the same ferociousness of a wolf pack descending upon helpless sheep. No deception is here involved; war to the death is declared by those who, in the spirit of Saul of Tarsus, would hale men and women into prison, persecuting them even to the death (Acts 9:1f, 22; 26:9ff). History has only demonstrated the truth of Paul's prophecy: the attacks upon the early church by the fanatical pharisees; Herod's killing James with the sword; the banishment of the apostle John by the emperor Domitian to the Isle of Patmos; the ten waves of persecution lasting almost 250 years under the Roman emperors Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcas, Aurelius Antonius, Severus, Decius, Maximus, Valerian, Aurelian, and Cioletian; the terrors of the Dark Ages; these all demonstrate the horrible hatred of Satan and his followers against Christ and His people, a hatred which by divine inspiration is typified by the fierce destruction of wolves against a helpless flock of sheep.

Another group of wolves of which Paul speaks is every bit as destructive and dangerous to the peace of Zion as the first group. They are those who would arise from among the elders themselves. Jesus Christ Himself warned of them, stating that one of the chief dangers would be their appearing to be prophets while actually being false prophets. They "come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (Matt. 7:15)," He said, indicating that although their approach is different from those who openly attack and destroy, their inward natures are identical. By representing themselves as prophets, they gain entry and

acceptance inside the walls of the church because outwardly they appear to be Christ's sheep. But this, their temporarily being accepted within a local church, does not mean that they are surrounded by the true salvation of God in the spiritual sense, any more than a wolf would receive the shepherd's blessing by loping about inside the sheepfold for a few minutes. This merely signifies that from time to time in God's wisdom and providence He has a purpose and reason for wolves to attack or to infiltrate His sheepfold. Of this there will be more said, later. For now, it possibly can be said that Christ and His apostles warned more about these latter wolves than about the former kind. Christ said, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

Peter and Paul likened Satan, as chief over these two bands of wolves, to two other figures: As chief over the ravening, grievous wolves, Peter said that Satan, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Paul, showing Satan as the chief of the wolves in sheep's clothing, said, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.

When Paul described to the Ephesian elders those who would arise from among them, he said they would be "speaking perverse things." The very word "arise" indicates that such men would be elevating themselves, attempting to appear higher than their brethren. Their method of speaking

perverse things is something which would not be expected of a true minister of righteousness. This being so, the perverse things they say and do readily cause such destroyers of the flock to standout in the sight of discerning spiritual eyes. By calling to the church's attention this one characteristic of **perverteness**, Paul at once also gives a chief indication of how the wolves would be made manifest to God's children.

The word "perverse," then, sets forth the characteristics of those infiltrators of the Kingdom. In fact, that single word summarizes a remarkable set of related words which describe the behavior and attitude of those who are intent upon drawing any disciples after themselves. "Perverse," according to Webster, means "turned away from what is right, or good; obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable or accepted; wrongheaded; arising from or indicative of stubbornness or obstinacy; marked by peevishness or petulance; cranky, contrary."

"Obstinacy," or "obstinate," used in defining "perverse" means, "pertinaciously adhering to an opinion, purpose or course in spite of reason, arguments or persuasion; not easily subdued, remedied or removed."

"Peevishness" is "querulous in temperament or mood; fretful. Perversely obstinate; marked by ill temper."

"Petulant" means "insolent or rude in speech or behavior. Characterized by temporary or capricious ill humor."

"Capricious," finally, means "apt to change suddenly or unpredictably; inconstant."

Paul says these who rise up from among "your own selves" in such perverse behavior do so with one purpose uppermost in mind: to draw away disciples after themselves. When a man draws away disciples after himself, a sect or party (in the political sense) is formed. Where a (political) party exists, whether in the church or not, there is always a partisan spirit or attitude

among the followers of such a man. Sectarianism in the local church is not so much the denominating of groups such as "Baptists," "Methodists," and "Lutherans," as it is a rivalry within a local church itself, and the "I am of Paul," "I am of Apollos," "I am of Cephas," and "I am of Christ" variations of groups within a church or an association, which would pit ministers and brethren against one another, if possible.

Of exactly such a spirit was Diotrephes, mentioned in III John, who loved to have the preeminence among the church to the extent that he would not receive the apostle John. John said Diotrephes was so taken up with this love of preeminence that we was "prating" (talking long and idly; babbling) against the apostle with malicious words. Not content with this, Diotrephes would not receive visiting brethren, and, forbidding those who would, he cast them out of the church (excluded them). He could scarcely have done so, had he not had the support of a sizeable following.

To see this trend and to warn against it whenever and wherever it manifests itself is part of the responsibility of the watchmen upon Zion's walls.

When, in the context of the doctrine of Christ and His church one is perverse or opposed to that which is right, it will be found that he is opposed to one or more facets of the gospel of our Lord. In the early church several other men besides Diotrephes were named in connection with doctrinal error and factionalism within congregations: Alexander, Phy�ellus, Hermogenes, Philetus and Hymenaeus--these last two said that the resurrection was past already and thereby overthrew the faith of some. Paul, the good watchman that he was (by God's grace--I Cor. 15:10), plainly and publicly identified these men and their erroneous teachings. He made the point that doctrinal errors (heresies) are evil communications, and evil communications corrupt good manners

(behavior). Specifically, he cited the error of non-resurrectionism in I Cor. 15:32f. There Paul exposes the heresy that says the dead rise not, and the behavioral error to which it leads--that of saying, "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." In modern language this is exactly the world's attitude which says, "In this life you only go around once, so you should grab for all the 'gusto' you can." Paul says this attitude corrupts good behavior.

Some people ask, why doesn't God do something about false prophets if He can? The atheistic attitude is, "Surely, if there is a God, he could do better if he would," and the Arminian says, "Surely, God would do better if he could." Both attitudes are the product of depraved human reasoning which assumes it could counsel the God of Israel and instruct the Holy One in righteousness. Few people know that whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He, in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge (I Cor. 8:6f)."

Actually, God is doing something about it all. He directs the wolves' steps no less than He leads His sheep in paths of righteousness for His name's sake; if a false prophet is a man that walketh, then he is not exempted from Jer. 10:23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

Earlier, it was said that God has a purpose in wolves attacking or infiltrating His sheepfold. In I Cor. 11:19 Paul explains: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." God's purpose is to use the wolf to purge His church. When the wolf in sheep's clothing introduces his heresy, the false professors rally around his false doctrine, while God's children are made increasingly

concerned and wary, and opposed to it. If at this point God raises up a watchman to cry out against the wolf, often times that false prophet will try to convince the sheep that the watchman is really the wolf.

The net result is, in God's providence, a separation must take place, for, can two walk together, except they be agreed? The separation brings about the recognition by the brethren abroad of "they which are approved," that is, those who are identified with scriptural doctrine and practice, because they have been made manifest through their ordeal. And, through the strong contrast brought about by truth and error coming together to do battle, also made manifest are the false prophet, the false doctrine, and the false professors who fulfill Acts 20:30 by becoming disciples of those men who arose speaking of perverse things: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be manifest that they were not all of us (I John 2:19)."

Nothing herein is meant to imply that any specific individual who has gone out from among the Old Baptists is definitely a false prophet or a false professor of Christ. No one should pass judgment upon individuals in such cases. In the heat of controversy some of God's children may be confused temporarily, and some may follow error for a time. Two cases in point are Peter, whom Paul publicly rebuked at Antioch, because he was blameworthy (Gal. 2:11), and Barnabas, who "also was carried away with their dissimulation (Gal. 2:13)." It is the glory of the Lord Himself to seek His straying sheep in such cases and bring them back. I John 2:19, cited above, leaves room for hope when John at first says, "they were not of us," but later modifies this by saying, "...they were not all of us." This allows for some of those who "went out from us" to yet be "of us."

External persecutions only draw the Lord's people closer to one another, strengthening and unifying them while driving false professors away. The heresies which arise betimes also serve God's purpose in manifesting His approved ones while leading away those to whom God sends strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thess. 2:11f). Hereby the Christians' confidence is vindicated that the phrase, "all things," in Romans 8:28 means all things, including wolves, persecutions, false doctrine, heresies and divisions--they all work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Paul says, "There must be heresies." "Must" is a word of necessity, and the doctrine of necessity is the doctrine of the absolute predestination of all things.

To deny these truths is to deny (1) that God has a purpose in the existence and activities of the wolves and the false professors; (2) that they are as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed (II Peter 2:12); (3) that they were before of old ordained to this condemnation (Jude 4); (4) that they were appointed to being disobedient (I Peter 2:8), and (5) that they will keep their appointments in what God says is due time (Deut. 32:35); (6) that, as God raised up Pharaoh for the express purpose of showing His power in him, and that His name might be declared throughout all the earth, even so God raises up those twin harlot daughters of Babylon--the heresies of Arminianism and conditionalism--to position them so that Christ Jesus may manifestly tread them under His feet, and that He will indeed do so when it serves His purpose; (7) that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, gathering His wheat unto the garner but burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:12); (8) that He doeth

according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What does thou? (Dan. 4:35); (9) that He has any purpose in placing His watchmen upon the walls of salvation as it hath pleased Him (I Cor. 12:18); (10) indeed, it would be a denial that God had any purpose in the walls of salvation in the first place.

Now, one additional thought before closing: Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain (Psalm 127:1). Salvation is of the Lord; He can keep the city without the watchmen, but the watchmen cannot keep the city without the Lord. If He does not bless them with seeing eyes, hearing ears, understanding hearts and perceptive spirits, then all of their efforts are altogether vanity.

In summary, God Himself calls, qualifies and places His watchmen throughout His spiritual kingdom. "With the voice together shall they sing" the good news of the gospel, that all is well. The church, like a walled city, may be attacked from without or from within; God's watchmen guard against both types of attack. God Himself sits, the sovereign in control, not only of the church, but His kingdom ruleth over all. Surely the wrath of man shall praise Him; the remainder of wrath He restrains as it pleases him. He controls and restrains His enemies including Satan himself, in such a way that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be charged with folly or blamed for the sins of the creature.

The walls of salvation not only protect the people they surround, but they support and uphold the watchmen, furnishing a vantage point from which they can better see approaching danger and from which they can better warn the people under their care. Every wall has a foundation, but the walls of salvation are themselves the foundation and support of these watchmen! Who could hope for a better foundation than

salvation in Christ Jesus?

Part of the eternal bliss of God's children will be: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise (Isaiah 60:18)."

In this present evil age may it be our happy lot to anticipate that day, and to experience Psalm 48:12-14: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death."

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

EXPERIENCE

Eden, N.C.

Dear Elder Williams,

I would like to tell some of my travels which I hope is of the Lord. Back in my late twenties, these awful feelings came over me that I was an outcast, different from anyone else. No one liked me because I could see myself as a terrible wretch. I didn't want to be left alone, but yet I was afraid to go anywhere. I was so afraid everytime I got in a car. I just knew I would be killed and hell would be my home. I knew I was the biggest sinner in the whole world. I tried to pray for months for this awful burden to be lifted. It kept getting harder and harder to bear. I can't remember dates like some, but it went on for a good while.

My neighbors asked me to go to their revival at a little Missionary Baptist Church. I went, hoping to get some relief. I even went to the alter for prayer, but no relief came. I don't mean to offend these people. We only believe what the Lord teaches us. Nevertheless, to hear them talk, they were so good and sinless, and I among them so full of sin that I wanted to slip out before the meeting was over. They preached drinking,

smoking, or using tobacco in any way, or cosmetics were the only sins. The only thing I did that they called sin was use make-up. I stopped using it, hoping to feel better, but nothing I had done helped. My sins were forever before me. I knew the Lord couldn't love such a sinner as I.

I could feel the Lord aiming an arrow to shoot me down, so I could go to my doom, which was hell. No one can ever know what trouble I went through until they travel the same road.

One night while lying in bed burdened over sin and asking the Lord, "What can I do?", a great light came into the room and hovered around me. That was the brightest and most beautiful light I have ever seen. If not deceived, God showed me then how blind and helpless I was. A voice spoke to me and said, "You cannot save yourself". I wish I had words to tell what a wonderful peace came in my heart knowing God is the Saviour. My works were over. It is all in God's hand. I had a peaceful sleep that night. The next morning everything was so beautiful. It seemed like everything was praising God. I couldn't go back to my neighbors' church anymore, where they were giving man more power than God.

My neighbors told me that I would never be anything but an "Old Hardshell". One told me Rosa Stultz is a "Hardshell". (She is Sister Rosa Cox, now.) Oh! how I yearned to talk with her, but never could when I was with her. The time had not come. There is a time and a purpose for all things.

My Mother told me they were coming by for me to go with them to Dan River Church, which my neighbors called "Old Hardshells". I didn't care what people said, I rejoiced in having a way there. I kept my feelings to myself. As we entered the church door the hymn, "Rejoice, the Lord is King" was being sung. If not deceived, I was really rejoicing. It seemed like I floated into my seat. I don't have words to tell what that song

means to me. I knew He was King of Kings and Lord of Lords. My heart was so overflowing I didn't know what was preached, but I thought that was the most wonderful place I had ever been. I knew that was the Church I wanted for a home. People told me, "You have to tell an experience to be a member of the Primitive Baptist Church", so that was the end for me as I could tell nothing in which they would receive me into fellowship with them. I begged the Lord to teach me, and show me the way for I wanted to be with them in Dan River Church more than anything in this world.

As time went by, my sister passed away, and we all missed her so much. One night I had a dream after her death. I was walking down this narrow path in a large field and came upon this beautiful mansion. Someone was singing inside in the most beautiful voice I had ever heard. I went inside to see who was singing. There was a huge crowd inside and my sister, who had passed away was above everyone, and she was dressed in a garment white as snow. I thought she was an angel. She was the one who was singing those beautiful hymns. I tried to go to her but couldn't because of so many people.

A few months later I had the same dream again. There was my sister again in this mansion as an angel, dressed in white, singing hymns. I tried to go to her again but couldn't. I was so cast down for fear I was lost, for I knew the devil's people could not be with the angels. I was in so much trouble I thought I would die. A voice spoke and said, "Take this to Elder Spangler". I asked the question, "How? I never see him?" The voice again said, "Write him a letter". I did just that. He and Brother Gold Minter came to see me. I told them some of the things I hoped the Lord has done for me. When they left Elder Spangler said, "I believe there is something for you." But I felt as they went out the door that they shook the very dust from their feet.

I started going to all the meetings I could at Reidsville and Dan River Church. The people were so good to me. I had lots of different ways when they found out I wanted to go. I thought that they were very dear people, and they still are to me. I wanted so bad to ask them for a home, but I knew they wouldn't have such as I.

I was at the Reidsville meeting one Sunday and while Elder Spangler was speaking I thought I would smother to death if I couldn't go. I had to leave cast down. Elder Spangler, after the meeting, asked how I was. I wanted to pour out my heart to him so bad, but all I could say was that I was alright. I believe we have so long to travel in the wilderness like the Children of Israel.

Dan River Church was having a baptizing one meeting. I just knew before I left home I would be baptized, so I carried my clothes, but couldn't say anything to those dear people. The burden was so heavy. I said, "Lord, how long? Or will you ever bless me to have a home with them."

In June of 1959 at Dan River meeting Elder Spangler announced an open door. I don't know what happened, but when I came to myself I was almost at the pulpit. I couldn't say much but they received me. I love the people in Dan River Church. It has been the best home I have ever had. I wish I had words to tell them how much they have meant to me over the years.

In sweet fellowship,
Ruby McGuire

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, naturally 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 chosen 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,
Graydon R. Smith
Minden, LA. 71055

Chestertown, Maryland
EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER

Dearest Ones:

This has been such a lovely day, and I've thought of you all, down on the Shore, so much, knowing that you have met together in song and worship on this day, and long to be with you more often.

A few days ago I felt to sit down and read more in my Bible than usual and the expression "It came to pass" caught my eye. I pursued it further. When we really stop and think of life, we see this great truth, "It came to pass!"

Even the joys of life come to pass. All the miseries of life come to pass. All the heartaches, troubles, wars, the crime - all come to pass. Our children are born, grow up into men and women, and "It came to pass". I began to think of some of the happenings in my own life, that I worried about, and thought I would never get over. Now I look back and I realize, "They came to pass". Some of the things we thought were so terribly

important, and now are not important at all. "They came to pass". And do you know what I began to understand better? I need to learn how to enjoy what I have, while I can still enjoy them, because all the pleasures of life will eventually "Come to pass". And I want to always remember, when I feel burdened or without needful strength, and things look dark, well, nothing can stay. "This too will pass". He will give me a new day, with a new hope, a new strength, and when I can really believe, "It came to pass", then I really believe all my troubles will fade away. "It came to pass". I believe Paul used that expression in Acts 27:44, and it is mentioned first in Exodus 12:41. I am sure it is found far more times than that, but these verses gave me plenty of food for thought.

Another period of feasting I enjoyed was upon the many times our Lord came to His disciples with the words, "Peace" and "Fear not, it is I". What a comfort that is to a believer, to hear, in our hearts, the echo of those words, when we are being bothered by worldly doubts and fears!

The heart is filled with joy when we find ourselves forever free from all this, and in the very nature of things our soul finds rest. And with such a God, who is at the same time a Father, there is no room for anything but rest. That rest can only be found in peace with God, in Christ. I know, and I am glad I do know.

There have been so many times in the past when all sorts of trials and sicknesses seemed to overcome me, and I did not have the strength to pray, except deep within, that I wondered if God could really read my very soul and know how much I needed His strength and healing. But I knew others prayed long and often, and sincerely and I knew God heard and answered prayer. I knew and understood that He was putting me through another testing period and I did not want to come out of it in any way except giving Him all praise and glory.

He has blessed me with grace to say, "Thy grace is sufficient for me" and to be reconciled to His will in all things. Praise His Holy Name. I recognize and respect the limitations He has given me, and I am strengthened in so many, many ways. I can only sing praises.

God be with and bless you all. I long to see you. I do love you all so much for Christ's sake.

Ruth Lucht

A REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE

In the town where I resided for many years, there lived a married woman who had for thirty-three years made herself singular by her antipathy to religion. Her husband was naturally of a quiet and easy temper, and strove to his utmost to live in peace. He was a professor of religion and a member of our church. His conduct gave general satisfaction, not only to all his Christian friends, but to the neighbours who had no acquaintance with religion.

His wife was quite the opposite. She was naturally of a violent and most unhappy temper; and this had been increased by an education which had prejudiced her to the highest possible degree against religion. Her aversion was so great that the husband, after many years striving to endure his hard lot, found his patience quite exhausted; and seeing no possibility of happiness at home, he found means, unknown to her, to leave his country.

After he had spent some time from her, he began to reflect on his conduct, and thought he had fled from that cross which God in his providence has called him to bear. He therefore resolved to return, though he had not the least prospect of spending his days any more agreeably to himself at home.

On his return he found he was not mistaken, for she soon made him experience that her temper was as intolerable as ever; but being convinced it

was his duty to bear all, he remained firm, and determined to endure those difficulties to which God in his providence had called him. For many years the troubles she raised in the family, through her implacable hatred to religion, were repeatedly the subject of remark among the surrounding families.

After they had been married thirty-three years, she, unknown to any person, resolved that she would at some time hear what it was that made her husband for so many years endure so patiently such unparalleled persecution as she had by her conduct made him experience. Accordingly she determined to set out from her home one Sabbath evening, without dressing herself in her best clothes, that none in the house should suspect her intention, but suppose that she was going, in her idle and wicked manner, to spend an hour with some of her old companions in the neighbourhood.

When she arrived at the meeting house, she soon spied a dark corner, in which she was persuaded she could hear and not be noticed by any of the constant hearers. In this respect she obtained all her wish, for not one of the hearers knew of her being there; and as for her husband, he ever imagined he should ever see the day that his persecuting wife would so much as hear one gospel sermon. She said not a word for some time of her visit to the meeting house, though an arrow had been shot so deep into her soul, that all the art and violence of her temper could not extract it. He that guided the arrow which wounded Ahab, sent an arrow of conviction into such an unerring manner, that it sank deeper and deeper every day.

The next public sermon, who should be there--and that not clandestinely, but openly--but this poor trembling sinner, under the most distressing apprehension that all was over with her? And as she knew she had not only exceeded the

whole town for rage and enmity against the gospel, (as she thought,) but the whole country, she could not prevent herself from drawing the most dreadful conclusions, namely, that her punishment in hell would as far exceed that of others as her sins had rendered her notorious in this world.

Under this intolerable pressure of spirit she resolved that, while God spared her life, she would neglect no means, either public or private. The husband looked on this unexpected change with both hope and fear. He now had a companion with him in public worship and at every prayer meeting; and her distress was so great, that though the eyes of great numbers were looking on her with astonishment and wonder, nothing had weight enough to hinder her attention to the word. She now heard for eternity; this swallowed up every other consideration.

When I had observed her for some time to attend so very constantly, I spoke to her at a private meeting, and intimated both my pleasure and surprise to see her there, and I asked her the reason. She said little, but repeated the words of David: "Is there not a cause?"

As her understanding opened to take in the nature of divine things, and to see more and more of their everlasting importance, her spirits were the more depressed, so that in about twenty weeks' time her natural frame was so much exhausted as to bring on a nervous fever, in which state she was for a short time confined to her bed.

At last she was brought so low that the person who attended her thought she could not continue alive many hours; accordingly her nurse sent in great haste to the warehouse, requesting her husband to come home immediately and take leave of his wife, desiring the messenger to inform him that she was dying. He hastened from the warehouse stricken as with a thunderbolt, dreading the idea of

finding his wife on the borders of eternity in such a gloomy state of mind. But it pleased God, who has promised that the spirit shall not fail before him and the souls that he has made, and who understands to a moment how to time those great gifts of his, just about the time of his arrival in the room, to turn her extreme sorrow into as high a degree of joy. This joy was as much superior to what many of God's people are favoured with, as the terror and darkness she had endured had exceeded those of most who have real experience. Several friends also, having been called in, were witnesses to a house gloomy beyond description one hour, and the next like the borders of the heavenly world.

No sooner had she experienced this unexpected change than she sent to my house, requesting my immediate attendance, and being overjoyed with what I heard had taken place, I hastened to share with her and my friends the pleasure. As I entered the room I was struck instantly with a complexion that I formerly beheld with pain, on account of her distress and perpetual depression of spirits; but which I now saw to be like heaven itself; every feature of the face indicated in the strongest manner the feeling and joy of her heart.

After a few words had passed, expressing her pleasure in seeing me, she said in a peculiar tone, quoting the first two verse of the twelfth chapter of Isaiah, "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." After saying things of these words as extraordinary as her joys, pointing with her finger to her husband, who was standing on the other side of the bed, his heart running over with joy--"There" said she, "is a good husband, whom I have abused for

thirty years. When he had come home from the house of God, or from a prayer meeting, I have abused him beyond anything I ever heard of in the whole world. After making him fly to bed for a shelter of my envenomed tongue, which was in reality set on fire of hell, by the time he had well laid himself down in bed, I have rushed into the room with all the vengeance and wrath with which human nature is capable of being possessed; and being, I am fully persuaded, taught by the devil how to plague him, I did that with my tongue which I fully believe was never done by any other wicked woman since God created the heavens and the earth. As he lay on one side", she added, "I have sworn in his ear, when the enmity of my heart so far exceeded the strength of my animal frame, that I have frequently fainted in the horrid exercise; and generally when I was so weak that I was contrained to give over, I frequently spoke these words, with an awful tone: 'I know I am going to hell, and I will not go there for a small sin.' This", she added, "I have done repeatedly, sometimes until two, and sometimes until three in the morning. Did you ever hear of any person under heaven manifesting such enmity against God and his people?"

After speaking some time she said, "I am now fully convinced that I see something of this wonderful mystery, and why such a God-provoking sinner should be spared for so many years, and suffered to run on in such an awful manner. God designed to manifest such riches of his grace in me as I think have not been manifested in any other monument of his mercy for centuries. I am now", she added, "fifty-three years of age, and do think there has not any arrived in heaven for many ages in whom infinite and free love will be so glorified as in me."

After speaking many things which surprised all present, she said, "None of you will ever see me have the least doubt of my state to my dying day." I was

persuaded in my own mind I should see her soon convinced of this mistake, but knew it was not proper to speak one word to her at that time.

She soon recovered, and was restored to her usual health; and it might be said of her, that for seven years she ran in the ways of the Lord with unabating zeal. Her husband, however, after this change was made in her, was not so diligent in the ways of God as before. She had many fears that, after all he had suffered for religion, it should be proved at last he was a castaway.

After having walked in the ways of the Lord about seven years, it pleased God to call her to that state of happiness which she now enjoys above. She bore a tedious and painful illness with patience and fortitude. The last time I saw her was some days before her death. After speaking for some time in the most animating manner of the immutable love and kindness of God, which she had experienced for seven years, she said to me, "You have been witness to those great trials with which it has pleased God to exercise me and try my faith; and you remember how I told you on that remarkable day of my deliverance from that dreadful guilt and horror of mind which had brought me to the very gates of the grave, that I should never doubt of the love of God to my soul to my dying day; and I now tell you, though you know how greatly I have been tried by a variety of things, that I have never been left to doubt one single moment."

I do not remember ever to have either read or heard anything like this from any other person; all I have been acquainted with have been frequently exercised with doubts and fears. But as her conversion was remarkable, so were the dealings of God with her. She at the same time told me she knew that such a day, mentioning the day, was to be the day when her corpse was to be interred, and desired me to promise her that I would walk before her coffin up the churchyard on that day. I told her, if I

was well, and that should be the day, I would be sure to be there. She said, "I want you to give me your promise, that on that day you will walk before my corpse". She was in great pain when she spoke to me; and some of her last words to me were, "Now I am going to appear, as I told you, one of the greatest monuments of mercy that surround the throne above." She was buried on the day she mentioned to me.

Selected from the "Gospel Standard" 1846

Richmond, Virginia

My dear brethren,

I have enjoyed many meetings and I think of how I go my way rejoicing in the good news and seldom tell you that I enjoyed what you were blessed to say. The dear Lord willing, I would like to say a few words to you. Our fifth Sunday meeting was so good. I thank the dear Lord for His blessings but I think it will be all right to say to you that I enjoyed the good news and I hope the dear Lord will continue His blessings upon us all.

Elder Tench, I know you were very uncomfortable on Sunday and hope you will soon feel much better. You had to leave before the meeting closed and I was sorry you did not hear Elder Spangler say a few more words about the question you asked him. He quoted from John I, and from Hebrews I, speaking of our manner of communicating with one another by "words" and the only way of communication that we have with God is by the Word. I wish so much that I had ability to remember more of the good news I hear. I love to hear the brethren talk one with the other about the Scriptures. I'm not blessed to read and understand the Scriptures but I have read both of these chapters and do read texts that I hear one expound. I hope the dear Lord will bless you with answers to your questions.

Elder Spangler, last August, after learning that I would have to enter the hospital for doctors to determine whether I had cancer, I wrote a letter as

the appointed time approached for me to go. Like most letters I write, that one consumed much time, but more, it contained something that brought me to a complete stop. Should I put into words my heartfelt prayer? Me, a sinner, offer prayer on paper? And let others see my simple words? But that's when that prayer came to me: when trying to write some dear ones. Well, my dear one, from that day to this, that little prayer has been with me, it has been a help and a solace to me. It has been an arm of strength and quite sufficient for my needs. Isn't it wonderful how the dear Lord can make us ask for that which He has already given us? I love the way of the Lord. When you asked for silent prayer, I thought of a few words of that little prayer.

I love to think of the things I believe the God of heaven has done for me. They give me strength for the day and hope for that day to come. I know my words are so simple. I almost apologize for them, but I will not for I hope the Lord gave them to me.

Elder Wray, I must speak to you, too. You spoke to me in such a lovely manner on Sunday and you were happy when I could reply that the dear Lord continues His blessings on me.

In much love I hope,
Reidy Pickral

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BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Pittmans Grove, the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in November, 1980. (November 29 and 30)

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

Binghamton, N. Y.

Dear Editors,

Enclosed please find a check to renew my subscription for another year, and use the balance as you see best.

I look forward each month for the *Signs* to arrive, for I have no other connection with any Primitive Baptists in this area. I am not a member, but am a believer in their doctrine.

As you can see from my handwriting I am getting quite old and my time here is short. Continue the good works for it cheers so many old people very much.

Sincerely,
Ruth Steiner

EDITORIAL

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

John 19:10, 11

"Then saith Pilate unto him, speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

These words are taken from the time our Lord stood before Pilate, who was at that time governor over the Jewish people. Pilate, from the record, obviously knew a great deal more than he was willing to publicly concede. He, like most natural beings, (those who have not been moved by the Spirit of Grace), sought to prefer himself before doing that which was right and proper, and this account of our Lord standing before him is among the clearest displays of God's sovereign government over humans you will read. Continually, throughout this account, Pilate sought to release Jesus, and he was extremely reluctant to lay his hand of Him either physically or in a legal manner. But there was another element there at that time - the religious element. If we're honest with ourselves, we must confess that there is nothing uglier than ugly religion, no matter whose it is - ours or theirs. When religious people want their way, nothing will stand in their way. Caiaphas, the high priest, and all the rulers of the Jews, saw in Jesus an obstacle to their religious authority and rule over the people. To their minds, at all cost He must be taken out of the way, so that they could continue to project themselves as the spiritual rulers of the people.

The priests, Levites, scribes, and so on in that day left their mark on the people. And those of today are no different. There have always been those who aspire to

dominate over the spiritual lives of their associates, and if they must go to the legal authorities and press their issue they will do so. Nothing has changed except the calendar. Religion is still the greatest force in opposition to the Kingdom of God that ever existed, and the Pilates of this world are nothing more than tools in the hands of religionists. Our Lord used His most bitter language against the Pharisees who governed the people at that time. "Woe, unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte...." and so on. "Woe, unto you", and other denunciations were leveled against the religious leaders and accepted spiritual guides of that day by the Lord.

The Kingdom of God has always been and always shall be a spiritual and an inward kingdom. The outward kingdom is always a great, flourishing, visible display of human ingenuity filled up with pomp, pride, and ceremony. Scattered among the religious of the world, however, there has always been that little flock who seeks to meet in the name of their Lord and Master, not for anything that it would bring them materially or naturally, but for the inward peace, the comfort, the joy, and the satisfaction that is gleaned from gathering in His glorious Name.

In this last scene of our Lord's life, we find that Caiaphas and the religious rulers sought for political help to be rid of Jesus of Nazareth. As before noted, Pilate attempted as best he could to wiggle out of the situation. In this chapter, (18th of John,) there are several verses of scripture that introduce the thought that Pilate was not interested in getting involved in the conflict between Christ and the religious leaders. In verse 29 it says, "Pilate then went out unto them, and said, what accusation bring ye against this man?" As a ruler of the Romans he attempted to make this scene legal. "Do you have an accusation

against Him?" We have the blessed privilege of looking back on that scene and knowing that there was no accusation that could be leveled against the Son of God. All He had ever done had been good. All He had ever done was for the glory of His Father and the comfort of the poor and the afflicted. Pilate didn't ask this question in order that he might clear Jesus in His claims, but rather because it was the legal thing to do. Then in verse 31, "Then said Pilate unto them, take ye him and judge him according to your law...." Pilate wanted nothing to do with this matter, so he says, "You take him and you judge him according to your law." Now listen very carefully to what the Jews therefore, said unto him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death". Pilate hadn't said anything about taking him and killing him, but in their mind nothing short of death itself, would satisfy them in regard to Jesus of Nazareth.

Now then, may we pause here just a moment. Can you not see that in the hearts of the religious mob was an aim to take the life of this innocent man? On the part of Pilate there was the aim to free Him from the probabilities of what the mob would do to Him. Pilate and the Jewish leaders were working counter to one another. The legal government wanted to free Him; the religious government wanted to crucify Him. Now which one will win out? Will religion gain sway or will politics win the day? Unless we look at this as God-taught children of truth, we cannot know the answer. Neither the religious nor the political leaders can do any more or any less than the determinate council and purpose of God intended for them to do. The Jews wanted His death but not in order to fulfill God's plan. They had no knowledge that God had a plan concerning Jesus. Pilate was the legal government and wanted to free Him, but all of the power he had could not frustrate the secret council of God, that He be delivered into the hands of wicked

man and taken and slain. If this is not a display of God's holy government, where in all of the Bible would one look to find it? Herod pulling in one direction, Pilate in another, the religious leaders in another. The little band of disciples wishing they could pull, and helpless to do anything. But above all of the scene of confusion, there was the order of God's holy purpose. The Jews said, "We have a law. It is not lawful for us to use it in putting a man to death". That is what they were interested in. We might look forward just a little and read another scripture; verse 7 of chapter 19, "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." You would think the religious leaders were contradicting themselves, wouldn't you? We just read, "The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death". (V. 31) But then in verse 7 of the 19th Chapter, "We have a law and by our law he ought to die". Which time did they lie? Do you see that religion knows no limits, when it comes to applying their laws? They will use them to the satisfaction of their own carnal purpose.

Going on with Pilate here - in Verse 33, he goes in to Jesus and says, "Art thou the King of Jews?" This is more than the religious leaders at the time would do. They denied flatly that He was, but Pilate, at least, asked the question, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Our Lord answered him, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" Pilate retorts, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" At least in semblance it appears the Lord is getting a fair interrogation before Pilate. Pilate appears ready to find reason to set him free. But God has decreed that He must die. (The wicked Jews want to see Him dead but not because of the decree.)

So Pilate asks, "What hast thou done?" Pilate had heard all of the infor-

mation. He knew generally what was going on. You might say he was at least a partially competent governor. He kept his finger on the pulse of the populace. He knew what the rumors were. He had heard about the multitudes being fed, and that people had been raised from the dead. Stories, too, of people who were blind and then made to see. Also, he had heard of how great multitudes of people had been gathered by this lowly son of a carpenter. He heard too how He had performed miracles, and that never a man had spake like this. But still in his interrogation he says, "What hast thou done?" Listen now to the answer, (Chapter 18:36) "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews...." You will observe that He did not say, "That I be not delivered to thee....", but rather He said, "Then should my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." (Vs. 37) "Pilate therefore said unto him, art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." Such truth as He set before Pilate! "My kingdom is not of this world...." He was not endangering anybody's political power. He was not directly a hazard to the rulers and leaders, of whatever sort they might be. Our Lord had come lowly, and meekly, He had come in the name of His Father, and His mission and purpose was to gather sinners. Such as were desperately in need of that which they could not provide for themselves. He came to the lowly and to the meek, and He did deliver them and He did accomplish the will of the Father to a jot and a tittle. He had not in any way and under any circumstance violated either the religious or the political laws of that day. He stood as the only true witness to

all eternal and living truth to say that, "My kingdom is not of this world." There was not any laws that could interfere with His kingdom because His kingdom had not been established under earthly laws. Pilate couldn't understand these things. Pilate couldn't comprehend them. The Lord said, "To this end was I born"; this was the very purpose for which He came into the world. Oh, how Pilate must have been confused to hear that. The Jews didn't want to hear it, either. It would have done them no good. It would have only hindered their purposes because, if He had been born to this end, then the sooner He was dead the better as far as they were concerned.

Then Pilate asked one of the most outstanding questions a natural man ever asked. (Verse 38) "Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again...." Pilate didn't ask that question out of ignorance. Pilate cared not to know what truth is. The wording of the text is such that it leads one to believe that Pilate asked the question in contempt. He said it like this: "What is truth?" "You speak about the truth; what is truth to me?" The only thing that was truth to Pilate, or men like him, is their own ambition. Truth is nothing but another tool in their hands to use, lawfully or unlawfully, as it pleases them. And to hear the lowly One speaking, "Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice" means nothing to the Pilates of this world. He exemplified those who have a total disregard for all truth, and particularly divine truth, because he had no interest in truth. He was interested in furthering his own cause and preventing any sort of calamity arising in his governmental reign so there might be no dispatch of critical information to Caesar that would jeopardize his position as governor of the Jews. He wasn't concerned if Jesus was the truth from God. He was concerned that the One

who spoke of truth would be of some hinderance to the furtherance of his plans, and so he says, "What is truth? What do I care for truth? Why should I be concerned about your testimony?"

On saying this he went out again. He left the presence of Jesus as he had done on times before. But when he went out to the Jews again, listen to what he says to them: "I find in him no fault at all". You remember that John the Baptist spoke to the religious leaders just before our Lord's baptism and said that God would make even the rocks to cry out to His presence. He told them God could raise up stones to testify to His glory. And here we find a man who has nothing but contempt for the truth, and yet he is obligated by the eternal wisdom of God to stand before those that sought Jesus's death and say, "I find no fault at all in him." None whatsoever! The man did not care about the life of Jesus, he cared about the life of himself. But he was obligated to confess that which was the truth and even though he was contemptuous of the truth, he must tell the truth: he must tell the truth in the face of the greatest obstacle he ever had to his own governmental power. "I find no fault in him" (whatsoever.)

Then he says (verse 39) "Will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews?" Why, he wanted to see Jesus go free. But they wanted Barabbas. So after the scourging and smiting, we find in verse 4 of the 19th Chapter, "Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him." Again he is obligated to testify he finds no fault in Jesus. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man." (V. 5) Do you think the religious leaders were stirred? Do you think they were moved? They saw him after he had been scourged. There was now the crown of thorns on his head and he was wearing the dirty purple

garment, bleeding, probably profusely, in a great state of humiliation and disgrace, publicly at least. And Pilate points to him as if to say, "Have I not done enough now? Are you not satisfied that we turn him loose?" He says, "Behold the man"! Yet all the Jews could see was a man they held in contempt. All Pilate could see was an obstacle in the way of his government. But those who walk by faith can see in the lowly, despised, and persecuted suffering One the very purposes and plan of God to redeem the world of His chosen people. And they rejoice that the Man Christ Jesus stood there at that time. Though all these things would seem to be counter to human nature and contrary to the wisdom of a holy God, they were but the furtherances of every link in the chain of divine providence and predestination, to bring to pass the greatest event that ever occurred in Heaven or earth; the redemption of sinners, saved by grace.

When the man, Christ, stood there He stood there in shame, but it again was a portion of the holy plan of God to thwart the purpose, both of the Jews and Pilate that God would be exalted; and Him alone. As mentioned earlier, Pilate didn't want to release Him because of his fondness for Him, and the Jews certainly didn't want to kill Him because of God's plan. Yet, it worked out that way. "Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him." (V. 6) This is an amazing statement. That a human being (who in this case was governor) could say of another human being, to a mob of madmen religionists, "Take him and crucify him. I find no fault in him," is nearly beyond belief. You could go into the average tavern across this land today and find people with more integrity than was displayed by either crowd here. The average drunkard that sits on a bar stool drinking beer has more regard for humanity than either Pilate or the religious mob displayed

here. An innocent man, one who was an acknowledged innocent being, was to be thrown to a mob to be crucified, and the man in authority, with the power to prevent it says, "I find no fault in him". This is enough to anger and inflame the feelings of most any human being of even sub-normal intellect. But again we must recognize that despite all of the intense feelings that we have over this incident, God's purpose was yet to be accomplished, and so nothing could hinder it, and so this makes it all the more amazing. It is an amazing thing that the ruler of the people, the governor of that time, could say, "Take him and crucify him. I find no fault in him."

If there was one thing in those days that the Romans prided themselves in, it was that they were a just people. They required strict application of the law before any man was put to death. Yet here was a man who had the authority of life and death, and here was a group, religious rabble rousers, who did not have the authority of life and death, and he gave an innocent man to them and said, "Take him and crucify him. I find no fault in him." Never has a man acted more the part of a weasel than Pilate acted at that time. You would feel like human nature would dictate to him, at least to some degree, to have made a pretense of defense for a man who obviously was not guilty of any crime or charge brought against him. This shows, at least from the natural part, how much influence the religious rabble rousers have. They will gain their way if they can.

Ask yourself this question. Was the religion of that day any worse than ours today? No, by no means! It would be better to stand with Pilate than to stand with the Pharisees who wanted the life of our Lord. He didn't pretend to be religious. Oh, may God bless us to know, and may He enable us to see, that there is but one course of action for those who believe the truth and love the Lord of glory, and that is to come out from

among all religious enterprises of every fashion that does not bow the knee to Jesus and His Father. May we acknowledge that God is supreme in all things; that Pilate and religion and all of the rest together are nothing but the implements of God's holy divine will. He will accomplish His purpose in them just as surely as He will in the falling of the sparrow, or the moving of a mighty mountain.

Pilate went out and said, "I find no fault in him." They said, "We have a law". He went in again, and said, "Whence are thou?" And then the text, "Then saith Pilate unto him, speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Pilate says, "Do you not know that I have power?" "I have power!" Why, who was Pilate? Pilate was another lump of clay; another of the insignificant worms of the dust of God's creation, and yet he stood in the face of a man whom he knew to be innocent, and he says, "I have power against thee. I have power to crucify thee and I have the power to release thee." In the jargon of today's language, you might say he was afflicted with a case of the "Imies". I am this, and I am that. I've got this and I've got that. He may say, "I have power to crucify thee", but did he have any power?

Our Lord, though He was bleeding and suffering, could answer him with great authority. "Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." (V. 11) "No power, Pilate--you couldn't have power against me except it were given thee from above." "Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." (V. 11) Several things may be noticed there. One is that Pilate's sin was great; but there was a greater one. This leads to a conclusion that is unavoidable. If there is such a thing as one sin being greater than another sin, then there is greater

punishment than other punishment. Now someone may ask, is that consistant? Yes, it is. If there is a greater sin; if one sin is greater than another sin, then does not God have the right to do with one as it pleases Him and then another as it pleases Him? We cannot contend that hell would be any hotter in one spot than it would in another, or that the torment would be any greater in one spot than it would be in another, but we can content that if it pleases God to extend the awareness or knowledge of the darkness and blackness of hell and show the hopelessness and abandonment of eternity to one more than another, then who should we be to discredit God's wisdom in doing so? It is God in the voice His Son that says, "He hath the greater sin". All we can go by is what the testimony is, and so long as the testimony is there, may we rejoice that it is so! Pilate's sin was great but Caiaphas, (not Judas) had the greater sin. Our Lord was not talking about Judas when He said, "he that delivered me". It was not Judas that delivered Him to Pilate. It was the high priest. It was religion that delivered Him there, and religion is yet today at this very moment attempting to deliver our Lord up to judgment and to condemnation. But may our God be praised, the Pilates then and the governments today have no power, even when our religious leaders would deliver Him up to be crucified, unless God gives them that power. And though the Church of Jesus Christ might in this day seem to be insignificant, and the numbers dwindling away and the hearts of many are growing cold and the true ways are being abandoned, recognize this one thing. The powers that be are still ordained by God. All of these things are still, to the jot and the tittle, fulfilling the eternal purpose of God. Ultimately Jesus will be lifted up above the sight of all of His people, that He might be praised, world without end and the anguish and the grief of those that know Him not and despise the truth

will be to the fullest in the final day.

"Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Listen, "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him; but the Jews cried out, saying, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." (V. 12) Why, those Jews weren't concerned about what Caesar and Pilate did or didn't do. They were concerned about what Pilate would do in their behalf to get rid of this one called Jesus of Nazareth. And so they threw this in his teeth; "Why, if he is making himself to be a king and you side with him and turn him loose then you have sided against Caesar". That was more than Pilate could hear. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Golgatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour; and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them; shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar." (V. 13-15) Do you think anything has changed? "We have no king but Caesar." That was religion speaking. And today, Pharasee religion still knows no king but Caesar. They weren't in love with Caesar but they loved Caesar's world, and the things of Caesar's world far greater than they did the things of the glory of God. Yet in all of this they did nothing, absolutely nothing, but fulfill the eternal design of God that Jesus would die. And in that they would be accountable. Why, Pilate even went so far as to wash his hands. He took water, and washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." (Matt.

27:14) But do you think that eliminated his crime? No! His sin remained. In these things they together wrought out the grand, wonderful purpose of God which was to be fulfilled. "The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against the Holy Child Jesus who thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council determined before to be done." (Acts 4:26-28) "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council determined before to be done." May the Lord bless us to recognize that Pilate, Herod, the Jews, and all of the rest did fulfill God's council and yet they were ignorant in it all.

Elder James F. Poole

PRAYER OF THANKS

As the old year ebbs away
And the new comes into sight
I thank Thee, Lord for granting me
Another year of life.

Not one of mere existence
But one filled to the brim
With all the joys - the precious joys
We find in knowing Him.

Julia Ada

Christiansburg, VA.

Dear Elder Spangler,

This money is for another year of the *Signs of the Times*. I am 85 years old and I think every year that this is the last, but the Lord only knows that.

I always look forward to the *Signs* coming. Most of the time I read it through before I put it up. I am blessed with good eye sight so far. Several of my children take the *Signs*, and I am thankful for that, too. I always enjoy reading the "Voices of the Past". That is always good.

I just wanted you to know that I enjoy

reading the *Signs* very much.

In Hope,
Mrs. F. S. Agee

OBITUARIES

ELDER E. J. LAMBERT

Words cannot be written to express our sincere feelings of loss over the passing of our beloved friend and Elder, E. J. Lambert. Our precious friend and fellow yoke minister in the Gospel of Jesus Christ was called from his earthly journey August 14, 1980, in Hot Springs, Arkansas. He was born September 28, 1906 in Amity, Arkansas to Charles B. and Ida M. Burchfield Lambert. He was married to Willie Myrtle Hancock on November 17, 1928. A son, Charles, was born to this union on April 6, 1930. His wife, afflicted with pneumonia, departed her life May 3, 1930. The next four years of his life were spent wholly in the college of tribulations located in the furnace of affliction, as stated in his book, *Tried in the Furnace*. He met and married Dessie May Williams November 18, 1934. Sister Dessie May departed her life January 4, 1973.

Elder Lambert was ordained to the office of elder by order of Cedar Hill Church of Arkansas while the South Arkansas Primitive Baptist Association was in session September 15, 1934. His wife, Dessie May, was the first one that he baptized.

Elder Lambert was weakened much in body the past four years, yet he was given enough strength to serve (up until six weeks before his death) the five churches he was called to serve. He could hardly enter the stand on many occasions because of weakness of body; but as he read a text and began to speak, he received the needed strength and wisdom from on high to proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This was truly manifested in Elder Lambert.

May I make a following quotation from his book, *Tried in the Furnace*?

"I have traveled among this people in the different sections of the country and find such unity in belief that I am persuaded that all are taught by the same Teacher. I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He is

our salvation both for time and eternity. God has taught me in His wonderful dealings with me the doctrine of salvation solely upon the merits of Jesus Christ to such extent that any other doctrine is strange to my ears. I believe Jesus Christ accomplished the law to a jot and a tittle, and His accomplishments were accredited to the account of the people who were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. His blood covered all the sins that God's people have ever committed, are committing now, or ever shall commit. This is not proclaimed because of any theory advanced by anyone but because of the things that I have experienced."

His experiences were such that made him feel his complete dependency upon God. Once when he was feeling so low and cast down, he prayed for relief but none came. Finally he prayed, "God, I'll be your anything," yet no relief. He poured out his soul from the very depth of his heart in prayer, and begged, "God, I'll be your nothing." And God whose mighty arms were always underneath him raised him up in spirit and feelings. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

He was always willing and enjoyed talking on doctrine and religious matters. He was given an abundance of wisdom therefore many brethren went to him for counsel. The writer was given the sweet privilege of spending many wonderful hours conversing with him. Our son, Jimmy Hamrick, became very close to him and loved to talk with him on spiritual things, spending a few nights each month in his home. Elder Lambert showed a great interest to the young in the ministry and was ready to share with them the things he had learned and experienced during his ministry.

Elder Lambert was an associate editor of the "Signs of the Times" for many years. Our great loss is his eternal gain. His soul and spirit are now with the Great God that he was given wisdom and strength to serve and proclaim for 46 years.

Survivors include one son, Charles T. Lambert, Hot Springs, Ark.; mother, Mrs. Ida Lambert, Hot Springs, Ark.; and one brother, Ernest Lambert, Haworth, Okla.

His funeral services were conducted August 17th by the writer and assisted by

the following brethren in the ministry: Elders C. M. Haygood, B. J. McLaughlin, Lloyd Wall, W. W. Taylor, Paul Daniel, C. C. Morris, and Brother Jimmy Hamrick. His body was laid to rest in Good Hope Cemetery, beneath a mound of beautiful flowers to await the resurrection when Jesus will come to call him to his eternal home in heaven.

Written by order of conference, Good Hope Church, Winnboro, Texas, August 23, 1980. One copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

SISTER BERTHA WHITE JOHNSON

A dear Mother in Israel, Sister Bertha White Johnson, was called home on June 14, 1980, in the Roanoke Chowan Hospital in Ahoskie, N.C., at the age of 99 years.

Sister Bertha was born in Martin County, North Carolina on July 31, 1880, the daughter of Mack and Belle White and spent her life in Martin County until 1973 when she moved to the Pinewood Manor Rest Home in Ahoskie, N.C.

She was married to Charlie Sylvester Johnson in February, 1902, who preceded her in death in 1964. To this union seven children were born. Surviving is one son, Joshua Mack Johnson of Baltimore, Md., three daughters, Mrs. Nina Belle Rogerson of Salisbury, N.C., Mrs. Bertha Gray of Bethel, N.C., and Mrs. Nellie Faye Savage of Williamston, N.C.; 17 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren, and 5 great great grandchildren.

Sister Bertha united with the Spring Green Primitive Baptist Church over 50 years ago and remained a steadfast loving member until her death, always filling her seat as long as she was able to attend.

Funeral services were conducted in the Biggs Funeral Chapel in Robersonville, N.C. on Monday, June 16, 1980, by her Pastor, Elder Joseph A. Leggett. Her body was laid to rest in the Robersonville Cemetery, there to await the coming of her blessed Saviour.

The Spring Green Church extends their deepest sympathy to Sister Bertha's family.

Done by order of conference Saturday before the fourth Sunday in June, 1980.

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

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

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Danville, Virginia
August 20, 1980

To the Upper Country Line Association
in session with Moon Creek Church,
Caswell County, N.C., July 14, 15, and
16, 1979.

Dear Brethren,

After due deliberations the Church at
Dan River has decided to request that
our Church be dropped from the roll of
churches of the Upper Country Line
Association and become an independent
church.

*We raise no question of fellowship,
esteeming highly the brethren
and sisters of this Association.*

We are sending \$100.00 to help defray
the expenses of the ministers who visit
during the Association. We also hope to
visit with you, and help entertain the
visitors who attend the Association.

Done by order of the Church in
conference.

**D. V. Spangler, Moderator
Boyd Minter, Clerk**

The above copy of the letter to the Upper Country
Line Association in 1979 is printed at the request
of Brethren, that no one be confused in regard to
these matters.

D. V. Spangler, Editor

June 23, 1980

Dear Elders of the Signs,

I am sorry to be late renewing my
subscription to the *Signs of the Times*.
Due to illness I have not been able to
conduct my business since May 23, 1979.
I have been a patient here at Roman
Eagle Nursing Home since Sept. 8, 1979.
I have not been without pain since

October. However, no matter how much I suffer down here or how hard the cross is to bear, my Lord and Saviour has told me in His Word that He would never put more on me than I could bear, nor would He ever leave or forsake me, but would go with me all the way even unto the end. I live daily by that scripture and I realize no matter how much suffering I do down here, I can never in a million years suffer what Christ my Saviour suffered when He bled and died for me on the old cruel cross. I feel He suffered and died in my room and stead, but truly I am the worst of sinners.

It is sweet to know the Truth, and to know that the Truth will make you whole.

My eyes are bad and I can't read very well, but I do enjoy so very much the scriptures I am able to read, and the *Signs*, too. It is food for my soul, as I am unable to get to church services. I do enjoy visits from members of like precious fellowship and faith. The home here is a nice place for older people who have no one to look after them.

I am enclosing a check to renew my subscription for one year. May our Lord and Saviour bless each of you editors to continue to set forth the doctrine of truth as it is set forth in the scriptures.

This is poorly written, but I hope I have not written anything amiss. I am a little sister in Hope of eternal life, if one at all. If you are so led to pray for me when at the Throne of Grace I will appreciate it.

Lillian H. Holt

SERMON ON AMOS 7:8
BY
ELDER LOYD WALL

A few weeks ago I read a verse of scripture and have had some meditations on it. This morning it is back again. There is no way to get it out of my mind because I stayed awake this morning until 20 minutes until 2 o'clock.

I got up and turned the light on to see what time it was. I took a nap after that. I don't believe there is any way in the world to get away from the Lord. And I am going to tell you also that the devil can't get away from the Lord, either. And I will tell you the reason why I can't get away from Him. Because if I am not altogether deceived He gave me a thorn in the flesh. Since I was 11 years old, old Satan has really been a thorn to me. He goes everywhere I go. He gets ugly. And I have done more than Paul did, if I am not over-judging. Paul prayed twice for God to remove his thorn. And the answer was everytime "My grace is sufficient for thee".

Brother John Bain, who we laid back to the dust a few days ago, said he didn't know if he had ever prayed in his life, but he had done a lot of begging. That is what I am saying. I've done a lot of begging God to remove this thorn out of my flesh; this messenger of Satan that buffets me. But I never have gotten God to trade with me. Never have. He never would. And right now I want to say that I am thankful that He doesn't trade any. Because if I could get Him to trade one time I know by experience, I would lose every bit of confidence that I have in Him. God's confidence is all we need. And the reason why that God the Lord didn't save the Apostle Paul from this thorn is because He is an unchanging God. The Bible says that. "I am the Lord and I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

I don't desire to hurt the feelings of any human being. But more especially here of late I hear so much about accepting the Lord, and God wanting people to be saved. I don't want to hurt those people's feelings that advocate that. They believe that because they can't help it. But I am going to tell you that according to the teachings of the scriptures that is not the way it is. God's people accept the Lord because they can't help it. One might ask the question, "Well, do they accept Him contrary

to their will?" No, that is not so. They are always willing to accept Him and yet it is not of them voluntarily to do so. They are made accepted in the Beloved.

Now I want to give you something else. It is not left up to you to acquaint yourself with the Lord. And according to the text that is on my mind you don't have to get out and look Him up. We are going to prove that by the scriptures. I would like to call your attention to the last verse of the 46th chapter of Isaiah, and I want you to pay close attention to my reading if it be God's will. I am a very poor reader. Isaiah speaking out here, he said, "I bring near my righteousness". Now the book plainly teaches that "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the pharisees you have no part with God". And we know what the scribes and pharisees were. They fasted twice a week and payed tithes of all that they possessed and they were not like other people. Now I didn't write that, and you didn't either, but that is the truth. Do you find anybody doing that? Do you? I want to ask you a question. Do you find people out paying a tenth of all that they earn, regardless of how much it is needed at home? My book says charity should begin at home. Do you find people that fast? Do you find people that say that they are not like other people? That they are better than so and so? Do you find them? I want to ask you. I am just asking you a simple question. I think you do.

Now he says, "I bring near my righteousness". Not yours, but his. And He didn't leave us to guess how near He brought it. "It shall not be far off and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." Now what is He saying? Zion is the church of the Living God. So I want to ask you a question, dear hearers. What did it leave for you to do when He places salvation in Zion? I want to ask you. What in the world has the poor creature of the dust to do? What in the

world did it leave Him to do when He said that He placed salvation in Zion, and then I want to tell you that you don't need to guess where salvation is, because the Apostle Paul says, "In Him." In who? In Christ is salvation. Neither is there salvation in any other. Now I want to ask you one more question, and that is, doesn't that cut out all hardshell preaching, too? I mean preaching about bringing salvation to anybody. What is the reason why a hardshell preacher can't bring salvation to anybody? It is because they can't bring it to themselves. They don't need to bring it. They don't have to, because God places it there in Zion.

I would like to call your attention to a scripture that I read a few days ago, because it is in harmony with that one that I just read; it is found in the 7th chapter of Amos, verse 8. I believe again that it says what it means and it means just exactly what it says. The Lord here asked Amos something. We read, "And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou?" Now we don't have to guess who asked Amos that, do we? The Lord asked Amos that. Not a preacher, not a deacon, not a lay member, not an organization, but the Lord asked Amos, "What are you seeing?" Amos saw something, or the Lord wouldn't have asked him. He would have told him what He wanted him to see. "What thou seest, Amos?" "And I said, A plummet". Amos told the Lord just what he saw, "A plummet". "Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plummet in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more." My dear hearers, we know that a plummet is what carpenters use in building a building. And we know that a natural plummet does not make a crooked wall. But I tell you what you can do. You can take a building after it has settled and after it has been built for some time and you can stretch that plummet to the plummet and it will show you every crook and every flat place that is in the

building, and I want to tell you that a natural plumbline will do that. And I want to tell you dear children of the Heavenly King, until Israel has a plumbline placed in the midst of them, they won't know anything about their crooked ways. And I want to tell you, dear children, that the Lord has just one plumbline and that plumbline is His Darling Son, for in Him is salvation, neither is there salvation in any other. When He places that plumbline within your very being, that plumbline, which if Christ Jesus, shows you every crook and every turn that is in your very being. And it makes the individual to confess that sin is mixed with all that he does. Why does it make him confess that sin is mixed with all that he does? It is because there is no sin about this plumbline, as sure as you live.

And now too, I want to tell you one more thing. I am going to have to preach what I believe this morning, if I preach at all. Now children of God, if you stretch a plumbline down the side of this building and I want to tell you, it shows you where it is crooked, and where the crooked places are in this building. That plumbline will not make the building straight, by no means. And I want to tell you something, dear children of the Heavenly King. When Christ is born in you, the hope of glory, that doesn't make you to quit sinning. It just shows you what a sinner you are and it makes you to hate sin. It makes you to wish that you could never sin again, as sure as you live. Now as the plumbline does not straighten up the building, but only tells you there is a little crook here, and a crook there; there is no perfection in them. I'm talking about that place, now. I want to prove that. Even though after Christ is born in them the Hope of Glory, because the Apostle Paul said, "In me is no good thing, that is in my flesh." And you know, He said, "I thank God that with my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin."

I want to ask you, my dear hearers,

would you have known anything about your crooked ways until the plumbline was placed by you? You didn't reach up and get it and you didn't go to where it was. It came to you, as sure as you live, and you know the reason why it came to you? It came because in the beginning your mother, Eve, transgressed. She transgressed in that home back yonder in the garden, so she was separated from her head. There wasn't a way in the world that poor Eve could go to Adam. Why? Because she had fallen in sin. And what caused her to commit that sin? She transgressed the holy law God had given, and you know, where there is no law, there is no sin. So did Sister Eve. She violated the law. She fell under sin, and when she fell under sin her whole being ultimately became crooked. And I am going to have to preach this hard doctrine, as sure as you live.

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, "Consider the work of God; who can make that straight which God has made crooked." I want to tell you, there is not enough preachers in the United States or in the whole world, to make one perfect in this time world, as sure as you live. So Eve was separated from her husband and there wasn't a way in the world that poor old Mother Eve could go back to Adam. You know that Adam had to go to Eve, as sure as you live, and because of the love he had for that woman, he was willing to go down in sin, knowing what the results would be. And he took of that fruit, as sure as you live, because of the love he had for her. He was willing to die for her and that is exactly what he did. And when he did, that put every one of his posterity into sin; every last one of them.

Now, if you know any human beings who came from anyone except Adam, then you might get them out of the condition that they are in. But everyone that is his offspring, that is, everyone that came from Adam and Eve was born in this horrible condition. They were born in sin, and a destitute condition,

and there is nothing they can do about it. They could not, and we cannot go to Christ, just as Eve could not go back to Adam after she fell. We are just as helpless to go to Christ as Eve was to go to Adam. I am going to prove that by the Bible, and don't make me out a horrible person if I fail to do that. Now, they both have transgressed the law, and God put a curse on the earth, and I want to tell you that He used different language when He cursed the earth, because curse means death with God. You know, we might use the same language and call that cursing, but that is not. A curse means death, as sure as you live. And so God cursed the earth for man's sake and it brought forth thorns and thistles. And then God drove man out of the garden, and his wife with him.

And you know, the tree of life represented Christ Jesus, and it was also in the midst of that garden. The Godhead then said, "Man has become as one of us to know good and evil." And lest they reach forth and take of the tree of life and live forever, they were forbidden to stay. I want to prove that to you by the Bible. "And he placed a Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way", not to keep them away from the tree of life, no, because that tree of life didn't need such. But that which I want to get to is to keep the way of the tree of life; lest man reach forth and partake and live forever. And I want you to tell me where in the word of God it says that sword has ever been taken down from around that tree that keeps the way of the tree of life. As sure as you live, it never has been taken down. I want to prove that to you, because Jesus said in the 6th chapter of John that "No man can come to me except my father who sent me draw him". You know the reason they can't come? Because there is a flaming sword turning every way which keeps the way of the tree of life. The tree doesn't need keeping, itself, because it is the way of life, as sure as

you live. And as long as eternity remains it will keep the way of the tree of life.

I want to tell you something, brethren, when I started on this subject, I said he would place salvation in Zion forever more. He said, "I will place a plumbline among Israel, and I will place it there." And in the land of Eden He put His only begotten Son in the person of Jesus Christ, here upon this low ground of sin and sorrow. And the Bible says He was born on this wise. "And when Joseph was espoused to Mary before He knew her he found her with child", and you know, he being a just man, he thought to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep and said to him, "Fear not Joseph, to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. For she shall bring forth a Son and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Isn't that what Isaiah has said, when he said, "I place salvation in Israel," and isn't that what Amos saw when he saw that plumbline and God told him, "I will place a plumbline in the midst of Israel. I will not pass them by any more." And then when that plumbline came, it was Jesus, and he gives proof. And I want to tell you one thing. There is no crook in the person of Jesus. He is the plumbline, as sure as you live. And I want to tell you something else, He is not only straight, but He is strait. And He said for all His people, "Strait is the way, and few be that go that way". "Strait is the gate, that leads to life everlasting, and few there be that find it." I will tell you just how many are going to find it; yes, everyone that had that way placed in them, as sure as you live. In every one that believes has that plumbline been placed there. He says, "I go before my sheep. I put them forth and they do follow me. And a stranger they will not follow because they know not the voice

of a stranger."

You know, children, I want to preach now what I believe. You never would have given your heart and life to Christ. No. No. But Christ was given to you in eternity. As sure as you live. I want to prove that by the Bible. "No man is able to pluck them out of my hand, for my Father who gaveth them me is greater than all". Oh, yes! No man is able to pluck them out of My hand. The Lord told Amos, "I will put a plumbline in the midst of Israel. And I will not again pass by them any more". And you know, Paul said, "I am persuaded that things present, or things to come, or height or depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." Oh, that is a sweet promise to me, that He won't pass us by any more. And now Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem of Judah and was born of a virgin, and with all those miracles He did, it didn't cause people to move toward Him. Oh, no! But let me tell you, the only ones who did believe were His sheep, as sure as you live.

You can't find in all the pages of the Bible that everything doesn't happen just like He planned it. Nowhere is there any goats made into sheep. It didn't even make them want to be a sheep. They didn't have the want-to. And I will tell you the reason why they didn't have the want-to, because He said, "For this cause I will send them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie and be damned, who receive not the love of the truth, but have faith in their own righteousness." The next verse says, "We are bound to give thanks always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, for God hath from the beginning chosen you into salvation through sanctification and belief of the truth." Are you not for all eternity, to give thanks for it? I will tell you also, dear brethren, if there was something we could do, we would do it, but Paul said, "Brethren, we are bound to give thanks always to the

preacher? Oh, no, no. Give thanks unto the church? Oh, no no., but we are bound to give thanks always unto God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, for God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Now then, do you know Him, who for something like 33 years went about preaching, and then was crucified? Before they crucified Him, He said, "But it is needful that I go away. For if I go not away, the comforter shall not come." And brethren, I want to tell you something else. He didn't send it to the non-elect. But He said, "I will place a plumbline among Israel", and Israel is His people. And He said, "I will place salvation in Zion", and not in the world, but in Zion. As sure as you live.

Now I want to prove to you that when God sent out His twelve, He didn't say, "Go among the goats". Oh, no, no. But they were sent to one people. And you know, when He sent the twelve, He told them not to go to the general public, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I want to tell you dear hearers, they never were sent among the non elect. And they never will be sent unto the non elect. God sends them, as sure as you live, not to do their own will, but the will of Him that sends them. And He told the twelve, "Go not in the way of the Gentiles, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And while Christ was preaching to those lost sheep of the house of Israel to whom He was sent, He said, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold. But them must I also bring. I want to tell you one thing, if He hadn't brought the Gentiles to that fold, the plumbline would never have been among them. As sure as you live. Why? Because the Gentiles couldn't go to Him. That is why! They know that no one can go to Him except the Father which sent Him draw them. And He said "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold. Them I must also bring. And there shall be one shepherd and one fold." Oh, dear

children, have you ever felt the plumbline? It doesn't vary. It doesn't turn, either to the right or to the left. It is straightway, as sure as you live. It doesn't wait for me and you to decide to have everlasting life.

But there is a way opened. And that is the way that Isaiah spoke of in the 35th chapter when he said, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness: The unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein." You know the reason why those that err are not there? You would have to turn aside to get in this way should you err, and that is why there is no erring in that way, because there are no errors in that way. That is a straight way. That is a plumbline. There is no error in the plumbline, which is Christ Jesus, as sure as you live.

Now He said, "I will place a plumbline among Israel, and my people, and I won't pass them by any more." And also He said, "I will bring near my righteousness and it shall not tarry. I will place salvation in Zion, among my people for my glory, saith the Lord." Now then for the Jews I will preach, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold, them also will I bring, and there shall be one shepherd and one fold." And you know, He said then, "It need be that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come. But if I go away, I will pray the Father and he will send you the Spirit, which the world cannot see." It has been there a long time, and that is another sermon, as sure as you live. He said, "I will send to you another spirit, which the world cannot receive, and it shall take the things of mine and try to show them unto you? No, no. And it shall take the things of mine and show them unto you." I want to tell you, my little children, that He will save you from sin unto Himself. That is the plumbline, because God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, these three are One, as sure as you live. And you know,

He told them to go to Jerusalem, and there came unto them a message from on high. And the number was about 120, and out of every nation, kindred, tongue, they were assembled at that place when the Holy Ghost came. I heard a man this morning over the radio, I won't call a name, but I heard the man say as he was preaching on Holy Ghost baptism, that you can go to the altar and say, "Lord, Lord" until the Holy Ghost comes. And that, I want to tell you, is making fun of the Holy Ghost. I believe that is blaspheming the Holy Ghost. I want to preach what I believe, now, if God will allow me to do so. They were told of God to go to Jerusalem and there tarry until visited from on high, and it came upon the group, like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house. What was it He said for them to do? He said to go there and tarry. And the Bible says in another place, "Be still and know that I am God." Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. I want to tell you one thing. You don't have to go anywhere, or to any altar. Why? Because He said, "I will place a plumbline among Israel, my people. And I will place salvation in Zion." I will tell you, brethren, you don't have to go anywhere. And He told them at Jerusalem, "And there tarry." Stand still. Stop your works. And there tarry until you are endowed from on high. And it came a rushing and mighty wind, and it filled the whole house. Everyone there spoke in his own tongue and everyone understood the words of God. You can take a man, I don't care how able he is and you can send him to preach all over the United States over the radio and over the TV and every church house, and I guarantee you, it won't profit anything unless that plumbline has already got there before the peacher gets there, as sure as you live. Why? Because they won't understand it, and I am going to prove that by the Scriptures. Paul didn't know who the children of God were; I know he didn't. Only the

Lord knew who they were. Paul and Barnabas preached, and they didn't know who was and who wasn't. And they said, "Seeing that you put it from you, and count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo we turn to the Gentiles. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the name of the Lord." Did everyone of them do that? No. The book tells us just how many were glorifying the Lord, and how many weren't. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the name of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." I want to tell you that ordained means set apart. Everyone that the plumbline had been placed in, that one is the one that salvation had been placed in. And I want to tell you, they can't help glorifying the name of the Lord.

Transcribed from a recorded sermon by Elder
Loyd Wall, Bivins, TX.

Elizabeth City, N.C.

Dear Brethren:

I am enclosing a check to renew my subscription for two years. Please use the balance as you see fit.

I don't get to go to church very often any more. I do enjoy the *Signs of the Times*. I hope I can be blessed to have it as long as I can see how to read it. I can't write very well about the way I feel, but the Lord knows my heart and how much I have enjoyed going to the churches far and near. I have been blessed to hear most of you ministers from time to time.

I can't drive for long trips any more, and therefore I have to stay home most of the time. It is a comfort to have the *Signs of the Times* to read. I feel that most of you will remember me, although how unworthy I am.

May God bless each and every one and my love to all. I greatly need and desire your prayers.

In hope of a better life,
Catherine Vass

A GOOD JOURNEY

Dear Elder Poole,

On July 8th Elder and Sister Shipman, their daughter, Denise, Sister Joyce Pittman, my parents, Elder and Sister Joe L. Hamrick, and myself departed Winnsboro, Texas and headed for the Staunton River Association in Virginia. We spent the first night at Elder and Sister McCool's home in Steens, Mississippi, where we received a warm welcome. The next morning, we went to pick up Elder and Sister Griffin at their home just outside of Crossville, Alabama. Elder Griffin requested Elder Shipman to offer prayer for a safe and prosperous journey. A beautiful prayer having been offered, we headed our fully loaded van towards Virginia. Singing the sweet hymns of Zion made the time go by faster. Even when we weren't singing, time and miles quickly passed by, as Elder Griffin's presence ensured there would be no dull moments.

Before we hit the Virginia line, we stopped at Elder and Sister Berry's home for a lovely visit. Elder and Sister Griffin also visited Sister Bellows, Elder Gilbert Beebe's granddaughter and I understand, only surviving direct descendent. Having squeezed in some good free grace books we bought from Elder Berry, we headed on our way.

The surprise element in the trip was that Sister Joyce Pittman had not informed her parents, Elder and Sister Julian Williams, that she was coming along with us. Needless to say, after arriving at the Williams' home, the surprise reunion of daughter and family presented a most joyous scene, and was very heartwarming to all who witnessed it.

To those of us from Texas, the open air Staunton River Association was a new experience. In Texas, our numbers are few enough to where the Association can be accommodated within the church building. Thus, for we Texans, seeing a vast array of people sitting in folding chairs on bare ground, with beautiful

trees all around and the singing of the birds in the background, proved to be a different, and altogether beautiful setting for the preached word to fall upon hungry souls. The Prince of Peace seemed pleased to bless all three days of the Association with His sweet presence. We can all say that it was good to be there.

There is nothing like visiting among God's people, for surely Christ reveals a measure of Himself in each one of His little ones. They are able to comfort one another and edify one another with the comfort and edification they themselves have received from above. Thus, the visitation proved to be one of the crowning joys of the whole trip.

Having personally visited the North Carolina - Virginia area with Elder Lambert a few months before, I had enjoyed listening to the spiritual conversation between Elder Spangler and Elder Lambert at Brother and Sister French's home. I was now blessed at Brother Burnell Williams' home to hear Elder Spangler and Elder Griffin speak concerning their precious Lord and Saviour. We never truly appreciate our wise aged Elders until they've left this old world. Then we begin to sorrow not only our great loss, but the fact that we did not show enough appreciation for their long labor in the Word and doctrine, while we were blessed to have them in our midsts. We may even have said things to them that we would to God and we could have apologized for, but we usually wait until they pass away, and then it is too late. While at Brother and Sister Burnell Williams' home, Elder Spangler spoke a few words of comfort to Elder Lambert on a cassette recorder. Brother and Sister Wells later spoke a few words on the cassette, as did Elder Griffin. Elder Lambert had been invited to come on this trip, but due to his health and other reasons, he felt that he shouldn't try to make it.

Leaving Sister Joyce Pittman with

her family, we headed for Maryland and your home where we enjoyed the same wonderful Christian fellowship. For Elder and Sister Griffin, it was like a homecoming to visit the area where they used to live. You and your wife were very thoughtful to show us around Welsh Tract and London Tract Churches. If those old church walls could speak, what stories they'd be able to tell! We were certainly made to feel at home up your way and please give our love and regards to the brethren.

Leaving your home to begin our return trip, we stopped at Brother and Sister Bill Davis' home where Elder Griffin made some very touching remarks to Beth Davis, exhorting her to never forget that her parents are Old School Baptists, and giving her some of the characteristics of Old School Baptists. I wish I could get the spirit of his remarks down, but I believe that it will suffice to say that all were in tears when Elder Griffin finished speaking.

We later arrived back at Elder Williams' home where we picked up Sister Joyce and continued on our journey South. We stopped at Lookout Mountain along the way, to view God's marvelous handiwork upon seven states.

Returning through Alabama, we stopped and ate at Elder and Sister Griffin's home. It was difficult saying goodby, as we had enjoyed their fellowship on the trip immensely. We next arrived at Elder and Sister McCool's home where we received word that Elder Lambert had been admitted to the hospital in Hot Springs, Ark.

While with the brethren in Mississippi and Alabama, we experienced the same warm fellowship.

We then headed West, reaching Winnsboro, Texas on July 21st. Sister Joyce Pittman immediately drove on to Dallas to be with her husband, Phil, on their first wedding anniversary. The next morning, Elder and Sister Shipman and their daughter headed further south

for their home just south of San Antonio.

Words cannot express our feelings concerning the love shown us. We all have returned with a large store of good memories. One of my father's more pleasant memories center around meeting Elder Spangler for the first time and visiting with him and his wife.

Later, we called up Elder Lambert and replayed the tape cassette messages from back East. He enjoyed them very much and received them as messages of love. One of the more unforgettable remarks made on the trip was by Elder Griffin, who said that we are all on a good journey, hoping the same things, believing the same things, and looking forward to the same things. Elder Lambert just ended his journey last August 14th. It was indeed a good journey since it had such a good destination. He is now with the Christ he loved so well, with the Christ he traveled on so many trips as ours, to preach. He has indeed reached his final journey's end. He has arrived home.

In one precious Hope,
Jimmy Hamrick

Bassett, Va.

Dear *Editors of the Signs of the Times*,

It is time again to renew my subscription for the *Signs of the Times*. I am sending \$10.00 for two more years. I do not agree with every point of view that goes into the paper, but I cannot remember anything written by the Editors being contrary to the scriptures. I don't like so many old articles being republished, but of all the writings of Elder Beebe I have never read anything unsound. When the paper becomes perfect, then it will be time for my cancellation. I beg the readers to have patience and not expect to find perfection only in our Lord Jesus Christ. There are many errors spoken in the pulpit and we overlook it and cast a mantle of charity

that peace may prevail. May God be with us altogether with the Editors.

(Elder) J. R. Hollandsworth

FROM AN OLD SIGNS
COUNT THEM OUT

The following extract from the "National Baptist", of Philadelphia, we copy from the "Baptist Watchman", of Nashville, Tenn.:

"Why should the Anti-Mission Baptists be numbered among us? The fact of their practicing immersion does not make them Baptists. If they denied the divinity of the Lord, we should not reckon them among us. Why, then, do we include them, while they repudiate his last command—the great commission? By enumerating them we put ourselves in a false and most unfavorable position. A comparison of our numbers with our contributions does us injustice. The avowed drones should be counted out; and we hope that our brother, the careful compiler of the Year Book, will leave them out of the Baptist table next year, putting them, if so disposed, in a separate head under different denominations."

"And how about the drones that are not avowed? How about the Omission Baptists? And in what relation do the Associations stand to those do-nothing churches? Suppose that a church, year after year, reports no contributions to christian benevolence; is it not the duty of the Association to inquire into the matter, just as much as though the church were unsound in doctrine? We believe that it is the duty of the Association. A church that sets at naught Christ's commands, has and ought to have no place among Baptist Churches."

REMARKS: Yes, O yes, count them out, by all means; if any of the Old Primitive Order of Baptists who repudiate modern unscriptural missionary plans for fleecing and deceiving the people have become mixed up with your national religious organizations, cast them out, by all means, and as soon as possible; for it is written of the Lord's chosen people, "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." (Num. 23:9) "My kingdom", saith Christ, "is not of this world", nor does it require human power or policy to sustain it; for, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the

bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about and instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." (Deut. 33:8-12) "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone". "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee? O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places." (Deut. 33:28, 29)

If the National Baptists then have hitherto counted any of the Lord's Israel in to swell their number, let them now count them out. Let them remember how it fared with the Philistines, when they had taken the ark of the Lord and set it up in the house of Dagon, how soon they discovered the necessity of counting it out, for Dagan could not stand before it. Egypt also had to count the Hebrews out, when the time had come for their deliverance.

Count them out, ye National Missionary Baptist, just as your missionary brethren who compassed sea and land with their missionary operations counted out the disciples of Christ, when they agreed that if any among them should confess him, they should be counted out of their synagogues.

The "National Baptist" says. "If they", the Anti-Mission Baptists, "denied the divinity of the Lord, we should not reckon them among us." Why not? Do you refuse any who pay the initiation fee in current money? Your constitution, unless it has been changed, will admit to membership, life membership or directorship, any who

will pay the stipulated sum required, without inquiring concerning their faith.

"You imply a charge, that those whom you wish to count out as Anti-Mission Baptists repudiate the last command of Christ, the great commission. This charge we peremptorily deny, and challenge the author of the slander to the proof. What was the last command of Christ in the commission? Was it, "Send ye into all the world--send ye and teach all nations, and teach them to observe all things which the President, Directors, and Co. of the Mission Societies shall command you?" Or did he command his disciples the apostles, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Teaching them--what? Were they to teach them to institute Mission Societies, collect funds, establish Theological Schools, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and send them to all nations? If so, we have read the word to no profit. As we read the Savior's command, it was that the apostles of the Lamb should go (not send) and teach all nations, baptizing them, etc., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them, (the apostles) to whom this command was given. They were not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, but the commandments of Christ; no more, no less. Who then are they that repudiate the Savior's instructions and commands in the commission? Let the accuser of our brethren how a single percept of our Savior's commands that we repudiate, or cease to accuse us of disloyalty to the King of Zion.

We can conceive of no reason the New Order of Church and State, National, or Missionary Baptists have for including the Bible Baptists in their annual reports, but that suggested by the "National Baptist", namely, to swell

their number, or to take away their reproach; but as there is no concord between Christ and Belial--no agreement between the temple of God and idols, we second the motion that the Anti-Missionary Baptists be counted out from the fraternity of the Nationals; for as the Nationals despair of making any money out of us, we shall be as unpalatable to them as the prophet of the Lord was to the whale, and they will be quite as ready to count us out, as the monster of the deep was to count out poor old Jonah.

It seems from the wailings of the "National" that the New School Baptists are annoyed by drones in their hive; which, being interpreted, means that they have members who do not contribute freely to their filthy lucre to fill the bag of those Judases who have charge of the funds. Now we ask, "Of what use can they be to a missionary organization, if the institution can make no money out of them?" In the church of the living God the poor have the gospel preached unto them; but in a modern mission establishment they are drones, and must be counted out of the missionary hive. Suppose they are sound in the doctrine of the Bible, what will that avail if they cannot or will not contribute freely to swell the income of a bloated, anti-christian clergy? Well, put on the last, and count out the drones. Let their names, with those of the anti-missionaries, be cast out as evil.

April 15, 1875

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May 4, 1980

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

I would like to express a few thoughts on the law and justice for your consideration.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein. They were created by him and for him. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11). It is for his honor, glory and

pleasure that all things exist; yet there are those who say that he did not create the devil and that he did not want sin in the world. Both of these contentions are disproved by Job. "His hand hath formed the crooked serpent." (Job 26:13). And, "What his soul desireth, even that he doeth." (Job 23:13). If God had desired to keep sin out of the world I am sure he has the power to do so, for, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What deest thou?" (Dan. 4:35). Not only did God form the crooked serpent, he gave Satan all the power he possesses: "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom. 13:1). But it is very comforting to the children of God to know that Satan can go no further than permitted of God, for he has put a hedge around his children that cannot be penetrated (Job 1:10), but according to the will of God. Satan does torment, afflict and use every vice against us to try our faith, as he did Job, but he can never take our life: for it is eternal and hid with Christ in God. In this, Satan is doing the will of God, for all these trials and afflictions work together for our good. This is the furnace thru which we must pass: the trial of our faith. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (I Pet. 4:12-13).

God has a purpose for sin in the world, but he is not the author of it: for sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4); and entered the world by man: "Wherefore, by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." When God formed man of the dust of the earth he made him upright, but subject to vanity. And being made

subject to vanity, man fell from his lofty estate into a state of sin; from whence he had no power to recover. I am sure that had God desired to do so he would have made man in some other fashion: but who is man that he should question why God made him thus? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

The purpose of sin in the world and the salvation of God's children from its curse is co-existent with God: and Christ stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world as that salvation. God's law is just and holy, and his justice demands the death of every transgressor. Christ paid justice all her due when he hung on the cross of Calvary, bled and died for the transgressions of his children, the ones chosen in him before the foundation of the world. He was made a curse for us, for, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."

But how can justice be satisfied if the just suffer the penalty of the unjust? We know of no law that would allow anyone to be put to death in the room and stead of someone else who has been found guilty of offence worthy of death. Be they father, mother, brother, sister, or friend, and regardless of their desire to do so, they could never truly serve justice by dying for the guilty. Should one be put to death in such a case murder would be the result and the guilty one would still be deserving of death.

When God formed Adam and placed him in the garden of Eden Eve was in him. God took a rib from Adam and made a woman. "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her to the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." Eve was deceived by the crooked serpent and ate of the forbidden fruit. Adam was not deceived, but because of his great love for his bride he also ate of the forbidden fruit: and both

died. To deny this would be to proclaim God a liar; for he said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Death means to be separated from or cut off, therefore they surely were separated from their fellowship and standing with God, and cast out of the garden.

Adam is a type or shadow of Jesus Christ, the image of him who is to come. As Eve was in Adam, so is Christ's bride in him; the bride being the church, "which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:23). Christ is the head of the body, the church; and we are the body, and "members in particular." (I Cor. 12:27). Jesus loved his bride with an everlasting love and would die for her that he might redeem her from the curse of the law. But in his Godhead he could not die, therefore he became incarnate. He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham and was born of the virgin Mary who was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost. Therefore he was verily God and verily man. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that thru death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. 2:14-15). We read in Heb. 10:5, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, "Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin; and Christ was the sacrifice, the body prepared, that he might shed his blood on the tree of Calvary and perfect forever them that are sanctified. Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. They are one body: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. 5:30).

When Christ was nailed to the cross, his people were in him, and they died in

him. Therefore we see now how justice was satisfied when the Just was slain for the unjust; and prove that he did not die for all the Adamic race as is taught by the Arminian people. His people died in him, were buried in him, and they arose in him. And when he shall come again, without sin unto salvation, these vile bodies shall be changed like unto his glorious body. Then shall we see him as he is and be with him forever.

The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves who were crucified with him, but they did not break the legs of Christ. This was done that the scripture might be fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." I believe this is significant, in that had they broken his bones they would have broken the children of God. Glory be unto God, this cannot be done!

Dearly Beloved Brethren, knowing that the scriptures are of no private interpretation, and knowing my great weakness, I can only pray that these scriptures have been rightly divided and hope that I am included in those for whom the Lord shed his precious blood. Cast a mantle of charity over my errors and may God grant that you remember me when at the throne of Grace.

Clifford Wilbanks

2764 Clifton Ave., N.W.

Roanoke, Va. 24017

June 20, 1980

Dear Editors of the *Signs of the Times*:

It is my privilege to send in, at this time, articles for your consideration. Each one of the contributors have had articles in the *Signs*, except Sister Myrtle Thomas, who is a member of County Line, and in her 80th year, we have communicated by pen for many years. I have enjoyed same, I copied her last to me, let her read it, and she, tho reluctantly, because of her poor expressions, of so great a subject as "Salvation by Grace", gave her permission to send same for your consideration. Dear Brother; may He that

said to Peter, "what is that to thee? follow thou me", in these perilous times, strengthen you. When so many are saying, I'm of this one and I'm of that one. May I ask, Who has delivered. Whom do we trust that will yet deliver, and who is he that has made all things beautiful in his time but he that still says, with power, "What is that to thee? follow thou me". May we be given a humble heart and lowly mind, that we could say, with those of old, "For our conversation is in heaven", then I would not have the thought I am of this one or that one, but that my trust is in him, that bear the earths huge pillars up, Ps. 75:3 that a poor sinner such as I, am yet suffered to grace the stage of action, says "he has not changed". He that gave me sight to see my lost and ruined condition more than 50 years ago, still reigns in righteousness, and;

- 1 There's not a sparrow nor a worm
But's found in God's decrees;
He raises Monarchs to their thrones,
And sinks them if he please.
- 2 If light attend the course I run
'Tis he provides those rays;
And 'tis his hand that hides my sun,
If darkness cloud my days.
- 3 When he reveals the Book of Life
O may I read my name
Among the chosen of his love,
The followers of the Lamb?
63 Gadsby's Selections

After these many years, tho so often feeling out of the good way and so utterly unworthy in self, I still have hope there was a work within that says "Follow me" that He begun and still carries on; Even this morning, by faith in Him, I in a moment was back in Botetourt County, where I first felt His delivering hand and saw the beauty of his whole creation praising Him, which was a melting of heart this day, and as then I was speechless, at the glory of the Lord.

He is all I have that shall remain, should I know any other name. May each ask ourselves, What have we but what we have received and if we have of

Him received all that is of worth to us, is it not of worth, to yet follow "Him".

Please excuse the poor arranging and small words that point out such a great subject. Which brought to mind a book by Elder John Rowe on the, Sovereignty of God, Which had a quotation on the fly, "I think I love the doctrine this book points out better than my own life" and was signed by my great grandmother, Violet Turner, one of the charter members of County Line. What a living union I felt to her, tho at that date I had known so little of her. Again may we humbly hear, "What is that to thee, follow thou me".

Farewell,
Noel F. Conner
(We hope to print the articles Bro. Conner
mentions shortly. Editor)

Olympia, Washington
To the Signs of the Times:

I am enclosing a check for two years subscription to the *Signs of the Times*. Use the balance as you see fit.

I enjoy the paper very much. I don't get to go to church very often due to health conditions. It is good to have the paper to read. I am 85 years old.

In Christian Hope,
Maude Schwartz

FOR THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Near Waynesborgh
Nov. 6, 1835

Dear Brother Beebe: I have just returned from a short, but laborious tour in the edge of West Virginia, among a few of the scattered sheep and lambs of the Redeemer, and among whom I enjoyed a considerable degree of satisfaction, as I believe they are lovers of Truth. Two of them joined to obtain one copy of your worthy paper, and I have also two other subscribers. Dear Brother, from reading your paper, I have been much encouraged to stand fast in the liberty of

the gospel and face my opposers with christian fortitude, altho' the religious world is in utter confusion. For while the multitude of professors are fondly dreaming of the early dawn of a glorious millennium, to be ushered in by human effort, and in which all mankind are to have a true knowledge of Christ, and all act in concert with each other in all things pertaining to the Redeemer's Kingdom; a little despised few are often found weeping over the declension of vital piety and extensive apostacy from the faith once delivered to the saints; viewing the spirit of the day as pregnant with fatal consequences to the cause of godliness and truth. And from the persecuting taunts, connected with the bold attempts to brake up the churches and change the theology of the Baptists, they are looking forward on the day, when they, as the last witnesses of gospel truth, must bring up the rear of martyrdom, and seal with their own blood their valor for the truth which shall remain on the earth.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself; so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify of the grace of God. Yet these things trouble me, for this is a day of peculiar trial to the saints--a day in which light is called darkness, and darkness light; truth is called error, and error is abundantly propagated for truth; the doctrine of grace blasphemously called antinomianism, and the delusive whims of Fuller and Hopkins, thundering from most of our pulpits; that is to say, the Atonement of Christ is general to all and special to part, and efficacious to none until they do their part--and for want of new plans and cash to drive on, millions of souls redeemed by Christ must go to hell; but, say they, at our protracted meetings we will raise a great storm and convert all the sinners while their passions are warm. It is true they proselyte considerable numbers, and

thereby fill up their churches with graceless professors; and like priest-like people, "they are heady, high minded lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God--having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof"; from such I am bound to turn away. I am often pained to see many, who appear to be christians, following their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of; and even many who profess to believe our doctrine will say, It is not profitable to preach the doctrine of the gospel given us, as practical preaching. But, Brethren, with equal propriety Christ may be charged with preaching an unprofitable sermon, (John 6), when in reply to the caviling of the Jews, he says, "Murmur not among yourselves, no man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day"; and he continued his sermon in a glorious development of the way of life and salvation through the sacrifice of himself, so that many of his soft-mouthed, world-loving disciples began to baul out, "It is a hard saying, who can hear it?" and turned backward and walked no more with him. Yet this sermon only tended to expose their hypocrisy, and like the cask of new wine which through fermentation casts out its dregs and renders the body more pure; but, brethren, "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them, for they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple". Such men are very numerous among us; but we must expect them, for the Scripture tells us they shall arise, and if the prophetic part fail, why not the promises which are yea and amen.

But I must conclude my epistle; I have not written because I thought myself capable of writing for public inspection, but because I thought it might be strengthening to my dear brethren

throughout the extensive circulation of the Signs of the Times, to hear that there are a few names yet in Western Pennsylvania who are not disposed to pay an implicit worship to the new measures of the day, neither are we drunken with the wine of her fornication. Brethren, farewell at present.

In hopes of Eternal Life, I subscribe myself, most affectionately yours,

Barnet Wittach

Signs of the Times
January 15, 1836

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

REMARKS ON JOHN XIV. 1-3

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. 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."

The last solemn Passover supper that was ever to be eaten by divine authority, had just been celebrated by our Lord with his disciples. The last lingering moments of the legal dispensation were ebbing away. Judas had received the sop, and Satan had entered his heart and taken the helm of his covetous, traitorous, perfidious mind, and he was at this moment negotiating with the priests and rulers of the people to betray the Son of man. The hour beyond which Divine Justice could defer his claim for vengeance no longer, had arrived. The lowering clouds had gathered thick and darkly around the dear Redeemer; his soul oppressed with sorrow was bowed within him as the sin-bearing sacrifice now about to be offered. Yet, painful as was the bitter anguish of his holy soul, his thoughts were turned to his disciples; and amidst his stifled groans

for what was now crushing his own soul, he said to his disciples, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." And that little while the golden moments were closely occupied in fortifying their minds for the dreadful scene which they were about to witness. Every moment was fully occupied, from the eating the passover and institution of the supper, to the time of his arrest, in instructions to the disciples, and in communion, prayer and intercession to the Father. The substance of all these instructions and prayers are recorded in the xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, and xviii chapters. Let them be often read and solemnly considered by all who love the Lord and hope in his salvation.

On such an occasion how deeply interesting and vitally important are the words which we are about to consider. Never was there such an occasion before; never can there be again, to try the faith and confidence of the saints of God. How suitable and how consoling the words: "Let not your heart be troubled." Although these words were addressed to the eleven, and through them to all the church of God, but one heart is recognized; he does not say hearts, but heart, for the primitive disciples were of one heart and one mind. There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith and one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Not the heart of stone on which the Sinai covenant with Moses and the whole commonwealth of Israel was written, which was the centre of their national vitality, by which they were embodied in distinction from all other nations; but that heart of flesh which was given to the mystical body of Christ, for Christ in his church is the centre of spiritual vitality, of love, of unity, and identity. He is the life and immortality of the church, which is his body. This spirit of Christ in the members of his church is but one spirit,

or heart, sending its vitality to every member. This heart was to be assailed by a dreadful trial which was now about to fall with such crushing weight upon them. But, as though at once to let them know that he was fully aware of the approaching trial, and to give them a comforting assurance that it should result in their good and his glory, the kind, sympathetic words of encouragement are graciously spoken, "Yield not to despair; let not your heart be troubled.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The trial now approaching was peculiarly calculated to test their faith in him as the true Messiah that was to come. Although it might not shake their confidence in God, or lead them to fear that there is no God, was it not calculated to make them fear that Jesus was not the Son of God and Savior of his people, as they had understood him to be? It certainly did have the effect. They said, despairingly, "We verily thought it was he that should redeem Israel;" but alas! that confidence was shaken when they saw him crucified, and his lifeless body laid in the grave. Still though fearing that they had been mistaken in regarding him as the Son of God, they betrayed no lack of faith in God. Now these words of assurance seem to imply that there was in all they should witness, if properly understood, nothing that ought any sooner to be allowed to shake their confidence in him as the Meditorial Head of the church, than to shake their faith in the eternal Father.

Again, the same faith which recognized the Father, also must necessarily recognize the Son of God as one with the Father, for none can know the Father but by revelation of Christ, and none can come unto the Father but by him. Our faith cannot be so divided as to believe in God and disbelieve in Christ, for there is but one faith, as we have proved, and he that has by that one faith seen the Son, hath seen the Father also. For the Father is in him, and he is in the Father; he and the Father are one.

"In my Father's house are many mansions." This is the affirmation of an existing truth, and a most glorious truth. And his ability to describe his Father's house was as evidence that he was the Son of God. A stranger could not describe that house which is made without hands, and which is eternal in the heavens. But Jesus is the Faithful and true Witness. No man hath ascended up into heaven; but the Son of God has come down from heaven, and reveals all that is necessary for us to know of the house of God, and if there were anything more concerning his Father's house which his children ought to know, he would have told them. The house of God is his dwelling place - his place of permanent abode, where he makes his home. His house is figuratively set forth in types and shadows of the Old Testament, as the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, as the Temple in Jerusalem; and in a more spiritual manifestation made to the patriarch Jacob, when in rapture he exclaimed, "Verily, God was in this place, and I knew it not; this is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." The gospel church and kingdom of Christ is called the house of God. Ye are God's building. — I Cor. iii. 9. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ." — 1 Pet. ii. 5. The house of God is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament scriptures, as Gen. xxviii. 17, Josh. ix. 23, Judg. xviii. 31, and xx. 18, Psa. xlii. 4, lv. 14, lli. 8, lxxxiv. 10, Isa. ii. 3, Mic. iv. 2, and in very many other passages. And yet we are informed that the Lord dwelleth not in houses made with hands. Figuratively he was said to dwell in the tabernacle in the wilderness, in the temple at Jerusalem, but all these were types, pointing to Christ and his church, or body, as the true spiritual dwelling place of our God. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever;

here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread."—Psa. cxxxii. 13-15. "His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." — Psa. xxxvii. 1-3. Therefore the holy psalmist could say, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."—Psa. cxxi. 1. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee"— Psa. lxxxiv. 1 & 5. The psalmist exulted in the certainty of dwelling in the house of the Lord forever, because the Lord was his Shepherd.—Psa. xxiii. 6. This was the fullness of his aspiration. "One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple."—Psa. xxvii. 4. This is the house which our Redeemer calls "My Father's house," in which he says, "are many mansions." Many opinions have been expressed in regard to the figurative import of the many mansions here spoken of, and to our mind the precise meaning is not so clear as we could desire. The true meaning, whatever it be, must be important, as we infer from the words of our Lord, "If it were not so, I would have told you." A mansion, in the modern application of the word, is a dwelling place, sometimes applied to a house, and sometimes to apartments or rooms of a house. In our text a distinction is implied between the house and the mansions. "In my Father's house are many mansions." The mansions are many, but the house of God is but one. So when other figures are used to express the same idea - one body and many members, or one city and many inhabitants, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."— Psa. xlvi. 4.

In the text last named the city of God, which is but one, contains many tabernacles of the Most High. The same idea is expressed 1 Cor. xii. 12-14. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, for the body is not one member, but many." "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. — I Cor. xii 18-20. In changing the figures which represent the same kingdom or church, from a house to a city, what in the former would be appropriately called mansions, in the latter would be more clearly expressed as houses, or tabernacles, and when a body is the figure, members of that body convey the same meaning. This to every citizen of the city of God is an appropriate dwelling, for Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together; whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David."— Psa. cxxii. 3-5. There is in the house of God a place or mansion for every member of the household of God; thrones of judgment to be occupied by the apostles to sit upon, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The sons of Zebedee could not change their allotted mansions or positions, so as to sit one on the right and the other on the left hand of the king, when he should come into his kingdom. And as members of Christ, God has set each one in its appropriate place in the body of Christ as it hath pleased him. In the types of the ceremonial law the inheritance of each tribe was distinctly marked out and secured to each by an inalienable title.

And so also in the positions assigned officially to patriarchs, prophets, priests, levites, captains, kings and subjects. These types all pointed to the order of the house of God under the gospel dispensation, for in them were exhibited the patterns of the things of the heavenly kingdom, and although they were all confined to the worldly sanctuary and carnal ordinances of a fleshly or carnal Israel under the law, undoubtedly prefigured the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, under the gospel dispensation in the true tabernacle which God has pitched and not man.

The question may very naturally arise, if this be the sense in which our Lord spake of the many mansions of his Father's house, why this special mention should be made of them on this most solemn occasion? All the words of our divine Lord were fitly spoken, well timed, and full of vital interest to the saints. The organization of the gospel kingdom was now very soon to be manifested. The law and the prophets were until John; from the coming of John the kingdom of Christ was preached, that it was at hand, but the places in the gospel kingdom could not be attained until the last jot and tittle of the law should be fulfilled, until Christ should do and suffer all that was written of him in the law and in the prophets and in the psalms; for he must suffer and then enter into his glory, in coming into which he would ascend his Mediatorial throne, and when the Son of man should sit on the throne of his glory, the apostles who had followed him in the regeneration should also sit upon their twelve thrones. The deliverance of all his people should then be effected, and each should receive the mansion which was prepared for him in the house of God. Fully with Christ in his death, all his members were quickened together with him, and they raised up together and made to sit together in Christ Jesus. But, in all this, as in all things, Christ must have the pre-eminence. He must go

before them in sufferings and death, must be the first fruits of them that slept in his resurrection, yet by vital union and identity of spirit "bearing his sheaves with him." Hence the suitability of this solemn occasion to speak to them of the mansions, or heavenly places so soon to be occupied by them, when he should remove the bars of death by abolishing death, and bring immortality to light in his resurrection — when at his command the everlasting doors should be opened, and the everlasting gates should lift up their heads, and the king of glory should come in with all the trophies of his deathless victory, and by his triumph prove that to believe in God, is to believe also in him, and that the throne of his kingdom should be as firmly established and forever continue as unshaken as the throne of his eternal Father.

"If it were not so, I would have told you." They had been led to expect this, and he would certainly have undeceived them if it were not so. Notwithstanding the terrible scenes immediately before them, which should so much try their confidence in him, the gloomy night of trial would soon be terminated, and the sable shades of darkness should be driven from their skies by the bursting light of his resurrection and the establishment of his kingdom and government as the Prince of Peace.

"I go to prepare a place for you." From the explanation which he gave the disciples in this connection, we learn that he was going to his Father; for he said to them, "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." And in reply to the inquiry of Thomas he said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." This agrees with what he said unto Mary after his resurrection, and commanded her to tell the same to his brethren: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and to your God." —John xx. 17. He had also informed them that he was going to

receive a kingdom, and to return again unto them. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on the thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."—Luke xxii. 29, 30. This kingdom, which was appointed unto him of his Father, is the place which, according to our understanding, he was going to prepare for his disciples. Although as an inheritance of the heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ, the kingdom of heaven was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, according to Matt. xxv. 34, yet its manifest redemption and gospel organization awaited the resurrection and ascension of Christ. The God of heaven was to set it up in the days of those kings of whom Daniel had prophesied. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."—Psa. ii. 8. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," &c. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—Heb i. 5, 8, 9; Psa. xlv. 6, 7. Thus it was written, and thus it behooved him to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and then to enter into his Mediatorial glory, as the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God our Savior.

"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." The if in this case is not to express doubt or uncertainty, for he had told the disciples that it was expedient for them, and that he would soon go away, and that his object in going away was to prepare a place for them where he would dwell with them uninterrupted

forever. "Yet a little while and ye shall see me no more; and again a little while and ye shall see me." Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me hereafter. It was necessary that he should first suffer, and be the first to rise from the dead, but he assures them that he will come again and receive them unto himself, that where he is there should they also be. True and faithful to his words of promise, he came again unto them, after his resurrection, and abode with them a sufficient length of time to demonstrate his resurrection, and after his ascension he came unto them by his Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, organized his kingdom in its gospel order, and into it received his disciples to go no more out forever. And again will he come to them in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and, in their final resurrection in his image will he receive them to himself, that where he is there they may be also. It is the will of the Father, that of all he has given to Christ he should loose nothing, but that he should raise them up again at the last day. And this is also the will of the son, who in his intercession has said, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," &c.—John xvii. 24.

(Editorial by Elder Gilbert Beebe May 1, 1865)

FROM GEORGIA

Monticello, Georgia

Dear Elder Williams,

Please renew my *Signs* subscription, using the balance as needed.

I love the *Signs of the Times*. I cannot remember a time in my life when it was not in our home. Recent baseless persecution hurts me and I pray that God will lend strength to endure and bring the dear Editors and publisher through to the praise of His dear Name. The Lord is ever with His own.

The valley He has promised to exalt;

the mountain (afflictions) He has promised to make low; the crooked things (persecutions) He has promised to make straight; the rough places (doubts and fears) He has promised to make plain. May we be thankful that all is in His hands. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter". (John 13:7)

Elder Poole's editorial in the September issue is very lovely, full of praise to the power, glory, and mercy of God. I read it with tears and a swelling heart. What a Saviour we have; what a Rock of Ages for the children of Israel. All undeserved, even undesired, until He breathes life into the dry bones.

We remember with pleasure being with you and Sister Williams at Brother Gold Minter's. We would desire the privilege of being more often with those for whom we feel deep love and fellowship, yet we are thankful for the times we have enjoyed with those of "like precious faith".

In bonds of love and hope,
Florence A. Gibson

O B I T U A R I E S

WILLIAM HERMAN PITTMAN

Brother William Herman Pittman was born September 8, 1902 and God called him home to rest in Jesus on October 16, 1979, at the age of 77.

Brother Herman was a believer in the sound doctrine of Salvation by Grace.

He united with Creeches Primitive Baptist Church February 25, 1973. His baptismal service was held March 11, 1973.

Brother Herman will be missed by his family and friends who loved him so much. But we feel that our loss is his eternal gain.

As those of us who knew him best, we know that his earthly body was weak. His suffering was great during many years of declining health. However, we believe that God's Grace was sufficient for him, and that he has fallen asleep to await the calling

together of all the saints in that great and glorious kingdom with our Heavenly Father, to sing his praises forever and ever.

Written by: A loving sister
Thelma P. Boyette
Elder D. B. Stokes - Moderator
Jeffrey O. Creech - Clerk

BROTHER RAYMOND HENDERSON

It is with a feeling of sadness that I attempt to write a few words in memory of Brother Raymond Henderson, whom we, the Church of North East, highly esteemed.

May we bow in humble submission to God's will who called our brother in Christ from this world of suffering and sorrow to be with Him forevermore.

Brother Raymond was born August 12, 1894. He passed away February 27, 1980, making his stay on earth 84 years. He was married to Lillian Morton in 1921. To this union was born 4 children, 3 sons and 1 daughter. The sons are. R. V., R. H., S. John Henderson, and the daughter is Virginia Coghill.

Brother Raymond joined the church in 1962. He was faithful in attending church as long as his health would permit him. On account of his failing health the last four or five years of his life, he was unable to attend church regularly.

His funeral was conducted by his Pastor, Elder J. T. Prescott, at Jones Funeral Home in Jacksonville, N.C., He was laid to rest in Onslow Memorial Park beneath a beautiful mound of flowers.

This was written by request of the church in conference with one copy to the family, one copy to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, and one put on church record.

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

SISTER BESSIE DALTON VASSER

It pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from our midst Sister Bessie D. Vasser on May 5, 1980.

She was born in Pittsylvania County on October 30, 1902, the daughter of the late David Booker Dalton and Teddie Lester Dalton.

She is survived by her husband, Bradley N. Vasser, two sons, Felix Vasser of Gretna, Virginia and George Vasser of Hurt, Virginia, two daughters, Mrs. Clara Brumfield of Gretna, Virginia, and Mrs. Odessa Hill of Timberlake, North Carolina; three brothers, Roy C. Dalton and Bethel Dalton, both of Gretna and Gladdy Dalton of Danville, Virginia, also one sister Nettie D. Vasser of Gretna, Virginia, fourteen grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren.

Sister Bessie was received into the fellowship of Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on September 24, 1933, and was baptized by her beloved pastor Elder C. T. Evans the same day. She was a faithful member as long as her health permitted, but had been unable to attend her meetings for some time.

Funeral services were conducted at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on May 7, 1980, by her pastor, Elder O. K. Tench, and her body was laid to rest beneath a beautiful mound of flowers in the church cemetery.

Sister Bessie will be greatly missed by her family, brethren, and friends, but may the family and we at Weatherford Church be reconciled to our loss and to God's will.

Written by: Marvin Brumfield
Elder O. K. Tench, Moderator
L. H. Doss, Clerk

RUBY DALTON BRUMFIELD

With a heart pained with sorrow and filled with grief, I humbly attempt to write an obituary for my beloved Mother, and your beloved sister in Weatherford Church, Mrs. Ruby Dalton Brumfield.

Born January 2, 1908, and passing on April 13, 1980, made her stay on earth 72 years, 3 months and 11 days. It seems such a short time since I attempted to write an obituary for her beloved husband, my Father, and your brother in Weatherford Church, Mr. O. R. (Doc) Brumfield, who preceeded her in death March 29, 1979.

She was faithful to the church until the day of her death. On the day of her passing on, she enjoyed so much the fellowship of the brothers and sisters at the services at Springfield Church.

She was a firm believer in salvation by Grace, believing the Lord has fixed all

things. It is well said that a man's days are numbered, and his time appointed, and his bounds are with the Lord, and he cannot pass them.

She was received into the fellowship of Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church December 31, 1966, and was baptized by her pastor, Elder O. K. Tench, April 23, 1967.

She leaves to mourn their loss, two daughters, Shirley Dalton and Sylvia Hughes, four sons; Calvin, Carvel, Donnie, and Billy Brumfield, eight grandchildren, two brothers and four sisters.

Her funeral was held at Weatherford Church by Elders O. K. Tench, Raymond Goad, and Denver Simpson. Her body was laid to rest beside her husband of neary 54 years, beneath a beautiful mound of flowers in Weatherford Cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord and Savior.

May God enable us to be reconciled to his will, to be thankful for the time he gave her on earth, and to say, not my will, but thine be done.

Written by her son,
Billy W. Brumfield

SISTER FANNIE DAVIS JOYNER

By the request of the Mill Branch Primitive Baptist Church, I would like to attempt to write a few lines in memory of Sister Fannie Davis Joyner, though I feel my unworthiness for this task.

Sister Joyner was born on September 1, 1892, and passed from this life on September 9, 1979 in Nash General Hospital. She was the last survivor of the family of Henderson A. Davis and Bid Davis.

Sister Joyner was the widow of Elder Johnnie Joyner. She is survived by three sons, William Fred, Meedy B., and Willie Marvin Joyner; also two daughters, Mattie Ruth Barnes and Fannie Estelle Williford, all of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Also she had several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Sister Joyner was united with the Mill Branch Primitive Baptist Church in October 1915, and was baptized by Elder Meedy B. Williford. She was a member of our church for nearly 64 years. We of the Church found Sister Joyner to be such a dear person. She was loved by everyone that knew her. She loved her church and family and was

faithful to the church always. As long as she was able she enjoyed entertaining the brothers and sisters and their friends in her home. It is a great loss for us here on earth, but a great gain for her, for I feel that she is one of God's chosen little ones called by His grace.

Sister Joyner's funeral was conducted at Johnson's Funeral Home by the Pastor, Elder Harvey Holland, and Elder Henry Jones. She was laid to rest at the family cemetery in Nash County.

We at Mill Branch Church wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Sister Joyner.

Read and approved in conference the first week-end in August, 1980. And agreed to send a copy to the *Signs of the Times*, a copy recorded on our church book, and a copy to the family.

Written by Sister Elsie V. Baker
Elder Harvey Holland, Moderator
Sister Estelle Joyner Williford, Clerk

SISTER MYRTLE WOOD ALEXANDER

Sister Myrtle Wood Alexander was born October 13, 1901. Her parents were John and Sallie (Proffitt) Wood.

She joined the Antioch Primitive Baptist Church the first Sunday in April, 1933.

She married Louie R. Alexander, June 5, 1920. To this union was born six daughters, Miss Sallie Alexander of the home, Mrs. Ruby Kelsto, Houston, Texas, Mrs. Iris Butler of Camden, Ark., Mrs. Billie Gorman of Foreman, Ark., Mrs. Dixie Reed, Alvin, Texas, and Mrs. Arma Mata, Laredo, Texas.

She passed away from this life October 26, 1979. Her funeral was held at Camden Funeral Home by Elder E. J. Lambert. Burial followed in Lakeside Cemetery near Camden, Arkansas.

She was a firm believer in salvation by grace. We miss her and hope to meet her again some sweet day.

Written by her daughter,
Iris Butler
Camden, Arkansas

NEAOMIA ACKER RHOADES

Another one of the Lord's saints has been called home. Sister Neaomia Rhoades of 619 Autumn Drive, Winnsboro, Texas was born

April 6, 1892 in Hopkins County, Texas to Cap Fuller and Mary Huckaby Fuller and departed her life here July 24, 1980.

She was first married to Daniel Webster Acker in 1910. Mr. Acker died April 21, 1931. To this union was born two sons and two daughters. She married Jacob Murphy Rhoades in 1943. Mr. Rhoades died October 26, 1961. One son, Willie B. Acker, proceeded her in death. She is survived by the following, one son Travis Acker of Dallas, two daughters, Mrs. Almedia Speight of Winnsboro and Mrs. Johnnie Rhoades of Athen, Texas, four stepsons, Earl, Clyde, Arnold, and Troy Rhoades, three step daughters, Mrs. Ivy Elledge, Mrs. Ila Fay Black and Mrs. Cary Lee Gilbert, ten grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and one great-greatgrandchild.

Sister Rhoades wrote the writer of this obituary a long letter relating some of her many experiences. During one period of time she went for a long time with a cast down feeling and felt if she were to die that she would go to hell. She would attempt to pray but no relief came. One day a voice spoke to her and said, "Stand still and wait on the Lord." This she was given to do with some peace of mind.

She was preparing to attend the association at Hopewell church when a voice spoke and said, "Get in the church." She related to me the following: "The next morning on our way to church the trees, the grass, everything looked so beautiful and when I entered church, I saw a beautiful light, the whole building shone so bright. It was the most beautiful sight I have ever seen." She asked for a home with Good Hope Church, was received, and baptized.

She remained a faithful member, a lovely and gracious sister who loved her church and all those who believed in the God she was given to love.

Her sweet face will be missed by all who knew her. We feel our loss is her eternal gain.

Her funeral was conducted by the writer with interment at Harmony Cemetery to await the call from Jesus Christ, "Child come home".

Good Hope Church, while in conference August 23, 1980, requested the above obituary be written and one copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Elder Joe Hamrick, Moderator