

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 153

KEELING, VA., JANUARY 1986

NO. 01

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84

Fayette, Ala. 35555

Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Elder D. B. Stokes

102¹/₂ Daniel Court

Jacksonville, N.C. 28540

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566. All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

Psalm 127

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

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EDITORIAL

With a prayer for Gods help and guidance, we now enter into the one hundred and fifty-third year of publishing the Signs Of The Times. We want to thank each of you subscribers for your support, our editors for their good editorials and the God of all grace from whom all our blessings come.

Editors

The following is transcription of a sermon delivered by Elder Kenneth R. Key, third Sunday in March 1985 at Moons Creek Church. (Edited and condensed for publication).

Reading from the First Chapter of Philippians, the sixth verse, we find these words: "*Being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of*

Jesus Christ."

What more comforting a feeling could we have than to feel that God has begun a work in us, and that He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. When we first were given to feel that hope in Him; when we first were given to feel that love for the Church and if not deceived was given a view through that gate called beautiful, that we could see the Church of the Living God, and had a desire that we might go therein and be a member of that church.

If you can look back, with me, to the feelings you had of that great joy that sprang up in your heart that gave you to rejoice so much, that you felt you were free of sin - that there would be no more trials - there would be no more sorrows - that you were lifted up in your feelings, seemingly as high above the earth as we could ever be here in this life. It was a great experience. If you could go back with me, in your experience and feel these times again and muse on the things of the past. Maybe not all have placed their name upon a church book, but waiting, as on the porch of Solomon's Temple - which we feel is a type of the Church of God, there on the porch, and have not yet entered therein - but, they hear the singing, they hear the peaching, they enjoy the fellowship of those of like precious faith, and it is a joyeous feeling in their heart.

Here, we find the Apostle Paul speaking unto the Philippian brethren, trying to comfort them in their feelings. No doubt, he knew how that sometimes they came down in doubts and fears, and then they would go back and inquire as did Gideon of Old. He would ask of God - "If, indeed, I have found Grace in thy sight, why have these things befallen me?" In this life, in our journey here, it's a journey through the wilderness. That's the way God chose to lead his people. He said, "I could have carried them through an easier way", but, when He delivered

the children of Israel out from under the Egyptian bondage, He lead them through the wilderness way, and He tells us why He did this. Trouble may come, and they would repent and turn back. Through this, they were toughened for the journey. I think, sometimes, if we had all of our sorrows and afflictions that we must have here in this life, if they fell upon us at one time, we would not be able to bear them. The burdens would be too great. It's through the wilderness that He leads us - through difficult and trying situations, and yet even in this desert and wilderness way there are oasis. There are places of rejoicing. There are refreshing places as we journey along. It is not always through difficult and trying times but a mixture of joy and sorrow.

I believe there are seasons in our lives - in our spiritual lives, as we journey through this land here. I believe there is spring - summer - fall - and winter. Sometimes, it seems that our winters become so long. We become so cold-hearted within ourselves and our winters seem to last for a long time. So many people recently have said to me that they don't have the feeling they once had. They don't have the feeling of that first love. They're filled with doubts and fears, which spring up within them. Some even go to the place, as Peter did and go back fishing. As we go back and think of these things and find parallels in the scriptures, we see we are not the only ones who had or will ever have these feelings. Peter loved Jesus and followed him, and said I will go with you even unto death, if necessary. I will stick close by your side. Yet, Jesus knew his frame. He knew Peter would even doubt Him, and told him even before the cock crows, you will deny me. That is the frame of the carnal man here in this life. Nevertheless, this Peter who loved Jesus so dearly and followed Him so conscientiously and had the desire to stick close by His side, and I think he was just as sincere in

his feelings at that time, as he could ever be. Just like you, when you were first given that love and desire, nothing could cause you to turn back and go any other way. Yet, God suffered Peter to go back fishing, and go back to the things that he once enjoyed, but he caught no fish. It was for a purpose to teach him that in yourself you can do nothing, but in me, all things are possible. He suffers us to go back to the time and place in which we once enjoyed, but you find joy no longer out there in the world. Even the dove that went out from the Ark as the waters were receding, and he came back. He found no place to rest the souls of his feet. There is no place for the children of God to rest the souls of their feet in this world, we have been killed to the things of the world and have been given to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Paul, being confident, tells them when these times come, may God bless you to think upon this. Be confident of this very thing, that He that hath begun a good work in you, He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Jesus told his disciples, I give unto you everlasting life and you shall not perish. This will not perish which God gives unto His children. This pure in heart which is Jesus born in you, the hope of glory. It never dies. There is no end to it. It will be with you and He will perform this work even unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, we must come through this time of doubts and fears.

We find David of Old - one who was a man after God's own heart. He was a man who walked close with Him. He showed his love and feelings when he was called into this work by saying the Lord is my shepherd. He was given to feel so confident at that time he could boldly say the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. There are times when we can say that with great confidence. We can say that with great feelings, because

of the blessings and experiences we have been through, or the times we have felt that God has begun a work in us. That the Lord is my shepherd, and it was so precious - and David says, surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. He didn't feel that anything but goodness and mercy would follow him all the days of his life. Isn't that your feeling when you were drawn into the knowledge of this truth, and given this precious hope in Him - and given to feel that God is your heavenly Father - and that in Him, all things dwell - that everything that you need is stored up there for you - and that He will grant it unto you as you need it here in this world - that He will give unto you and withhold no good thing from you. David had this blessed feeling that surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

I can go back to the time when I was first given a home in the church, and how precious it was to me. Between the time I had joined the church and the time that I was baptized, everyone I come in contact with, I wanted to tell them of this experience - that I felt I had. It was so precious to me. I thought I could tell everyone about it. I could show them, and they would love it, too.

I soon found out that this is not the way it comes. We cannot teach our brother, our neighbor to know the Lord. This is the work of God. He says, I will do this work. I will teach them, and they shall know me. A stranger they will not follow, but this teaching is not of man, but of God, our Heavenly Father as he performs His work in the hearts of His children. You can be confident, this very moment, of this very thing that He who begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. We would if we could - we would teach everyone to see that which is so precious unto us, but we find that we can't do it, and it didn't come to us that way. It is not by flesh and

blood that we are taught these things, but through revelation.

When Jesus asked of Peter - who do you say that I am and Peter said, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Blessed art Thou Simon-bar Jonah, flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you, but my Father who is in Heaven. He told him how he came into the knowledge of this truth. He told him where it came from. He told him who taught this to him.

Let us go back now to David, who had this feeling with him, that surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and then later on when trials and afflictions came unto him, we find him praying unto the Father - "O, Lord, restore unto me again the joys of thy salvation." It seems like his heart had been hardened. That he had been turned cold. That he had become poor in spirit, and he prayed unto the Father. Here's the man who said the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want, and the same man saying, O, Lord, restore unto me again the joys of Thy salvation. You can be confident of this very thing that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. So, dear children, as you journey along and when these trying and difficult times come, and when you become poor in spirit, just remember this God has promised tribulations here - but has promised never to leave you. Never to forsake you - but be with you always even unto the ends of the earth. He knows all of your trials. He never sleeps or slumbers, but is ever watchful over His children. We find, as we journey here, we shall also be as they back in that day. God never changes. I believe the words spoken to the children of Israel are the same as if they were spoken to you today - because it's all unto the household of faith, those who have been taught by the Spirit of God. We find John the Baptist another one who had a

great experience in baptizing the Savior there in river Jordon. He saw the spirit of God come down and light upon his shoulder in the form of a dove, and he heard the voice saying from Heaven - "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We would think if we ever had an experience like this, we would never doubt again. Would you think you would forget this experience, and ever doubt again? Yet, we find John a few days hence shut up in prison, and I believe that's the experience we have from time to time, in our feelings. We're shut up in prison. We can't unlock the prison doors. We can't alleviate this condition. We can't get out of this condition that we're in. It seems we're in so much darkness that we can't even see a ray of light, and we become in doubt and fear just as John did. He sent his disciples out to inquire, is this the Christ, or shall we look for another?

Just that soon, he was brought down to the place where he was doubting. Christ sent the disciples back to John, and said go, and tell him again. Go - and not only tell him again, but show him again - how the deaf ears were opened, etc. Just go back in your experience. There was a time when your ears were deaf. There was a time when you couldn't hear the gospel as it was preached unto the children of God, and a time you couldn't understand spiritual things.

I can go back in my experience, and I know many of you were reared up in a church of this faith and you attended when only a child, having been brought in your mother's arms. There were times back then when you heard the preaching, but you did not understand it. Your ears hadn't been opened, but when it pleased God to open your ears and you began to hear these blessed truths, and this is what He is telling here. Go back and show John again. Go back and tell him again how the deaf ears have been opened and how their hearts have been

given to understand. How the eyes have been opened. They are able to see these things. We have to be shown over and over again, and you can be confident of this very thing - that He that hath begun a good work in you, he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. When you need to be shown again, He will show you again. He will give you a little more evidence. He will give you a little sign as you need it. I believe you will find your daily bread to sustain and keep you along the journey. Haven't you experienced this in your life? Just be about your daily vocation of work, and feel that in some little experience that you could see the hand of the Lord in the matter, and you were given to feel deep within your breast to say THANK YOU, THANK YOU - GOD, feeling that you know for sure that He was with you - that this was a blessing of God, that he was remembering you once more with His tender love and mercy, and affording you with this blessed experience, yes, being confident of this very thing - that He that hath begun a good work in you, He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

I'm glad that He is able, not only to start this work, but perform the work in the hearts of His people. Sometime we start things that we can't finish, but this God has loved you with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness drawn thee. He draws His children out of nature's darkness and brings them into the knowledge of this truth. Aren't you glad it is with loving kindness that He brings you? I don't care how you might have lived before He brought you unto the church. I don't care what you might have done. He doesn't rebuke you. He doesn't tell you when he brings you in that you have been a bad boy or bad girl and all the bad things you've done - but, you will be received with outstretched arms. The prodigal son as he was brought home to the Father's house, and likewise, He brings his children in drawing them.

He says, No one can come unto me except the Father that sent me draw them. That's the only way we can come unto the knowledge of this truth. This is the way this work begins in the hearts of His children. He draws them unto Him. Everyone He draws, they shall come and He says, in no way will they be cast out. He draws them unto him and everyone that is drawn unto Him, they are made willing in the day of his power. I don't care how strong in the world they might have been - where their status in life is, but they can be brought down, being made a beggar, and be brought home to their friends, crying - not of the things that they've done - not boasting of how they've given tithes - how they have done this and that, as we find this in the Pharisee. They went up to the house to pray. There was he who boasted of the things he'd done. He was a man of great works in the world, and he boasted of those things he'd done. I feel he was sincere in that which he was feeling, but there's one that stood afar off - not feeling worthy even to lift his eyes up toward Heaven, but he smote upon his breast and said, Lord, be merciful unto me a sinner. This man went down justified.

Do you feel you have done a lot for the Lord, that has caused him to turn his eyes unto you and be merciful unto you? Rather we come feeling we have done nothing, but it is with loving kindness and tender mercies that He's drawn us, and we come with that prayer within our breast - that the Lord be merciful unto us a sinner.

Being confident that God will just give us that Grace, that we could go being confident of this very thing - that He that hath begun a work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. I feel confident of that thing this morning. Sometime I worry about myself, and look for evidence, has He ever touched me? Do I know anything about the matter? I have never doubted this doctrine or these

words. I have never doubted these promises that God made to His children. Many times I have wondered about my own life, and we find the Apostle Paul - one who has written some 13 books in this Bible, and one that God said was a chosen vessel. A great man of God. As he labored and had a great experience being brought down, and seeing a great light shine round about him - that overpowered him and brought him down, and changed his way, and caused him to go forth preaching salvation by the grace of God. He went into cities feeling that bonds and afflictions await me in every city I go, but none of these things move me. He was willing to spend and be spent in the ministry, the work God put him in. He said, God put me, God put me into the ministry. Paul didn't go into it because he decided he wanted to, but was brought down and he said, He put me into the ministry.

Of all Paul went through - of all the suffering - of all the many stripes that he was beaten and bore - of all the trials and afflictions that he had, going forth and none of these things moved him, God gave him to press on, feeling that God would be with him all the way - even unto the end - and yet there was a time in his feelings that now, after all this time - am I to be a cast-a-way?

I am confident of this very thing, God will perform the work begun in us. He will perform it all the way. You might be cast down, but you will never be destroyed. Why, because he said - that which is within you is greater than that which is in the world. Jesus Christ, the hope of Glory. It is stronger than any power in the world, and there's no power that can take it away from you.

We travel through a baren land, with dangers thick on every hand. It is a troublesome, difficult journey, but, just think about it. Jesus, who went before us, he made the path for His children. He was acquainted with grief. He knew much

sorrow, and He was an innocent man. He never rolled sin under his tongue as a sweet morsel. He was not guilty as you and I, who have committed sins - and yet, He took our sins and He bore them - carried them to the cross, and He paid the redemption price - shed his blood - gave His life that we might receive the joys of his crucifixion - that we might receive the benefits of His crucifixion.

He went before us; He made the way - and you can be confident in this very thing that if He's begun a work in you, He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

May God continue to bless you as you journey through this wilderness way - that you might feel confident along the journey, that He has begun a work in you and that He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Jesus preached this doctrine to his disciples that No one can come unto me except the Father who sent Me draw him and many went away. Not all were disciples, Many were following just for fishes and loaves. There were 12 disciples that stayed with him. The others went away. He said to this twelve - Why would you not also go away? They said, "Where else can we go?"

I ask you, where else could you go? Except unto those of like faith to find this which is comforting to your soul. There is no place to go, and there were twelve who stayed by Him - out of the five-thousand who had gathered around.

The church of God is a small number. I am not ashamed of the little flocks. The scriptures teach us to Fear not, ye little flock, because it's the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. It's a small number. Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to eternal woe. Narrow is the gate, straight and narrow is the way of the Lord's children. They are few in number. He said, I have not loved you because you were the greatest in number - because you are the fewest of all people.

He's going to be with you here. He will give you all that you need, and keep you along the way. He will feed you and strengthen you, and comfort you with every needed blessing. You shall die with that precious hope that this is not the end, but death is only the entrance into our long home. "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may be also." One day we'll hear that beckoning voice saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

I love this doctrine. If I can't live with you people, I don't know where I could go. May God bless us and keep us that we might journey together in that oneness of faith with one-eye single toward Him, ever looking unto Him - the author and finisher of our faith.

Elder Kenneth R. Key

CORRESPONDENCE

MEDITATIONS OF A SINNER.

March 3, 1879

Dear Brother In Hope:

If indeed I know anything about hope as it is in Christ Jesus. It is a serious question with me whether I do or not. But the Apostle John says: We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. Sometimes I get to the place where this is the only proof that I have of the new birth. But since I have had a hope that God has shown me the way of truth, I don't believe my heart has ceased to love the brethren, and pray for the peace and prosperity of Zion. No wonder then that it is with fear and trembling that I should attempt to write or speak in this great name. One of old said: That if we speak we should speak as the oracles of God. Study to show thyself approved unto

God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings for they will increase unto more ungodliness, 2 Timothy 15-16. Now, Dear Bro. I have no patience with a man who says that God has called him to preach His gospel and to publish peace, and to say to Israel thy God reigneth, and to give to each his portion of meat in due season, and then gets his conceptions of the two dispensations (Law and Grace) so mixed up that he does not know heads or tails. I say he must be mistaken. It must have been God of the Arminians that called him. Because Israel's God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

Dear Brother, these lines come to me with so much force I must quote them:

"How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord

*Is laid for your faith in His excellent word
What more can He say than to you He
hath said*

You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled."

The foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are His. Dear Brother, I am satisfied that all the combined powers of darkness can not shake this foundation for Christ said: "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." How it thrills our hearts with joy when we are enabled to see that God has reserved unto Himself all power and wisdom and has given us the consoling hope that we are included in the everlasting arrangement. We are made to say surely salvation is of the Lord; and I don't believe that means two or three or half dozen salvations either. Christ said: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the father but by me." Dear brother, does this not include all the salvation that there is? Is not the salvation spoken of sufficient for every child of Grace? Does not this same Jesus hold

the keys of death and hell? Will any be able to pluck His own out of His almighty hand? He says, my Father who gave them me is greater than all and none shall pluck them out of my Father's hand. He also said, I will raise him up at the last day. The foundation of God standeth sure. Having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are His.

Then the question arises: Can we, or have we, ever done anything to merit God's favor? I for one feel to answer no, because I feel that sin is mixed with all I do. How to perform that which is good I find not. For the things I would, I do not and the thing I would not that I do. Notice, here are two minds (flesh and spirit) and they are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. And Paul said; "Then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

Plunged in a gulf of dark despair
We wretched sinners lay
Without one cheering beam of hope
Or spark of glimmering day.

I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. Here then is the great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec without beginning of days or end of life. Who was able and altogether worthy to enter into the holy of holies. Once for the sins of His bride perfecting forever them that are sanctified. Not just a part, but all of them, for He says all that the Father giveth me shall come to me. Here's the church founded upon the rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, here's the glorious building without spot or wrinkle, kept by the power of God. Without the assistance of man. Let us notice just here the kind of character embraced in this everlasting indestructible building. Two men went up to the temple to pray. One a Pharisee, the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." He

must have been the half dozen salvation man, because he said he was not like other men or even this Publican. But notice the other character the Publican, who stood afar off, and would not so much as lift his eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his breast saying: "God be merciful to me a sinner." This man went down to his house justified rather than the other not by his own good works. Oh, no, but by Jesus Christ, who is rich in mercy to all that call upon Him. It makes no difference how great a sinner you are. If you have come to Jesus Christ for salvation (not two or three salvations) but for salvation. He says He will in no wise cast out though your sins be as scarlet I will make them white as wool. Here is based all the hope this poor worm of the dust has. I believe if He will He can make me clean. And He said upon one occasion: "I will, be thou clean." And then my mind goes back over a period of 27 or 28 years to one bright June morning when I became so miserable I could not work. I tried to pray but I could not utter a word and yet every breath was God be merciful to me a sinner. I hope and believe that this same great High Priest appeared as my righteousness, lifting me out of the awful pit, placing my feet upon the rock and putting a new song in my mouth. I say when I remember this time I am made to say surely salvation (not salvations) is of the Lord, and that the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are His.

Dear Brother, I started out to write you on entirely a different line of thought, and I don't know why I have written as I have, but I shall not apologize. But will say just do with it as you see fit and it will be perfectly all right with me.

Yours in hope,
E. F. SAUNDERS,
Randleman, Route No. 2, N. C.

Dearly beloved brethren,

The subject of sin, what it is, its effects, its origin and what God has done to save his people from the condemnation it brought has been on my mind for some time and I feel a strong desire to write some of my thoughts for your consideration, feeble though my thoughts may be. If not deceived, my desire is to write to God's praise, honor and glory, and for the comfort and edification of his beloved children. May God guide my every thought.

We find in Rom. 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." We see from this that man is the author of sin. Webster's dictionary defines an author as being one who makes or originates something. Sin was not something in the world, but Adam made or originated it when he transgressed the only law that God had given; for sin is the transgression of the law. (I John 3:4). God's law is as just and holy as God, and the transgression of it brought death. "And the Lord God 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 thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The only thing I have found recorded in the holy scriptures that God cannot do is lie. (Titus 1:2). Therefore we know that Adam died in that day. No, he did not die a corporal death, the death of the body, but a spiritual death. The meaning of death is, to be separated from something. Adam was not at that time separated from the world, but from his standing with God and his upright and innocent state in which he was made. And we, being the posterity of our federal head Adam, fell under condemnation with him, for we were in his loins when

he fell.

I believe I have given scriptural proof of what sin is, who its author is, its effect and the penalty. There are many other scriptures that give proof of this, but I trust these are sufficient. Now let us consider its purpose and what God has done to redeem his children.

We read in Psalms 5:4-5; "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thy hatest all workers of iniquity." This scripture is enough, though there be many, to prove that God hates sin. None but a reprobate would deny this. Although God hates sin, he has a purpose for sin being in the world, for he has a purpose in all things. If he does not have a purpose in sin, then it would not be here, for he certainly has the power to keep it out: or if he does not have such power how can we be sure that it will not be in heaven? He said, "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as I have purposed, so shall it stand." He has thought of and purposed all things, or he is not the God I hope to worship, for Paul tells us that we know all things work together for good to them that love God, and them who are the called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28). If all things work together for good then certainly God knew everything that would come to pass and had a purpose in them. "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." And Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God and was crucified and slain by wicked hands. Who would dare say that God did not have a purpose in their gathering together to crucify the Savior with their wicked hands? It was with evil intent that Joseph was sold by his brothers,

but did it not serve God's purpose to save many lives?

God made everything that is made, and everything he made is good. That is, everything is good for the purpose for which he made it. He made man from the dust of the ground, breathed the breath of life into his nostrils and placed him in the garden of Eden; and when he made him, he made him subject to vanity. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." (Rom. 8:20). God also made the crooked serpent (devil), and though the devil is an evil being, he is good for the purpose for which he was made. The devil was a liar from the beginning and the father of it, and he tempted Eve and lied to her: and she, being subject to vanity, and being tempted, fell under it. We will note that God did not tempt Eve, but the serpent. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed." God made us the way we are, and we are not to question his authority or reason. As Paul says, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that made 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 unto dishonor?" God hath made us upright; but we have sought out many inventions. (Eccl. 7:29).

Eve was deceived and drawn away by her own lust, but Adam, being a figure of him which was to come, was not deceived; nevertheless, because of his great love for his bride, he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the law of God. There was no pressure or enticement or any such thing from God: they simply followed after their earthy or natural desires as God knew they would

even before he gave them the commandment, for he said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He did not say, "if thou eatest," but, "in the day thou eatest." There was a day already set when they would eat the forbidden fruit and die. This came to pass, for God had a purpose in it. He had given a commandment to them saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." This they could not obey because, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." (John 12:24). Had they not died, spiritually speaking, they would have remained in their upright and innocent state in the garden and remained childless. Nevertheless, Adam is the federal head of all mankind and all his posterity was in his loins when he fell under the law, therefore death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. As it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Rom. 10:12) This is only one of many scriptures that proves all men are sinners, but I am sure that a child of grace needs no scripture at all to know what he is by nature and what he hopes to be by the grace of God once he has been translated out of his dead alienated state into God's marvelous light. He cries and moans over past sins, begs for grace to live godly, and pleads for mercy as did the poor publican. Only those who have not been touched by the grace of God would pray as did the Pharisee.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." In the fulness of time, the set time, it came to pass, for God had purposed in eternity that his beloved Son would come into this low ground of sin and sorrow and

save his chosen people from their sins; for Christ stood as a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8). God well knew what man would do before he made him, and having a particular people among men that he loved with an everlasting love their redemption was made sure in Christ even before the foundation of the world, and their names were written in the Lamb's book of life. Those whose names were not written there will fall down and worship the beast (Satan), but the redeemed shall sing a new song: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

All of God's attributes are equal. Neither his love nor his mercy is greater than his justice: one cannot override the other. No one is made perfect nor justified by God's love, for God is perfect and his holy law demands perfect justice when it has been transgressed, and the penalty is death of the transgressor. Blood must be shed, for where there is no shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. (Heb. 9:22). The blood of Christ was the only blood that could be shed to satisfy justice and redeem sinners at the same time, for he was the only one without sin, spot or blemish. How justice could be satisfied in accepting his blood and death in the room and stead of sinners is a very sublime subject in its self, which I will not attempt to write now, but we know that he offered himself once a sacrifice well pleasing to God and hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. The Holy Ghost brings us this witness, for the Lord hath made a covenant with us, saying, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.” “What God hath done is forever. Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.”

Beloved brethren, we are sinners, and deserve death and everlasting destruction from the face of the Lord. At least this is what I feel I deserve, and if he casts me into the bottomless pit of hell he will be just and holy in doing so. But I believe he has given me faith to believe in the redeeming blood and power of the blessed Savior, and a hope that I

am one for whom he shed his precious blood.

Brethren, it seems to me that my thoughts have been very scattered, but if they praise, honor and glorify the blessed Savior, may he bring them together unto you for your comfort and edification. Charge all errors to me, and praise him for all truth that has been set forth.

A sinner in hope of eternal life,
Clifford Wilbanks

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



POPLAR SPRINGS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Poplar Springs Church located about three miles off Highway 17 between Millport and Vernon, Lamar County, Alabama, was organized April 5, 1834. In the spring of 1900, the location was moved approximately 5 miles to its present location.

The old wooden building was replaced

in 1973 by this brick building.

It is in the Buttahatchie Association. The meeting time is the third Sunday in each month at 11:00 o'clock.

Elder H. C. Moon has served as Pastor for 36 years. Elder J. B. Moon is Assistant Pastor.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

WHAT IS TRUTH?

New Vernon, N.Y., Sept. 1, 1844

(EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A FRIEND
AT THE EAST.)

“**T**here are things in which I am more interested than in any pecuniary consideration, and they may be implied from the following interrogatories, viz: What is truth? and, what is duty? A general answer may be given to the first in which all professed christians will agree, viz: The bible or word of God; but of the doctrines and duties which that word teaches and enjoins there is a great variety of interpretations or opinions. This difference of understanding exists not only between the saint and sinner, the elect and reprobate, but also among the saints themselves, or good men. These, to a great extent result from early temperaments, &c. But to be definite, permit me to ask of you, what is truth in relation to the perpetuity of the Sabbath? Taking into consideration the course pursued by those friends of Christ who after attending to his burial returned to their homes, “and kept holy the seventh day according to the commandment;” and also the direction given by the Savior to his disciples in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, when he said, “Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.” To what extent is the moral law, so called, binding? I saw in the SIGNS some time since, an article on this subject (the Sabbath,) by S. Trott, and recently another on the subject of the moral law. But I should think they did not perfectly harmonize. I wish for light.

“Again: What is Truth in relation to the decrees of God? Did He ordain all events that have taken place, and are to take place? And as many or most things

occur or eventuate through a course of means, did he also ordain the means? Do means or conditions appointed by God, and by him associated with the result in man, leave events necessarily unfixed or uncertain with God? If Tyre and Sidon would have repented had they seen the mighty works which were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, is it not possible that some who are now in the darkness of heathenism, might exercise the same kind of repentance, if the law of God, by which is the knowledge of sin, and the truths of the New Testament, through which God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, were declared unto them? And after determining what is truth in regard to these things, let me ask, what is duty in reference to the same?

“I ask not these questions to elicit a discussion, for I have neither disposition or competency to do so; I am no sage, but as a sincere inquirer after TRUTH.”

It is at all times a pleasure to communicate what light we have to those who sincerely inquire after truth; but it is not unfrequently the case that those who inquire “What is Truth? like Pilate, when he made this important inquiry of our Lord, turn away without waiting for an answer.

Our young friend is right in his conclusion that the testimony of the scriptures is truth; but the bare testimony of the bible does not fully embrace all that the question implies. Christ is emphatically The Truth, and he is that truth of which the scriptures are a faithful record. The inquiry then, “What is Truth?” Amounts to the same, when thus proposed to our fellow-creatures, as that expressed in the words, what think ye of Christ? We cannot give a full, appropriate answer to the one question, that will not with equal propriety apply to both. In reply, therefore, we say to our friend, it is our firm conviction and settled faith, that

Christ is essentially the Truth of God, "the way, the truth, and the life." "The faithful and true witness; the eternal Logos or Word, which was with God and was God; the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us; in whom was light, and that Light was the life of men." As the Word of God, he is the Truth of God, and that Word by which regeneration is effected, by the communication made to them by the Spirit of that light which was in him, and which was the life of men.

The second inquiry is, "What is Duty?" We answer, to "fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man." In confirmation of this decision read Eccl. xii. 13. In point of duty, then, it will be discovered that all mankind are delinquents when measured by the commandments of God, which are exceeding broad; for in our depraved state it is written, "there is no fear of God before their eyes." And again, "all have sinned;" and "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified." Consequently there can be no just grounds to hope for acceptance with God upon the performance of duties.

*"No works, no duties of our own,
Can for the smallest sins atone;
The robes which nature may provide,
Cannot our deep pollution hide."*

It is true, as our friend remarks, there is much difference even among professors of religion in regard to duty, as well as in relation to the doctrine of the scriptures; but every soul that is born of God, is led by the unerring Spirit of Truth to see himself a poor, lost, guilty, perishing, and helpless sinner, cut off from all prospect of salvation by any power or exertion which he can possibly make. His former system of duty religion can avail him nothing while under such circumstances. Duty faith, duty repentance, duty prayers, and duty works, all serve only to press him down to the gates of death. In short, he may labor and toil for

a law righteousness until the commandment slays him at the feet of Sovereign Mercy, where his legal hopes all yield up the ghost, and there he is made acquainted with Christ as the resurrection and the life, the way, and the truth. Christ's blood is applied for the remission of his sins, and his perfect righteousness is applied for the justification of his soul, and he finds with joy and ecstasy of soul that transforming grace which

*"Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice."*

At this important crisis of his experience, he loses his burden and guilt, for all his sins and all his duties, and his own righteousness roll with Bunyan's pilgrim's burden into the sepulchre, to return to him no more. Now old things with him are passed away, and all things have become new. He is now delivered from the law, and there is, therefore, now no condemnation to him, for he is now experimentally in Christ Jesus, and walks no more after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus his Lord, has made him free from the law of sin, and whom the Son maketh free is free indeed. The difference between the former and present condition is, formerly he was under a law that convicted him of sin and guilt, which required everything of him, but furnished him with nothing; but now he is brought under the gospel, which requires nothing as a condition, but furnished everything that his poor soul could want to make him perfectly happy and perfectly secure. His whole soul is now made to rejoice in Christ whose love is richly shed abroad in him. Nothing can to him now appear so lovely as his blessed Savior; nothing so desirable as to be found glorifying him in the soul and body which are his. He cannot now be deterred from following Jesus. He is not inclined now to study how to prevent his examples, or to evade his commands;

he desires not to shun the reproaches of the cross, for he esteems them better than all the treasures of Egypt.

*“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
He’ll follow where he goes.
‘Hinder me not’ will be his cry,
Though earth and hell oppose.”*

“My sheep hear my voice,” says Jesus, “and I know them, and they follow me.” “A stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.” In allegiance with Jesus as his King, it is his highest privilege to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded, and to walk in all his ordinances blameless, as did Zacharias and Elizabeth.

But to come to those particular points upon which light is sought by our inquiring friend. “What is truth in relation to the perpetuity of the Sabbath,” &c.? In all candor we reply, the Sabbath in the letter or legal observance of it, as it was obligatory upon Israel under the legal dispensation, is abrogated, and with all other hand-writing of ordinances was nailed with the great law fulfiller to the cross; blotted out and done away, so that the apostle Paul commands the church of God, “Let no man, therefore, judge you in meats, or in drinks, or in respect of a holy day; or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath day; which are a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ.” “Touch not, taste not, handle not.”—Col. ii. 14, 16, 17, & 21. But in relation to the spirit, or body, or substance, of which the legal Sabbath was a shadow, it is perpetual. It consists not, however, in the seventh day, or a first day cessation from the ordinary pursuits of life, but in a complete cessation from all the servile works of the law, and entrance into rest. The law dispensation was the six days in which men were commanded to labor and do all their work; but the gospel dispensation is the Sabbath of the Lord our God, and in it the saints are to cease from all their own works as God ceased from all

the works which he had made, when he rested on the seventh day and hallowed it, and as Christ also, when he had fulfilled the law, finished transgression and made an end of sin, rested from his own works as God did from the works of creation when he had finished them. As under the abrogated law men were not permitted to gather sticks, kindle fire, or perform any kind of labor, or think their own thoughts, or speak their own words, so under the gospel, those who believe and have entered into rest, according to Hebrews iv. 3, are not suffered to gather sticks and kindle fires; or, as your eastern people would say, make use of means to get up a revival of religion, or by a system of duty religion, to warm themselves into happy frames, or religious exercises. No manner of work shall be done, no burdens shall be borne upon the Sabbath day. Works are excluded, the saints are to live by faith upon the Son of God; rest on him, rest upon his promises, his grace, his blood and righteousness. This glorious rest remaineth, or is perpetuated for the people of God; but God has sworn that those workmongers who hold on to the observance of blotted out hand-writings, and ordinances, nailed to the cross, they shall not enter into rest. They are like the troubled sea, they cannot rest, they cannot cease from their own works. It is impossible to rest in Jesus, unless we believe in him; and faith is the gift of God. It works by love; instead of its being exercised by us, it exercises us, lays hold of the promises for us, overcomes the world for us, enters within the veil for us, and subdues kingdoms, works righteousness, obtains promises, stops the mouths of lions, quenches the violence of fire, delivers from the edge of the sword, out of weakness makes us strong, waxing valiant in fight, and turns to flight the armies of the aliens. What shall we say more? Time would fail to tell of Gideon, and of

Barak, and of Sampson, and of Jephthae, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets. Such is the vitality and power of the faith of God's elect; having this faith in us we have confidence in God; we trust in him and are as Mount Zion which cannot be moved, but abideth forever. Without this faith none can know the blessed privilege of a gospel Sabbath, this Sabbath of the Lord our God; this day which the Lord has made, this Lord's day, this glorious and perpetual Sabbath of rest unto all that have the faith which was once delivered to the saints. But we are requested to notice the Sabbath in connection with the circumstances of the saints observing the seventh day Sabbath, after the burial of the crucified body of our Lord, and of Christ's direction to the saints to pray that their flight should not be on the Sabbath day, &c. In regard to the first circumstance, we would remark that the disciples were not delivered from the obligation to keep the law of Moses, until the resurrection of Christ; for although he had fulfilled every precept, and borne its penalty in his death, put away sin, and made an end of transgression, &c., yet he must rise again from the dead for their justification. As they were buried with him by baptism (immersion) into death, and after the similitude of baptism raised with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Christ suffered for his people as their Head, and in that relation to them, they, in regard to the demands of law and justice, suffered and were dead and buried with or in him, so that when he was raised up by the glory of the Father, they were raised *with him* to newness of life. No longer to serve under the letter of the law, but to worship God in the newness of the spirit. It must be borne in mind that Christ came to redeem them that were under the law, and to this end came himself under the law, and remained under the law until

the resurrection from the dead. This accounts satisfactorily, we would think, for the disciples' keeping the Sabbath day, which elapsed while Christ was in the tomb, according to the commandment of Moses, which was still binding upon them at that time.

The instruction to the disciples to pray that their flight from the fearful calamities of Jerusalem might not take place upon the Sabbath day, is urged by the advocates of a perpetual obligation to keep a seventh day Sabbath, as evidence that our Lord taught the perpetuity of that obligation after he had nailed the hand-writing of ordinances to his cross. But on examination other sufficient cause will be found to warrent that admonition. It was named incidentally with some other things, which might be serious hindrances to their precipitate flight, in which any hindrance might involve them in the most dreadful calamities. This admonition no more implies that their flight on the Sabbath day would be a violation of the law, than the other circumstances named in verses 19 and 20 of Matt. xxiv.; but because, like the other difficulties named, this, should it so occur, might prove a serious hindrance to their flight. Indeed, the reason is assigned by our Lord in the very next verse; "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world" up to that date, and hence the necessity that they should be prepared instantly, at the signal which he would give them to take their flight. If they were circumstanced so as to prevent immediate flight, though this would violate no precept of the law, yet at that moment it would involve them in woe. Or if the flight should be in the winter, which of course could not be overruled by them, it would make it difficult for them to speed their flight; or if on the Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week, which the Jews were at that time very tenacious for the sanctity of, should

they attempt a flight, they would subject themselves to an arrest by legal administrators of the Jewish law, according to the usage of the Jews at that time. Up to the very day in which Jerusalem was overthrown, the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, and enjoined a strict observance of the seventh day Sabbath, and would arrest any offender, just as the authorities of Connecticut formerly did those whom they caught traveling on the first day, which they said had, by some means or other, taken the place of the seventh; and thus it would prove a serious hindrance to their flight.

Is it not astonishing that the aversion of the hearts of men who profess to be the followers of Christ, should be so great to the plain declarations of the scriptures, as to lead them to pervert such passages as these, so as to make them seem to conflict with the testimony of the inspired apostles of Jesus Christ, who by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost declared that the ordinances of Sabbath days were blotted out and nailed to the cross, as shadows of which Christ was the body or substance. As to the day being changed from the seventh to the first, there is not the least shadow or trace of authority for such a change in the bible. If, as some have contended, the obligation was moral and not ceremonial, and therefore perpetual, the same argument, if it could be established, would also forbid the change, for moral statutes are as immutable as they are perpetual, and therefore they cannot change.

As to what appeared to our correspondent as a discrepancy in brother Trott's communication on the Sabbath and then on the law, perhaps the further development of his views in this and the last number of the SIGNS, may obviate the difficulty; but if not, he will please hereafter state particularly wherein he apprehended a want of harmony.

“Again: What is truth in relation to

the decrees of God?” We reply, in our opinion all that God has said upon this subject, as well as all that he has said upon all other subjects, is truth; and he has declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; (Isa. xlvi. 10) and that he “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” — Eph. i. 11. These scriptures are sufficient to establish the point, that God governs and controls all things, and that his government of all events and things is in strict accordance with his fixed, immutable and eternal purpose, counsel or decree, from the flight of a sparrow, the falling of a hair from our head, up to the most important events which involve the destiny of kingdoms and worlds.

“Did he ordain all events that have taken place, and are to take place?” Yes, as certain as it is that he is God. If an event has ever transpired over which he had no government, then other such events may also yet take place independently of his government; and if one such event can or has taken place, millions may follow, and by such an admission we should be hurled into absolute atheism; for if he is God, he is just such a God as he has declared himself to be, and has all power in heaven and on earth, governs and controls all beings, all destinies and all events, and causes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he restrains. He forms the light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates evil; for he has said, “I the Lord do all these things.” And all the things which he does, he works according to the counsel or decree of his own will, as we have already proved.

“And as many or most things occur or eventuate through a course of means, did he also ordain the means?” Things which are brought about in the providence of God, or by virtue of his universal government, bear an intimate rela-

tion to and are connected with each other, like the revolving wheels in a complicated machine; and to the imperfect vision of the poor finite mortals, these revolutions may seem to conflict, yet in the wisdom of God they work together in harmony. Those which to us seem most trivial, are with God as important as any other of the events connected in the system of government; and he who is the Maker and Builder of all things, who has declared the end or issue of all things, has secured, by immutable decree, a revenue of glory in the result of all things, which he will not give to another, nor his praise unto graven images. What we call *means are things*, and belong to and are embraced in the *all things* which he governs and controls. Hence what we may call means are the result of the decrees of God, as well as those things that are effected by them. For instance, the death of Christ was an event which, for magnitude, challenges a comparison with all other events. It took place according to the decree of God, as all are compelled to admit, and yet that very death was a means connected with other events to be effected by it. "That by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal life."—Heb. ix. 15. The treachery of Joseph's brethren was a means to induce them to murder him; their avarice, and the providential appearance of the Ishmaelites, were the means which induced them to change their purpose and sell him; this sale was the means of his going down to Egypt; the wickedness of Potiphar's wife was the means of Joseph's imprisonment; his imprisonment was the means of procuring an opportunity of interpreting the dreams of the butler and baker; and this was in turn the means of his appearing before Pharaoh, which was the means of his promotion, which was the means of laying up corn,

and this was the means ultimately of bringing about the interpretation of Joseph's dreams, which had been the means of first moving the enmity of his brethren against him, and all this was the means of preserving Jacob's family alive through the famine; and that preservation was connected as a means of a Savior's visit to the world, for out of Judah came forth a Deliverer, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Can our correspondent, or can any other being, tell which of these events were unimportant, or which, if any of them, might have been dispensed with without breaking the chain of causes and results of means of ends to be accomplished? If the results were ordained, of course the means were also equally ordained as the result of other means or causes which produced them.

"Do means or conditions appointed by God, and by him associated with the result in man, leave events necessarily unfixed or uncertain with God?" Certainly not. But why associate means and conditions in the statement of the question? There is no great affinity between them. Every event that ever occurred, from the creation of the world to the present day, has been an ordained means of bringing about other events, which, in their turn, are also means bearing upon others; but conditions are very different things. When God sent Moses and Aaron with conditions of peace to Pharaoh, saying, "Let my people Israel go," and threatening with judgments if those terms were not promptly complied with, he told Moses that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let Israel go until he should execute his judgments on Egypt. So the statement of conditions in his case did not hide from his eye the end or result.

And when God gave a conditional covenant to the nation of Israel, embracing temporal blessings and curses on condition of obedience or disobedience,

if we admit that God is Omniscient, we must admit that he knew precisely how these conditions would be treated by, and what effect they would have upon those unto whom they were given; consequently it was impossible they should render the result indefinite or uncertain with him. But let it be distinctly understood, that although the covenant which is now abrogated, which was typical, and which provided only for temporal blessings and curses, was conditional, that the covenant of salvation is ordered in *all things* and sure; not *yea* and *nay*, but *yea* and *amen*, to the glory of God by us. There is not a condition stated or intimated in all the scriptures, either directly or indirectly, expressed or implied, wherein God has offered, proffered, or proposed to save a sinner from the condemnation of the law, or from the just penalty thereof, upon any condition, of any kind whatever; for all that are saved, or ever were or ever shall be delivered from the wrath and condemnation, are "saved, and called with a holy calling; not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to them in Christ Jesus before the world began." They are blessed with all spiritual blessings according as God has chosen them in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world; and he has predestinated them unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, wherein he has made us accepted in the Beloved.

"If Tyre and Sidon would have repented, had they seen the mighty works which were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, is it not possible that some who are now in the darkness of heathenism, might exercise the same kind of repentance, if the law of God, by which is the knowledge of sin, and the truths of the New Testament, through which God commands all men everywhere to repent, were declared unto them?"

If things were otherwise than what they are, we confess our utter inability to say what they would be; but of this we are fully satisfied, if one link of the chain of cause and effects, which God in infinite wisdom has linked together, could possibly be broken, we should be in a deplorable condition; results unlooked for and unprovided for might then surprise God himself, and world on world might dash, until all would sink to utter ruin. The supreme theme of our devoutest joy is that the Lord reigns; but if we, or any combination of power in heaven, earth, or hell, could, by sending a bible or a missionary, or any thing else, into heathen lands, (if indeed there be any other land to which that designation more appropriately belongs than it does to this land of bibles and of boasted light,) could bring about the accomplishment of any event that was not provided for in the eternal, unchangeable, and invincible decrees of God, by the accomplishment of such a work, we would disprove all the record God has given of himself. Why did not the same cause which would have produced repentance in Tyre and Sidon, produce that effect on the cities where it existed? And why was it not employed in those cities which for the absence of it were destroyed? Or is it proper for us to inquire why God has made one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

It is turly by the law that a knowledge of sin is sent home to the conviction of quickened souls; but if a knowledge of the mere letter or reading of the precepts of the Old Testament could effect that conviction, why was Saul of Tarsus without such conviction until he undertook his journey or mission to the city of Damascus? And why are not American sinners, who abound in bibles, convinced of sin? That every bible of which we speak declares the reason; because that it should be the peculiar work, not of the bible simpy, but of that spirit which Jesus should send, to convince of sin, of right-

eousness, and of judgment to come; and when the Spirit executes this work, he employs the law, and brings the commandment home to the sinner's heart in its spirituality, and sin revives, and the sinner is slain.

If it were the purpose or pleasure of God that those regions of the earth which are called heathen, should have that kind of repentance which Tyre and Sidon would have had, if God had been pleased to give it to them, or any other kind of repentance, they would assuredly have it; for he doeth his pleasure in heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; he taketh up an island as a very little thing, and nations before him are as the drop of the bucket. None can stay his hand; he speaketh the word and it stands fast; he commandeth and it is done.

"And after determining 'What is Truth' in regard to these things, let me ask, What is duty in reference to the same?" In consideration of all the grand, magnificent and sublime things contemplated in the foregoing questions and replies, it is certainly becoming that we should "be still and know that he is God." "What the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law," and we conclude, therefore, that it is the duty of those who are under the law, and the delightful and inexpressible privilege of those who are delivered from the curse and bondage of the law, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, to *believe* all that God has said to them respectively, and to obey all that he commands; and, as we have said before, this comprehends *the whole duty of man*.

CONTRIBUTIONS

AUGUST 1985

Elder Hale Terry, VA.	\$ 7.00
Buford Holland, VA.	5.00

Mrs. W. L. Simmins, VA.	2.00
William L. Midkiff, VA.	7.00
Mrs. Minnie G. Roberts, NC.	2.00
Miss Era Barber, AL.	5.00
Mrs. Lucille Young, TN.	4.00
Elder Rufus Brown, VA.	1.00
J. A. Avera, FL.	5.00
Cecil Neal, IL.	7.00
Frank Hunt, VA.	10.00
Mrs. Alpha Ramesy, VA.	7.00
Mrs. Genera W. Meara, CA.	15.00
Willie M. Ratliff, VA.	5.00
Mrs. Ruth Sparkman, TX.	2.00
Mrs. Jessie P. Whaley, NC.	2.00
Elder Richard Campbell, TN. ...	14.00
Elder W. D. Griffin, AL.	5.00
G. G. Comer, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Herbert Gibson, VA.	2.00
G. W. Carter, NC.	2.00
Howard L. Peters, VA.	2.00
Mrs. R. C. Moore, NC.	2.00

NOVEMBER 1985

Mrs. Mamie Aldridge, NC.	\$ 2.00
C. Martin Hollandsworth, VA.	3.00
C. C. Wilbanks, LA.	7.00
H. B. Rhoades, TX.	7.00
Mrs. Myrtle Daniel, FL.	2.00
Mrs. Inez Hollie, VA.	2.00
Mrs. Marjorie Harris, CA.	2.00
Mrs. Bessie Barber, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Lillian S. Davis, NC.	2.00
O. W. Parks, TX.	7.00
W, J. Lambert, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Charity Dowdy, NC.	2.00
Loyd Chance, TX.	7.00
Luther Gaskill, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Homer Pettis, LA.	2.00
Mrs. Dorothy Siefloff, NC.	7.00
Lawrence Holloway, MD.	2.00
Mrs. Myrtle Black, NE.	5.00
James W. Huber, MD.	10.00
Levie Goard, VA.	2.00
A. R. Potter, VA.	2.00
Mrs. D. V. Spangler, VA.	45.00
In Memory Mrs. Mary H. Brooks (11/22/1900-6/30/1985) By her Children, AL.	50.00

MEETINGS

The next West Country Line Union meeting will be held at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church the fifth Sunday in December, 1985. Moons Creek Church will be host for this meeting. All lovers of the truth are invited to meet with us. We extend a special invitation to ministers of our faith and order.

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

**OLD MOUNTAIN
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH**

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written word of God, Old Mountain Church (Mt. Ararat) looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They therefore called for a presbytery to be formed on Saturday, October 19, 1985 at 3:00 P.M. at Old Mountain Church, Danville, Virginia, for the purpose of examination of this gift, brother Edgar Horsley and if found qualified be ordained to the full work and service of deacon.

All Elders of our faith and order present were invited to sit in the presbytery and all deacons were asked to sit together. The meeting was opened by prayer by Elder Raymond Payne. Elder Haywood Wray was elected as moderator and deacon Bob Collie to serve as clerk. Brother George Powell acting as spokesman for the church delivered brother Edgar Horsley to the presbytery. The qualifications for deacon were read as set forth in scriptures First Timothy, third chapter, by Elder Jimmy Hollandsworth and Acts, sixth chapter by Elder Leonard Key. Examinations followed by Elder Leonard Key and Elder Raymond

Payne and other Elders of the presbytery. The presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifications of this candidate proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elder Jimmy Hollandsworth. The charge was delivered to brother Horsley by Elder O. K. Tench. He was then delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon.

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

Presbytery was dismissed by prayer by Elder Jimmy Hollandsworth.

Elder Haywood Wray, Moderator
Deacon Bob Collie, Clerk

OBITUARIES

SALLIE HALL GAULDIN

On July 5, 1985 God in His infinite wisdom called our beloved sister Sallie Hall Gauldin, home at the age of 87. Her funeral was conducted by Elder Kenneth Key and Elder Haywood Wray at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church. Her body was laid to rest in Dan View Cemetery in Eden to await that glorious resurrection day when the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout and the dead in Christ shall rise to meet Him in the air and ever be with the Lord.

Sister Gauldin was blessed to ask for a home in Dan River Church on September 17, 1954. She loved the doctrine of Salvation by Grace and despite many obstacles was faithful to her Church and attended her meetings regularly as long as she was able. She was a very sweet and humble woman and was loved by all. We deeply miss her but may we and

her family and friends find peace in knowing that for God's humble poor, knowing that for God's humble poor, being absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. To depart this life and be with Christ is far better than anything this world has to offer.

Sister Gauldin was born on May 4, 1898 to John and Birdie Hall. She was married to the late Robert Bruce Gauldin on May 3, 1916 and to this union were born six daughters, one of whom preceded her in death (Hazel Edwards). Those she left behind are Eva Johnson, Eden, North Carolina; Bea Winn, Roanoke, Virginia; Cleatus Shope, Eden, North Carolina; Christine Salmon, Winston-salem, North Carolina; and Janice Mason, Crystal Lake, Illinois.

May God bless and comfort her family as only He can do.

Written by request of Dan River Church in conference on August 24, 1985.

Jean B. Moran

ANNIE L. PRICE

Sister Annie L. (Proctor) Price, a devoted member of Pleasant Hill Church was called from this life June 24, 1985. She was born August 3, 1895 making her stay in this world 89 years, 10 months, and 21 days.

She was received into the fellowship of the Primitive Baptist at the Nashville Primitive Baptist Church, Nashville, North Carolina the fourth Saturday in February, 1915 and was baptized the next day by Elder John T. Williams. After moving from that area back to the community near Pleasant Hill, she asked for a letter to move her membership and was gladly recieved by the brethren of Pleasant Hill Church on Saturday, September 26, 1931.

Sister Price, loving in nature, enjoyed her meetings at home and was always

ready to travel any distance to meet with the brethren as long as her health permitted.

Being afflicted with declining health, her last years were spent in a rest home. Even then, when she felt she could possibly stay up long enough to attend her meetings, she was there with the aid of a very attentive family.

Her funeral was conducted June 26th at Johnson Funeral Home, Rocky Mount, N. C. by her pastor, Elder Henry C. Jones and her body was laid to rest in Pineview Cemetery.

We, at Pleasant Hill, extend our heart felt sympathy to her family of four daughters; Mrs. Annie Ruth Skinner, Mrs. Nora Boone, Mrs. Frances Tolson, and Mrs. Ruby Keel; for sons: Harvey, Clarence, John, and Marvin; twenty-nine grandchildren, and forty great-grandchildren.

Though we miss her greatly, we do have that sweet hope for her eternal heavenly rest and realize it would only be a selfish wish to wish her back into this land of trials, troubles, and tribulations.

written at the request of the brethren of Pleasant Hill Church in conference August 24, 1985.

Elder Clyde Debow, Moderator
J. Carroll Williams, Clerk

ELDER CECIL E. TURNER

Our beloved pastor, Elder Cecil E. Turner has gone Home to ever be with his Lord.

He was born in Patrick County, Va. July 4, 1905 and passed away with the dreaded disease of Leukemia in Memorial Hospital of Martinsville, August 30, 1985.

He joined River View Primitive Baptist Church the 4th week-end in July, 1933 and was baptized by the late Elder Dan Helms. He began speaking in pub-

lic the 4th week-end in September, 1934 and was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry, August 29, 1936.

He was married to Sister Gladys Conner Turner August 13, 1928 and they were blessed with 51 years together. Sister Turner passed away August 29, 1979; and since her death he was never content but looked forward anxiously to the time when he too could lay his armor by and go "Where congregations ne'er break up and Sabbaths never end."

He is survived by one son and daughter-in-law, Elbert and Avis Turner of Bassett, Va.; one grand-daughter, Aleta Turner; One grand-son, Mark Turner; Three sisters, Mrs. Gwendelyn Lawson, Stuart, Va.; Sister Agnes Thomas, Collinsville, Va.; Mrs. Wanda Sumner, Patrick Springs, Va.; Four brothers, Brother Conway Turner, and Mr. Norman Turner, Bassett, Va.; Elder Rupert Turner and Mr. Arnold Turner, Collinsville, Va.

A few months before Elder Turner passed away he arranged most of his funeral service. His pastor Elder James R. Hollandsworth of River View Church, together with Elder Leonard Brammer and Elder Buddy Crofts conducted a most beautiful service to an overflowing crowd of brethren, sisters and friends at Collins Funeral Chapel, Bassett, Va. on Sunday, September 1, 1985. He requested also that each Pigg River Minister to speak briefly at this service, if they so desired, after which he was laid to rest under a beautiful blanket of flowers by the side of Sister Turner in Roselawn Burial Park.

We thank our Lord that he was given to us as our lovely pastor at Roanoke Church in sweet Fellowship these 32 years. At the time of his death he was also pastor of Chestnut, Martinsville, and Rocky Mount Churches.

His love and faithfulness to his God in the service of the church will live with us in the years to come. Although his voice

has been stilled among us, he will ever live in the esteem of his brethren. We cannot think of a more fitting memorial than to say, we believe truly that he was called by divine grace and ordained by God to preach salvation by the grace of God these many years.

A volume could be written about our Father in Israel but this is not what he would have wanted. He desired all praise and glory to be given to our blessed Lord and not to poor creatures here on earth.

We, the members of Roanoke Church realize that our loss is his eternal gain and may God's richest blessings keep us all and bless us to comply to his last message to us, "Do the best that you can."

Written by Sister Rlee B. Houchins at the request of Roanoke Primitive Baptist Church while in conference, Saturday October 5, 1985.

Elder Lane Carter, Acting Moderator
Brother Hassell A. Hale, Church Clerk

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

Psalm 116:15

ELDER JOHN D. WOOD, SR.

Elder John D. Wood, Sr. our beloved pastor, passed away on July 3, 1985 in a nursing home in Westminster, Md. at the age of 87 after an extended illness. He was faithful to his flock for many years having served churches in several different areas of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

In 1916 he united with Roanoke Church and was baptized by the late Elder J. C. Hurst. In April 1918 he was licensed to preach and consequently ordained at Roanoke Church in 1931.

Following is a list of churches served by Elder Wood:

- 1937-48 Belleview Church (now
Laurel Ridge)
1938-48 Little Hope Church
1938-85 Black Rock Church, Butler,
Md.
1950-83 New Valley, Mount Zion and
Frying Pan Churches in Virginia
1948-78 Rock Spring Church in
Pennsylvania
1971-81 Ebenezer Church in Balti-
more, Md.

In addition to these, he served on fifth Sundays two churches in the mountains of Pennsylvania: Needmore and Sidling Hill while able to drive such distances. From 1937 until 1978 he served as clerk of the Pigg River Association and was editor of the Signs of the Times from 1951 until late years when he became an associate editor.

While pastoring the churches in upper Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, he made his home in Manassas, Virginia where he and Sister Virginia Wood entertained many brethren. Their door was always open to those of like precious faith and any that stayed there were shown loving hospitality.

Following is a memorial written by Rock Springs Church for Elder Wood:

Resolution of Respect

WHEREAS, Elder John D. Wood, presently of Manassas, Virginia, served the Rock Springs Church as Pastor for thirty years and one month, August 15, 1948 to September 3, 1978, and

WHEREAS, He gave the Church this long period of service in the nurture and admonition of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; serving faithfully in the ability in which he was endowed by his Creator, our almighty heavenly Father; giving always unto the Son of God all due reverence as the Savior of his chosen people; teaching gospel truth, expounding and exhorting upon the same;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that

this Resolution be entered in our record as a Memorial of him—as exemplary of an undershepherd of his Lord.

Charles B. Osborne,
Deacon & Clerk

Elder and Sister Wood traveled long distances to faithfully serve his many churches until his failing health caused him to resign from serving. He was no longer able to drive such distances and eventually was confined to a nursing home with his faithful companion.

All who knew him will miss his gentleness, sincerity and sweet humility. He was truly a servant of God. But we feel that he has gone to a better place (not made with hands) to be with his Lord and Savior. One of the editors of the Signs remarked that he “had never known a nobler man.”

Elder Wood was laid to rest in Black Rock Cemetery, Butler, Maryland. His funeral was conducted by Elder Junior Connor of Salem, Virginia. He is survived by his wife Virginia Carter Wood and a daughter, Virginia Gladding both of Westminster, Md., and a son John D. Wood, Jr. of Manassas, Virginia; five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, one brother, Paul Wood of Roanoke and three sisters, Kathryn Davis of Roanoke, Edith Foltz and Doris Wood, both of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The above was compiled by Sister Beulah Stuart, Sister Ella Simpkins, Sister Peggy Osborne and Virginia Wood in loving memory.

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Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA, FEBRUARY 1986

NO. 02

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84

Fayette, Ala. 35555

Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Elder D. B. Stokes

1029 Daniel Court

Jacksonville, N.C. 28540

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566. All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Virginia 24566

PSALM 95

O come let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is our God: and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand, to day if ye will hear his voice.

Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.

Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

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 EDITORIAL

"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

Song of Solomon 4:16.

We believe there are two speakers in the above text. The first speaker represents the Lord Jesus Christ, and the second, the church, His bride, His spouse. It is Christ who has created the winds and holds them in His fist, who opens His hand and lets them loose and can recall them at His pleasure. This He demonstrated while here upon earth. While on the Sea of Galilee, he rebuked the wind and sea commanding a calm of them and they became calm. This caused His disciples to say, "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Matthew 8:27. Christ has power to shut or open the winds according to His own purpose and pleasure.

The wind in this text I believe to be

emblematic of the Holy Spirit of God. In Ezekiel 37: 9, 10, we read, "Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say unto the wind, thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, and exceeding great army."

On the day of Pentecost: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Acts 2: 2. The Lord Jesus Christ by virtue of what He has fulfilled for His chosen bride, has now the authority to call upon the Holy Spirit to continue upon those whom the Father has chosen in Him before the foundation of the world and given to Him as His bride. And this not to show authority over the Holy Spirit, but to show the complete union that exists between them. So when Christ says to the Holy Spirit: "Come and blow upon my garden," He is speaking as Mediator calling upon the Spirit to do his assigned work concerning the Church. This is not supposed to show any inferiority in the Spirit to Christ, for all three persons have jointly agreed in the everlasting covenant to take their several distinct parts in the salvation of the Church. The Spirit acts freely in the first application of grace to poor unworthy sinners. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3: 8. The workings of the Spirit of God in regeneration are visible to natural man; he can no more discern the Spirit's grace than he can see the wind blow; he cannot account for operations of the Spirit, for he neither knows his person or his grace.

It pleased the Father to get glory for his divine justice and holiness by demand-

ing full satisfaction for sin. He was the avenger of sin; therefore God is called in scripture a consuming and devouring fire and a jealous God. It pleased the Son to get glory for the divine attributes of God by satisfying justice and fulfilling His holy law. It pleased the Holy Spirit to give glory to all divine attributes, by breathing into their souls a newness of life, and carrying it on through this life into a life of glory. The necessity of his continually breathing into our souls the breath of life is beautifully represented in the text. The Spirit is described under his known emblem, "wind." Our souls can no more live to God, without grace, than our bodies live without air. Nothing can grow in the garden without air, neither can any grace grow in our souls unless the Holy Spirit blows upon us. After we have received His grace, are quickened and made alive by it, we must have its influence every moment to support and to carry on the life which he has given, just as we need air for our natural bodies to carry on their lives.

"My garden," here the Church is spoken of under the figure of a garden. A garden is a piece of ground distinguished and separated from all others for the owner's use. This garden only includes the elect of God, it is not left to other people. It is a garden walled in, walled in with everlasting life. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. This is a garden that has been planted by infinite and eternal wisdom. His people are not only like a garden, but a garden enclosed. God's infinite mercy has made the Church an enclosure into which no invader may dare to come in. "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst thereof." Zechariah 2:5. He sets a hedge about them in providence, so that nothing can destroy them. A garden enclosed by His precious love and mercy toward

them. "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. You are as safe as Jesus, for on His heart He bears your name, on the arm of His strength He wears your name, as the high priest wore the names of the tribes upon his shoulder, as well as upon his breastplate: "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Christ has enclosed this garden from the wilderness for his own use. He has set trees of righteousness which he has moved from the desert land of the world where they grow wild by nature and transplanted them into his garden. Here they are cultivated and watered with his grace. The Church is said to be a spring: "A spring shut up, a fountain sealed," from which water flows to water all the plants in Christ's garden. The graces of the Spirit which are in her as "a well of water, springing up into eternal life." John 4:14.

"Awake, O north wind" The time has come for one of Christ's chosen ones to be quickened from deadness in trespasses and sins. He calls upon the Spirit and notice, it is the north wind. We are not born in the garden of the Church, but in the wilderness of the world, in a dry barren land, where no water is, no dew or rain. In this barren soil we are like the wild olive tree. We bear no fruit until the heavenly husbandman moves us and grafts us contrary to nature on to the good olive tree; all that are in Christ Jesus will bring forth good fruit. The Spirit's first work upon a quickened soul is to come as the north wind. The north wind was to awake. We all know how cutting and penetrating the cold north wind can sometimes be cutting to the very marrow of our bones. When the Spirit comes to a sinner as the north wind, it begins to humble him, cutting the heart with piercing convictions and

bringing us to realize our sad state as sinners before a Holy God. The law demands more of us than we can render, therefore we feel to fall under its curse. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3:10. I believe it was the north wind that made the Apostle Paul cry out: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The publican to cry: "God be merciful to me a sinner" and the jailor to cry: "Sir, what must I do to be saved?" The north wind was to awake. It was to be the first mover, for all men lay in the dead sleep of sin, until the Holy Spirit awakens them. And his general method of awakening sinners is to inspire them with conviction of their sins. He opens their eyes, shows them their guilt and lets them see their danger and this is very painful and distressing. The wind strips him of his self-righteousness, creature strength, and wisdom. Everything seems to be against me where must I flee? Everything we treasured at one time begins to fade away, our idols are torn down, and we must also cry out: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." When all hope seems to be banished, we cry out with the Apostle Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

"And come thou south." The Spirit is spoken of now as the south wind. The Spirit at first kills, and then makes alive; wounds, and then heals; he brings them into the wilderness and then "speaks comfortable to them." The Spirit makes known the things of Christ in all their suitability to a poor condemned sinner. The promises of Christ to poor unworthy sinners now begin, begin to yield their sweetness. When by the eye of faith we are blessed to see the sweetness of Christ's atoning blood and love, the sweetness of His righteousness, and His faithfulness, we are ready to "sing a new song." "And he hath put a new song

in my mouth, even praises unto God." Psalm 40:3. The south wind is generally a soft wind, so it signifies the Lord bringing his promises to his people's conscience with power, and some of these sweet promises are "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 44:22. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities," "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:10, 12. And "I came not to call the righteousness, but sinners to repentance." Luke 5:32. The whole work of bringing us from a barren to a fruitful state, from a bad tree to a good one, is of the Lord.

"Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." I believe these spices to be fruits of the Holy Spirit worked into the hearts of God's people by the Spirit. For his believing people are not capable of doing so themselves; for they can no more exercise grace than they can work it of themselves. Christ knew full well that it is the Spirit's work, therefore he calls upon him to blow upon them. I believe these spices consist of fear, faith, hope, love, prayer, humility, joy, peace and many more. For instance, is there anything out of heaven sweeter than faith, the faith which trusts and clings, which believes and hopes? Christ never delighted in the burning of bulls, goats, etc. but he always delighted in the faith which brought these things as types of the one great sacrifice for sin. When Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and Abel's sacrifices were accepted of God, because Abel's offering manifested his repentance toward God, and his faith in the things of Christ. Can there be found any sweeter spice than love, the love which loves God because He first loved us, the love which flows out to all the brethren and for the precious truth as it is in

Christ Jesus. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." I John 3:14. The God who gives us faith may well be pleased with faith. The God who created love in such unlovely hearts as ours may well be delighted at His own creation. These spices can only flow out of a poor sinner as they are worked in by the Spirit. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." John 3:27. "Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits." Here the Church is speaking and expresses her desire to have Christ come into his garden. This, I believe, refers to a spiritual coming of Christ into the hearts of his people, when they feel his presence, when his love is made manifest to their hearts. The Church here is seeking his spiritual, gracious, and comfortable presence that she might have more intimate communion with him. Christ does not always manifest himself to his people. How often do we feel the hiding of his face? He is always in the garden, because he has promised to be always with his people to the end of the world, but he does not always manifest himself to them. But at this particular time in our text, the Church seems to be enjoying the manifestation of Christ's love, mercy, and the enjoyment of his presence because the Spirit has been blowing upon them that the spices might flow out. We can never feel too close to Christ, we always want more nearness to him, and no doubt will, until we are with him in glory. "O For a closer walk with God." It is Christ's presence that makes his garden, the Church, a heaven on earth. He never comes empty handed, when he makes a visit, he always brings something that makes the hearts of his people glad, for he revives the plants, waters them and makes them fruitful. Sometimes it is necessary for Christ to do some pruning. When one of his little ones get to branching out too far towards certain idols and

the things of this world, it becomes necessary for him to "come and tear it from its throne" so that "I'll worship only thee."

"And eat his pleasant fruits" All spiritual fruits are performed by virtue of our union with Christ. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" for "without me ye can do nothing." John 15: 4, 5. "It is God that works in his people both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Christ obtained all grace for his Church in the everlasting covenant, "ordered in all things and sure." He is the author and finisher of faith and of all grace to be given to us, and by his spirit works it in us. So these fruits of faith, love, hope and more may be said to be his, for we have none of ourselves. These fruits are said to be well pleasing in his sight. By eating them is said to be Christ delighting in them, his enjoyment of them and his acceptance of them. It is Christ to whom all the fruits belong and this is acknowledged by the Church. Therefore the owner of the garden had the right to eat of the fruit thereof.

I close with a hymn by Isaac Watts.
Song number 57 in Goble's.

*We are a garden walled around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground:
A little spot enclosed by grace
Out of the world's wide wilderness.*

*Like trees of myrrh and spice we stand,
Planted by God the Father's hand;
And all his springs in Zion flow
To make the young plantation grow.*

*Awake, O heav'nly wind, and come,
Blow on this garden of perfume;
Spirit divine, descend and breathe
A gracious gale on plants beneath.*

*Make our best spices flow abroad
To entertain our Savior-God:*

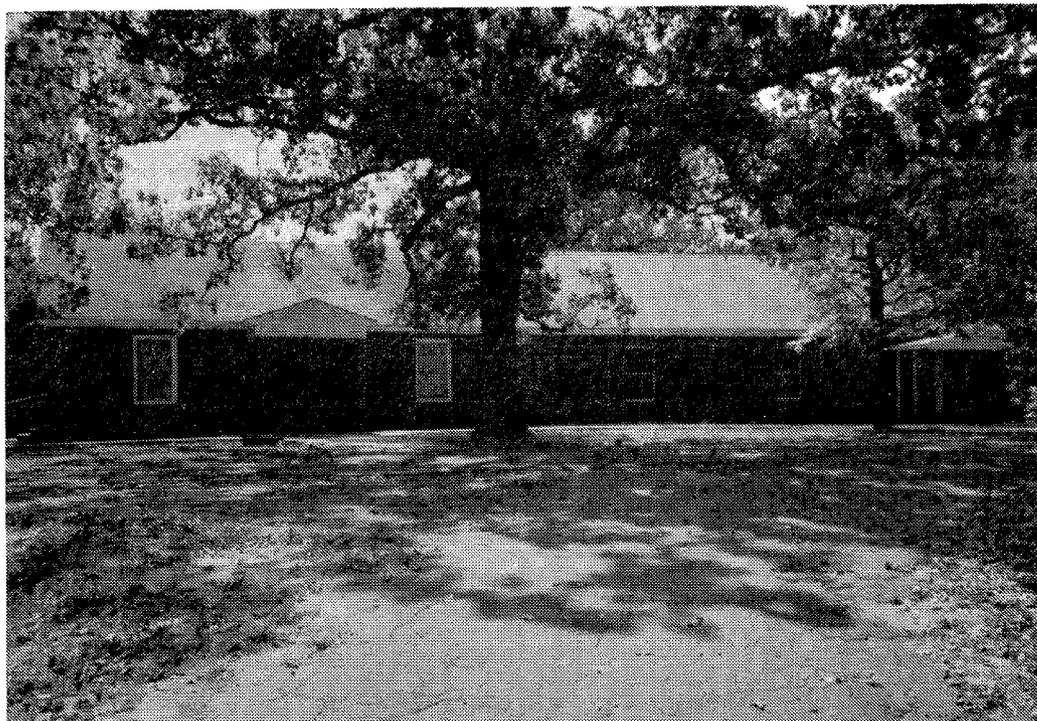
*And faith, and love, and joy appear,
And ev'ry grace be active here.*

**In bonds of love,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick**

*"Whatsoever ye would that men should do
to you, do ye even so to them."*

Mat. 7:12

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



HOPEWELL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church was organized in July 1855. The church is located about six miles west of Winnsboro, Texas. Meeting is at

10:30 on 2nd Saturday and Sunday of each month, and at 10:30 on 3rd Sunday.

The present pastor is Elder Joe L. Hamrick.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Following is transcribed from tape of a sermon preached by Elder Raymond Goad on Sunday, July 14, 1985 at the Staunton River Association.)

Found in the 2nd Chapter of the Book of Job, beginning with the first verse, it says: "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord."

You know it seems in conversation

with people that they picture Satan as being a human being in the sense that he has supreme powers, but you know as I see Satan, there is a little bit of him in all of us. And you know here it didn't say anything about anyone else that came on this day other than the sons of God. You know God has so fixed everything that there is a certain time, the Bible refers to certain people, certain days and it is so fixed and he said the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. He didn't say anything about him coming among anybody else. He says he came among them.

This scripture came to me very forcibly this morning while I was attempting to get ready to come to church and I thought of old Satan, about how, as I said, there is a little bit of Satan in us all, in the children of God most especially because if there isn't a little bit of Satan in there, where does the warfare come from. If this earthly tabernacle were holy, then Satan wouldn't be there. If this earthly tabernacle were pure Satan wouldn't be there. And if it's holy we wouldn't need to be changed would we? So we find that old Satan comes among the children of God. And the Lord said unto Satan, "From whence comest thou?" Wasn't in the sense that the Lord didn't know why he came. But He knew that he was there. I know that he's here, I know he's in this earthly body that stands before you because he troubles me. But you know I believe that Job is a type of the church. You may not agree with this but I see Job as a type of the church.

And Satan answered the Lord, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it." Now he wasn't talking about the ground you walk on out here, that we know as the earth. He is talking about this earthly tabernacle that stands before you and those that sit out there that God has dealt with. Satan does not bother those

that have not had a change of heart because they already belong to him, or else they have not been made alive to Christ. And Satan doesn't trouble those that haven't been made alive to Christ Jesus. But Satan is that sin that dwells within our bodies. Satan is that that troubles our minds. Satan is that that troubled Christ, as the brother said when Christ said, "Get behind me Satan." Did not Christ go before for all of the ransomed church of God? Then when He said, Get behind me Satan, did He not put him behind all of the children of God? In the sense that he (Satan) will never deceive one of them until they are lost. If this is not true then Satan has the greater power, does he not? Satan is that that Paul sought the Lord to remove. Paul had those troubles, you have those troubles, I have those troubles in this life. I ask myself daily if I am a God-called minister, why do the thoughts pass through my mind that pass through there. It's nothing more than Satan tempting.

And so it goes on to say: "And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job?" In other words, hast thou considered my church? I love to think of that as the church. Maybe I'm wrong in that, am I brethren? Hast thou considered my church? And what does Satan say to Him? He says, you have him hedged in. In other words, he knew, Satan himself knows he has no power, no temptation, no deceiving, unless God permits. God rules and reigns in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say, why doest thou. So He is talking about (the Saviour), as He speaks of Job, I believe the old testament is full of types and shadows pointing to the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth." I want to ask you, my dear hearers, and I

trust my brethren this morning, is there anyone in the earth like you? You know, I believe the poet said, Is there anyone like me, so far from God I lie, it often makes me weep and cry. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? You know this came to me very forcefully that Job is a type of the church. Do you ever find where God ever put His love in the heart of a poor trembling sinner, in this Book, that he ever desired to go back to the ways of Satan?

Even though Paul suffered shipwreck, he suffered imprisonment, he was beaten with many stripes, he was put in prison and all of these things and it seems that before the light shined around about him that he was traveling on flowery beds of ease, it seems he had all kind of friends as the Prodigal son did when he left his father's house. He had plenty of money, he had all kinds of friends. But when the money was gone the friends were gone were they not? And the Lord said unto Satan, Hath thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth. There is none like the children of God upon the face of this earth.

I told some of the brethren that I enjoyed so much the visit of Elder Foreman the other night and the other brethren that were with him, Elder Reeves Smith and I told them, even if I'm not included in it, I've had a wonderful life just to live among these people, to hear them tell what the Lord has done for them.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man." Job denies this. God's children deny this. They deny being perfect. But the thing of it is, my dear hearers, He says I have put their sins as far away as the east is from the west and know them against you no more and that your robes shall be wash-

ed white as snow in the blood of the Lamb.

Then how does He see his church? Does He see it in it's sins, then he hasn't put them away has he? But I believe when the Lord looks down and sees His church He sees it as a bride adorned for her husband. That's the way I believe He sees His church. Perfect, an upright man, one that fears God. You know the world at large doesn't fear God. There are people who don't believe there is a hereafter. There are people that don't believe there is a God. And there is a people that worship Him in vain. And there is a people that deny Him. There is a people that deny His powers. But there is a people called of God. Christ died for a certain number of people and the scripture says not even the angels of heaven know; but their names were recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world.

I asked a minister, he told me he was a minister, not long ago, if he believed the scripture in the Book of Revelation where it says that all shall be saved, that may not be verbatim, whose names are recorded in that Book. He said, Well I don't know why not. I said, well, if you believe that, then tell me how one of them can be lost or one added to it, because that Book is sealed with seven seals and no man in earth and no man in heaven or no man under the earth is worthy to loose the seals and look thereon. If we don't see God as the Supreme Architect of this Universe and see Him as knowing all things from the very beginning, then He ceases to be God. He wouldn't be any more than you or I if He's got to wait until tomorrow to see what I'm going to do because tomorrow old Satan will probably be very present with me. Will he with you? You and I don't have the power to tell Satan to get behind us as Christ did. But I believe that Christ, when he said, Get thee behind me Satan, meant for him to get be-

hind and he's there.

“And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.” All that a man has he will give for his life. “But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.”

You see my dear hearers, Satan has no power to pluck out the life of the saints of God. He goes as far as he can, he afflicts you, he gives you evil thoughts, he gives you trouble on every hand but he has no power whatsoever to take your life, just as he did Job. And we find that the Lord gave him permission to afflict Job. From the sole of his foot to the top of his head were sores and boils and even Job's wife said, Just curse God and die. What did Job say? And what does the church say? What would you say? What has it made you do? You know I have seen those whose companions don't believe this doctrine, won't have it, but it will make you leave your home, your families, and often your wife, your children, those that are sick to go somewhere and to be with those of like precious faith, will it not? So Satan went forth in the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sores and boils from the sole of his feet to his crown and here we see this affliction. Here we see what Satan has done to the church of God. And remember now, we must remember there are some things as we read these scriptures and pray for understanding that we must remember as we read them. Remember that he cannot touch his life, and remember that God has said that he was a perfect man and I believe that God sees this church as a perfect church because He's going to present it, as He has said, to the Father in that day only beknown unto him. He's going to present it, as He has said, to the Father in that day only beknown unto Him. He's

going to present it perfect, without spot, without wrinkle, without blemish, think about it my dear hearers.

Is Satan not behind you, get behind me Satan, get behind me Satan. Yes, he's back there, and didn't Job's wife say, Just curse God and die. And what did he tell her? What would you tell somebody this morning should you come down to a bed of affliction and they would say, if God were just this wouldn't happen, just curse God and die. What would you tell them? You'd tell them just like Job did: You speak as one of the foolish women. You speak as one of the foolish women. You see, my dear hearers, these things are given of God freely, these things are first. I heard this morning something that did my heart good. I heard someone say they heard Brother Soloman's wife say yesterday that she used to think she was first in his life but now she was second.

You see, my dear hearers, God comes first. He said you seek me with (I don't know the exact quotation) all your heart and with all your soul, and all these things, He comes first. These things are the first and the foremost in life because Satan is behind and all the things of Satan you see. But what does the scripture say about Satan? He said he would deceive the very elect if it were possible. He (Satan) would deceive the very elect if it were possible. You see, my dear hearers, he would deceive Job, he would deceive the church, he would deceive them all if it were possible. But it's not possible. It's not possible for one that Christ died on the tree of the cross for and said, “It is finished,” it's not possible that one can be plucked from His hand. But that they all, what did He say? In the 17th chapter of John when he prayed to the Father: He said they are in the world but they are not of it. You see, there's a difference. So we become a dual person, become the warfarer.

I don't have to tell you when you do

wrong or something out of the way, that you've done that. There's something in here will tell you that. When you lie down on your pillow at night there's something will say, I wish I hadn't done that, I wish I hadn't said that. What is it? It is that that is pure. It's that that's within. I take away the old and stony heart and give you a heart of flesh. That's the heart of understanding. I give you a pure heart. And if it's pure, then my dear hearers, how is anything going to pollute it? If God gives you something that's pure, then how is Satan going to pollute that? Get behind me Satan. You and I don't have that power do we?

But aren't you glad that Jesus Christ came here to this low ground of sin and sorrow and went before us, conquered death, hell and the grave and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, making intercession for the saints. Someone said that He is there preparing a place. The place is already prepared. There are two places prepared. And I'll tell you one thing my dear hearers, that fire that will burn was not prepared because there wasn't going to be anyone there. It's going to be just as many there to be cast into that lake of fire — He'll say, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you. And it's going to be just as everlasting as heaven is.

When we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun, you'll have no less days to sing God's praise than when you first begun. I believe they were false witnesses that came to Job and told him that his cattle were gone, Job was a wealthy man, you know, that to me is a type of the children of God when they've been born again. You know, the wealth of this world doesn't seem all that important any more does it. How many of you in your early years had set great goals in this life? You were going to be somebody in this world and when the Lord melted your heart it didn't seem to be important any more did it?

And so those false witnesses, those false messengers as they may have been, came to Job and told him that he (Satan) destroyed his family and his earthly possessions. To me that represents false witnesses that come to God's children but they don't deceive one of them. It never changed Job one iota. All of the afflictions that Satan brought about, and you can rest assured my dear hearers if God has placed His love in your heart, all the temptations that Satan will ever bring upon you in this life will never pluck you out of His hand. He'll never turn one of them back to the ways of this world. He'll never receive one of them. But they all shall come forth in that day, bright shining as the sun. They'll have no less days to sing God's praise than when they first begun.

Yes, I believe that this is a beautiful type of the church of God. When God's people come together Satan comes among them also. Satan is that that's within us. Going up and down, and to and fro in the earth, in this earthly tabernacle. Deceived and being deceived. Deceive the very elect if it were possible.

But aren't you glad that God so fixed it and that He has paid the price for all of our sins, not part of them. If there had been something left for you and I to do old Jonah would have had to swim a little ways when he went down in the belly of the whale. But there you see a complete deliverance. He was delivered out on dry land. He didn't have to wade. He didn't have to swim. You know, I believe all of God's ministers are taught in the school of Jonah. Let's suppose that Jonah had gone straight way to Nineveh when the Lord told him to go down there and preach to that wicked city, what would he have preached to them? He didn't have an experience, he didn't have anything to preach to them. But he went the way the Lord had prepared for him to go. He went the way of the sea and the whale swallowed him there and

he went to the depth of the sea and the sea weeds wrapped around his neck and then what did he say? I vow that salvation is of the Lord. And that old fish vomited him out on dry land. A very beautiful type of the deliverance of God's people.

You shall be delivered on that celestial shore and that celestial city whose builder and maker is God eternal in the heaven on the wings of His love. Someone has said here at this Association, that He will never set foot on land again. But He says He's coming again, to meet you in the air, to take you home on the wings of His love, present you to the Father without spot, wrinkle, blemish or any such thing.

My dear hearers, Satan will never get in front of one of you to hinder that straight and narrow path. If Satan could get in front that wouldn't be a straight and narrow path would it, you'd have to detour to get around would we not? But I find that that straight and narrow path, that all of the obstacles have been removed. You know, as a small boy, we used to walk a lot of places we went. We went through the woods, the shortcuts but we had to go around the steep places and the bluffs, the ruts and the rocks and the trees and the paths were crooked. But the pathway to heaven, that pathway that Christ laid down for you, all has been removed. And Satan has too because he's behind, he's not in front. You are traveling home to glory.

Someday this life will be over. Someday you are going to see Him for yourself and not another. And someday you will know in fullness what you have only known in part. Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them that love Him. And them that love Him, old Satan is behind. Never be in front, never deceive. Bless your heart you shall see Him for yourself and not another, be like Him and be satisfied and Satan won't be there. He won't be

there then. It will all be pure, white and He, as someone said, I believe, yesterday, we won't need the sun by day as we have it today or the moon by night for He shall be the light of His people.

May God bless you and keep you and cause His light to shine upon you is my prayer for Christ's sake and come back to see us when you can. Thank you!

Elder Raymond Goad

November 4, 1985

Dear Elder Williams:

It is time to renew my subscription to the dear Signs of the Time. I sure love the Signs of the Times, sure hope I can always be able to keep it coming to me as long as I live.

Find enclosed a check for \$18.00 for two years subscription.

Thanking you in advance,

Mrs. Bonnie Gover
Rt. 5, Box 411
Dothan, Ala. 36371

Brethren in Christ:

I am enclosing a check to renew my subscription to the "Signs of the Times" for another year; the balance, a small gift.

I feel very blessed to be able to partake of the spiritual food provided therein.

May the Lord continue to bless you in your endeavors in behalf of his "little ones."

In Christian Love,
Marjorie Harris
1425 2nd Ave. SP 13
Chula Vista, CA. 92011

 VOICES OF THE PAST

 "he being dead yet speaketh"

LUKE XV

It is well for us to note that there are three parables in this fifteenth chapter of Luke, and all three are linked together in a remarkable manner. The first is the parable of the lost sheep, the second is the parable of the lost piece of money, the third is the parable of the lost son, improperly called the "prodigal" son. The word "prodigal" means wasteful. This son was worse than wasteful of the goods divided unto him, he was "lost" and in effect "dead." Verse twenty-four gives the real kernel of the parable: "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." So let us call it the parable of the "lost" son," not of the "prodigal" son, as it is generally headed in most of our Bibles. What is a parable? It is a placing of natural things alongside of spiritual things to effectively point a truth. Jesus employed this figure of speech many times in addressing the unbelieving multitudes, as for instance see Matthew xiii. in verification of Psalm lxxviii. 2, and Isaiah vi. 9, 10. Verses one and two of Luke fifteen give the situation which gave direct occasion for Jesus to declare these parables. Going back into Luke fourteen, we see from verse three, Jesus had been addressing the lawyers and Pharisees, and also in verse twenty-five he had been addressing the multitudes. The effect of these discourses of Jesus on his hearers is shown in verses one and two of Luke fifteen. The publicans and sinners drew near for to hear him, but the Pharisees and scribes murmured at what he said and found fault because he received sinners and ate with them. Thus, Jesus' preaching was, as ever, discriminating, and separated between those

who hungrily hung upon his words because it was just what their souls needed, and those who self-righteous and self-satisfied needed not a savior and knew not that they were sinners. Keeping this fact in mind: the two kinds of people in this congregation confronting Jesus, the one wanting to hear him and the others hating and not believing his sayings, we can easily see the primary application of these three parables. Let us glance at each a moment before taking up more especially the one of the lost son.

The parable of the lost sheep sets forth the work of God the Son in redemption. The ninety and nine are left in the wilderness, while the sheep that is lost is sought for and found by the Shepherd. The ninety and nine are not left safe in the fold, they are left in the wilderness. These ninety-nine do not represent at all those who are saved. The ninety-nine were in the wilderness and were left there. Hence they signify the Pharisees and scribes who objected to Jesus' teachings. These, satisfied with themselves as they were, were in the wilderness of unbelief and unregeneracy. The lost sheep, when found, was not brought back to the ninety-nine in the wilderness. The parable does not so state. The lost one, found, was carried on the shoulder of the shepherd and brought "home," where friends and neighbors were who could join in the glad rejoicing at the successful issue of the shepherd's search. This "lost" one is, in figure, the needy souls who drew near to Jesus to hear him, as declared in verse one. The Son of God was manifested in the flesh to seek and to save his lost sheep. He labored in this search, he was burdened, he was in agony, he hanged bleeding upon the cross. He laid down his life for the lost sheep. But he arose from the dead bringing up with him from the captivity of sin and from under the power of death, those whom the Father had in eternity committed to his care—the "lost" ones. When he arose trium-

phant leading captivity captive and ascended into heaven to give gifts unto men, there was indeed more joy, yea vastly more, rejoicing in heaven over the victorious outcome of the Son's journey to earth, than there was over the ninety-nine self-justified persons left in the wilderness not needing any repentance, for there was not at all any rejoicing whatsoever over these latter.

The parable of the lost piece of money. The woman, it seems to us, in her search for the lost piece of money does not go outside her house, but searches diligently everywhere within the house. In her search, she uses a candle. Does she not represent the work of the Holy Spirit? If the first parable sets forth the work of God the Son in redemption, the woman in her search for the lost money shows the work of the Holy Spirit. The lamp used by the woman is significant of the holy Scriptures, because the Spirit uses the word in his work of searching the hearts of those within the house. The house is not merely the visible kingdom, but the whole house of God: those manifested publicly as "found" by the Spirit and also those who may not be visibly connected with the kingdom but those whose souls are searched by the "lamp" of the word made applicable to them by the Holy Spirit. Psalm cxix. 105, would seem to indicate this. The lost piece of money is without value while it is lost. No matter what the monetary value stamped upon it, it cannot be used for any purpose for which money is used, while it is lost. It cannot be used to pay a debt, nor to purchase anything, nor for any other financial end, while it is lost. It needs to be found and restored to circulation before it is of any value. Yet, all the time it is lost it bears the stamp of the government to which it belongs, even though it is in a useless state. Saul of Tarsus was the property of God even before he was regenerated. All unknown to Saul, he was a chosen vessel of God,

and had been so from eternity, but he did not know it until he was "found," nor was he any good to the church until he was "found." Jesus died to save his people from their sins. Having done so, the Holy Spirit sends the word with power experimentally into the hearts of the elect of God to bring them to the knowledge of the truth and to unite them vitally to their divine Head so they can bring forth fruit unto God. But there is no fruit-bearing until vitally united experimentally to Christ, just as the money while lost is without value no matter what may be stamped upon it. Apart from Christ, God's people have no value. Joined with Christ, they are good for something; without him, they are good for nothing. Right here, please note these zeros. 000,000,000. What is their value? Nothing. But, now, let us put 1 in front of them. Thus: 1,000,000,000. The 1 gives value to the zeros, but without the 1 the zeros have no value no matter how many they may be. The 1 is Christ. He, the Head, makes us nothings leap into significance.

And now we come to the parable of the lost son. "A certain man had two sons." Not just any man, but a "certain" man. This man, we think, was Abraham, because Jesus here is addressing none but Jews. The Jews were the descendants of Abraham. Isaac had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. He had others afterward by Keturah, but we are not thinking of those now. Ishmael, the child of his flesh; Isaac, the child of promise. Two great lines of Jews sprang from Abraham: the natural Jew, the spiritual Jew. These scribes and Pharisees who murmured at Jesus because he received sinners and ate with them, were Jews naturally. As Ishmael mocked Isaac, so did these mock Jesus and those who truly believed him. Those who drew near to Jesus for to hear him because their hearts had been opened to receive him, might well have been Jews in heart,

spiritually so because their circumcision may doubtless have been in the heart by the Holy Spirit and not merely outward in the flesh. How else would they have been drawn near to him to hear him, while others drew away from him? These two classes are the two sons of the "certain man." The Pharisees, in their self-righteousness, were the stay-at-home good son, good in their own estimation. These professed to have deserved well of their father because they had not at any time transgressed the commandments. The younger son demanded of his father the portion of goods belonging to him. According to the Jewish custom, the oldest son always had priority over the younger. This was seen in Jacob and Esau. Esau the elder was displaced by the younger. Jacob found favor while Esau was rejected. The same is the case here in the parable. That which is natural is first in evidence, but afterward comes the spiritual and takes precedence over the natural: thus the elder serves the younger. The Father, being asked by the younger for his portion, also gives unto the elder his portion: as it is written. "He divided unto them his living." These blessings thus divided between the two, could have been only natural blessings. Because had they been spiritual blessings, the younger could not have wasted them and lost them. The spiritual blessings with which God has blest his people in Christ before the foundation of the world, are such as cannot be wasted nor mortgaged nor sold. Nor equally so, could the portion divided to the elder son have been spiritual blessings because to the self-confident are not given spiritual blessings, but only to the poor in spirit, for it is the meek who shall inherit the earth, not the self-exalted. As to these blessings which did pertain to the Jews, we have not far to seek. In Romans ix. we have the list: "To whom (Israelites) pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the

law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." The younger son, receiving his portion, departed "not many days after." How rapidly did Israel decline. This was exhibited at Sinai while Moses was away from them in the mount. They made a golden calf and ascribed to it the deliverance from Egypt, the glory whereof was rightly the Lord's. "Not many days after" coming out of Egypt, we find them idolatrous. "Not many days after" coming into the land of Canaan under Joshua's leadership, we find them defeated at Ai because of the golden wedge hidden among them, obtained in disobedience from the accursed ruins of Jericho. How quickly did the fine gold become dim! Having wasted his substance in riotous living, having spent it all, and the famine coming where he was, the younger son finds himself reduced to beggary, hunger and want. All this was verified in Israel's history. Again and again did the nation go in the way of the Gentiles and heaped to themselves refuges of lies, which availed them not. Yet when they turned unto the Lord, he heard them and sent them deliverance. How very great is his mercy toward those with whom he is in covenant-relation! His compassion is very wonderful. This younger son finally "came to himself." He was awakened to see his true condition. How very well he represents those who, circumcised in heart, are made to rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh! "He came to himself." Who can do this, except they be convicted of sin by the Spirit of Truth? The sinner cannot see himself as he truly is, in the sight of the just and holy God, but by the entering into him of the commandment so that he finds the law to be unto death, killing him to the love of sin and to any expectation of escape therefrom save by the might of Jesus

Christ. "He came to himself" is explained by verse twenty, in which it states he "came to his father." There can be no coming unto salvation save as the sinner is awakened to the true knowledge of himself. Coming to the true knowledge of one's sinful condition by nature is the first step in coming "home." In verses eighteen and nineteen he makes to himself the confession which he expects to make when he shall meet his father. He resolves to ask his father to receive him back on the basis of a hired servant. But this can never be! Never on the basis of "law" can a son be restored to the "home." To be received back as a hireling would be restoration on a legal footing, and not on the ground of grace. Impossible! And the son comes to know later that there can be no such status for him at "home," no matter how unworthy he may feel. While the son was yet a great way off, the father saw him and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Before ever he could make his confession, the father gathered him to himself. Thus the covenant of God's mercy in Christ gathers the wanderer in unconditionally, not on the basis of any confession or otherwise. Whatever confession is to fall from the recreant lips must come as the after effect of love and compassion, and is not the cause thereof. Then, after the revelation to him of the love of his father, pours from the heart of the "found" one his confession of unworthiness and the acknowledgment that his sin has been primarily against heaven, that his sin is against God far more than man. But not a word does the son say to his father about being restored on the basis of a hireling. He had thought to do this previously, but such a rush of love as comes from his father quenches all such false fancies as are based on legal expectations. Not one word of blame or condemnation comes from the rejoicing parent's lips. All is love and forgiveness. In an-

swer to the plea of the son that he is no more worthy to be called his son, the father commands the best robe to be brought and put upon the son. This best robe is the imputed righteousness of Christ. This is all the worthiness the sinner needs to fully restore him to his rightful heritage in the covenant of the father, and without this imputed righteousness of Christ nothing else will avail to obtain favor with the father. Christ's righteousness is the answer to our unworthiness. In addition, the ring is put on the son's finger, thus are the saved sinner's works linked up with the covenant of grace. Good works are the fruit of faith, and are not the cause thereof. Acceptable works follow justification, never do they precede the latter. New shoes are put on the feet. Just so, there can be no walking in obedience to the precepts of the covenant of grace except as the effect of justification through the imputed righteousness and obedience of Christ. As the hand represents works, and the feet represent the walk, so do the works and the walk of the child of God spring from justification by faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rings and shoes were not put on slaves, but on free men. How wonderfully do these ornaments show the son to be, not a slave as he once felt he was willing to be, but a freeborn son! (Rom. viii. 2.) "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." Here is a sacrificial feast. The Jews of old had a custom which they called the "feast of the threshold." Whenever a son would run away from home and come back after an interval of time, one of the first things done by the father on the return of the scapegrace son would be to kill a sacrifice at the door of the house before allowing the "found" to enter. This sacrifice was supposed to atone for any transgressions the boy may have committed away from home. These being "covered" by the blood, the boy was

free to enter again the home he had left. You will not find this sacrifice enumerated in the law of Moses among the others there set down. It was simply a custom which grew up out of Jewish tradition, but it is a very comely one. The killing of the fatted calf and then the eating thereof, presents the truth of sacrifice and then of feasting. Only on the ground of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can the lost sinner be found and restored wholly reconciled to the Father. And from this sacrifice of the Lamb of God comes not only our peace with God, but the living food which feeds the souls of the lost when found. Except we eat his flesh and drink his blood, there is no life in us. The sacrifice of himself becomes the feast of his church. So beautifully, therefore, does the ordinance of the Lord's supper set forth the food and drink of the Lord's people, at the same time that it memorializes his death until he comes again.

After all this gladsome reception of the younger son, we find in the parable the description of the anger of the elder son because of his jealousy at the rejoicing made over his erring brother's restoration. Verse two of this chapter fifteen shows very plainly who this elder son is. Comparing verse twenty-seven with verse thirty-two, we see a great light. The son had been received "safe and sound," says verse twenty-seven; and in the thirty-second verse, we have it that the dead is alive again and the lost is found. Putting these two verses together, and letting them explain each other, what have we? To be "safe" is to be "alive from the dead," and "soundness" is to be "found" of God's grace and restored to the "home" predestined for us. In the thirtieth verse, the angry elder son refuses to acknowledge the restored one as his brother. He says, "As soon as this thy son was come." "Thy son," not "my brother." How awfully do these words as they fall from the

lips of anger and jealousy rightfully judge the one who utters them! In very truth, the lost one found is not the brother really of the self-righteous Pharisee. No, there is a great gulf between them, brothers in the flesh though they be. This elder son chides his father with never having given him a kid that he might make merry with his friends. Notice this! He wanted to make merry only with his own associates, no desire whatever to rejoice with his father. True it had been, that the errant younger son had wasted his living on harlots, but never did the father give him a feast to make merry with evil associates: yet the elder son wanted a feast only that he might make merry with his friends, not at all that he might rejoice with his father. What a picture is this of false religion, that religion of the natural man which knows no conviction of sin and repentance, but wants the favor of God only that it may continue in the paths of its own choice, to make merry with its own friends.

H. H. L.

ARTICLES

LAW AND GOSPEL

(Part of a letter by J. C. Philpott, 1861.)

My dear Sir – In one of your letters you expressed the wish that I should give my views upon this point – Why, in my judgment, the law is not a believer's rule of life... In doing so I shall take occasion to offer my thoughts on these three distinct points –

1. Why the law is not the believer's rule of life.
2. What is his rule?
3. Disprove the objection cast upon us that our views lead to doctrinal or practical antinomianism.

By a believer, I understand one who by faith in Christ is delivered from the curse and bondage of the law, and who knows something experimentally of the life, light, liberty, and love of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. By the law I understand chiefly, though not exclusively, the law of Moses. And by the rule of life I understand an outward or inward guide, by following which a believer directs his walk and conversation before God, the Church, and the world.

It is very necessary to bear strictly in mind that we are speaking here wholly and solely of a BELIEVER. What has the law to do with a believer in Christ Jesus? Is he required by the revealed will of God to take the law as the guiding rule of his life? I answer, No; and for several reasons.

1. God does not leave us at liberty to take at will one part of the law and to leave the other. It must be taken as a whole, or left as a whole, for God has so revealed it. I cannot find in any part of God's Word any mitigation of its terms, or any halving of it, so that, according to the views of many divines who have written on the subject, we may be dead to it as a covenant, and yet alive to it as a rule. The essential and distinguishing characteristic of the law is that it is a *covenant of works*, requiring full and perfect obedience, and attaching a tremendous curse to the least infringement of its commands. If then I, as a believer, take the law as my rule of life, I take it with its curse; I put myself under its yoke, for in receiving it as my guide, (and if I do not this, it is not my rule), I take it with all its conditions and become subject to all its penalties. . . . The indispensable connection between a covenant and its rules is clearly shown in Gal. v. 1-6, where the apostle testifies to "*every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.*" It is idle to talk of taking the law for a rule of life, and not for a covenant; for the two things are es-

entially inseparable; and as he who keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all (James ii. 10), so he who takes but one precept of the law for a rule, (as the Galatians took that of circumcision), by taking that one, virtually adopts the whole, and by adopting the whole puts himself under the curse which attaches to their infringement.

People speak very fluently about the law being a rule of life who little think of the resulting consequences; for amongst them is this, that its written precepts and not its mere spirit, must be the rule. Now, these precepts belong to it only as a covenant for they were never disjoined by the Authority that gave them, and what God hath joined together no man can put asunder. To show this connection between the precepts and the covenant is the chief drift of the Epistle to the Galatians, who were looking to the law and not the gospel, and having begun in the Spirit were attempting to be made perfect by the flesh. Read with enlightened eyes, this blessed Epistle would at once decide in favour of the gospel as our guiding rule of Christian conduct as distinct from the law which was never given to believers in Christ as the rule of their daily conduct and conversation. Observe how Paul chides those who would so act; he calls them "foolish Galatians", and asks who hath bewitched them that they should not obey the truth (that is, the gospel), "before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them." He appeals to their own experience and asks them: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" He draws a line of distinction here between those works which are done in obedience to the law as a guiding rule, and that power of God felt in the heart which attends a preached gospel when heard in faith, and asks them under which of the two they had received the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit. But observe, further, now

he bids them "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16). Now, to "walk" is to live and act, and the rule which he here gives for this living and acting is not the law but the Spirit, and he tells them the blessedness of this divine leading and guiding: "If ye be let of the Spirit, ye are not under the law"; that is, neither as a covenant or as a rule – that they were free from its curse as a condemning covenant, and from its commands as a galling yoke, which neither they nor their fathers could bear (Acts. xv. 10). **But to show them that this deliverance from the law did not set them free from a higher and more perfect rule of obedience, he bids them "fulfill the law of Christ"**, which is love, a fruit of the Spirit and not produced by the law which worketh wrath and gendereth to bondage (Rom. iv. 15; Gal. iv. 24).

If we are willing to abide by the inspired Word of Truth, we need go to further than this very Epistle to decide the whole question, for in it we have laid down the rule according to which believers should walk, which is, "a new creature" (or a new creation): "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, Peace be on them, and on the Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 15-16). Is the law or the Spirit's work on the heart held out here as the rule of a believer's walk? The law is strictly a covenant of works; it knows nothing of mercy, reveals nothing of grace, and does not communicate the blessed Spirit. Why, then, if I am a believer in Christ and have received His grace and truth into my heart, am I to adopt for the rule of life that which does not testify of Jesus either in the Word or in my conscience? If I am to walk as a believer, in must be by a life of faith in the Son of God (Gal. ii. 20). Is the law my rule here? If it be, where are those rules to be found? "The law is not of faith." How, then, can it lay down rules for the

life of faith? If I wish to walk as becometh a believer with the Church, what help will the law give me there? To walk as such must be by the law of love as revealed in Christ and made known in my heart by the power of God. If I am to walk in the ordinances of God's house, are these to be found revealed in the law?

We give the law its due honour. It had a glory, as the Apostle argues (II Cor. iii.) as the ministration of death and condemnation, but this glory is done away, and why are we to look to it now as our guiding rule? The ministration of the Spirit, of life, and of righteousness "doth much more exceed in glory", and why are we to be condemned if we prefer the Spirit to the letter, life to death, and righteousness to condemnation? A rule must influence as well as guide, or else it is a dead rule. If you choose to be ruled by the killing letter which can only minister condemnation and death, and we choose for our rule that which ministers the Spirit, righteousness, and life, which has the better rule? It is much to be feared that those who thus walk and talk have still the veil over their heart, and know nothing of what the Apostle means when he says: "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. iii. 17-18).

But not only have we these deductions to influence the mind in rejecting the law as a rule for a believer's walk, but we have the express testimony of God as a warrant for so doing. We read, for instance, that "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19); that "I am become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that I should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that I should bring forth fruit unto God"

(Romans vii. 4). As a believer in Christ, the law is dead to me, and I am dead to it. The Apostle has clearly and beautifully opened up this subject. He assumes that a believer in Christ is like a woman who is re-married after the death of her first husband; and he declares that "she is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband" (v. 2). Of course the first husband is the law, and the second husband is Christ. Now, adopting this figure of Paul's, may we not justly ask: Which is to be the rule of the wife's conduct when re-married, the regulations of the first or of the second husband?

2. What, then, is the believer's rule of life? Is he without rule? A lawless wretch who because he abandons the law of Moses for his rule has no guide to direct his steps? God forbid! for I subscribe heart and soul to the words of the Apostle: "Being not without law to God, but under law to Christ" (I Cor. ix. 21). The believer then has a guiding rule which we may briefly call **THE GOSPEL**. This rule we may divide into two branches. The gospel as written by the divine finger upon the heart, and the gospel as written by the blessed Spirit in the Word of truth. These do not form two distinct rules, but the one is the counterpart of the other; and they are mutually helpful to and corroborative of each other. One of the four promises of the new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31-34; Heb. viii. 8-12 compared), was: "I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." This writing of the law of God in the heart, I need not tell you, is that which distinguishes it from the law of Moses which was written on tables of stone; and becomes an internal rule whereas the law of Moses was but an external rule. This internal rule seems to be pointed out in Romans viii. 2 where we find these words: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from

the law of sin and death." By "the law of the Spirit of life", I understand that guiding rule (for a rule in Scripture is frequently called a law; the word law in Hebrew signifying literally "instruction") which the Spirit of God, as communicating life, is in a believer's heart. It is, therefore, the liberating, sanctifying, guiding influence of the Spirit of God in his soul which, as a law or rule, delivers him from "the law of sin and death"; by which I understand not so much the law of Moses, as the power and prevalency of his corrupt nature.

If this then be a correct exposition of the text, we have a guiding internal rule distinct from the law of Moses, and a living rule in the heart, which that never was nor could be; for it did not communicate the Spirit (Gal. iii. 2-5). But this internal rule, as being "the law of the Spirit of life", has power to lead all the children of God; for in the same chapter (v. 14) the Apostle declares that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God". This leading which is peculiar to the children of God and is an evidence of their sonship, delivers them from the law; for "If we be led of the Spirit we are not under the law" (Gal. v. 18) either as a covenant or as a rule, for we have a better covenant and a better rule (Heb. viii. 6). What is the main use of a rule but to lead? But who can lead like a living Guide? How can a dead law lead a living soul? The very proof that we are the children of God is that we are led by the Spirit; and this inward leading becomes our guiding rule. And is it not a disparaging of the guidance of the blessed Spirit to set up in opposition to His guiding rule a dead law and to call those Antinomians who prefer a living Guide to a dead letter? This living Guide is that holy and blessed Spirit who "guides into all truth" (Jn. xvi. 13). Here is the main blessedness of the work and grace upon the heart, that the leading and guiding of the blessed Spirit

form a living rule every step of the way; for He not only quickens the soul into spiritual life, but maintains the life which He gave, and performs (or finishes, margin) it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. i. 6). This life is eternal, as the blessed Lord at the well of Samaria declared, that the water which He should give the believer should be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (Jn. iv. 14). It is then this springing well in a believer's soul which is the guiding rule, for, as producing and maintaining the fear of God, it is "a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death" (Proverbs xiv. 27).

But lest this guiding internal rule be abused, which it might be by enthusiasm, and that they might not be left to substitute delusive fancies for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the God of all grace has given to His people an external rule in the precepts of the gospel as declared by the mouth of the Lord and His apostles, but more particularly as gathered up in the epistles as a standing code of instruction for the living family of God. Nor do these at all clash with the rule of which I have just spoken, but on the contrary harmonize entirely and thoroughly with it; for, in fact, it is one and the same rule; the only difference between them being that the blessed Spirit had revealed the one in the written Word, and by the application of that Word to the soul makes the other to be a living rule in the heart.

Now there is not a single part or particle of our walk and conduct before God or man which is not revealed and inculcated in the precepts of the gospel; for, though we have not minute directions, we have what far excels all such unnecessary minutiae — most blessed principles enforced by every gracious and holy motive, and forming, when rightly seen and believed, a most perfect code of inward and outward conformity to the revealed will of God, and of all holy walk and conduct in our families, in the

Church, and in the world.

I would say then that a believer has a rule to walk by which is sufficient to guide him in every step of the way; for he has the internal quickenings, teachings, and leadings of the Spirit to make his conscience tender in the fear of God, and has the law of love written upon his heart by the finger of God; and if besides this he has the precepts of the gospel as a full and complete code of Christian obedience, what more can he want to make him perfect in every good word and work (Heb. xiii. 21)? Can the law do any of these things for him? Can it give him life, in the first instance, when it is a killing letter? Can it maintain life, if it be not in its power to bestow it?

But it may be asked: Do you then set aside the two great commandments of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," etc., and "thy neighbour as thyself"? No, On the contrary, the gospel as an external and internal rule fulfills them both, for "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). So that this blessed rule of the gospel **not only does not set aside the law as regards its fulfillment, but so to speak, absorbs into itself and glorifies and harmonizes its two great commandments, by yielding to them in obedience of heart, which the law could not give; for the believer serves in newness of Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter** (Rom. vii. 6), **as Christ's free man** (Jn. viii. 32), **and not as Moses's bondsman**. This is a willing obedience and not a legal task. This will explain the meaning of the Apostle: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man"; for the new man of grace, under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, delights in the law of God, not only for its holiness, but as inculcating that to do which fills the renewed heart with inward delight—love to God and His people.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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OBITUARIES

SISTER LETTIE BARBOUR

It pleased our Dear Lord, to remove from our midst, Sister Lettie Shelton Barbour. She was the daughter of the late Harvey Shelton and Martha Pickeral Shelton. She was the widow of Thomas Barbour. Sister Barbour passed from this life September 30, 1985.

Sister Barbour was a member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, Gretna, Virginia. She was received by experience and baptized April 10, 1947. She believed and loved the doctrine, Salvation by Grace. She attended meetings as long as she could.

Sister Barbour leaves to mourn her: one son, Lorenza A. Barbour of Hurt, Va. Five grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.

Her funeral was conducted by her beloved pastor Elder O.K. Tench and Rudy Hearn and Larry Brafford. The funeral was held in Springfield Primitive Baptist Church and her body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park.

Written by a sister in hope,

Carol R. Pickral
Elder O. K. Tench, Pastor
Oscar D. Pickral, Clerk

ELDER BENNIE NEAL CLIFTON

Amongst our sadness, there are many sweet memories as it falls our lot to record the passing of a dear father in Israel.

We desire first and above all to give thanks to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for the life and devotion of this dear servant and count it our most

rich blessing that we were enabled to walk with him these many years.

Bennie Neal Clifton was born May 18, 1910, one of twelve children of the late Austin Minter and Martha Jane Plasters Clifton. He grew up in the Vesta community and was given some most wonderful experiences of grace before ever being able to go to the church.

Bennie was about twelve years old on one occasion as his mother left to walk to church, and being filled with conviction, he begged God for a little glimpse of Heaven before he should depart into everlasting punishment. To his most wonderful surprise, a vision of almost unspeakable joy appeared,

*Heaven came down my soul to greet,
and Glory crowned the mercy seat.*

When he did get to go to the church for the first time, he went to the outside of the pulpit and wept that he could just be where the people met to praise and honor God. That dear esteem of the children of God, and his unwavering devotion to Christ, never left him through all his years of service and even in his most trying hours.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Bennie in a dream also when he was a young lad. In the dream, Bennie felt he was a fugitive and a most wretched sinner. Hiding in the woods and trees, a beautiful young woman brought food to him. As he tried to escape to safety at his father's house, thinking to hide in a barn, a man dressed in white appeared riding a white horse. The man inquired of Bennie's father telling him he had watched Bennie in the wilderness and had sustained him there.

The walls of the barn opened and the man put a golden cuff on the wrist of Bennie to which was attached a gold chain. After he put Bennie on his horse to take him away, Bennie asked "How long

must I serve?" The man looked back at Bennie and said to him, "Your sentence is Thirty-Three Years."

On June 2, 1934, Bennie was married to Miss (later Sister, whom he baptized) Edrie Ruth Terry at her father's home by the late Elder David Spangler. (Elder and Mrs. Spangler were dear friends in Christ to them both and were blessed to stand by them on the occasion of their fiftieth wedding anniversary.) This union was blessed with four daughters, Rebecca, Betty, Judy, and Carole, and at the time of his passing ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Sister Clifton was a dear companion to Elder Clifton, sticking close by his side through raising their family and through all his ministry.

In September, 1939, Bennie was received by experience into New Dan River Primitive Baptist Church and was baptized the next day by the late Elder Noel B. Gilbert. In September of 1943, he was found qualified and ordained as deacon of his home church.

Brother Bennie became very burdened with the call of the ministry and, thinking to escape as Jonah, went into the service of his country on April 4, 1944. He served until October 16, 1945. The Lord ruled in the sea also and as their ship came under attack in the North Atlantic, Bennie came before the men and preached his first sermon. A young man was there to witness the event and he came forward and embraced Brother Bennie. They were parted during the war, but were brought back together 19 years later to walk together as brethren for many years. This man, Brother Ruben Pickral of Bannister Springs Church was one of those who bore Elder Clifton's body out to its resting place.

Deacon Bennie Clifton was appointed to serve as a trustee of New Dan River Church (Vesta, Va.) in March, 1950. Another member of the church, Brother Henry Cassell, was given a dream or vi-

sion in early 1952. He was shown and told in the dream that "Bennie Clifton must preach the gospel!" Brother Cassell brought this before the church the fourth Saturday in April, 1952 and confronted Brother Clifton with his thoughts. Brother Clifton confessed and yielded to the ministry. He entered the pulpit of wood to stand in the defense of his Lord and Saviour the next day, the fourth Sunday in April, 1952.

Bennie Clifton was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry in July of 1953 and during his ministry he saw and was blessed to be kept,

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace has led me safe thus far,
And Grace will lead me home.*

Elder Noel Gilbert was a dear father in Israel to Elder Clifton, having spent many hours and nights at his home. As Elder Gilbert's health began to decline, Elder Clifton was called equal pastor with Elder Gilbert in June of 1955.

Elder Clifton visited many churches throughout the southeastern United States and was called upon to conduct hundreds of funerals and weddings. He also baptized scores. He was called at different times to serve Thomas Grove, Round Peak, Old Hollow (Stewart's Creek) and Spoon Creek Churches. At the time of his passing, Elder Clifton was the pastor of New Dan River, Liberty, and Goblingtown Churches. He never refused to serve anywhere he was called upon to do so.

As he was blessed to devote much of his time and resources, Elder Clifton saw New Dan River go from an unsealed building to its present condition with bathrooms, electricity and heat, and spent so many of his last days building a room onto the church for meals and overflow crowds. He remarked while working the room would be good for funerals.

Little did we realize as soon as it was completed, his would be the first funeral in which it was used for such a crowd. The church grounds are also reminders of much of his work with an outdoor stand, a pond for baptizing, and now a perpetual trust-funded cemetery for our loved ones.

Through all the work though, Elder Clifton never considered it out of servitude but rather a labor of love. He would never want any honor to himself and he was always the first to count it OUR privilege to sit underneath the drippings of His blessings.

Even as Elder Clifton came to the end of his earthly pilgrimage, he was blessed with such a deep reconciliation to God's Will, and talked freely and joyfully of passing to the other side.

*I am glad that I am born to die,
from grief and woe my soul shall fly.*

Elder Clifton was diagnosed as having cancer in January, 1985. The doctors examined him and said he was healthy as a fifty year old man. After surgery, he counted it a privilege to have his side pierced and remain so until his death, saying if his Lord did so he was no better. But our prayers were answered in that we were given a few more months with him and he was able to return to his churches before his passing. His last sermon at his home church, while very ill and in pajamas and robe still outlined the great sovereignty of God our Saviour. He left admonishments to the churches to be faithful to Christ and love each other; That Salvation was by Grace and that by Revelation only.

As I sat by his bed and watched him grow weaker, I remembered the many times in the last six or eight years he had told me this was the way it would be, but I just never could accept it.

On the fourth Sunday in April of this year (1985) from a wheelchair in the

chapel of the local hospital, Elder Clifton laid hands on and prayed for the latest new member of his home church, after baptism that morning, then sat up and talked to a few of the other members and friends that were present. The first of the week following he became more ill and went into a coma eight days prior to his passing. Sister Clifton stayed right beside Brother Clifton throughout all his suffering and ministered so lovingly to all his needs. As was shown her in a dream, she followed with him right up to the river of death and stood by him as he breathed his last breath.

*Sweet to rejoice in lively hope,
that when my change shall come;
Angels shall gather round my bed,
and waft my spirit home.*

Elder Clifton passed away on May 13, 1985, only five days short of being 75 years old. The local funeral home (Howell's) said it was the largest crowd ever to attend the viewing of a body. Funeral services were held for Elder Clifton at his home church on May 15, 1985 by Elders Paul Hopkins, John Wingfield, and Ernest Branche, there was a great multitude in attendance, and he was borne out to his desired resting place near the church.

From the fourth Sunday in April, 1952 when he first went into the pulpit unto the fourth Sunday in April, 1985 and his last prayer Elder Clifton's servitude to the Lamb he loved was Thirty-Three years to the day!

In this day of turmoil and trials may we all consider this experience that has touched our lives and be assured that God is Sovereign!

We love Elder Clifton and we miss him, but again we hope we're thankful for the humble walk he was given, and the times we've sung together, cried together, and communed together.

May we all bow in humble submission and give God all the Praise, Honor, and

Glory, for unto us was Christ's words felt, "Rejoice, *rather*, that your names are written in Heaven."

When the clouds shall part and the myraids of angels spring forth, and the King in all His Glory shall appear, may we be blessed to be changed in a moment and go forth to dwell together forever.

*When Earth can no delights afford,
He spreads a Heav'nly feast;
Such dainties crown his royal board-
"To be with Christ is best!"*

Submitted by:
Elder Paul Hopkins
Clerk James Shelor

SISTER LOLA CHAMBERS RUSSELL

Sister Lola Russell was received as a member of the Durham Primitive Baptist Church on December 1, 1984. She passed away in the late evening of that same day.

She had been very ill for several months and while in the hospital the last time she requested the pastor and deacons to tell the church that she desired membership with us. She was unanimously received as a member at a special call meeting on December 1, 1984.

Sister Russell was not able to be baptized with water. But the church had seen evidence in her life that she had been baptized with fire and the Holy Spirit. She had been attending Old Baptist meetings for most of her life and rejoiced in the doctrine of Salvation by Grace and we believe that her hope of heaven has now become a reality to her spirit.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit that they may rest from their labors: and their works do follow them."

C. Humbarger, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

“The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon”

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA. MARCH 1986

NO. 03

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years.

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84

Fayette, Ala. 35555

Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnboro, TX 75494

Elder D. B. Stokes

1029 Daniel Court

Jacksonville, N.C. 28540

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566. All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Virginia 24566

PSALM 3

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me.

I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.

Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

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 EDITORIAL

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (II Timothy 3: 16, 17)

I am sure that somewhere, in some of our religious periodicals that I have already said perhaps too much on this text, but a time has come about to where I feel to notice it again. I am sure that it means what it says. If it does not mean what it says, then I would appreciate some one clarifying the writings of inspiration so that we would have a better system of understanding inspiration.

To me the inspired word of God means what it says. If it does not mean what it says, then poor students like I am are in a great need of instruction. In the first place, each reader of these sacred matters needs qualifying by a higher state of intelligence than Paul was in when he

wrote by inspiration. We are told by Inspiration that all Scripture is given by the Inspiration of God. It bearing that approval, it is presented to us as being from God and of God; that whatever utilization of application is made of it that it is perfectly useful in teaching and in application of the said Scriptures to any Phase of God's teachings. It is the doctrine of God our Saviour although it is the writings of men, even inspired men. In no way is there any danger or likelihood of failure or any way in which the writers of the Bible saying the wrong thing or leading the recipients of those writings to leading the brethren astray.

All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God. Here is the only safe place to tarry. Safety is found only in the reception and the following word by word the writing of Jesus Christ and His inspired apostles. That does not permit any of the followers of the blessed Lord differing from Him. Whatever He or they said or left on record on the pages of the Holy Bible was for us to obey. This declaration of the apostle is applicable to one and all of us that have been called to minister to and among the saints of God. To be sure, this does not give any Elder the right to skip over any portion, of Holy writ, and to raise objections or to deny any portion of it or to leave it off or to quibble or stagger or halt or dodge one syllable of the inspired testimony of the Saviour or any one of the inspired apostles.

One of the most noted Elders among our people made the bold assertion that he did not believe in giving admonitions. Our people gave him wide approval of the wide assertion. There are numerous Elders scattered over the United States that boldly and publicly and some of them daringly and boastfully that they do not use admonitions nor exhortations in their preaching and writing. Their reason for this is because that they did not believe in doing so. Such preaching

is not true and it is not a healthy atmosphere among the ministers of God--in fact it is doubtful if a single passage of Scripture can be found to substantiate anything like that in the Bible.

I have felt like for years that some eternal Being had to have an inspired mind in order for the Bible to have absolute authority. What a useless book the Bible would be if each writer in it was moved to write the Scriptures of divine truth, and that he had supreme authority to interpret it in his own judgement.

Again may I refer to the text at the head of this article. My dear brethren, let us be careful about disputing what the Saviour and the apostles commanded us to do. If any of us differ with what they said, who does it put in a precarious position? Is it us or them? If we take the authority to take out of the sacred Book what He has commanded us to do, doesn't He have the right to take out His promises to us out of the book of life? If not, why not?

Our text is found in the charge to Timothy. How much of this charge is applicable to Paul? To Timothy? To you and I? What man among us that has come under the laying on of hands in ordination to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ? It is essential that all of the charges in it be given. There are not any minor items in this charge. Our text assures us that each item in this charge be given to the man being ordained. If not, I am taking the position that a man has not been scripturally ordained. My dear yoke fellows in the ministry, yea, to every reader who has been baptized into the church of Jesus Christ, isn't it bidden that an applicant for baptism is obligated to be completely immersed in water to be properly baptized? Likewise, did the rules laid down by the apostle Paul include all of the charges that was given by him for the orderly ordination of a deacon? The Scriptures tell us in a sure and in no uncertain term

that these rules for the ordination of deacons are to be carried out. Again, let me say that I have heard favorably known elders speak lightly of both charges to ministers and deacons. One noted and favorably known Elder said that there was not any use for charging deacons and ministers because they did not intend to obey them anyway.

Yet, with a tendency for lack of confidence in our brethren is one of our major weaknesses. I am told on many occasions that God will take care of His church and His people; that is a mark of meddling with God's business. Where my dear brethren in Holy writ is carelessness and neglect and closing our eyes to the ordinances, instructions and commandments of God set aside by His servants. We are under commandment by God the Father, God the Son to follow His commandments, definitely not to set up a rule and conduct and procedure of our own. If we do not have any stronger incentive for adding to or taking from the direct and spoken commandments of the Head of the church than to base what we are removing or canceling are certainly on a weak foundation and are in a pitiful condition. After the direct spoken commandment of the Saviour, the Son of God, the inspired truth as given to us by the glorious Sufferer of the body of Christ, we have either lost something that He gave us for the benefit of the men of God, or we have added to His inspiration something in addition to His inspired word.

My dear brethren is there any difference in the error of taking from what He said than there is in adding to it? I do not know of any sin that could be introduced among us worse than that of adding to or taking from what He instructed his apostles and ministers to carry out. This thought brings before us the gospel charge from Paul the apostle and minister of the gospel to the young fellow minister of the gospel of Christ. If I am

called by names and charges of being weak in the faith, so be it. The Elder the Apostle Paul was charged with this and that and the other. His answer to these charges was that none of these things move me. I would pray on bended knees that my Father enable me to bear any and all charges pressed against me when these charges are because of standing steadfast in defense of the doctrine of God our Saviour.

It is hard for me to understand anyone that boldly declares that they do not believe in exhortation (Acts 14: 22, 23; II Cor. 8: 17). They do not believe in admonitions (Rom. 15: 14). They do not believe in rebuking those that are yielding to the enticing suggestions of those that walk disorderly (Titus 1: 13, 25; 12: 5). I cannot understand how any man that professes to have been called of God to the work of an evangelist, to pastor churches, to minister in the militant kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ can say boldly, sometimes in an arrogant manner that they do not admonish; that they do not rebuke; that they do not exhort. Yes, I am well aware of the reason given for not doing so. They are bold to tell me why that they do not do so. Their reasons for not doing so are two fold. First, they do not believe in doing so; second, there is not any use of it.

My first reason for writing the things that I am writing is because that it has been placed there by the Head of the church. I do not profess to know more than my brethren, but you have a right to know what my views are. I do know that when Elder G. W. Berry gave me the charge, soon will be fifty years ago, that he was careful to charge me as to what they were ordaining me for. I further am sure that Elder R. W. Rhodes in the most tender, and yet authoritative manner was called upon to add to the remarks of Elder Berry and I am sure that both of them were thorough and explicit in giving the charge as they could be. I

confess today, as I have confessed many times, that I have not been as punctual in hewing to the line in that way as I should have been.

Another thing that has been a mystery to me has been the boasting of many of our Elders in their attitude about admonishing God's children about following the Lord in the pleasant rite of baptism. The sad thing, yea, the pitiful thing is that many, if not the most, of our ordained elders is that they boast about NOT doing it. What is their reason for not doing it? They generally have several reasons for not doing it. First, the Arminians do it, that is admitted, but if that is acceptable as a reason, then they also, many of them, baptize the candidate. Does that prohibit us from baptizing the candidates? If not, why? I have had it put to me by the Elders of my day that I am to preach the word, but that that is the end of my work, that the believers are on their own as to them coming before the church.

That is a wonderful gift, preaching the word. But is that all that Paul said? Please be kind to me a poor beggar. Is that all that Paul commanded Timothy to do? Now is it? Did Paul command Timothy to preach the word and stop his commandment to him and to all other ministers? I freely admit that he told him to preach. But I insist that he told him to do other things. There was a good reason for the Apostle telling Timothy to do other things. He told that young minister to preach the word. Yes, it is freely admitted that he commanded Timothy to do that. But he did not stop there. I deny that preaching was all that Paul commanded him to do. In the way that all ministers should give a charge, Paul charged Timothy to be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine, and he told him why for him to do so.

I have not run over this United States

telling people that I have been assigned to a place in the ministry as Timothy was, but for some reason best known unto God, my brethren says that I have been. If so, do I not have the same authority that Timothy did? If so, I will, as Elder Spangler told me a short time before he passed away, continue to do as Paul told Timothy, and as he told you and you and you to do.

I have scores of articles in past issues of the Signs in which I spoke repeatedly in defense of absolute predestination and admonishing the brethren to go forward in walking in these admonitions.

That has always been my policy. I

told Elder Dodson that before I was put on the Signs staff. He was a man that was a believer in doing that. The founder of the Signs was a strong believer in admonishing the children of God. His noted son, Elder William was a strong believer in doing that. Many of the editors, if not each one of them, together with writer after writer for the Signs for more than a hundred years often encouraged God's little children about walking in the numerous admonitions and exhortations laid down in the Bible.

Please bear with me, a poor unworthy sinner.

Elder W. D. Griffin

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH

MOUNTAIN CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



Mountain Creek Primitive Baptist Church was organized October 24, 1935 in Claiborn County, Tennessee and is a member of the original Powell Valley Primitive Baptist Association.

The church is located on Owl Hollow

Road about one mile west of Lone Mountain, Tennessee.

The meeting time is 11:00 o'clock Sundays following the third Saturday each month. Elder D. R. Cabbage is the moderator.

CORRESPONDENCE

32 Cloverdale Estate
Northport, Al. 35476
Dec. 5, 1985

Dear Brethren, Editors, Associate
Editors of Signs Of The Times:

I am sending check for two years, and you may use the other as you may see fit.

I have been reading the Signs seven years. And I hope and believe that the Great God, the only true and Living God, has at many times caused me to rejoice in the reading. How dependent that we all are upon this All Wise, All Powerful, Merciful, Loving, God. So much of the time I am made to wonder how He could love such a sinner, worm of the dust as I am. But we know that He come down, born of a woman, lived and died for sinners, of whom I feel as the Apostle Paul, to be the chiefest of sinners. And if a Saint, the least of all. But Dear Brethren, that Precious Hope that I have is so Precious that I would not exchange if possible for everything in this world. Praise God from whom all blessing flow, Praise His Holy Name.

It has pleased God for me to have met you all, as unworthy as I feel to be. I surely hope that it will be Gods will for the Signs to be continued many years. And I want to say that, as with all things was fixed before the foundation of the world, and no man can change any of God's work. Please forgive me of all errors in my writing a sinner, if saved; saved by Grace and Grace alone.

Come to see us when you are given a mind to do so. We are always glad to have the dear children of God, of whom we feel to be, of the elect family to be with us at any time.

In hope of eternal life,
Elder W. T. Posey

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

ETERNAL LIFE.

"This is the true God, and eternal life."—1 John v. 20.

That this testimony is given by the inspired apostle concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, we presume but few if any will dispute, since there is no other character or being found in heaven or earth to whom we can apply these titles without involving the sin of blasphemy. The whole theme of John in this epistle, as well as in all his writings, was to bear record of testimony of him, and to show by the most indisputable testimony that he is as here declared, the true God, and eternal life. It is highly important that the children of God should be instructed in regard to his being, his attributes, his fullness, and of the relationship subsisting between him and them; and to meet this necessity the Holy Ghost inspired John to write unto the scattered family of God that they may have fellowship with each other, and that their joy may be full. (1 John i. 1-4.)

As the doctrine declared in our text involves the fellowship of the saints one with another, and their fellowship also with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, how very important it is that we in striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, should search diligently these Scriptures which testify of him.

Two important points are established by the declarations of our text. First, that Jesus Christ is the true God, and secondly, that he is the eternal life. On these two points we will offer a few remarks for the prayerful consideration of our readers.

First. He is *the* true God. It is not said that he is *a* true God, as though there

were a plurality of true Gods: for the Scriptures proclaim but One living and true God; and he himself has said, "I am God, and beside me there is no other." Hence the definite article is used to signify that Jesus Christ is the same God of whom Moses testified unto Israel saying, The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms. He is the same God who said, by Isaiah, unto the seed of Israel, Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. Yea, he is that very God who has said he will have no other god before him. He is therefore called, The only wise God, our Savior. And in our text he is also distinguished from all false gods, or imaginary deities, the *true* God. This descriptive characteristic, implies that there are those that are called gods, and worshiped as such, that are not true. Jesus himself testified, all that ever came before him, were thieves and robbers: and he admonished his disciples that many *false* christs would come, and commanded them to beware of them.

He is the true God; all others who claim that honor, or who are revered as such, are false, delusive idols, whether they be of gold or silver, or any material substance, or existing only in the vain imagination of their worshipers. But when we claim that Jesus Christ is the only true and living God, we hold that all the fullness of the eternal Godhead dwells in him. The eternal Father is in him, and he is in the Father, and he and his Father are one. The Holy Spirit of the Lord God, in all his infinity is given to him without measure or limitation; it dwells in him, and is one with him. All that constitutes the Godhead, with all the attributes and perfections belong to him, and are essential to his nature, so that in the absence of any of them, if it were possible that any of them could be absent from him, he would be disqualified to be a *Savior*, or to be worshiped. God has de-

clared that he is God and beside him there is no Savior, and he has forbidden his creatures to worship any but himself, therefore in worshiping Christ, we worship none other than the true God. The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, Notwithstanding these personal distinctions by which they are severally set forth in the record of truth, are but the one only living and true God, for these three are one. In his eternal Godhead we hold therefore, in distinction from the views advanced by those who lately assailed our faith on this subject, that Christ, in his Godhead, is self-existent, independent and eternal. That his Godhead in unbegotten and underived, it is the Godhead of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, and we would as soon think of applying derivation to the Father or Spirit, as to that fullness of the Godhead which is embodied in our Lord Christ.

Although he is the true God, equally and identically with the Father and the Holy Ghost, he also sustains and most gloriously fills a mediatorial identity, in which he is as fully identified as one with his church, as in his Godhead he is one with his Father. Hence our apostle not only declares him to be the true God, but also proclaims him as the eternal life. He himself declares, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The scriptural record of this Eternal Life, as given by the apostle John, and by all inspired writers, finds its origin in the eternal Father; and hence its eternity. "That which was from the beginning, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with

his Son Jesus Christ.”—1 John i. 1-3. The manifestation of this eternal life which was with the Father, is represented as a begetting, a bringing forth, a setting up, and a Sonship, while its incarnation extended the manifestation to the saints on earth, so that they could see with their eyes, and handle the Word of life. Let us not forget that this Life is eternal, the manifestation is not the origination of it; for before it was manifested, it was with the Father. The begetting, or birth, is not the origination of that life which is made manifest by a birth. This eternal Life, is the Life which our Lord Jesus Christ is unto his *body* the church, which is the fullness of him that filleth all in all. “For me to live is Christ.” “When he who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.” When this eternal life was manifested, of course it appeared, and in it all the saints were and are manifested in glory, even in that glory which the divine Mediator had with the Father before the world was. This is what we understand to be the eternal vitality, or immortality of the church of God. It was with the eternal Father, hid with Christ in God, and it was given unto the saints together with all that pertains to life and godliness, in the unspeakable gift of God’s dear Son, whom God has given to be the Head, Life and Immortality of the church, which is his body; all the members of which the omniscient eye of the Father did see, yet being unperfect, and in his book all its’ members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them.

These views, if correct, involve what is called the doctrine of Eternal Vital Union.

That is the life of all the saints of God is one life, it is Christ, and Christ is eternal, as the Immortality of His body. The manifestation of this eternal life involves a spiritual generation, preceeding from God the Father, in manifestation of the

eternal Life which was with him, and all this eternal life with all spiritual blessings, was given us in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Hence, in the Sonship of Christ is found all our vital relationship to God. This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and the life is in his Son, so completely identified with the Sonship of Christ that he that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. For he only hath immortality dwelling in the light. The children of God having spiritual, eternal life given them in Christ before the world began, are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; they are a seed that shall serve him, and be counted to the Lord for a generation.

This is the doctrine of the Bible on the subject of the true God, and Eternal Life, and a prominent and fundamental doctrine of the apostolic Baptists in all ages, and in all parts of the world. It sets forth Eternal, Unconditional Election, and life given to the chosen or elected people of God, before the world began. Yet there are those now, as probably there have been in past ages, who would confuse the minds of the saints, in order to rob them of the comfort which an understanding of this subject inspires. John says, “These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” Satan and his legions oppose the doctrine, traduce, misrepresent and persecute those who hold, and proclaim this doctrine. Not because Satan has any hope of being able with all his allies on earth, in or out of the christian profession, to overturn or destroy it, but the joy of the saints cannot be full without the consolation of this doctrine, the object of the powers of darkness is to prevent the fullness of joy which the subject inspires.

May the Lord lead our minds by his Spirit into this and all truth, and deliver us from all error and delusions, for

Jesus' sake, and then we can well afford to bear all the reproach which may be heaped on us for the truth's sake.

"Then let the loudest storm arise,
Let tempests mingle earth and skies,
No fatal shipwreck shall we fear,
For Christ, our life, is always near."

THE LATE ELDER GILBERT BEEBE
MIDDLETON, N.Y. January 15, 1859.

ARTICLES

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee." (Tim. 4:16)

In a recent editorial we voiced our concern for false doctrines which are presented in the name of Jesus by nominal Christians. We are far more concerned, however, about matters that pertain to the church. We need not be surprised at what goes on in the world, either politically or religiously; and this is because unregenerated people have not been taught in the school of Christ and have not been quickened to know anything of the laws of Christ. The very best that is in human nature falls far short of spiritual things; for no person is subject to the laws of the kingdom unless he is a citizen of that kingdom and living within its bounds.

Every subject of the kingdom of God is born into the kingdom and are citizens by birth, there being no provisions made for naturalization as among natural kingdoms. Each of these subjects is taught of the Lord, for his laws are put into their minds, and written in their hearts. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." And a portion of the New Covenant reads, "I will put laws into their

mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be unto them a God, and they shall be unto me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

We believe this is true with respect to each and every subject of grace; and there are no ignorant ones in this family, for to whatever extent of the depth of the mystery of godliness any of them may be led, they are all built on one foundation, and fed on the sincere milk of the word.

There is another important side of the matter, however, which, if we are faithful, we will look into; and looking, we will find much which will take us unto the throne of God for grace to guide and lead us aright. There is much in us as individuals and as churches which is not according to godliness; and the eyes of our understanding are surely blinded and our conscience seared, if we fail to recognize it.

Conditions were such in the church at Corinth that Paul wrote them: "For ye are carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"; "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness of God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." (I Cor. 3:3 and 18-19). Also to the Galatians, Paul wrote: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you." (Gal. 3:1) What ever the circumstances which demanded the above from the Apostle, (which are named), the same is demanded whenever there is any departure from the faith anywhere or at any time.

When Jesus spoke to the eleven after his resurrection, he said: "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 to observe **ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU**; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:18-20)

In our early days among the brethren we felt,—as did many of the brethren, that a brother was sound in the faith if he believed Predestination, Election, Resurrection, etc. And we are certain that these are sound doctrine if correctly understood and defined, and as such are absolutely necessary to be preached and believed every time the **GOSPEL** is preached; but these are not the only things which are sound doctrine.

To preach everything whatsoever Jesus commanded to be observed is sound doctrine and everything which the Apostles taught and commanded is sound doctrine. And we must insist that everything which was written by inspiration is sound doctrine; but that everything else not in accord is not sound doctrine. Sound doctrine is properly called the truth as it is in Jesus, and cannot be rightly separated into distinct parts, for it is one continuous whole. Therefore, if any part is neglected to be taught and believed, truth,—or sound doctrine, is neglected.

To illustrate what we have in mind, we may say that orderly walk and godly conversation is sound doctrine; but if exhortation to these things is neglected, or if reproof or rebuke is neglected where necessary, then the **WHOLE TRUTH** is not being presented. It is well to read the whole of the 2nd chapter of Titus; where Paul wrote: "Speak thou the things which become **SOUND DOCTRINE**: that the aged men be sober, brave, temperate, sound in the faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holi-

ness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

In all things shewing **THYSELF A PATTERN OF GOOD WORKS**; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again, not purloining but shewing all good fidelity; that they may **ADORN THE DOCTRINE** of God our Saviour in all things.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, **TEACHING US** that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. **THESE THINGS SPEAK, AND EXHORT, AND REBUKE WITH ALL AUTHORITY**. Let no man despise thee."

It is our understanding that all gospel ministers are under this charge, as well as all other things they are instructed to teach and preach; such as, "Of these things put them in remembrance, **CHARGING THEM BEFORE THE LORD** that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain bab-

lings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness." (2Tim. 2:14-16). In the 4th Chapter of 1st Timothy, Paul wrote, "These things **COMMAND AND TEACH**. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou **AN EXAMPLE** of the believers, in **WORD, IN CONVERSATION, IN CHARITY, IN SPIRIT, IN FAITH, IN PURITY**. Till I come, give attendance to **READING, TO EXHORTATION, TO DOCTRINE**. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophesy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that they profiting may appear to all. **TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF, AND UNTO THE DOCTRINE: CONTINUE IN THEM: for in doing this thou shalt both SAVE THYSELF, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE.**" Are not these things included in the calling of a servant of God, and is he not charged with them when he is ordained? Surely so; for whether spoken or not, all things which belong to the office-work of an elder are included in the charge.

Not only are the servants of God to preach and teach these things, but the brethren are exhorted to hear them and continue in them, as children who have been taught of the Lord and have his laws written in their hearts and put in their minds: That they may lead a quiet and peaceful life, and adorn their profession, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. Being children of God and taught of him, there is no walking outside of these things which may be tolerated in the church; for though it is said,—and it is true, that when we walk astray it is because we are walking in the flesh.

Yet if this reason is sufficient to give license for such walking, and allowable as a principle governing conduct where would there be place for gospel order and discipline? Though each of us feelingly realize our fleshly walk so often, are we not therein condemned by the

law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which has made us free from the law of sin and death: and being dead in sin cannot walk any longer therein? Is there not that within us which causes us to know that these things are not becoming to us as professed followers of Jesus, members of his body, and having a hope of eternal life? We understand the Scriptures to teach, and our experience to confirm that, though we have these treasures in an earthen vessel, we are not at all excusable, but are amenable to the discipline and order which belongs in the church, and which the brethren are enjoined to maintain.

If this were not true, the church would have no right to require godly walk and conversation of her members as necessary for the retaining of fellowship and privileges of the church. It is therefore, gospel order that when members are in disorder from any cause, the weakness of the flesh cannot be accepted as giving them a right thus to walk; but they are required to walk as becometh godliness. If they do not thus walk, after proper admonition and labor on the part of the brethren, the fellowship and privileges of the church must be withdrawn.

He is a faithful preacher who preaches the word to his people, not only in the fundamental principles and experiences, but in exhortation reminding them what is required of all those in fellowship, who are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and have right to the communion of the blood and body of Christ. But if any should withhold from the brethren which he is commanded to teach, he is not faithful to his calling. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1Cor. 4:2) No servant of God should inquire of men what he should preach, nor turn aside for any earthly reason from preaching the whole truth; but taking heed unto himself and unto the doctrine, and realizing that he falls far short of ability and

wisdom, he will betake himself unto God who called him, as James said; "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." etc. (James 1:5-6)

Jeremiah mentions a terrible thing among the priests and prophets: "A wonderful and horrible thing has happened in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their own means; and MY PEOPLE LOVE TO HAVE IT SO; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5:30-31). No doubt the same things may be said of some of the Lord's people in this and former days: some love their own ways, and their own desire of advantages, rather than the Lord's ways according to the pattern and examples given; and what makes it worse is that many are ready to follow. In this they are not only wrong themselves, but are upholding those who are wrong. If any are in disorder they would soon come to naught were they not strengthened by those who uphold them. Personalities should have no place among the brethren, for they should preach, not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and themselves the servants of the brethren for Jesus' sake (see 2 Cor. 4:5).

Our earnest prayer for Zion is that the Lord may be pleased to give us sober minds and understanding hearts; and a sitting still, (Ruth 3:18); and a laying down of our lives for the brethren, (1 John 3:16). It is such a serious thing for any to cause unrest and disturbance of the peace of the churches. May we all be blessed to take heed unto ourselves, as well as the doctrine, and not have the following apply to us: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adver-

saries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD." (Hebrews 10:26:31).

No doubt all brethren will agree that the saying mentioned in the text pertains not to eternal life but rather saving the church from errors in doctrine and practice; for it is a very noticeable thing that where there is a sound and faithful ministry, there is usually a sound and faithful church.

J. D. W.

I desire to write a few thoughts upon the two olive trees spoken of in Zechariah iv., in connection with the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation xi. The great question is, who are the two olive trees, and who are the two witnesses referred to in the two Scriptures named? It seems to me that in Zechariah iv., the angel answered the question of Zechariah quite plainly: "And the angel that talked with me came again, and awaked me, as a man that wakened out of his sleep; and said unto me, what seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, (the church) with a bowl upon the top of it, (Christ) and his seven lamps thereon." These seven lamps give light to the church, and the Head of the church provides the lamps, and also the oil. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the

throne, which are the seven spirits of God. Now it was said that upon one stone should be seven eyes. The stone is Christ, and it "shall be," not "may be," for there are no maybes in the Bible. And "I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." These "Are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth."—Zech. iii. 9; iv. 10. Now let me quote from Rev. ii. 7; iv. 5' vii. 6: "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices, and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the Elders, stood a Lamb, (Christ) as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." For the type of all this see Exodus xxv. 31; Leviticus xxiv. 1-5; Hebrews ix. 1, 3.

There were seven pipes to the seven lamps, and two olive trees, one upon the right and the other upon the left side of it. And he said, "So I (Zechariah) answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these my Lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Therefore it must be true, and it must also be that all human means and instrumentalities are cut off by this sweeping declaration, and the Spirit is the first witness. Does not this prove that the first witness is the Spirit? And who will dare to dispute the word of God? Now who is the second witness? "Who are thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone (Christ)

thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace unto it." The seven eyes of the Lord were on that stone (Christ).

I will now refer to Revelation xi. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days (or twelve hundred and sixty years) clothed in sackcloth. It is in the body, the church, which in this world is clothed in sackcloth, that Christ and the Spirit do prophesy, and nowhere else but in the church. These are the two olive trees standing (which shows that they have all power) before the God of the earth. We also read that if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies, and if any man will hurt them, he must in like manner be killed. Now who has this power outside of these two witnesses, the Spirit and Christ? Read 2 Thess. ii., eighth verse especially, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume (is there anything left of that which is consumed? With the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Has any power like this ever been given to any others? These it is said have power in themselves (not given to them) to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven, to give rain unto the land. (Deut. xxvii. 12.) Elijah said unto Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."—1 Kings xvii. 1. By whose power then was it sent? "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." It is also said that these witnesses have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. Now where does this power come

from? "Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord: behold I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood."—Exodus vii. 17. Jesus also said, "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." And he said, "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And this Spirit of truth he says shall abide with you forever. And "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." And again he said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John viii. 17; xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26.)

Was not the Holy Ghost also a witness upon the day of Pentecost? Paul said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Again he said, "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."—1 Cor. i. 6. And again, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." (Read 1 Cor. ii. 9-12.) Again, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ. Not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."—1 John v. 6, 7. And also from revelations we have seen that Christ is a faithful and true witness. John to the seven churches

which are in Asia; Grace be unto you, and peace, from Jesus Christ the faithful and true witness, and from the seven spirits which are before the throne. Job had said before, "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high." This is in Zion, the city of our God. Her two witnesses who fight all her battles, and conquer all her enemies, and put them under her feet, are eternal, invisible to the world, but are revealed unto the saints.

Now under the law we read, "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." If Christ, the antitype, had not been beaten with many stripes, we never could have received the oil of divine grace through the other witness, and Holy Ghost. The typical lamps must burn continually throughout the legal dispensation. And so the church of God receives continually the olive oil from the two olive trees, which in revelation are said to be the two witnesses. These olive trees have all power in heaven and on earth, and ever have and ever will exist. They are eternal. Therefore the oil by which Zion is supplied is inexhaustible, and her lamp can never go out, but must burn eternally. Her lamp is brighter than the noonday sun, for God is her eternal light. Then "Let Zion arise and shine, for her light has come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon her. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." This is by the power of the two witnesses, Christ and the Holy Spirit. These two witnesses are the only ones that have power to justify them and cleanse them from all guilt. "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons

shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine heart shalt fear and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.”—Isaiah lx. 4, 5. These two witnesses are the only two who could testify from the first, from Adam and Abel through all time, even til the end of time.

Now where are these two witnesses slain? In Babylon. Where do their dead bodies lie? In Babylon. No wonder the inhabitants of Babylon stumble over them, they are in their way. No wonder they want to bury them, there are too many sheep and lambs bleating after them to suit the old lady and her daughters. To preach Christ crucified always was, and always will be a stumbling-block and foolishness to the worshipers of Babylon. To them it is dead preaching, and there is no life in it. “Wherefore it is contained in Scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious, but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.”—1 Peter ii. 4-8. Read also Psalm cxviii. 22; Isaiah viii. 14; xxviii. 16; Matt. xxi. 42; Luke ii. 34; Acts iv. 11; Romans ix. 22; 1 Cor. i. 23. Again it is said, “And he shall be for a sanctuary; (to his chosen) but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offense, to both the houses of Israel, (natural Israel) for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the old Jerusalem). And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.” This

is the testimony of the two witnesses, and it is the spiritual law that is signified. (Isaiah viii. 14-16.)

Babylon has no use for these two witnesses in making her converts. It is all by might of men and money, and hellfire, instead of Christ and the Spirit of God, they scare their converts into their fold, so that they can shear them. “They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?”—Hab. i. 15-17. Read also the thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel. These two witnesses are the life of the church, they are the only people who will not suffer Babylon to put the two witnesses away. These are their witnesses who can clear them in the court of heaven, from which there is no appeal. In this court these are standing witnesses; these are prophets who have prophesied the end from the beginning; eternal prophets. “And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” These help one another at getting up fires or revivals, to make proselytes. But the prophet has said, “Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.”—Isaiah l. 11. The inhabitants of the earth do not want to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, for they are all afraid of it. They are afraid that it would burn their building down to ashes. They have no use for the fire of God, or his Spirit, they would sooner have their own. This they can make of themselves

without the help of God. He is too slow to suit them, he is about two thousand years behind the times. His way of doing may suit the Hardshells, or Iron Jackets, for they know no better than to believe that God does all the work of eternal salvation. With this "behind the times" people, it is not God and company, but God alone, the Almighty. Say these slow ones, The last in man's judgment, shall be first, and the last or first in the world, who are so ahead of the times, shall be last. These have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. Hay, straw and stubble, and strange fire, this does finely in the world, but will not stand the test of the Judge of all the earth.

While there are many witnesses spoken of in the Scriptures, such as Enoch, Elijah, the apostles, all the saints in every age of the world, the starry heavens, the earth, and all God's works, which are witnesses of his power, and the Old and New Testaments, which contain all the records of these witnesses, yet these are not the two witnesses, or the two olive trees of which I have here spoken.

Your brother in hope,

R. S. BANKS.

Elder F. A. Chick: Dear Brother in Christ:

Feeling in the mood for writing, and my mind reverting continually to you, once more I address you as above, for what purpose I know not, only that I desire to hear from you, and take this means of getting a thought or two from your pen. Were you to meet me on the highway and greet me with the usual salutation, "How are you?" I scarcely know how I would answer you. No very deep trials, spiritually or otherwise, have stirred my mind since coming within the portals of the Zion of our God. My chief uneasiness is felt when I am brought in con-

tact with the world around me. This hurts me. Imagine how sensitive the body would be were the outer or scarf skin removed, and you will have a very clear idea of my state of mind when in the course of my daily walk I am brought in contact with unbelievers, or what is worse, the adherents of popular religion. I think it would be more in conformity with the experience of the saints, were I to realize more intensely that my worst enemies are "those of my own household." The children of God seem to talk more of their peculiar trials of mind while I have none. Surely there is a lost chord somewhere. "If ye be without chastisements, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." Do such Scriptures as these apply to me? Evidence seems to point that way, yet something within me thrusts them from me, and will not accept them.

Both of my parents were Old School Baptists before I was born. As soon as I knew anything at all, I was taken by them to Old Baptist meetings. Every Sunday found them in their place, and of course, I with them, for none of us children were permitted to stay away unless in the event of its being dire necessity. Now, under such training as this, how could I turn out to be anything but an Old School Baptist? I sometimes fear my knowledge of their doctrine is all in the head and not in the heart, where it ought to be. In a very weak and unsatisfactory manner I will endeavor to lay before you what I hope has been an experience of grace in me, but will leave you to decide whether such is the case, or if it be but a wild fancy of the imagination.

Born in the month of April, 1879, near the village of Southampton, Pa., and almost under the shadow of the Old Baptist meeting-house at that place, such were the circumstances that no excuse could be found permitting me to stay away every Sunday meeting, even in infancy. What tiresome, tedious, sonorous ser-

mons those were to my boyish mind. When during the sermon I should lose myself in slumber, how rejoiced I would be upon awaking, to find them singing the last hymn. The pleasantest part of the meeting for me then was when the minister closed the Bible. To the best of my recollection, I never heard any other than Old Baptist preaching until about fifteen years old. Naturally, having never heard any other, I thought the Old Baptists were all right, but I could not comprehend them. While I thought their religion was a mighty good thing for them, it was not for me. They seemed above me, exalted to heights that I could never reach, nor did I care to reach them at that time. I was satisfied with myself as I was. My parents being blest with the gift of hospitality, our home was always open to the brethren far and near, so that from hearing their conversation I became intellectually familiar with the various points of their belief.

Children around me attended Sunday School, yet I never asked permission to go, knowing full well I would be met with a point blank refusal if I did, and knowing this, I never had any desire to go.

Just when I began to think of eternity and the life hereafter, I cannot say. I sometimes feared that I would die in the night. At such times I would not go to sleep lying face upward, thinking this position more than any other favored death, and might tempt the "Black Angel" to visit me. Such superstitions would haunt me at times, but would all vanish with day-dawn, and not for some time later would I have such thoughts again.

Desiring from early years to become a teacher, in the fall of 1895 I began attending a normal school in my native State, to prepare myself for the work. Here the rules were such that every student must of necessity attend service in one of the many churches of that vicinity, every Sunday morning. No Old Baptist

church existing in that place, I was forced to attend other denominations, and here for the first time I heard other preaching. I recognized a difference in the preaching almost as soon as I heard it, not that I thought it was contrary to Bible teaching, but that it was more interesting to listen to, and more calculated to keep one from sleeping, than what I had formerly been accustomed to.

The week just preceding Thanksgiving was always set aside at the school as a "week of Prayer." During this week the Y.M.C.A. held daily meetings for the purpose of winning converts to their cause if possible. Speakers of some reputation in the religious world were procured to address these meetings, and to play upon the emotional side of every student's temperament. The "week of prayer" in 1895 slipped by without my paying any heed to it whatever. In fact, while the Y.M.C.A. held weekly meetings throughout the year, yet I very rarely attended any of them. At least it was noticeable to me that the very students who were the ringleaders in all the mischief going on, usually made the longest prayers and the longest speeches, but failed to act it out in their daily walk and conversation. This disgusting me, I was very seldom found at their meetings.

Uneventfully my student days passed on until the "week of Prayer" in the fall of 1896. The card issued as invitations to the meetings and scattered promiscuously among the students, bore this inscription at the top: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."—Numbers x. 29. Suddenly a determination to attend these meetings seized me. The motive that prompted me was possibly one of curiosity, as I wanted to see what effect such meetings would have upon me. Not because I realized the need of salvation did I attend these meetings, but as I have said, simply to see how such meetings were conducted, and whether I would be in any way affected by such proceed-

ings. Thus I began attending the sessions held in the fall of 1896, of the so-called "week of prayer." At the close of the first meeting all who desired to be saved were asked to stand up. Immediately I asked myself, Shall I stand or not? Do I want to be saved or not? Why certainly, what sensible man would not want to be saved? Therefore I stood with the others. At the second meeting all who stood at the first meeting were requested to remain at the close and consult with the professor who had the matter in charge. Feeling that I now had gone too far to draw back, I remained in my place at the close of the meeting. When all who were not interested had left the room, the professor made a prayer and talked to us about what we should do to be saved. Belief, he said, was the only necessary qualification for salvation, and it was for us to say whether or not we would be saved. I was willing, I thought, to be saved, but now to make myself believe in something that I knew nothing about, I could not understand. However we were requested to sing a hymn. The one selected had for its theme the giving of one's self to Christ, inviting him to enter and make our heart his home, &C. "I believe," "I trust," "I own," "I want," and other expressions were scattered throughout the hymn. How can I ever express my feelings while singing this selection? Here my pen fails when it attempts to portray in black and white the revelation manifested in my soul at this time. Something said to me, "You are lying, yes, lying, and that in the face of a just and mighty God. You say you trust in his name. You do not. You say you believe that Christ died for you. You do not. You and standing up boldly in the sight of God and telling a bare faced lie." Such agony as filled my soul I can never express. Hitherto my dealings had been between man and man. Now, in the twinkling of an eye, the scene was shifted, and my dealings were between God and

man. He was just and mighty, true and good, holy and undefiled. But I, what was I? Alas, a poor, wretched worm of the dust, crawling on the earth, striving in vain to seek a hole to creep into away from the fierce outburst of God's righteous indignation that had suddenly engulfed me, and was sweeping me to everlasting destruction. Yet I said it was righteous and just. I was the one that was altogether out of the way.

*"And though my soul were sent to hell,
His righteous law approves it well."*

Just how long I was in this state of anguish I have never been able to remember. How I managed to get out of that meeting and to my room, I do not know, but when I did get there I threw myself upon my bed and wept long and bitterly, much to the surprise of my roommate, who became much alarmed, thinking that the meetings had worked me up to such a pitch that I was going crazy over religion. He advised me not to attend any more of the meetings, and I did not; not because I feared insanity, but because I could get no comfort there. Gradually time wore on. Instead of getting better, I got worse, and my burden was fast becoming more than I could bear. The professor before mentioned, seeing I was under conviction, kept telling me that if I would but give myself up and believe on the name of Jesus, I would be saved. He asked me what I was waiting for? I said, "A revelation. When I see Christ and know that he died for me, then I can believe, not before." He then accused me of stubbornness, and so we parted, and never again came together in any other relation save that of teacher and pupil. At last I thought, what would I not do to be rid of this burden? O, if only Christ was my Savior. O, if he only had died for me. "Lord, thou canst if thou wilt make me clean." Now, to my mind, if relief were to come, it seemed to me it must come by a revelation, and that so vivid and so startling that I never could

doubt my being saved. I had come to the place where I ceased to work, or to try to rise from the depths to which I had fallen. All my efforts had availed me nothing, so I ceased to do anything and was waiting; waiting for what? For that revelation so startling and so sure that it would dispel all my gloom and save my soul from hell. While watching for this vision, I opened the Bible, and my eye fell upon these words, "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision: and it shall be dark unto you that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets and the day shall be dark over them." Alas, I was waiting for something that was not to come. I wanted a vision; I would have none, because the word of God coming to me with power told me I would not. Thrown down from this hope, vain as it had proved to be, I now suffered more than ever.

One night, laying upon my bed, I could not sleep. My troubles were fast getting too severe, and I verily thought they would be the death of me. They were gripping me by the throat, and I could feel my breath fast leaving me; I was dying. My mental anguish had brought on bodily suffering, and I had a raging fever. Now, surely, unless relief came, and that quickly, I should perish, and with that it seemed to me I or something within me cried, "Peace!" In the twinkling of an eye I was at rest. All my burden had gone. Hardly realizing my state, I tried to bring back my troubles, but could not. They were gone, thank God, for ever. Happy and as free as a bird, I fell asleep and slept till morning. And now again I cannot express my joy upon awaking. The sun never shone so brightly: all nature was at her best and rejoicing with me; I felt the power of the resurrection within and around me, and that the gift of eternal life was mine through the blessed sacrifice of God's only begotten Son, who was offered up

for me. Shout, ye heavens, and listen, O earth, Christ died for *me*. Such were my feelings at that time. Now I was not aware that there was another being on earth that had passed through what I had. Upon going home to spend a few days at Thanksgiving, I talked all the time to my parents of my feelings, and they rejoiced to see me rejoice. I soon saw that they had experienced the same things that I had. When I returned to school, I took with me a book written by our beloved pastor, Elder S. H. Durand, entitled, "Meditations on Portions of the Word." For weeks this was all the preaching I had. I soon saw from his writings that he knew all about my feelings from having experienced the same, and I loved him. It was in this way, through hearing them preach, and reading their writings, with the understanding that I now had given me, that I came to see the Old School Baptists as the only and true church of the living God, because it all corresponded with holy writ. Knowing this I loved them because I could not help it. No other people that I have ever met could understand my feelings. Loving them, I knew I had experienced the new birth, for "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." I did not go before the church at this time. Had I been near them when in the first flush of love, I know not what might have been the consequence, but, as I have said, I was not near any of them, and when I did get back to where they were, doubts and fears had so assailed me that I verily thought I had been deceived, and as for being baptized, I had not thought of it. The very idea was absurd. Nevertheless I have always attended Old Baptist meetings whenever an opportunity presented itself, never having attended regular service in any other denomination since leaving school, but my unworthiness was the barrier that separated me from them. However, in the fall of 1900, while

attending a yearly meeting, with the Welsh Tract Church, in Delaware, I lost sight of my unworthiness, and longed all at once to be baptized. This desire kept increasing in spite of the temptations Satan put in my way until the second Saturday in December, 1900, when at the regular church meeting at Southampton, Pa., I related my state of mind to the church. To my surprise they received me, and on the third Sunday I was baptized. Thus far the Lord hath led me on, as to the next step, I know not what it will be. I look to him to be my Guide. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

This letter is far too lengthy, and I know will sadly try your patience, so will close without more ado.

Yours in the hope of eternal life,

HORACE H. LEFFERTS.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—John iii. 3.

TTrue religion begins with an entrance into the soul of supernatural life. How or why it comes the soul knows not; for "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The wind itself is not seen, but its effects are felt. The sound of a going is heard in the tops of the mulberry trees, where God himself is not seen. The voice of the Lord, powerful and full of majesty, was heard by those who saw no similitude (Deut. iv. 12). Thus effects are felt, though causes are unknown. Streams flow into the heart from a hidden source; rays of light beam into the soul from an unrisen sun; and kindlings of life awake in us a new existence out of an unseen fountain. The new-born babe feels life in all its limbs, though it knows not yet the earthly father whence that natural life sprang.

And thus new-born souls are conscious of feelings hitherto unpossessed, and are sensible of a tide of life, mysterious and incomprehensible, ebbing and flowing in their heart, though "Abba, Father," has not yet burst from their lips. A man's body is alive to every feeling, from a pin's scratch to a mortal wound, from a passing ache to an incurable disease. The heart cannot flutter or intermit for a single second its wonted stroke, without a peculiar sensation that accompanies it, notices it, and registers it. Shall feelings, then, be the mark and evidence of natural life, and not of spiritual? Shall our ignoble part, the creature of a day, our perishing body, our dust of dust, have sensations to register every pain and every pleasure, and be tremblingly alive to every change without and every change within; and shall not our immortal souls be equally endowed with a similar barometer to fluctuate up and down the scale of spiritual life? We must lay it down, then, at the very threshold of vital godliness, that if a man has not been conscious of a new feeling, and cannot point out, with more or less precision, some particular period, some never-to-be-forgotten season, when these feelings came unbidden into his heart, he has not yet passed from death unto life. He is not in Christ, if he is not a new creature (2 Cor. v. 17).

"O that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."—Job xxiii. 3, 4.

Was not Job in the same spot where we often are? If this aged patriarch had not known what it was to be shut up in his mind, harassed and distressed, and well-nigh overwhelmed with the attacks of the wicked one, he would not have said, "O that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even

to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Has that ever been, is it now, the genuine feelings, the real experience of your soul? Do look into your heart, you that fear God. Do look for a moment, if you have never looked before, at the work of grace (and where are you, if you have never looked at it?) and consider if you know any of these matters. Did you ever, in a feeling of darkness, gloom, bondage, and distress of soul, cry (I do not say the words, it is the feelings we want, let the words go), "'O that I knew where I might find him!' Lord, I do want to find thee; my soul longs after thee; I want a taste of thy blessed presence; I want to embrace thee in the arms of my faith; I want the sweet testimonies of thy gracious lips; 'O that I knew where I might find thee!' I would not care what I went through." If so, then these very things shew that you have the fear of God in your souls, and the teaching of the Spirit in your hearts. You are where Job was, and if you know something of what Job speaks here, "'O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!"—if that is the desire of your soul, you have Job's religion, you have Job's experience, you have Job's affliction in this matter, and you will have Job's deliverance, Job's joy, Job's peace, and Job's salvation. Job's God is your God, and you will be where Job now is, bathing your ransomed soul in all the glory of the Lamb.

"He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth."—Psalm lvii. 3.

And where is God's mercy revealed? Outwardly in the word of God; inwardly in the heart. And it is by sending his mercy into the conscience,

shedding abroad his love in the soul, manifesting his pardoning favour within, That God "saves from the reproach of him that would swallow us up." Man may say, "I do not doubt your religion; surely you have marks and testimonies of being a child of God!" Ministers may come and endeavour to soothe you, and often by their soothing make more mischief than they mend: "O, no doubt, if you are exercised with these things you are a child of God;" as though a man could be satisfied with exercises, and because he is hungering and thirsting after the Lord, could be contented with his famine and his drought. No; these things do not touch the secret malady, do not go far enough, nor deep enough, nor come with divine power as from the mouth of the Lord himself. All short of this leaves the poor patient afflicted, desolate, and dejected; and does not remove that under which his soul labours. But mercy, sweet mercy, sent from heaven, and dropped from above into his spirit, applied to his conscience, revealed to his heart, and brought warm into his very soul by the Spirit of God—that saves him from the reproach of every enemy that would swallow him up. For if he can lean, confidently lean upon the arms of mercy, what can man do, what can Satan do, what can sin do, what can death do, what can hell itself do to hurt him? If the mercy of God is upon his side, revealed to his heart, and sent from heaven into his soul, who or what shall swallow him up?

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."—Hebrews xi. 1.

Wherever there is faith, there is desire; and as faith embraces heavenly realities, desire embraces that of which faith testifies. Now as the soul

is wrought upon by a divine power, and faith is drawn forth into blessed exercise upon the promises of which it is persuaded and which it embraces, desire is kindled for their enjoyment. Religion is not a burdensome, painful, melancholy, wearisome, and toilsome task or employment as many think. It has indeed its trials, temptations, afflictions, cutting griefs, and depressing sorrows; but it has its sweetness, its peace, its delights, and its enjoyments. And it is the sweetness that we feel, the enjoyment that we have, and the delighting ourselves in the things of God, which hold our head up and encourage us still to persevere and travel on through the wilderness. It is not all bondage, nor distress of mind, nor sorrow of heart, nor perplexity of soul which the heirs of promise feel. There are sips and tastes, drops and crumbs, and momentary enjoyments, if not long nor lasting, yet sweet when they come, sweet while they last, and sweet in the recollection when they are gone. The Lord gives that which encourages, strengthens, comforts, and delights, and enables us to see that there is that beauty, blessedness, and glory in him which we have tasted, felt, and handled, and which we would not part with for a thousand worlds.

“Him that God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”—Acts v. 31.

Jesus is “exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins.” The two go together. Whenever he gives repentance, he gives remission; wherever he grants remission, he bestows repentance. It will not do to let repentance go. Every child of God is brought to repent of his sins, and by repentance to forsake them. “But,” you say, “have I repented? Considering

the nature and magnitude of my sins, were I a repenting sinner, surely I should be mourning and sorrowing over them all the day long.” What, then, creates that doubt in your mind? Because you are often hard, dark, dead, cold. Here, then, again, we must distinguish between that godly sorrow for sin which is felt in the spiritual mind, and that hardness and darkness of our carnal mind which is still enmity against God, nor is there faith or love, repentance, or any one good thing in it. But there have been times and seasons when, under a peculiar influence, your heart was softened and melted before God; when sin was truly repented of; when you felt that it was indeed an evil and a bitter thing to sin against so good, so holy, and so great and glorious a God; when the rock melted, the hard heart gave way, the eyes flowed down with tears, and the swelling breast was almost ready to burst with penitential grief for your sins and over the sufferings and sorrows of the Son and Lamb of God, and you could only loathe yourself in dust and ashes before his holy, heart-searching eye.

“But we see Jesus.”—Hebrews ii. 9.

Did your eyes ever see him? Do look into conscience—did your eyes ever see Jesus? I do not mean your natural, your bodily eyes; but the eye of faith, the eye of the soul. I will tell you what you have felt, if you ever saw Jesus. Your heart was softened and melted, your affections drawn heavenward, your soul penetrated with thankfulness and praise, your conscience sprinkled with atoning blood, your mind lifted up above all earthly things to dwell and centre in the bosom of the blessed Immanuel. Do you think, then, you have seen Jesus by the eye of faith? Then you have seen the perfection of beauty, the consummation of pure loveliness; you have seen the

image of the invisible God; you have seen all the perfections and glorious character of the Godhead shining forth in him that was nailed to Calvary's tree. I am sure such a sight as that must melt the most obdurate heart, and draw tears from the most flinty eyes; such a sight by faith of the beauty and glory of the only-begotten Son of God must kindle the warmest, holiest stream of tender affection. It might not have lasted long. These feelings are often very transitory. The world, sin, temptation, and unbelief soon work; infidelity soon assails all; the things of time and sense soon draw aside; but whilst it lasted, such, in a greater or less degree, were the sensations produced. Now, if you have ever seen Jesus by the eye of faith, and ever had a tender affection going out toward him, you will see him in glory. But you will never see him in glory, if you have not seen him in grace; you will never see him eye to eye in the open vision of eternal bliss, unless you have seen him now upon earth by the faith of God's elect in your heart.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."—Romans viii. 1.

There is not a more blessed declaration than this in the whole world of truth. It is the sweetest note sounded by the gospel trumpet, for it is the very crown of the whole Jubilee. Is not condemnation the bitterest drop in the cup of trembling? the most thrilling, piercing note of that terrible trumpet which sounded so long and so loud from Sinai's blazing top that all the people that were in the camp trembled? (Exod. xix. 13, 16.) Condemnation is the final execution of God's righteous law, and therefore carries with it all that arms death with its sting and the grave with its terror. The apprehension of this; the dread and fear

of being banished forever from the presence of God; of being lost, and that without remedy; of sinking under the blazing indignation of him who is a consuming fire, has filled thousands of hearts with horror. And it must be so as long as the law speaks in its thunders, as long as conscience re-echoes its verdict, and as long as the wrath of God burns to the lowest hell. O the blessedness, then, of that word of grace and truth, worthy to be sounded through heaven and earth by the voice of cherubim and seraphim, "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!"

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."—2 Corinthians xxi. 9.

How mysterious are God's dealings! That such a highly favoured man as Paul should come down from the "third heaven" to the very gates of hell (that is not too strong an expression, for "the messenger of Satan" came from hell), that he should sink in soul-feeling to the very gates of hell, there to be buffeted by "the messenger of Satan;" and all to teach him a lesson that heaven did not teach him, *the strength of God made perfect in weakness!* Do you not think, that if we are to learn our weakness, we must learn it in the same way? How did Paul get his religion? And must we not get ours, in our feebler measure, through the same channels, by the same means, and by the same inward teachings? If we are to learn the secret of Christ's strength, it is not by making daily advances in fleshly holiness, and getting stronger in self day by day. It is not by old nature being so mended and improved, as bye and bye to be shaded off into grace, just as the colours in the rainbow are so harmoniously blended that you can scarcely tell where the one ends and the other begins. For this is what is really meant by

“progressive sanctification,” that the old nature is so gradually softened and blended into grace, that we can scarcely tell where the old man ceases and the new nature commences. Did the Apostle learn Christ’s strength in that way? No; but by being buffeted by Satan’s messenger, and thus being beaten out of his own strength, he found Christ’s strength made perfect in his weakness.

MEETINGS

South Ouachita Association

The next Union Meeting of the South Ouachita Primitive Baptist Association will be held, God willing, with Union Church which is located three miles northeast of Linville, La. near Marion, La.

Time of meeting begins Saturday before the third Sunday in April, 1986, and will continue two days.

All who love the truth as it is in Jesus Christ are invited to worship with us.

C. C. Wilbanks, Clerk
217 Bastrop Drive
Monroe, La. 71203
Phone 318-343-5473

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

OBITUARIES

1907 SIMEY BRICKHOUSE 1985

Brother Sim, as he was familiarly called by those close to him, was born in the Kilkenny area of Tyrrell County, North Carolina in 1907. In 1924,

he married the former Mary Dunbar and they were blessed with two children, a son, Jack, of Alabama and a daughter, Evelyn, who lives near them at Route 1, Bayboro, North Carolina. In addition, there are seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Brother Sim joined Smithwick’s Creek Primitive Baptist Church in 1973 and was baptized by his pastor, Elder J. T. Prescott. He was blessed to see the natural things for the upkeep of church property and also the welfare of his pastor. He never hesitated in taking the initiative in anything that needed to be done, oft times at great expense to himself.

Brother Sim was a man of few words and when he spoke, people listened. He was a very humble and meek person who loved the doctrine of salvation by grace. In 1977, he was ordained a deacon and served that office well until his death. In 1983, because of distance, he and his wife moved their membership to North Creek Church which was much nearer their home. We felt that while his former church had lost a reliable member, we at North Creek were blessed to have them as members.

In October, 1984, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and was unable to speak after that. He was perfectly helpless as far as nature provided. It was unusual not to see his precious wife at his bedside night and day. She was a faithful wife who sincerely believed in the vows “til death do us part”. He died May 10th, 1983 at his home and was laid to rest in Smithton Community Cemetery. His funeral was conducted by his pastor, Elder J. T. Prescott with Elder Jesse Foreman, Elder Reeves Smith and Mr. Willis taking part. We miss him. His wife and family miss him, but we feel he is sleeping the sleep of the eternally blest.

Elder J. T. Prescott, Pastor
Elder R. O. Smith, Committee

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

“The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon”

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA. APRIL 1986

NO. 04

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84

Fayette, Ala. 35555

Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Elder D. B. Stokes

1029 Daniel Court

Jacksonville, N.C. 28540

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566. All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Virginia 24566

THANK GOD FOR LITTLE THINGS

Thank you, God, for little things

that often come our way,

The things we take for granted

but don't mention when we pray,

The unexpected courtesy,

the thoughtful, kindly deed,

A hand reached out to help us

in the time of sudden need -

Oh make us more aware, dear God,

of little daily graces

That come to us with "sweet surprise"

from never-dreamed-of places.

Helen Steiner Rice

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 EDITORIAL

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (Romans 9: 13, 15)

My mind has been led by some power to write my feelings in regard to these things, which I believe fully in my mind are in the New Testament for the benefit of God's humble poor. I have not pitched myself into a frame of mind that would make me think that I can bring harmony to every believer in the world. No such illusion is in my mind. Before I say by way of comment anything about this sacred chapter I want to appeal to you, the reader that we might not, either writer or reader

have any hard feelings toward the other or anybody else.

This writing is that of the eminent Apostle Paul. He was writing as he was moved by the Holy Spirit. If a writer or speaker handles this language according to the same rules of language there is bound to be fellowship between both writer and reader. Neither of us will be allowed to differ with the other.

This writing of the Apostle is not garbled by the apostle. It means what it says, and it will still mean that after writer and reader are sleeping beneath the sod. We read, all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. If we do not believe what the writers in this sacred Book has given us, having been moved by the Holy Ghost, we should not be disputing with our brethren.

I have not got a reader that is going to dispute what Paul quoted about God hating one and loving the other, or loving one and hating the other.

What did God say? Did He say that He loved one and hated the other? Paul quoted from the Old Testament that He did. Did he say that? Do you dear readers believe that? Paul in this sacred writing asks this question, to wit, is there unrighteousness with God? Let us pause right here for a moment of reflection. Not only was Paul writing by the inspiration of God, but he was being taught as the inspiration came to him. Looking forward by faith, and being moved by inspiration and looking forward to the time when people would not believe what was being said, he exclaims, what shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? What do you think? Is it unrighteous in God to love one nation of people and hate another nation? At least two thousand years before Paul could see what was coming. It is still prevalent today. The Primitive Baptist people here in the united States are despised on every hand because of God's love for

Jacob and His hatred for Esau. I have said time and time again in American publications that the wrong people are bearing the brunt of this hatred. If people dislike election, they dislike God loving one and hating the other, then He is the one that is due to get their ire.

However, let us look at what Paul says. Is there unrighteousness with God for thus making this vast difference between these two boys. He gives an emphatic God forbid. Is it right, is it biblical, to lay the blame on any set of people? If so, how is it? What does God say about His having done this? He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth but of God that sheweth mercy.

What does God say? Who does He say it to? He says it to one and all that has it written in their church minutes and bulletins that we have got to get people fired up so that they will run here and there throughout earth's boundary lines, so that they will quit the ways of the world and come running with willingness of mind into the kingdom of heaven and be saved.

Can anything be found in any book that is any plainer and any more to the point than this? God says, It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth. It is not that way. God says that it is not that way. Now what am I supposed to do? It is not that way? What must I do? Is there a way for me to be loved by God? Since it is not gotten into by being willing or by being good at running, how could anyone, anyone at all, ever get to be loved?

For the scripture saith unto Pharoah, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up; that I might shew my power in thee, and that my power might be declared throughout all the earth.

Why should the children of God not believe this? These are the words of the

Apostle Paul. He was writing by the inspiration of God. What right have I to attack them? Instead of my attacking them as being untrue, why should I not write on them as being a part of the gospel of grace? Tell me, why should I not do that?

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Ah! at the hard sayings, the hard preaching at brethren that have quoted that passage of Scripture. It is the inspired writings of God Almighty, even the one through which any salvation for any one of the adamic creation, and yet He is malignantly ascribed as being a tyrant worse than Pharoah himself. Pharoah has not been reckoned by anyone as being a humble child of God, but rather he is reckoned as being evil, as being hard. Why should poor frail sinners berate the Lord God who shall, at the appointed time, say unto Pharoah and all of His kind, into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels? Reasoning from this standpoint unbelievers will ask, Thou wilt say unto me, Why dost He yet find fault? That is telling God off; that is calling His hand, even telling Him that He has not got any right to deal with one of His creatures in such a way.

God is not under any obligation to listen to any man's retaliatory remarks, for any and all of them are but a reply against God. To those that dares to reply against Him, He says, 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 (Romans 9: 21).

Now let us talk about the potter and the clay. We will never understand about this workman and his product unless we know something about each one. It was my privilege to watch a bona fide Potter

make a complete vessel one time long ago. I had become interested in the Bible, what is said, and who it said it to. To find a potter in a road show was a little strange and out of place, but I have always believed that the Lord brought us together. No man, however much book learning he may have will ever destroy the use, the work, and the result of potters vessel. Even as little as I know, it is the most useless thing in the world to argue that clay is joined together in deciding what a vessel is going to be. That is at least, one of the most unexpected things to occur in a transaction of building anything. On the occasion, when I watched the roadside potter, every product, as well as the number of vessels made was all decided by the potter.

In the case under consideration, the potter was the only one that touched the clay. He decided how many and what size each vessel would be. It is passing strange that people order millions of dollars worth of goods each year, and the manufacturer decides what the size, the quality, the texture, and any other ordered handle or spout that each article has, but, while God is the Potter as to how many children, their each characteristics, and their destiny. It is unreasonable, ungodly, preposterous for sensible people to think, and to argue, even getting mad over the matter, that the clay has a say so in what it is going to be.

Let us ask the question that Paul asked. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor? The usual manner of theologians is to make fun of the intelligence of anyone that would dare to suggest such a thing. A few will acknowledge that God has the power but that He does not have the right. Inspiration, foreseeing the objection, still asks it. Then the dear man of God, the Apostle Paul, being under the administration and guidance asks a question, to wit, What if God, willing to

show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory even us, whom he had called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. (Read the entire chapter number 9 of Romans).

My prayer to God is that our Father will open to the chosen sheep an understanding of these sacred matters, but not make us such champions of what is revealed to us that we start out condemning everybody that doesn't agree with them.

Let brotherly love continue.

Yours in precious hope,
Elder W. D. Griffin

CORRESPONDENCE

2-3-86

Signs Of The Times

Dear ones of The Faith of Gods elect:

I received the February issue, enjoyed its contents, especially Law and Gospel written by J. C. Philpott in 1861.

I fully agree with him. God does not allow his Elders or Servants, to take at will, one part of the law, and leave the other.

James 2: 10, "For whosoever keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all."

To me this one point is this, thou shalt not bear false witness is to those that believe in self righteous, to enter the Kingdom of God.

We believe it is by the spirit of God, who worketh the will and the do, giving him all the glory. We read in St. Luke 12: 31, 32, "Seek ye first 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."

Hebrews 8: 10-12, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 9: 11 and 12, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

"The ungodly do not believe in Election, Isaiah 45: 4. Matthew 24: 24, "For 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."

Psalms 3: 9, "He sent redemption unto his people he hath commanded forever, Holy and Reverend in HIS Name."

We believe in the will and shalls of God, which is the words of God and the words of Christ. Ephesians 4: 4-6, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in hope of your caling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 5: 14, "That we henceforth, be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." 5th. Chapter, verse 5, "For this ye know

that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God."

Sincerely,
Mattie Underwood

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

IT MUST BE BY FAITH

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11:6.

In my effort to write on this subject, I fear I can only reach the surface and the depth of the subject will still be unexplored. Paul said, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways are past finding out." Rom. 11:33. If by searching we could find the mysteries of God, the wise and prudent would have a great advantage over the ignorant and unlearned in acquiring knowledge of God, but since it has pleased God to hide these things from the wise and prudent and to reveal unto babes the things of his kingdom, it eliminates the class who would otherwise learn of the kingdom of God by searching rather than by revelation. Jesus said, "I thank thee oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." Math. 11:25.

If we believe in God, it must be by faith. This belief in God is not dependent upon any of our works of righteousness, for Jesus said, "It is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Again we find recorded in Holy

writ, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." Heb. 11:8-9. This faith which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were in possession of, was revealed to them, and they, as well as all the redeemed family of God, lived by this faith, for Paul said, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." Gal. 3:23. Paul says further, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Heb. 2:4. Rom. 1:17.

This faith which was revealed to Abraham was not given to his ancestors through the law, as was supposed by those who came to John's baptism, to be baptized by him. For John said, "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come. Bring forth therefore, fruits worthy of repentance and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Luke 3:7-8. We find almost the same words recorded in the 3rd. chapter of Matthew. This is clear evidence that the Pharisees and Sadducees were not children of God because Abraham was their father. Paul said, "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or his seed, *through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.* For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Rom. 4: 13-14.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God

must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. To all those that Jesus healed while he sojourned here in the world, were given faith to approach unto him. The woman that was a sinner who came from the city and entered into Simons house where Jesus had gone and when he had sat down to meat, washed his feet with the tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment.' "And he said, to this woman, thou faith hath saved thee, go in peace." Luke 7: 50. We find again recorded in Holy writ, that two blind men followed him crying and saying, "Thou son of David have mercy on us and when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, according to thy faith be it unto thee, and their eyes were opened. Math. 9: 27-30. This was living faith that dwelt in the hearts of all of those who came to Jesus and asked for help in time of need, and the evidence that he heard them was that they received that for which they petitioned. John said, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." I John 5: 14-15.

It is little by little that the children of God are given faith to believe in God. Our carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, is continually in conflict with the word of God, believing that some other way is just as good, like Naaman, the Syrian, who was a leper, who thought that the waters of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, were just as good as the river of Jordan, to dip in for a cure. The little maid that was taken captive, and waited on Naaman's wife, directed him to the Prophet in Is-

rael, but instead, he went to the King of Israel first (the law) bearing a letter from the King of Syria. But the King of Israel said, "See how he seeketh a quarrel against men, am I in God's stead to kill and make alive." He must go to the Prophet to find a cure. The same is true today. If you have a dreadful disease (sin) you will try all the remedies first that the flesh directs; and remedies they are, for there is quite a difference in the medicines that are labeled remedies and the one that is a cure. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. But every avenue must be closed before we are made willing to follow the meek and lowly lamb of God; Who is the way, the truth and the life. When our efforts are exhausted and we give up, a little faith is given to approach him at a throne of grace and we are enabled to ask for help in time of need. Then how applicable are the words, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. How marvelous are his words. "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

When Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, died, Jesus said to Martha "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the son of God, which should come into the world. Jno. 11: 26-27. May I repeat again that this belief in God is not dependent upon the work of the creature, for Jesus said, "It is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Then it is evident that faith is a gift of God and all that are born of God are of the spiritual family of Abraham, and not heirs because they were of his offspring by nature. For Paul said, "For the promise that he, Abraham, should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed

through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." And again we find recorded, "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made." I say not unto seeds as of many but unto one seed and that seed, which is Christ. And all that are born of the spirit of God are freely justified by faith. Paul said, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith, unto his grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of glory of God. Rom. 5:1-2. The suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was to meet the demands of God's just and Holy law and bring in everlasting righteousness and justification for the chosen and redeemed family of God. Paul said he was delivered for our offences and raised for our justification. Therefore the Apostle said, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Seek how? By faith. For without faith it is impossible to please God for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

We find recorded in Holy writ that all men have not faith, and this class is pointed out in 2nd. Thess. 3rd. Chapter and 2nd. verse. "And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. Those who have living faith, possess and manifest good works." If one professes to have faith and there is no evidence of good works manifested by him, it is evident that his faith is dead. For James said, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." As further proof that good works accompany faith, James says, "Yea a man may say, thou hast faith and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works." James 2: 18. In other words, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Our works are our fruits. We recognize the mark in a child

of grace by their fruits or works. This fruit identifies a child of grace. It cannot be hid, even though the little one is not aware of the mark, it is there. In all ages there have been a few who believed in salvation by grace. This belief was given them by faith, and they have earnestly contended for this doctrine of salvation by grace. No man nor set of men can ever convince this redeemed family of God that it is by any works of righteousness which they have done that this faith is "once delivered" to the children of God. It matters not where they are found, whether they be at the church house, at home, in the field or on the road or in any state or country, they will be earnestly contending for the faith which was delivered to them. Jude said, "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." Jude 3. Paul said, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." Faith is indeed precious and this is more fully realized when we come to the end of our wits. Troubles arise, and sore afflictions are to be endured. Such experiences bring dark times in our souls. But faith looks up to God even in the sorest affliction and our strength is made perfect in weakness. how true was this when the disciples of Jesus were out at sea in a storm. The waves were mounting up high and covering the ship. We find recorded, "And he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with waves; but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And FEARFUL, O ye are of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the sea; and there was a great calm." Math. 8: 23-26.

"He maketh the storm a calm." His disciples had a little faith or they never could have awakened the Saviour. The Saviour said to Peter, "O, thou of little faith:" it is evident that he had some faith when he said to the Saviour, "Lord if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." "And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterious, he was afraid; an beginning to sink, he cried saying, Lord, save me." Math. 14: 28-30. When Peter was some distance off with no storms and waves he could walk, but when he approached the Saviour his strength became weaker and weaker and when Jesus made bare his hand by stretching forth his hand. Peter's strength was made perfect in weakness, Paul said, "When I am weak, then I am strong." Strong how? Strong in faith, like Abraham who staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith giving glory to God.

How wonderful is it to have a little faith to approach unto God and be enabled to lay all of your sorrows and troubles before him. THE ONE WHO "Took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Math. 8: 17. All of those characters who received help from the Lord were in possession of faith, which enabled them, as well as you, to ask for help in time of need. "But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

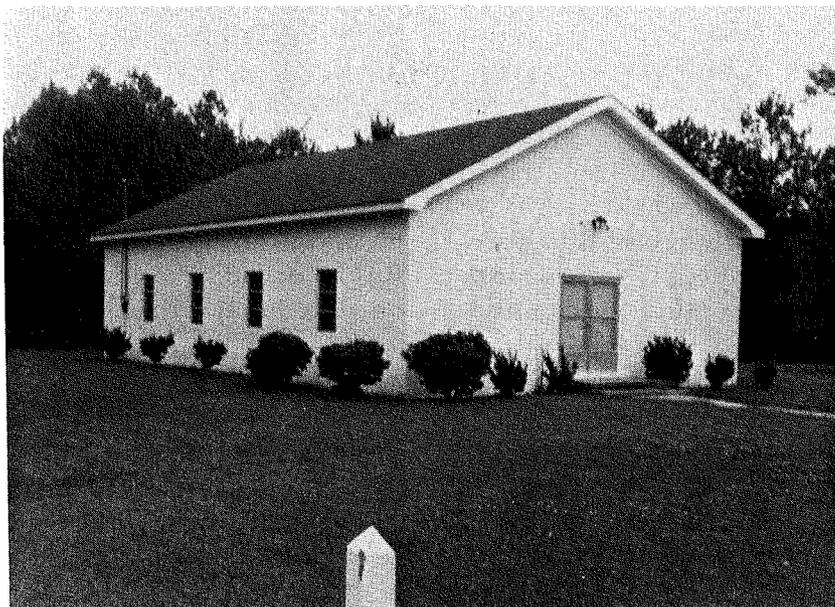
T. F. Adams

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."

Proverbs 9: 10

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 4/86
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.**

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



BAY SEA LEVEL CHURCH

Bay Sea Level Primitive Baptist Church was organized Sept. 5, 1829. The present Church building was built in 1969 in Sea Level, Cartert Coun-

ty North Caroline.

Church services are held every third Month, on first Sunday. Present Pastor is J. T. Prescott.

ARTICLES

DEAR BRETHREN:

In attempting to write on the general and important subject of "discipline," which is to rule and govern this chosen people of the Most High, and realizing as I think I do my ignorance and imperfection, and thinking of this people to whom it is addressed, it certainly makes me fear and tremble, knowing that many of this number are far more able to perform the task than I am, but if it is the Lord's will he can make it serve a good purpose; he can make his power and glory known as well through or by

the pen of one of his little ones as by the pen of the ablest writer, for where there is but little, there is but little required. How often we are fed and comforted by the little preacher as much as by the big ones, for it is the Spirit which God puts in the matter that sweetens and makes it palatable, and nourishing to our hungry souls.

I used to think that the gift of discipline was given to the preacher, and now I believe that is giving us much trouble to-day. The members are, to my mind, too ready to give ear to the preacher, or pastor, whether he knows anything about discipline or not. It is a big mistake to have any man's person in admiration. Paul says, Is there not one among you

that is able to judge between his brethren? The true answer often is, No. They just wait for the preacher to give vent to his feelings, whether he is in the flesh or in the Spirit, and I believe it is quite generally admitted by our good ministers and brethren that a majority of our troubles are caused, or brought about, by the preachers. Then, brethren, that being the case, should we not give the more earnest heed along this line? Brethren, I would that I could deeply impress that very thing upon your minds, that we may reduce our troubles, which seem to be on the increase. If we know where the line is that needs the closer guarding, why not give heed to these things, instead of letting them creep in and then have to war against them and have our peace broken up? But I say some of our best disciplinarians are found among our ministers. I have not found in all the volume of the Book where there is a general code of rules that will clearly apply to all cases that we are encountered with, and yet the very spirit of the whole matter is written, here a little and there a little. In some cases we can find written in one short sentence that which will furnish the key to a big problem. I could recite a number of cases where brethren or church got mixed up in trouble, individuals, or the collective body, and continued in trouble for a considerable time, and when at last the mystery, or the hidden secret was revealed by some little one, or by some sister who was very timid about calling attention to the key to the whole matter. Another mistake that is, perhaps, too often made, is having too strong a desire for peace. Brethren, we cannot have permanent peace at the expense of justice and order. While I hope I do have profound respect, love and sympathy for the true order-loving ministers, yet I have a great desire that the members do not esteem any man more than they should. Some ministers need much encouragement from their mem-

ers, while others need holding back. I think some are spoiled by the church being too hasty in their ordination. Paul rejects a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. I think they should learn thoroughly the difference between dignity and humility, but it seems that it is hard for all our brethren to learn the importance of this short lesson. Oh that there be no hateful, dignified spirit in an Old Baptist stand. Paul is correct, they are hard to teach order, It seems they would rather slay an opposing brother than to have their dignity humiliated. They seem to think that it would forever ruin their standing among the brethren, forgetting that God resisteth the proud and gives grace to the humble. Now this is one of the things I would love to strongly impress upon your minds, for it seems so seriously hurtful, not only to the church, but to the individuals, so let us have no man's person in admiration. When trouble arises among us, let us look for its source, its cause, and fairly remove the cause, regardless of whether it is the right eye, or any other member. Even our own companion should not be spared.

Here is another thing I wish to speak of: If a church is constituted in disorder, it can never be recognized by orderly churches. I suppose that this view is most generally considered among the churches.

Another thing that is found nowhere but in the evil, fleshly nature, is talking among the brethren. Often it happens that one brother will say or write something about another that is rather offensive, then the other makes some unkind remarks in reply to him, even in a private way. Then he tells the brethren how he made his brother retreat. His purpose being to elevate himself in the estimation of his brethren by lowering the other. This trait is also found in preacher jealousy. These things come only of the flesh, and not of the Spirit of Christ. He

that exalteth himself shall be abased. So we had better take heed, for the higher one exalts himself the harder he will fall. Let us remember that which was written afore time was written for our learning, so let us turn to the book of Esther and learn the story of Haman and Mordecai, from which we may learn a wonderful lesson.

The next I wish to call attention to our ministers. While in the stand it is common with some when they have no food for the sheep to employ their time in slurring false religion, to the embarrassment of their own members. I think this only arises from the carnal mind, and should be reprov'd. That which is not of faith is sin. Faith works by love and purifies the heart. Sin is prompted by the flesh and Satan and corrupts the mind. Are we not willing to bear hardness and suffer persecution without reviling again and calling men liars? God judgeth them without. The command to Peter was, "Feed my sheep," and you cannot feed them on husks, brethren, so preach the word. Do all things decently and in order. Do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.

Brethren, this is a difficult subject for me to write upon and make myself plain. Perhaps it is because I know so little about it, so I feel to urge good writers to take up the subject of the keeping of the Lord's house, that I may learn much more about it, for it certainly is a subject well worth our consideration.

I do not desire to have anything unsound or worthless come out over my name, so I urgently request that the dear editors examine this, and act according to its deserts.

R. P. BYNUM
Ranger, Texas

Jan. 22, 1935

Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.

Proverbs 3: 7

JOHN X. 2, 3.

"But he that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out."

In perfect harmony with predictions going before, Jesus "Opened his mouth in parables, and uttered dark sayings;" and while unto his disciples it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, unto them that are without, all these things were uttered in parables, for without a parable he spake not to them. This course was well adapted to the execution of the design of God, whose pleasure it is to hide these things from the wise and prudent and reveal them unto babes. The wisdom and prudence of men would rather dictate the opposite course, and instead of purposely concealing the things of the Spirit from the understanding of the great and learned, the wise and the noble, it would seek by moral suasion, lucid argument, conclusive demonstration, &c., to persuade men of influence and talent to embrace the gospel. Had our blessed Redeemer intended to court the favor or applaluse of those who move in the higher circles of human society, he might have used human policy, and adapted his discourse to their taste and capacity, as the worldly taught preachers of our age do; but then their faith would stand in the wisdom of this world, and not in the power of God. —1 Cor. ii. 5.

God's peculiar people are in various parts of the scriptures called sheep; and this figurative appellation is given them as the children of God, in distinction from the rest of mankind, who are designated goats. "All we like sheep have gone astray," says the prophet, Isa. liii. 6, "and the Lord has laid on him (Christ) the iniquity of us all." Of these strayed sheep the same prophet has said, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he

shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom.”—Isa. xl. 2. And the inspired psalmist says, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”—Psalm xxiii. 1. And in connection with the parable under consideration, Christ announces himself the good Shepherd, that layeth down his life for the sheep. Hence we have the testimony of Christ himself that the redeemed, or those for whom he died, are his sheep; that they were not only sheep, but they were *his sheep*, before they went astray, and that they were the objects for whom alone he laid down his life. Much might be said on the appropriateness of the figure, but to trace its analogy would swell our article to too great an extent. In the course of this chapter Christ speaks of two distinct sheep-folds; the one is that into which he as the Shepherd of Israel has entered by the door for the purpose of bringing out his own sheep; and the other, that into which he will fold all his redeemed when there shall be but one fold and one shepherd. The carnal tribes of the family of Abraham, under their legal covenant, were a fold in which many of the sheep which he came to redeem were held in bondage. “For this Agar is Mt. 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. iv. 25, 26. The son differeth nothing from the servant until the time appointed of the Father. And this was evidently the case with those “lost sheep of the house of Israel,” which Christ the Shepherd came to seek and to save. He for this purpose entered into the fold where they were confined, *by the door*, for the purpose of effecting their emancipation; and as the anti-type of Cyrus, of whom it was written, “Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth

by myself; that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up all thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron,” &c.—Isa. xlv. 24-28, and xlv. 1, 2.

As in the execution of the word of the Lord, Cyrus acted as the Lord’s chosen shepherd in delivering his captive people from their bondage, and in leading them out of Babylon, and in the re-establishment of Jerusalem, and in the building of the second temple, which was more glorious than the first, he was evidently so far a type of Christ: even so God has proclaimed his Son as his Shepherd, and the man that is his fellow.—Zech. xiii. 7. As God went before Cyrus to break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron, and to open before him the two-leaved gates which were closed upon captive Israel, so the right hand of Christ in the deliverance of his people from the wrath and condemnation of the law, was upheld by the omnipotence of his eternal power and Godhead. Cyrus entered Babylon by the gates, and the palace of Belshazzar by the door; for God had said unto the deep, Be dry, and the proud waters had re-

treated from their accustomed channel, and the army of Cyrus entered the city under the walls, and the guard or porter opened the gates of the city to him; and according to the word of the Lord these gates could not be again closed against God's redeemed people. "But he that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep." Christ in entering the fold, or place of his children's captivity, may be considered as having entered by the door, in reference to the prophecies going before. He came as it was written of him in the volume of the book, to do the will of God. "A body," said he, "hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sins, thou hast had no pleasure." "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second."—Heb. x. 5, 6. Secondly, he came in by the door to the place where his sheep were folded, when he was made of a woman, made under the law; for it was a carnal or fleshly covenant that his sheep of that fold were under; "The children being partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."—Heb. ii. 14-17. The captivity an bondage of God's people was in the relation in which they stood to Adam. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation," &c.—Rom. v. 18. And the Jewish covenant embraced a carnal or fleshly people, related to Abraham by being born in his house or brought with his

money, and their covenant contained also carnal ordinances and worldly sanctuary.—Heb. ix. 1. To effect their deliverance from that bondage, to emancipate them from that fold and from that government, he must needs be made flesh and dwell among them, he must be mad like them in all points, and yet be without sin; and although like them in point of humanity, yet holy, harmless and separate from sinners.

*"For he who could for sin atone,
Must have no blemish of his own."*

Although he had no sin, he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him.

3d. He entered by the door, agreeably to his explanation of the door of his sheep-fold. "I am the door," he says, and by himself he has fulfilled the law, cancelled its demands, borne its penalty, suffered the vials of almighty wrath, poured out his soul unto death, descended into the grave, encountered the king of terrors on his own dominions, despoiled him of his sting, and the grave of victory. "Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."—Heb. ix. 12. He had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again, so that by himself he was able to enter. This was a *new way*, a living way of entrance, and the Shepherd who entered by the door is himself the way, and no man can come unto God but by him.

To him the porter openeth. If, by the law, his captive sheep were held in the prison-house of death, Divine Justice was the porter who kept the door. No bribe could tempt him, no pity move him; he was inexorable. But to Jesus even this inflexible porter opened, and without expense, for Jesus met his full demands, and Justice asked no more. The brazen gates of death were unsealed; the massy bars of death were cut in

sunder.

To him the porter has not only opened the door of death, and the grave, but he has opened to him the portals of immortal glory. Not only have the gates of death been opened to receive him as the ransom of his people, but they have been opened to deliver him up, for it was impossible that he should be holden of death. Having done and suffered all that law could demand, or justice could inflict, he has now entered into the inner court of the temple by his own blood. He had commanded, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in! Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle."—Psalm xxiv. 8, 9.

But again: In the testimony of the Son of God, (1 John v. 6) we are informed that Christ came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

We have shown in the foregoing remarks, that Jesus by his own blood has entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, and by reference to Matt. iii. and last clause of the fifteenth verse, where the porter opened the door to Christ in regard to this witness. When Jesus came into the sheep-fold, or palace, the Spirit, in bodily shape like a dove, designated him as the Son of God. And lo, a voice from heaven was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This Baptist porter opened the watery door to the Shepherd of the sheep, because "Thus it became them to fulfill all righteousness."

And the sheep hear his voice. As he had promised by the mouth of the prophet. "I will cause my glorious voice to be heard, and will shew the letting down of my arm," &c. He has verified the promise not only in causing his voice to be uttered, but he causeth it to be heard,

by giving ears to the deaf, and life to the dead. "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 v. 22. Although dead in trespasses and sins, he gives unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. But by the sheep hearing his voice we are to understand something more than to hear what he says; they give the same evidence that they hear his voice, that sheep do when they are called by their shepherd, they follow him. The voice of Jesus as the Shepherd and Bishop of souls is sounded in the gospel, and all the sheep recognize the gospel as the well-known voice of Jesus; but others believe not, because they are not his sheep, as he said unto them.

And he calleth his own sheep by name. He has their names all written in his book of life from the foundation of the world, and the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. He is therefore at no loss in calling them. He knew among the Jews who were the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and he knows equally well all his sheep among the Gentiles, which were not of the Jewish fold. He is not liable to the mistake which the arminians charge on him, of calling some that are not his own and endeavoring to make them his own; and of frequently failing in the enterprise. He says, "I know my sheep and am known of mine;" and he also knows who are not of his sheep. "For whom he did foreknow them he also did predestinate to be conformed to his image, that he might be the First-Born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called," (he calleth them by name, and he makes them hear and understand and obey him) "and whom he called them he also justified; and whom he justified them he also glorified." He calls them with an holy calling, not ac-

ording to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began.—2 Tim. i. 9. If he should call them ineffectually, that would not be a holy calling; for a calling that is holy cannot be defective—must secure the design of him who calls. His calls are not general, as arminians assert, but special and particular, addressed to his own sheep, and these he calls by name, that there may be nothing indefinite in the vocation.

And leadeth them out. Christ was not only anointed to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound, but also to bring his prisoners out of their prison houses. The porter having opened the door to him as the Shepherd and Leader of his people, he leadeth them out. In order to lead them out it was necessary that he should go into the prison house where they were: this he did when he was made under the law, and when he descended into the chambers of death. But his was an errand of mercy, and by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, which is the devil; and wrought deliverance for them who were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He leads in the fulfillment of all righteousness, in a perfect obedience to all the requisitions of the law of God. None had ever preceded him in this work. But going before he leads his people after him, in bringing them up to the utmost demands of the law, for he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He leads them out from the guilt and consequence of sin: being made sin for them, and having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, he has brought life and immortality to light, and leads them out of their state of sin and death, into life and immortality. This is fully demonstrated in his triumphant resurrection from the

dead. He became the First Fruits of them that slept, and now holds in his hands the keys of hell and death. He giveth unto his sheep eternal life, and the assurance that they shall never perish. He leads them out from condemnation and into a state of justification—taking the lead in this also, for bearing the sins of his people he was numbered with the transgressors, and condemned by the law; but having satisfied that law, he that was manifested in the flesh, and put to death in the flesh, was quickened and justified in the Spirit, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on the world and received up into glory.

We have observed that Christ in coming into the Jewish fold, where he was sent unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, was made flesh, made under the law, of the stock of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the lineage of David; was circumcised, and became a debtor to do the whole law, and in this body which was made of a woman he was put to death. The law could pursue him no farther. When, therefore, he arose from the dead, instead of returning to that same relation to the legal covenant, to the carnal family of Abraham, tribe of Judah, &c., he was in his resurrection manifested as the Son of God with power. And although he had been known, in these respects, after the flesh, yet we shall know him no more after the flesh.

*“No more the cruel spear,
The cross and nails no more;
For death itself shakes at his name
And all the heavens adore.”*

As the Forerunner of his people he has passed into the most holy place: “For Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”—Heb. ix. 24. In all this transition from death to life, from legal bondage to liberty, Christ is the Leader of his peo-

ple and must be followed by them. Having removed the old tabernacle which was made with hands, and set up the true tabernacle which God has pitched and not man, and having abolished death, and nailed the hand-writing of ordinances which were against us to his cross, abolished the enmity, even the law of commandments, he has taken his seat upon the throne of his glory, and led the way for all his redeemed to follow him, and they shall all return and come with singing unto Zion, and sorrowing and sighing shall fall away.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say his flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised; and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works.”—Heb. x. 19-24.

MATTHEW XIII. 15-17.

At an early period in the primitive church the question arose among the disciples, and as they could not exactly agree among themselves, they brought the question for a decision to the Master, viz.: “Who is the greatest in the kingdom?” Our Lord did not tell them that Peter, James, or John, or the Pope, or the Bishop, was the greatest; nor did he say directly, as he might with great propriety, that this honor belonged to him exclusively. He understood them to mean the greatest among the disciples. How many of them had anticipated the palm we are not informed; but it is natural

to conclude that the disputants at least were actuated by ambitious, if not absolutely arrogant feelings—feelings very unbecoming them as the disciples of him that is meek and lowly. “And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them; and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” What a lesson for their instruction! What a reproof for their ambition! And what an example for their guide! “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Strictly speaking, Christ is the only one that has ever humbled himself in the manner described; others have been truly humbled under his mighty hand, and Christ is beyond all dispute greatest in the kingdom. The more child-like, therefore, his disciples are, the more they like Jesus.

With this preliminary instruction, our Lord proceeded to admonish the disciples of the unavoidable occurrence of offences, and how they should deport themselves when such offences should come. Although such offenders as cannot be reclaimed in a gospel manner are to be expelled, however conspicuous their standing or important their station, although they may be to the church as the right eye or the right hand is to the body, we are not to indulge in carnal reasoning, nor suffer anything to be done by partiality. With all the severity which the order of the house of God demands, gentleness, meekness, and a desire to reclaim an erring brother, is to mark the course of the disciples one towards the other. This lesson is set home by the most admirable argument contained in the scriptures: “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost;” and this declaration is beautifully illustrated by the man that had an hundred sheep, of which one is lost; he goeth into the mountain to seek the

truant sheep, and when he has found it, he rejoiceth over its restoration more than over those which had not strayed. Now is this christian-like? Then it is the proper course for christians to pursue when any have strayed from the footsteps of the flock.

“Moreover,” besides this general lessons of instruction, which are always to be observed by the saints, “if thy brother shall trespass against thee.” We cannot understand this to mean any particular kind of trespass, as to smite thee, rob thee, slander thee, or even that the trespass shall be against *thee* personally; but if thy brother shall trespass, or transgress the laws of Christ, so as to effect thy fellowship towards him, then the duty becomes indispensable to apply the instruction which follows: “You that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” It is not said, if thy brother trespass against thee *privately*, then tell him his fault between thee and him alone; nor is it said, If he trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Observe the figure laid down—one sheep has gone astray. It is sufficient that he has gone from the ninety-nine; no matter whether he went off secretly or openly, he has gone, and must be looked up. As the Son of man came to save that which was lost, we are to be Christ-like, and go in pursuit of the stray brother, with a becoming desire to render him a real service in restoring him to his place.

We are aware of some of the objections to the application of this rule to cases of open or public transgression; and there are also some arguments used against its application to offences of a strictly private character. A case is supposed: a brother has been seen and heard in open court, to curse and swear, and deny that he has any knowledge of Jesus Christ. This offence was open and before the world, in presence of the enemies of the cross of Christ; now what is to be done in

this case? Certainly an individual brother, although he might convince the offender of his error, has not the power to exonerate the offender from his responsibility to satisfy every member of the church; but still he is a stray sheep, and should be sought for. Now, to follow the direction and rule under consideration, how shall he proceed? To us it appears that this should be the course: My brother, I am grieved with your conduct; you have inflicted a deep wound upon your brethren in denying our dear Lord and Master, and in the profane language which you used on the occasion; you still persist in that course, or are you convinced of your error, and ready to make acknowledgments of your wrong? Now suppose the brother says, as David said to Nathan, “I have sinned,” and manifests the same contrition that David did, what will the laboring brother require to heal the wound? Will he not say, I rejoice that God has given you repentance for the wrong, and filled your heart with godly sorrow for your transgression; and if the matter were only known to myself, here the difficulty should end; but you know, my brother, that this offence was committed openly, and has come or should come to the ears of all your brethren; they are or will be as sensibly grieved as I have been. Now do you not see the importance of leaving here thy gift before the altar, and going immediately to be reconciled to the brethren? Go confess to them as you have now to me and they will rejoice to receive you; yea, they will rejoice more over you than over ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance. If this offending brother’s contrition be genuine, will he hesitate one moment? Will he not rather hasten to acknowledge his fault, and do all in his power to remove the stumbling block which he has been the unhappy occasion of? Would not such a course be in the spirit of the instruction of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, and much better cal-

culated to restore the offender, (if he be a subject of grace) than to simply cite him to be and appear before the church, and make satisfaction to the church for offences of a public nature? Where a real disposition exists to restore a wandering brother in the spirit of meekness, there is seldom any difficulty in understanding the mode of procedure directed. But when a difficulty occurs, (as, alas! too many have) where, instead of the spirit being grieved, the *old man* is mad, and seeks occasion to be avenged or to retaliate, it is astonishing how very exact he can be in requiring his offending or accused brother to pay the utmost farthing. How keen the eye to detect the difference between a public or a private offence. If public, he says, I will make it still more public—I will let the world see how much worse that brother is than I am. I will not go and labor to reclaim him; it is his duty to come before the church and confess, and if he should be excluded it will serve him right. Such a person will plead eloquently for scripture rule, but remain stupidly inconsiderate of the application of that rule to his own case. We would by no means be understood that it is unimportant that christians should be at all times and under all circumstances governed strictly by the scriptures of the New Testament; but we do object to that selfish construction of the word which would lead a brother to pursue a fellow-member out of the church, without laboring to reclaim him in the spirit of the directions laid down by our Lord in the chapter under consideration.

Again, instances have not been lacking where an individual has been conscious that he had given just cause for complaint, but, instead of being melted down with contrition for his wrong, he coolly sets about making his defence. In his turn he becomes amazingly tenacious for an exact conformity to certain instructions of the scriptures; or rather for his version of them. Now, says he, if I

have offended let my brethren pursue the course laid down in the 18th of Matthew, or I will give them no satisfaction; I'll let them know that I know something about church discipline, and if I have offended my brother, he is required to come and tell me my fault, &c.; let him, therefore, come to me if he wants anything. Is there a particle of gospel exercise manifested in this sort of contending for bible rule, while such scripture as requires the accused to go and be reconciled to his brother is altogether unheeded?

We have heard this argument also used in some cases: If a brother should inflict an injury upon a brother in private, so that the sufferer has not the means to prove his charge, that he is bound to bear the grief without pursuing the course of labor enjoined in this chapter, because that he cannot establish every word by two or three witnesses. But we trust this mode of reasoning does not prevail very extensively. The rule makes all necessary provision, for instance: My brother offends me privately; the facts of the case are known to none but ourselves. I go and tell him his fault, as directed, between him and me; he will not hear me. I then take what is called the second step of labor; taking one or two brethren we visit him; now before these brethren he denies all the facts in the case. I affirm and he denies; and if I proceed to tell it to the church, his word is supposed to be as good as mine, and the church, it is thought, cannot decide upon the just merits of the case for want of clearer testimony.

But let it be remembered, I am to go in obedience to the command of Christ, in the spirit of Christ, and of course trusting the issue to him; (if I perish, I perish) and in the second step of the labor, also trusting in God, I cannot be without sufficient witness. I have the very best of witness. My one or two brethren and myself make up the number of two or three,

and being assembled to labor with an offending brother in obedience to Christ, we are together in his name, and we have the assurance that he is in our midst. This assurance is given in the same chapter and in the same connection with the rule, and Jesus says every word shall be established, and he will make good the pledge, if the directions of Christ have been truly observed there is no possibility of failure in regard to the issue.

Before we close our remarks we wish to say that, although we fully believe this rule is always binding on individuals, requiring them thus to proceed in all cases, whether public or private, yet we do not believe the church, in her church capacity, is always bound to see that private labor has been taken, before she can consistently exercise that authority which is vested in her for dealing with transgressors. Cases may occur in open church meeting, requiring the immediate reproof of the church before all, that others may fear, &c. But in all cases where a charge is brought before the church against a member by an individual member, we do not believe that it is the duty of the church, before acting upon the charge, to see that the first and second steps of gospel labor have been duly taken according to the rule.

JONAH III. 9, 10.

“Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce wrath, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”—Jonah iii, 9, 10.

It appears from the record of this prophet that Nineveh was a heathen city of great magnitude and in a most deplorable state of ignorance and depravity, and that the Lord, instead of calling

for the organization of a Foreign Missionary Board to collect funds, manufacture, commission and send missionaries to warn Nineveh of impending wrath, commanded Jonah, one of his own prophets, to go to that great city and deliver a certain message; and notwithstanding Jonah's indisposition he was compelled to go and preach the preaching which God had bidden him. Every thing necessary for the accomplishment of the sovereign will of God in relation to Nineveh was provided without human aid, even to the great fish to ferry the runaway prophet to the field of his labor, and the gourd under which he should rest after having obeyed the word of the Lord. And can it be doubted that God, who has declared the end from the beginning, and said, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” was deficient in his knowledge of the result of Jonah's mission to Nineveh? Certainly not. Every circumstance in this divine record, when duly understood, goes to confirm the doctrine of the sovereignty, immutability and omniscience of God, but yet in such a manner of demonstration as to confound the wisdom of this world.

Jonah was commanded to say to the people of Nineveh, “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown;” it was therefore his duty to go and to leave the execution of the prediction to the Lord. And it is as certain that God was as able to have prevented the disobedience of Jonah, as it was for him to overrule his disobedience to his own glory and the direct accomplishment of his designs. In the disobedience of the prophet occasion was afforded not only for Jonah to become a sign or type of a crucified and risen Savior, but also for the use which God designed for a certain fish which he had before prepared for a certain agency in regard to Jonah's mission to Nineveh.

The restraining power of God was

also as potent to prevent the wickedness of Nineveh is it had been his pleasure to have employed it for that purpose, as it was in preventing Jonah from making his contemplated visit to Tarshish; but God designed to make use of that wicked city in testimony against Corazem, Bethesda, Capurniam and Jerusalem, and therefore every circumstance was wisely ordered and overruled to answer the counsel of his own will, in accordance with which he worketh all things.

But we presume the difficulty in the mind of our correspondent is that God had authorized Jonah to say that Nineveh should be destroyed in forty days, and then that he repented of the evil that he had said he would do, and did it not. By reference to Jeremiah xviii. 7-10, our correspondent will find the following law or principle of administration in regard to national judgment, &c., recorded viz: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build up and plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." The judgment of Nineveh was then in precise harmony with the rule by which he administers his judgments in a national point of view, and consequently there was nothing in the case of Nineveh indicating on the part of God the least variableness or shadow of turning, the words *repent* and *turn* being used in such cases not to indicate mutability or change of purpose in the mind of God, but a different administration from that anticipated by the language of the law under which nations and cities, as such, stand amenable to God. Thus, in relation to the sentence of

the law of God against transgressors, individually or collectively, the law denounces judgments without mercy. The sentence is in the most plain and emphatic language possible—"The soun that sins shall die." Thus, the law contemplates wrath and damnation, and that, too, by what God has said, speaking in the law; nevertheless, in the richness of his grace he has provided deliverance from the wrath for his redeemed people, and their deliverance, so far from reflecting upon his prescience and immutability, goes fully to establish both, inasmuch as their salvation and calling are "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began." Repentance in scripture parlance usually if not universally signifies a change or turning from. Such a change is sometimes in reference to purpose, and sometimes in regard to action.

An offending brother may turn again, repenting. Judas repented of his perfidy, and Esau also, that he had sold his birthright; and there is also a repentance which is unto life, to give which unto Israel and the remission of sins Christ is exalted a Prince and a Savior. But in none of these senses or the word can the none of these senses of the word can the term be applicable unto God, for he is of one mind, and none can turn him. Because he is the Lord and changes not the sons of Jacob are not consumed. To interpret these terms in their application to God as we may in their application to men, would involve a contradiction in the scriptures. But allowing the words *repent* and *turn* in our text to mean the same as Jeremiah xviii. 17-10, and we find them relating to the outward or providential dealings with nations, in their national characters. As when he saith in his law that the nations that will not serve him shall be destroyed, still reserving the power and right to turn these very nations from their wicked-

ness, and preserve them in the enjoyment of their national prosperity. It must be conceded that God knew beforehand what the effect of Jonah's preaching should be upon Nineveh, and although Jonah preached to them the legitimate consequence of their course, God humbled that city, and caused it to repent at the preaching of Jonah. And when he had effected this design by Jonah's preaching he made known to them his further design to save them from the impending ruin which was threatened. Now compare all this with the first experience of the children of God, and we discover a striking analogy when one is quickened by the Holy Ghost. Moses, or the law, like Jonah, comes preaching wrath; and this preaching, like that of Jonah, presents no alternative. "Thou hast sinned," thou are the man! thou shalt surely die! At this startling ministry of the law, the soul, like the Ninevites, is humbled; the relish for sin is killed, and like the men and beasts of nineveh, the soul is shrouded in sackcloth, a real sense of guilt and deserved wrath is brought home with terrific force; but when God, by the ministry of his law has sufficiently humbled the soul, he reveals to it his great salvation. This does not lead the soul to conclude that God has changed his purpose or his nature—that he has sacrificed his veracity or his justice, but he is made to rejoice in the revelation of that system of grace which is ancient as eternity, and in full harmony with the perfections of God.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."—
I Peter iv. 12.

The "fiery trial," then, is not a strange thing which happens only

to a few of the Lord's family, but is more or less the appointed lot of all. Do we not hear the Lord saying to his Zion, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction?" All then that are chosen must pass through the furnace of affliction, and all know experimentally the fiery trial, for by it they are made partakers of Christ's sufferings. But this is indispensable in order to be partakers of his glory. "If so be that we suffer with him, that we maybe also glorified together." Thus they suffer with him, "that when his glory shall be revealed, they may be glad also with exceeding joy." And this suffering with and for Christ in the furnace of affliction salts the soul, preserves it from corruption, communicates health, gives it savour and flavour, is a token of interest in the everlasting covenant, and is a seal of friendship and peace with God.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JANUARY 1986

Elder Larry Hollandsworth, VA..\$	2.00
Mrs. Elizabeth T. Adkins, VA....	5.00
Mrs. Ilene Clifton, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Mamie Lou Haney, AL. ...	2.00
Davis Mordecai, AL.....	5.00
W. H. Blaylock, NC.	2.00
Claude Harwell, MO.	2.00
Mrs. Kenneth Mathis, TN.	2.00
Mrs. Jean B. Moran, NC.	2.00
Mrs. J. B. Blaylock, NC.....	7.00
Mrs. Helen Maxell, WA.	10.00
Mrs. Clarence Baublitz, MD....	2.00
J. Cline Chandler, NC.....	5.00
D. G. Hart, NC.....	2.00
Mrs. Joyce Farley, TX.	7.00
John Collie, Jr. NC.	2.00
Casey Johnson, NC.	7.00

Mrs. Ethel Carter, NC.....	7.00
Mrs. Oza Hill, TX.....	2.00
Mrs. James H. Terral, TX.....	2.00
R. H. Hale, AL.....	2.00
Mrs. William I. Teel, PA.....	2.00
Miss Lora Smith, NC.....	2.00
James Cunningham, MO.....	2.00
Mrs. Ruth C. Clark, VA.....	2.00
David M. Spangler, VA.....	2.00
Hester M. Dawson, OR.....	5.00
Mrs. Clara McDuff, TX.....	5.00

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The next West Country Line Union meeting will be held at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church, the Fifth Sunday in March, 1986, if it be the Lord's will. Pleasantville Church will be host for this meeting.

We welcome our Friends, Brethren, Sisters and Ministers of our Faith and Order.

Elder H. W. Wray, Pastor
Sister Rachel Wray, Clerk

OBITUARIES

KENNETH LESLIE BLACK

Kenneth Leslie Black, of North Delta, B.C., formerly of Detroit, Mich. passed away at the Kelowna General Hospital, Kelowna, B.C. on Monday, April 29, 1985. He was 95.

He was born in St. Thomas, Jan. 13, 1891, the son of the late Archibald John Black and Kate Leslie (Rawlinson) Black. He was employed at the New York Central Railroad office where he worked for 50 years before retiring Feb. 1, 1956.

From 1958 to 1975, he worked for the Ion Optical Company, Detroit. He lived in Detroit from 1922 to 1980 and moved to British Columbia in Aug. 1980.

Our dearest Uncle Kenneth was an adherent of the Old School Baptist Church, of which his parents were members, all his life. He would speak of his love of scripture and of the dear Old School Baptist faith. He loved to hear the Old School Baptist hymns.

We praise God and thank Him that He allowed us the great spiritual benefit of having dear Uncle Ken live his final five and a half years with sister Flora and her family, and with us, in our home.

He was predeceased by brothers John Black of St. Thomas, William T. Black of St. Thomas, Archibald Black of Fort William, Duncan Black of Vancouver, B.C., James Black of St. Thomas, D. Crawford Black of Los Altos, Cal.; sister Kate Black of St. Thomas, and nephew Lt. James Wallace Black, killed in action in Italy in 1944.

Surviving are nephews Duncan Black of London, Ont., Ted Black, of Loveland, Colo., Duncan T. Black of White Rock, B.C., Kenneth C. Black of Nanaimo, B.C., T. Archibald Black of Ganges, B.C.; nieces Flora (Mrs. George Snowdon) of Okanagan Centre, B.C., Betty (Mrs. Lloyd Blackman) of North Delta, Mrs. Donna Black Sommer of Delta, B.C., Ruth Black of Thunder Bay, Ont., and Kathleen Hindley of Talahassie, Fla., and several great nieces and nephews including Anne Black Dunlop of St. Boniface, B.C.

Funeral services were held in the R.E. Allen Funeral Chapel with interment in the family plat at St. Thomas Cemetery.

Submitted prayerfully,
in Christ's love,
Elisabeth Black Blackman

MYRTLE (PASCHAL) CARTER

Plesantville Primitive Baptist Church sadly records the death of our Dear Sister in Christ, Myrtle Carter, 93. She died Sept. 25, 1985 at Will-O-Haven Rest Home, Greensboro, N.C. Her funeral was held at Ray Funeral Home, Madison, N.C. by her Pastor, Elder H. W. Wray. Burial was in Comers Chapel Church Cemetery. She was a native of Rockingham County, N.C., living near Madison, N.C. all her life.

Surviving are Son, Gary Carter of Greensboro, N.C. Brother Roy Paschal of High Point, N.C. and two granddaughters.

Sister Carter was Baptized into the fellowship of Pleasantville Church Sept. 1st Sunday, 1965 and she was a kind, loving and devoted member, always attending her meetings, until in 1979, she had memory failure and had to go to the Nursing Home. She did so many good things for others. Caring for her sister, and sister's grandchildren, and others.

We know our loss is Her Eternal Gain.

Sister Rachel Wray

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

Psalm 116:15

MRS. LILLIE MAE MCCOLLUM

Plesantville Primitive Baptist Church sadly records the death of our dear Sister in Christ, Sister Lillie Mae (Mitchell) McCollum, 93.

She died May 12, 1985 at Country Side Manor Home, Stokesdale, N.C. Her funeral was held at Pleasantville Primitive Baptist Church by Elder H. W. Wray, her pastor. Burial was in Church Ceme-

tery.

Surviving are, Daughter-in-law, Edith of Ky. and three grandchildren, Captain Jimmy McCollum in England, Carol Sue in Calif. and William McCollum III of Madison, N.C. Five great-grandchildren and all of them came to her funeral.

She was a native of Rockingham County, N. C. and a merchant.

She was baptized into the fellowship of Pleasantville Church in June, 1964 and was a loving, kind and devoted member, until failing health kept her from attending her meetings and had to be in the nursing home several years. She loved to read her Bible and the Signs of The Times. She spoke of wanting to go to her heavenly home when we visited her, before the strokes took her away.

May the Lord comfort her family and all who love and miss her.

Sister Rachel Wray

SISTER ELLA DARNALL

Sister Ella Darnall was born in Trigg County, Kentucky on April 1, 1900. She was the daughter of Ira and Mary Calhoun Dixon. Sister Darnall was united in marriage on August 13, 1916 to Elder Joseph (Nuck) Darnall. He preceded her in death on April 13, 1979.

She became a member of Dry Creek Primitive Baptist Church on the Saturday before Second Sunday in June, 1921. She was a faithful servant to the Lord in her gentle, humble way, has cooked, fed, and given lodging to many "Ole Baptists" during her lifetime with Elder Nuck.

Sister Darnall passed from this life on June 16, 1985 at Shady Lawn Nursing Home in Trigg County, Kentucky. Her funeral was held June 19, 1985 at Goodwin Funeral Home by Elder R. H. Hale and her body was laid to rest in

Atkins Cemetery to wait the second coming of the Savior.

She was survived by seven sons: Fentress, of Fayette, N.C.; Clayton of Harding, Ky.; Eugene of Marissa, Ill.; JOE, Ervin, and Elias of Trigg County, Ky. One daughter, Addie Pearl Harris of Hopkinsville, Ky. Twenty-two grandchildren, three step-grandchildren, four great-grandchildren. Two sisters: Modie Thomas and Ollie Compton. Four brothers: Tom, Delbert, and Lindsey of Trigg County and Douglas Dixon of Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

She will be greatly missed by all at Dry Creek Church, but feel that our loss has been her eternal gain.

Written by Elizabeth Mathis
Route 1, Box 247
Dover, Tenn. 37058

BROTHER LARRY WEATHERFORD, Sr.

The writer of this memorial feels unworthy to undertake this also, I was saddened to hear of his death.

He was born September 28, 1917 in Rockingham County, North Carolina. Died December 4, 1985 at Durham, North Carolina. He was a son of the late Deacon Harry Thomas Weatherford and Sister Beulah Dix Weatherford. Both were members of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church.

On December 25, 1941, he was married to Delores Callahan. To this union was born two sons. He leaves to mourn his passing: wife, Sister Dolores Weatherford of Danville, Virginia; Sons Larry G. Weatherford, Jr. of Lynchburg, Virginia, and Ashley W. Weatherford of Pittsburg, California. One sister, Mrs. Mildred W. Hanks of Danville, Virginia. Two brothers, William T. Weatherford and Brother Harold D. Weatherford of Danville, Virginia, also six grandchil-

dren.

On March 9, 1968 Brother Larry Weatherford joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church and was a faithful member until his death. Psalm 116: 15 "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The last time I spoke to Brother Larry was our fourth Sunday meeting in November, 1985. My wife and I were planning to be in Danville in a few days. I told him we would be by to see him. He said If I am still here. I believe he felt his days were short. Brother Larry was deep in the scriptures. He loved to hear his Lord lifted up high and the name of Jesus exalted above every name. He believed in prayer. Saint Luke 9:63 "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Brother Larry's faith in God was strong to the end. He was looking for that city whose builder and maker is God. II Timothy 4: 7 & 8 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." I truly believe that Brother Larry could witness with the Apostle Paul the above text. We will miss him, however, we believe our loss will be his eternal gain.

His funeral was conducted December 6, 1985 at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church by Elder's Kenneth R. Key and Lonnie Mazingo, Jr. He was laid to rest in the Church Cemetery to await the coming of our Lord. May the Lord bless the family and reconcile them to His will.

Written by request of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church, December 21, 1985 at her conference.

Humbly submitted,
R. Allen Carroll

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA. MAY 1986

NO. 05

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years
Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84

Fayette, Ala. 35555

Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Elder D. B. Stokes

1029 Daniel Court

Jacksonville, N.C. 28540

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566. All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Virginia 24566

ROMANS 8:28

THROUGH 39

And we know that ALL THINGS work together FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, TO THEM WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come.

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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EDITORIAL

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." I Cor. 2:7.

If the wisdom of God is spoken of in a mystery, then we might ask; what is a mystery? Spiritually speaking, a mystery is a divinely disclosed secret

which apart from revelation cannot be discovered. It is a wisdom which has been hidden from the world as far as having it revealed to their hearts, but revealed unto babes. Since this mystery is a secret conceived only by God and only known by Him, makes it an eternal decree, a divine wisdom which has long been kept hidden until in time revealed by the Spirit of God. From this we might summarize and say: 1. a mystery is a divine truth beyond the ability of nature, sense, and reason to comprehend. 2. it is hidden from the wise and prudent, and 3. it is revealed unto babes, by the Holy Spirit.

The gospel contains many wonderful mysteries. One of the first grand mysteries in the word of truth is the mystery of the Trinity. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." I Peter 1:2. And "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." I John 5:7. There are many passages of scripture that prove a trinity of persons in the godhead. No, the doctrine of the Trinity does not rest upon one or two isolated verses of scripture such as the above two, but it is a ray of light that illuminates the whole of God's word from Genesis to Revelation. Take away this precious doctrine of the Trinity and we would have no part in election, no pardon of sins, no redemption, no justification, no sanctification or salvation. The sovereignty of God in the choice of his people is a mystery, but do we not believe by faith that he has so appointed it to be? His sovereign will has fixed the circumstances of his creatures and His purposes none can reverse.

The Christian hope is based upon the doctrine of the Trinity. How can anyone have a hope of being of the elect of God unless it be from a Father who has all

power in heaven and upon earth and who elects according to His own purpose and will, unless he be God? How can anyone have a hope to rest upon the atoning blood of Jesus Christ in the redeeming, justifying work for his people, if it not be of the righteousness of the Son of God? How can His people be taught by, led by, and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts unless it be the Spirit of God? So can we not see that the spiritual knowledge of the Trinity lies as the foundation of all vital godliness, the sum and substance of all spiritual religion. The three persons in the godhead are not just three names but three persons distinctly named and described, and who are but one God. Now nature is reay to ask, how can one be three and three be one? Is it not because this mystery is a truth beyond the ability of nature, sense, and reason, being hid from the wise and prudent and revealed in time to babes by the Holy Spirit.

Another great mystery of Godliness brought forth in the scriptures is the son of God being made manifest in the flesh. "And without controversay 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 Tim. 3:16. Jesus Christ was sent into the world (with his own consent) by the Father and the Spirit. "Now the Lord God and his Spirit hast sent me." Isa. 48:16. "God was manifest in the flesh." Where can we find a greater contrast than between God and flesh, and yet the two are blended in the incarnation of the Saviour? He "was manifest in the flesh," is this not essential to the salvation of the elect of God? He who made you became like you, yet without sin. "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:7. Take away from our faith the doctrine of our Lord's true divinity, and

our hope of deliverance through Him is found baseless. What virtue would there be in his blood, if the Lord Jesus be not God? If the Lord Jesus be not God, his blood could no more save us, or purge away our guilty crimes, than the blood of any ordinary man; for if he be not the God-man, what merit could there be in his blood? There could be no atonement for our sins, no trusting to the Saviour's care, no hope of his mercy, and no prayer through Him.

Do we not find the incarnation of Christ to be a most extraordinary and amazing affair? It is a blessed event indeed, that the Son of God should become man, that he should be born of a pure virgin, without any concern of man, but by the power of the Holy Ghost in a way unseen and unknown signified by his overshadowing. Why was this necessary? In order to bring about the most wonderful work ever done in this world, the redemption and salvation of his elect people. We might ask, if Christ is God, can God shed blood, or suffer, or die? No, the God part could not but the man part, the human nature part, was the part that shed blood, suffered, and died. This is why. He took on a nature that could suffer, bleed, and die. "And without shedding of blood is no remission of sins." Heb. 9:22. The incarnation of Christ was to make peace with God for his elect to make reconciliation for sin which was appointed Him in covenant. He has reconciled sinners to God by his obedience, blood, and death making peace by his blood upon the cross.

His incarnation was also that he might bring forth, on behalf of his people, all those spiritual blessings provided in covenant and laid up in Christ; and which came by him, our High-Priest, over the household of God. "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3. So, He who now is adored by angels once laid in a manger; He who has power over all

flesh and all things was as man, made to sleep, eat, suffer, and die. A religion without the incarnation of the Son of God is like a house without a foundation. Hope discovers in it a sure foundation and love delights in an incarnate God, proclaims his honors, cleaves to him, gives him all the praise and crowns him, "Lord of all." Is not the incarnation of the Son of God a mystery beyond nature, sense, and reason to comprehend, yet revealed unto babes by faith?

The mystery of sin or iniquity is another great mystery. "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14. That he might deliver His people from the guilt of sin in which they were slaves and captives to their lusts. "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." Romans 5:12. Where does this leave all of Adam's posterity but dead in trespasses and sins into an estate of sin and misery. A loss of original righteousness followed upon Adam's sinning, he lost the righteousness in which he was created so that he and all his posterity became unrighteous. Guilt upon the conscience of our first parents appeared so they attempted to hide themselves from God among the trees of the garden. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Romans 5:18. The guilt of Adam's sin continues, and is imputed to all his posterity. This fact soon appeared in the corruption of Cain's nature by shedding his brother's blood. Doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit? No, no, make the tree good and the fruit will be good; and this is done only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Romans 3:11. Though they may understand natural things, and somewhat of

moral things, they understand not spiritual things, the things of the Spirit of God which they neither receive or know because they are spiritually discerned. They know not God as to glorify Him. They know not Christ, his heart-felt truth, nor the way of salvation by Him. They know not the Spirit, his person, office and operations upon the hearts and consciences of his people. Those who assume a creature power on the part of man to lay hold of salvation, only proves the light that is in them is darkness. This creature power to play a big part in his salvation is dishonoring to the Triune Godhead. It denies the eternal foreknowledge of God in men's salvation. It denies the eternal union of the Church with Christ and the necessity of that union to give birth to the right of redemption. It takes away the work of the Holy Spirit as the Holy One whose work is to quicken the dead. It both adds to and takes away from the Holy work of God.

The unregenerate will not accept the fact that they are spiritually dead, alienated and separated from God to the extent that it is impossible for them to worship Him in spirit and in truth. They believe what the devil told our first parents when he said, "Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:4, 5. Is this not what the unregenerate are saying today? We are not spiritually dead, we can accept or reject Christ anytime we have a desire to do so. They will not accept the fact that they are enmity against God, cannot please God, neither can they know Him.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. 1:12, 13. God's elect are brought to know Him.

This was made possible by the incarnation of the Son of God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to teach his people of the things of God, of truth itself. First by quickening them from being dead in trespasses and sins and by shining his divine light into their hearts to give them knowledge. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." II Cor. 4:6. This knowledge teaches us of the utter helplessness and impotence of ourselves and is daily worked out in our experiences. We learn that we are not sufficient of ourselves even to think a good or spiritual thought, or originate a right desire. We cannot feel, act, or pray as we ought. We have no power to defend ourselves against the assaults of Satan, or to keep our minds from going astray and unless "kept by the power of God," and upheld every moment by Him, we are sure to fall. He alone is our strength and refuge. Do we ever truly feel what a tremendous stake heaven or hell is? May God work in us all to feel and view the things of time and sense as mere toys of vanity and to feel and know that the things of eternity are the only solid, enduring realities.

Another great mystery is that concerning Christ and the Church. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Eph. 5:30, 32. From the eternal election of Christ by the Father as Head of the Church, and eternal election of the Church in Christ by the Father, flows the eternal union which of God subsists between Christ and the Church. The Church was chosen by the Father in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. He knew each and every member for He wrote their names in the Lamb's Book of Life giving the Church an eternal union with her covenant Head. Nature, sense,

and reason is ready to ask, How can she be a bride before she is born? But we believe that the Church was viewed and taken in all her beauty before the Adam fall. Their eternal union, in the mind and purpose of God, was not lost in the fall, but the personal and individual effects of it was loss, because they became alienated and separated from God. This union was made manifest again in a personal way at the new birth, bringing them into a close personal union once again. How strong is this spiritual union between Christ and the Church? This precious union rests upon a sure foundation which is nothing less than a Triune God. This close union between Christ and his Church is suitable to that of a vine and its branches. "I am the true vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him; the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Without the continual influence of the Vine upon the branches, they bring forth no fruit. Christ is spoken of as the true Vine. His believing people are the branches. The Lord's people differ in the exercise of divine teaching; as all are not led in the same precise path of soul experiences and temptations, do not sink equally deep in trouble, nor rise equally high in sweet enjoyment of His felt presence. But there is one thing at least common to them all, a sense of creature helplessness. "Without me ye can do nothing." Nothing to fulfil the demands of the law, nothing to put away sin, nothing to atone for their sins, nothing to fit and qualify your souls for the inheritance of the saints in light. Who shall deliver us from this dreadful state of helplessness? God's people are as helpless to partake of divine things after they are called by grace as they were before. Some of us may be tried by a feeling that we bear so little fruit as fear, faith, love, hope, humility, etc. We may try to read, pray, strive to do what appears to be right, but

seem to fail so much of the time. But our failures are meant to bring us away from self-righteousness in all its shapes and forms to a cleaving to the Son of God, and to realize that without Him, we can do nothing. James says, "Faith without works is dead being alone." How are these works to be performed? Just as the vine works sap into the branches causing them to bring forth fruit, so the Spirit works grace into the heart to cause it to bring forth fruit or good works according to the gift of God. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of God." Eph. 4:7. Only the saints of God bring forth spiritual good works. Some day Jesus will say to them on his right hand: "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty and ye gave me drink." and "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?" The King shall answer and say unto them, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. 25: 35, 37, 40.

Another great mystery brought forth in scriptures is that of the gospel. "That utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds." Eph. 6:19. The meaning of the word gospel is "good news of glad tidings." Good news because it is a message of pure mercy from heaven; a revelation of free, sovereign, distinguishing grace of God to poor, lost, and ruined sinners. The gospel in scriptures is called the "gospel of Christ" because Christ is the grand subject and object of it. Remove Christ from the gospel and there would be no revelation of his love, grace, mercy, his blood and righteousness, his risen power or his ascending glory. The gospel of Christ becomes the very good news to those who have been quickened and

made alive to their ungodly, lost, helpless, ruined condition, and without strength or knowledge to save themselves.

The gospel is a mystery because it proclaims salvation for the guilty wretched sinners, this is what makes it a mystery. It would not be a mystery if it proclaimed salvation for the righteous, the whole who know nothing of sickness, sickness of sin and sickness of self. The mystery is Christ "come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Luke 5:31. All the human race are sinners and unrighteous, but only those who have been made alive spiritually are made conscious of it. Because the unregenerate are alive physically, they feel able to perform all things necessary for their salvation. A gospel which nature has contrived, which consists of merits and works in order to obtain salvation, is not the gospel of Christ. There is no mystery in a conditional gospel, but the mystery is how can the Holy Triune Godhead look down in love and mercy on such sinful wretches that deserve nothing but damnation in hell and yet make them endless partakers of His own glory!

Another mystery is the mystery of the kingdom of God. "He answered and said unto them: Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Matt. 13:11. The kingdom of heaven is also spoken of as the kingdom of God. "Behold the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21. There are many scriptures in the four gospels that reveal the kingdom of God, or heaven, as being a principle of grace set up in the hearts of his people by the Holy Spirit. It is a "kingdom which can never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever." Dan. 2:44. Before the new birth, God's people are by nature

the children of wrath even as others. But there comes a time for each of God's elect to be quickened. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2:1. The new birth brings God's people from darkness into his marvelous light, and a new principle of grace is set up in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Without an experimental knowledge of this mystery, there can be no living to God, and no dying in the Lord. Can we look back to any period during our lives when the effects of spiritual life began to show themselves in our souls and consciences? Maybe we can and maybe we can't. But can we say whereas I was dead, I now have a hope of being alive, so as to feel my lost, ruined condition. Whereas I was blind, I am now made to see my need of salvation by the blood and righteousness of Christ. I was once in carnal security, I was made to flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before me. May we consider these things in our journey here upon earth and search our experiences for a reason to hope that the Holy Spirit has implanted spiritual life in our hearts and souls.

Do we have any waymarks? Can we give a reason for the hope that is in us? Have we had the entrance of conviction into our hearts, the application of the law to our consciences, and the breaking in of light enough to show us that we are sinners, lost, ruined, and undone? These are waymarks in our pathway of life. Again have we ever had an answer to our prayers? Have we ever received any particular blessing in hearing the preached word? Have we ever felt a love for the truth and for our brethren who love the truth? These are waymarks. Are we cast down by troubles of all nature? May we be given by these precious waymarks, some sweet encouragement that God is our strength and refuge in time of trouble. Are not all these great mysteries of truth hidden from the abili-

ty of nature, sense, and reason to comprehend? Hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes in Christ by the Holy Spirit through faith?

There are other mysteries mentioned in scripture of which I shall not attempt to write on as this article is too long already. May the Spirit of God lead us more deeply into the mysteries of the gospel, and to know them will separate us from the world and we will say with Ruth: "Thy people will be my people, and thy God, my God." May we praise God not only for some understanding of these mysteries, but that He has given us faith to rejoice in them. May God bless you all is my prayer.

In hope of mercy,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

CORRESPONDENCE

Saline, La.
Feb. 6, 1986

Dear Editors of The Signs:

It is time again to renew my subscription and I am sending you a check for one year.

I am so glad that I believe in the predestination of all things because to me it means that in God is our trust, and we believe that all is in His hands and He has all power and control over everything in earth and heaven and works all things after the council of His own will and for His purpose. And when we can believe this, we know that whatever troubles and tribulations we are faced with, God has already worked it all out for us. The hardest is the submission to His will for me. I know in my heart that what is will be and is right because whatever He does is right, but so much trouble I have submitting to His will if the will is hard

to face. But even so, we do and we will because what is to be will be as God wills it to be.

I'm glad that we have a Saviour to look to for help, and a way to escape the pollutions of this old world. I'm so glad that we have a hope that we have one to council and lead and guide us and make intercession for us, not because we are worthy, but because He is worthy and paid our debts for us. A lawyer pleads a case for his clients worthiness but Christ pleads our case because of His worthiness, because we know that we have no good thing in our flesh that merrits anything.

I believe that proof of Scripture comes from no man but that it is given you to understand as you experience the spiritual birth. I believe that you must be borned again before you can understand or hear What the Spirit says, borned of an incorruptible seed and that everything or event that comes to pass was predetermined to be just as it happens and that God has a purpose in all.

I believe that God had a purpose in bringing Judas into the world, the same as he had a purpose in bringing Christ into the world. Judas was chosen to betray Christ so the scriptures could be fulfilled, and some say that Judas was saved but I wonder about this because he was the Son of perdition, he was a devil— HJohn 13:18. I speak not of ye all I know whom I have chosen but that the Scripture be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his hand against me. 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 are lost but the Son of Perdition that the Scripture be fulfilled.

Also Judas did not witness the first resurrection because he, after he saw that he was condemned, he repented himself and brought again the thirsty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests and elders saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood and they said, what is that to us. See thou to it—Matt. 27: 4, 5. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed and went and hanged himself, this he did before Christ died on the cross showing that he did not witness the first resurrection so they chose another to take his place, his name was Matthias. Peter spoke saying, Acts 2:16, men and brethren this scripture must needs be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus Acts 2:17. For he was numbered with us and had obtained part of this ministry. (Yes, part but not all) Judas was one of the twelve so the scripture could be fulfilled. He had to betray Christ so that Christ could finish the work God gave Him to do and come into His glory.

Also the man of sin must be revealed, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away and that man of sin be revealed. The Son of Perdition.

I do not believe that if sin was never revealed to us that we would ever repent of our sins or even know that we are sinners.

I believe it all works in God's perfect way, everything he made has a purpose to serve and it will serve that purpose that it was made for. I hope that I am His Child, but if not, then I will get and deserve whatever comes. There is a beautiful Scripture that I long to be a part of. Psalm 85:10-13, Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth and righteousness shall look down from heaven; yea the Lord shall give that which is good and our land shall yield her increase. Rightious-

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ness shall go before him and shall set us in the way of His steps.

This is just some things that have been on my mind and thought I'd send them to you just to read and see what you think or believe about them.

Sincerely yours in hope,
Kate Mathews

Rt. 2, Box 78A
Strong, Ark. 71785
Feb. 18, 1986

Dear Editors of The Signs;

Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both the will and the to do of his good pleasure. I hope my mind is set on things above, and not on earthly things. If the Lord will bless me to write, and guide my pen to write on spiritual things that comes to us from above, from the Father of lights, where there is no variableness or shadow of turning. Every good and perfect gift is from above. I am wholly dependent upon the Lord to write anything that would be of any comfort to the Lords beloved people. I feel to love you all in Christ, I can do nothing without him, I feel much of my time to be nothing and less than nothing. The vilest of sinners, this world, sin, and satan, they do beset me so, possessed with doubts and fears from time to time of being one of his, my mind goes back a long time back, to some thoughts that come to me. Said Jesus, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. I did not feel to be righteous then, and I still feel I have no righteousness of my own to plead, unless the Lord is my righteousness, I have none. The whole hath no need of a physician, but it is the sick that hath need of a physician, to heal and forgive them of their sins. To clothe them in his righteousness.

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.*

*Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring!
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Black, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!*

For by grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourself. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. The gifts and calling of God, are without repentance, the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. "Ye are not your own, you are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness, I have drawn thee. Your sins and iniquities, I will remember no more against you. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." I love the precious words and thoughts of my Saviour, and my God, to me, whom I love and adore, where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. That the power be of God, and not of us. The holy spirit takes the things of Jesus, and shews them unto you. It is by revelation only, that the Lord blesses one of his, to know the truth. You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

Saith Jesus, Mat. 11:27 "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father;

neither knoweth any man the Father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, it is so precious to believe in the three in one God, and that he reveals his precious truths unto his called and chosen ones, and hides it from the wise and prudent of the world by wisdom that knows not God. The Lord speaks unto his little ones in a still small voice, the precious truths as it is in him. For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. He makes known to us, after that ye belived, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, hymn 8.

*The soul that's truly born of God,
Delights to run the heavenly road;
He mourns for sin, and hates the ways
Which lead to death—behold he prays!*

*Grace is the theme his soul explores;
A God in Christ his soul adores;
Before the cross his fears he lays;
And now to God, behold, he prays!*

*He flies from works to Jesus' blood,
Yet proves by works he's born of God;
He runs with joy in Zion's ways
And to his God, behold, he prays.*

The Lord is my strength and my song,
the rock of my salvation.

Yours in hope of eternal life.

Written with Love,

Lula Fox

7600 Willow Oak Lane
Arlington, Texas 76017
February 27, 1986

Editors, Signs of The Times:
Dear Brethren:

I see I have long since let our subscription expire. Please renew it for another year, back from when it should have been renewed. The remain-

der, use anyway you see fit. We (my wife and I) enjoy each issue very much and look forward to the next months.

When I read some of the articles, I hope I am blessed to see what a wonderful, loving, forgiving, merciful and powerful God we are given to worship. A God that knows where His people are at all times, knows what they stand in need of and then fulfills all those needs. I did not say our wants or desires, but our needs. For most of us, our wants and needs are about as far apart as the east is from the west. I hope I am given to know He is just as much in control of His people today as He has ever been. He is a God that changes not, the same yesterday, today and forever. If this scripture is true, then he does not need man to do his work or help him. He said, He stretched forth His hand and made Heaven, earth and all things therein. He ask Job, where he was when He made heaven and earth; with whom did He take council when He did all these things.

Thanks be unto this God, that if we are His, He first saved us, then called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

May God continue to direct all the editors to continue to publish the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. There sure isn't much spiritual truth in the land today.

A Brother in Hope,

Frank Richards

February 23, 1986

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

If God will bless me to do so, I will write to you a few of my thoughts concerning Job, and I pray that God will guide my every thought. Over the years I have heard many brethren express

their views concerning Job, and at times I have expressed my own views to others. I do not remember ever hearing a view expressed that completely satisfied my mind, and neither did my own views satisfy me. But recently, while spiritual things were far from my mind, thoughts of Job came into my mind suddenly. It was as though someone had spoken into my ear and said, "Job represents the children of God." My heart was flooded with great joy and my mind filled with many thoughts. I reviewed my own experiences and was amazed to see how closely they resembled those of Job, and wondered why I had not seen the resemblance before. I do not claim to know that I am a child of God, but if not deceived in heart I believe I have been given a very sweet hope in Christ.

In the first verse of the first chapter we are given a vivid description of Job. He was perfect and upright, and one who feared God and eschewed evil. How so? for man that is born of a woman cannot fit this description. As David said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In Rom. 5:12 we read, "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." In the flesh Job was a sinner and therefore could not be perfect and upright. Neither could he fear God, because he first must know him, and the carnal mind is emity against God. 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." There is a natural fear in all men, as one would fear a poisonous snake or being hurt; and in many, but not all, there is the fear of hell and Satan. This fear is preached and is the basis of the religion of many churches. But the fear ascribed to Job is a reverential fear that is born of love through the operation of the Holy Spirit. We love God because

he first loved us. And because of this love we have a reverential fear of him. It was because of this fear that Job eschewed, or shunned, evil. We attempt to follow this example, but when we fail it causes us pain, and we moan within.

I believe I have proven by the scriptures that Job as a natural man could not be the one described in the first verse of chapter one. Then who does this description fit but a born again child of God? For, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remainth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest." "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of th flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is beyond doubt with me that Job had become a son of God by this holy birth and as such is the one described.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." In the past I have been greatly confused about where and how the sons of God and Satan presented themselves before God. I may still be confused, though in my own mind I am satisfied, but I believe that when the children of God gather together to worship, pray, sing praises, and hear his blessed gospel preached through the mouths of his chosen ministers that they are presenting themselves before God, and that Saan is always among them seeking to deceive and destroy, because this has been his endeavor since the beginning. But thanks be unto God that Satan can go no further than the decrees of God. "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the works of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." But as God did

unto Job does he unto all his sons. Satan was given power to afflict and tempt, but in this we should rejoice, not complain as we so often do, for, "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." Also we, if need be, are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of our faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.." Did not Satan tempt our Lord, and did not God lay all our iniquities upon him who knew no sin? God spared not his only begotten son, therefore shall he spare us?

It is obvious that in the beginning Job knew and feared God, but as yet he knew nothing of his own sinful condition nor the righteousness of Christ. At that time he was relying upon his own self-righteousness, a righteousness he thought he had by his own works under the law. He begged to be shown wherein he had erred or sinned. He was afraid that his own sons may have sinned and cursed God in their hearts, therefore he continually offered burnt offerings according to the number of them. I do not find that he made an offering for himself. When they were taken away from him, with all that he possessed naturally, he fell upon his knees and worshiped the God that he feared. He knew he brought nothing into the world and he could take nothing out of it. All that he possessed was a blessing from on high, and he would not charge God foolishly for taking it away,

though Job's friends tried to convince him that he had lost all because of his sins. Is this not the way of many of our friends today? Do they not try to convince us that we should turn from our sinful ways, accept Christ as our Saviour, let him come into our hearts, and dedicate our lives to him? And should we not do this before it is everlasting too late? They tell us what we should do, but I have never found one who could tell me how to do it. Either they err in doctrine or we do not worship the same God, because the God that I hope to worship does his will in the army of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his hand nor say unto him, What doest thou? What his soul desireth, even that he doeth. What are we that we should let him or hinder him in any matter? There is no power but of God. All the powers that be are ordained of him. He gave Satan power to afflict and to tempt his beloved sons, but never more than he gives them strength to endure. Though he gives Satan such power, he never gives him power to take the life of a son. This life is eternal; it was given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world and it shall never perish; but it is after the birth of this life at the appointed time of God that he makes us to know of this life. A natural baby has feelings and other senses, but it does not have the capacity to understand its life, so it is with a child of Grace, but as it grows it is given knowledge, grace and wisdom. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is not all given at once, for we could not bear it, as Jesus told his disciples. First I believe we are made to know our sinful condition and how lost we are, and then we begin to search for ways to make us righteous in the eyes of him who made us. We turn to the law, for in it is our hope;

but we find that it only condemns us. It demands everything of us and gives us nothing. Eventually, when we have reached the end of our hope of approving ourselves under the law and are made to see that we are doomed to the vengeance of the fires of hell, and that justly so, we are given to see Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished for his beloved children, and then by grace we receive a very precious hope that we are among those for whom he has shed his holy and precious blood. Though this hope may seem very weak at times, it is always sufficient. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Though Job's sufferings were great, they were not worthy to even be compared to the glory and joy he should receive in that

life beyond the grave. And as I said before, I believe Job is a figure or type of the eternal sons of God.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." Brethren, let us never forsake presenting ourselves before the Lord, collectively and individually, and worshiping at his feet.

Beloved brethren, I have presented only a few of my thoughts and views for your prayerful consideration, and not to attempt to change the views of anyone who see these things differently. May God bless the truth and pardon the errors.

Brethren, I beg an interest in your holy prayers of faith, and may we all hear these gracious words from our blessed Saviour's lips on that great resurrection morn, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Yours in hope of eternal life,
Clifford Wilbanks

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



Hunting Quarters Church was Organized September 5, 1829. The present building was built in 1918 in Atlantic, Cartert County, North Carolina.

Church Services are held every third month on the first Sunday. Present Pastor is Elder J. T. Prescott.

VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

MATTHEW V. 16.

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

This exhortation was addressed to the disciples by our Lord Jesus Christ in the course of his discourse upon the mount. Retiring from the multitude that had gathered round him, Jesus withdrew to a mountain with the little group of his disciples, and sat down and instructed them. First in regard to the blessings of God which rest upon all such as possess the characteristics of true discipleship, which are these: poor in spirit, mourners, meek, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, yet a proscribed, persecuted, suffering and reviled people for Jesus' sake. That the development of these characteristics is to distinguish the children of God as the blessed of the Lord throughout all time, there can be no doubt; so that in the absence of these there are no marks by which we are at liberty to recognize them from the unregenerated mass of mankind. The children of God are not blessed for possessing these discriminating qualities, for that would imply that they were chosen on account of some personal excellency in themselves, which God has said is not the case; but the possession of them is the evidence of their being blessed, the effect and consequence of their having been previously blessed. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed his people with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 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.i.3, 4. Thus we see that all spiritual

blessings were prior to our personal holiness and exemption from blame, and our holiness and deliverance from guilt result from and are in accordance with his blessing upon the choice of us before the foundation of the world; and this choice and provision of grace and mercy had in view, as its ultimate object, and did secure to God's chosen people holiness and deliverance from blame. For the encouragement of this distinguished and blessed people, Christ has, in this chapter, given exceeding great and precious promises for their faith to live upon, viz.: 1st, the kingdom of heaven is theirs; 2nd, they shall be comforted; 3rd, they shall inherit the earth; 4th, they shall be filled with righteousness; 5th, they shall obtain mercy; 6th; they shall see God; 7th, they shall be called the children of God; 8th, theirs is the kingdom of heaven; 9th, great is their reward in heaven. What a glorious catalogue of *shalls* are strung together like a chain of gold to comfort, adorn and sustain the people of God.

*“Each of them powerful as that sound
That bid the new made world go round,
And stronger than the solid pole
On which the wheels of nature roll.
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speak all the promises.”*

Such a people, thus distinguished in the eternal choice of God, thus chosen of God unto holiness and ordained to eternal life, Jesus separated from the multitude, and sat down upon the mountain to teach as never man taught; and unto this people the exhortation placed at the head of this article is addressed. To no other people under heaven can this admonition apply. No other people are in possession of this light, nor can any other people let it shine, or aid in the diffusion of it. To this distinguished people Jesus said, Ye are the light of the world: a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it

under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Then follows the word of command: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. That the disciples to whom these words were immediately addressed were designed in a special manner to diffuse the light of divine truth, as ministers of the gospel, we shall not dispute; but we must at the same time contend that the gospel church, embracing all the subjects of his kingdom, is included with them, as the city set upon a hill; and each member of the gospel church is addressed, and in these words commanded to let his light so shine. The testimony which the sons of God are called to bear, is something more than can be borne by a mere articulation of sounds, and in the spirit of the admonition before us, it is to be borne by a display of works, at the development of which God is to be glorified, and all that are in the house of God are to be illuminated.

It is of vital importance that we should understand by what description of works God is to be glorified; for we live in a day in which there is great confusion and error upon this subject. For this very reason we have called the attention of our Old School Baptist readers to the consideration of this important subject, and we wish to be very particular in defining the nature and description of the works by which our testimony of Jesus is to be uttered. In order that we may be the more distinctly understood, we will first state some kinds of work by which a correct, true and faithful testimony cannot be borne, and consequently, by which the declarative glory of God cannot be advanced by us. And first, the works of the flesh have nothing to do with the diffusion of the light of Zion. By the works of the flesh, we understand all such works as the children of men, in an unregenerate state are capable of perform-

ing. All our Power, whether physical or mental, are by nature depraved; so that all the emanations from our fleshly powers are earthly, sensual and devilish. The thoughts and devices of the unrenewed heart are evil, and that continually. The carnal, or fleshly mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Christ has informed us that it is as impossible for man in his unregenerate state to perform that which is acceptable to God, as it is for a corrupt fountain to send forth pure water. The fountain must first be made pure, and then, but not until then, will the stream be pure. The tree must be first made good, and then its fruit will be good. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest; which are these." [disguise, modify, or shape them as you may, still they are there,] "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like."—Ga. v. 19-24. Consequently the works of the flesh are not the works by which the children of the kingdom of Christ are to glorify God. The declarative glory of God cannot result from our works, as the apostle clearly testifies to Titus, iii. 4, 5. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior towards men appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done," &c. All the works which we as creatures can do, whether good or bad, can never make the kindness or love of God appear, or in anywise develop the glory of our Father which is in heaven: therefore, such works as can be planned by our mental, and executed by our physical powers, are not the works intended in our text.

Second. The works of the law are not intended: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse."—Gal. iii. 10. And the works required in the text are from such as are under the

blessing, and not under the curse. Works which are wrought by us, however unexceptionable, if wrought in obedience to the Sinia covenant can never show forth our redemption from the law, or our translation into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. So very far are we from glorifying our Father in heaven, when we attempt to liquidate the demands of the Sinai law, and by obedience to its precepts render ourselves acceptable unto God, we insult the divine Majesty, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith Christ was sanctified, (or set apart as the law fulfiller) an unholy thing. A thing of itself insufficient for the perfect accomplishment of the complete salvation of his people. None who have faith in the perfect work of Christ will ever think it necessary for them to do his work over again, or to offer any amendment upon what Christ has done; but rather rest their whole soul on that finished salvation which Christ has affected by his perfect obedience to the requisitions of the law, and his suffering of the penalty due for the transgressions of his people.

If then, as we have proved by the testimony of the scriptures, the works required of the children of God, whereby they shall show forth the praise of him that has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light, are not those which are of the flesh, nor even our works of obedience to the holy law of God, by what works, our readers may inquire, shall let our light so shine before men that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven?

The light which the saints are to let shine is that which God lighted up in our souls, when he communicated to us the light of spiritual life; of vital union to Jesus, as our Head by which we are enabled to see the kingdom of God.—John iii. 3. And the only works by which that light can be made manifest to all that are in the house, are those works which

God has wrought in us.—Isa. xxvi. 12. “For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Phil. ii. 13. The works intended in our subject, are those wherein we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end thereof is everlasting life. They are those whereof we are born of God. They are defined by Paul as the fruits of the Spirit, viz: Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”—2 Peter i. 5-9. Those, therefore, who obey the injunction of Jesus, in our test, are those in whom these things, mentioned by Peter, abound, and by the abounding of these things they let their light shine; for they, in whom these things do not abound are blind, cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins; while they who do those things, viz: the things which are to be added to their faith; do walk in the light—do let their light shine, and are not barren nor unfruitful, are not blind, they can see afar off, and do remember that they have been purged from their old sins.

No man can add to his faith, virtue, until he is in possession of faith; and faith is the fruit of the Spirit, and the gift of God, and without it we cannot please God. No man can let his light shine, who has no light to shine. The breaking of the pitchers of Gideon’s three hundred men could have produced no light, if the lamps had not been in the pitchers. We were sometimes darkness, but God has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of

his dear Son; has given us an inheritance among the saints in light; constituted us children of the light; commanded us to walk in the light, and let our light shine. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."—2 Cor. iv. 6.

Christians, Old School Baptists, readers of the Signs of The Times, has the Sun of Righteousness arisen upon you with healing in his wings? Do you know him as the Fountain and Fullness of light, life and blessedness? How is it with you at this time? Are you reflecting that light, by walking in the light as the children of the day? Are you adding to your faith, virtue, and to virtue all those excellencies made manifest by the resplendent radiance of that light? Or have you forgotten that you have been purged from your old sins? If this is your situation, may not the apostolic admonition be applicable in your case? "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."—Eph. v. 14, 15. Would you, as the disciples of Jesus Christ, let your light shine, remember that this can only be done by walking worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called of God. We are not to sleep, as do others; there are foes for us to face, conflicts to be endured, enemies to be encountered, errors to be exposed, truth to be set forth, sheep and lambs to be fed, brethren to be exhorted, heresy to be resisted, persecution to be suffered, a cross to be borne, a warfare to be engaged in, a good fight to be fought, a course to be finished, and a crown to be received and worn in heaven. Each other's burdens are to be borne, and we are to watch over each other, detect sin and reprove it, both in ourselves and in others; a world to be renounced and its vanities to be laid aside. Besides all this, there are

mourning christians to be looked up and comforted, strayed sheep and lambs to be restored; lions, wolves, dragons and devils to be subdued; and God has given us a banner to be displayed because of the truth. Sons of Zion, purchase of the Redeemer's blood, can you discover nothing in all these considerations which requires you to "Let your light shine?"

But do we hear one say, "My hope is in the Lord, I do not expect to be saved by my works!" If your hope is good for any thing, it must be in the Lord; and if you look to works for salvation you will be awfully disappointed. But have you indeed a hope in God, and is it true that you rely on him and him alone for salvation? How will you make this known without faith and obedience? If your faith is of God, it will manifest itself by obedience. The very confidence which the christian has in God as a whole Savior, swells his expanding heart with love and gratitude, and awakens every heaven-born sensibility of his soul with ardent desires to glorify him in his body and spirit which are Christ's.

Few, feeble, weak and persecuted as we may seem to be in this day of rebuke and blasphemy, we ask for no accession to our ranks, but such as love our Lord Jesus Christ, and are willing to suffer the loss of all things for his sake. A very orthodox theory of faith and loud professions of attachment to the doctrine which sustains and comforts our souls are not enough. That faith only is genuine which works by love and purifies the heart. It is true, the old order of Baptist have been in some cases imposed on by persons professing our faith, who have proved (but too painfully to us) spots in our feasts of charity—men who cannot let their light shine because they have none; all they deem necessary is to sign with their hand our creed, and surname themselves Israel, and then make the livery of the Old School serve them as a cloak for their ungodly corruption of life

and deportment.

Should we attempt a delineation of the characters to whom we allude, we might be thought quite too personal; we will leave our brethren and our churches to look around them, letting their own light shine at the same time, and drag into the light those who have crept in among them unawares. Those who can find hours to spend in the merry circle of the graceless and profane, and can find some trivial excuse for absenting themselves from the house of prayer, those who can find the time and the means to fill a whole community of christians with tumult, bickerings, jealousies, contentions and disorder, but have no disposition to weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn; though they may boast of volumes of head-religion imported from neighboring countries, can give but poor evidence of a lighted lamp within their earthen pitcher. There may be preachers who can boast of preaching in the name of Jesus, and of casting out devils, and working miracles, and in their own estimation, giants among dwarfs, yet in the diffusion of the light they shall be detected, and should be put away. Those who are careless concerning what figure they make in the world, can join with the jovial and eat and drink with the drunken, cannot be at the same time shunning the appearance of evil, or letting the light of life, derived from Jesus, shine before men, that they may see their good works and glorify God.

Many of the dear saints of God may feel convicted of having been too remiss in regard to a circumspect walk and conversation. Alas! how much we all have to lament of our shortcoming; but the apparent severity of our remarks in this article will not break their bones, they will not be offended, but they will acknowledge with the writer,

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love."

The stand which we as Old School Baptists have taken, the sacrifices we have been called to make for the sake of purity in faith and practice, and above all, our love of holiness, our allegiance to Jesus as our King, our sense of the immaculate purity of his precious cause, will not allow us to walk in fellowship with those, under any name whatever, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. On the one hand, we should withhold our countenance from heretics, and on the other, from all who hold the truth in unrighteousness; and so from every brother that walketh disorderly withdraw ourselves.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

ARTICLES

Elder H. C. Ker—DEAR BROTHER:

Brother through a precious hope of life eternal, through the love, mercy and grace of Christ Jesus. If you will allow a vile sin-polluted being like me to address you in this manner. I have had a mind for some time to attempt to write some for your consideration, for the dear old Signs and household of faith, if the good Lord will direct my thoughts and give me a field of thought to draw on.

Some time ago, after visiting some Baptists who live in the irrigation district of the Peace Valley, and while humming over the old song, "Come, thou Fount of every blessing," my mind seemed to grasp some thoughts in an impressive way that led my mind out to meditate upon God as an eternal fountain, and the lay of this particular section of the country seemed to me somewhat as an example by which I might be able to express some thoughts as to the way God's chil-

dren receive blessing from this eternal Fountain (God).

I will first give a description of the surroundings of that section, and then attempt to give some of the thoughts which I have dwelt upon for some time. Looking west from the town of Roswell, New Mexico, one can view the Captain Mountains far in the back ground, something like sixty miles away. Those mountains are snow capped the greater portion, if not all the year round, and this melting snow becomes water and winds its way down the mountain slopes, through the canyons and into the Peacas River, and follows its natural water course on through a high land semiarid section of country, which is little more than a desert, and suited only in its state of nature for grazing land. In the heart of this section and along the water course of this river is found an irrigation district which is bountifully supplied with water from flowing artesian wells, and not drawn from the river channel, as one might suppose. While in conversation with a gentleman there and he was telling me about being one day at a certain place on this river and finding no water at all in the bottom of the river bed, only dry sand was there. The next day he came to the same place in the river and the water had risen above the sand and was flowing in a stream there. First, we understand that no stream can rise higher than its fountainhead, so when we draw a mental picture of the fountain which is formed there in those mountains by the melting of the snow on those mountaintops and canyons, which is probably hundreds of feet higher than the section of country where the artesian wells are found, it gives the thought of the pressure from this fountain which causes the water to flow upward from those artesian wells with such great force. It is, to my mind, an example of this God, this eternal Fountain, who inhabited eternity before this time world was ever spo-

ken into existence. This God of power, this God of knowledge, or wisdom, who was wise enough and who possessed power enough to declare the end from the beginning, the things of ancient times, and the things on down through all ages of the future which are not yet done, this God from whom all good and perfect gifts come; this God whose thoughts are as much higher than man's thoughts as the heavens are above the earth, and whose ways are as much higher than man's ways as the heavens are above the earth, in my mind (as man views things in weakness) is as the fountain of water which comes from those mountains that supplies those artesian wells to irrigate this garden spot of the plains. This dry, sandy place in the river bed at times, and at other times where an abundance of water flows, does not, to my mind, indicate in those dry days and times a weakness or a running dry of this fountain, but to me it carries a thought of the cold, indifferent stages of life which come in the experience of God's dear ones. When God with his all-seeing eye has seen fit to withdraw his presence from us for a little season. These periods of time when God sees fit to withdraw his sweet communing Spirit from us, and all seems sunken beneath the sand of time, comes to us often after we feel we have felt the almighty hand of God dealing with us, after we feel that we have heard the call from God as it comes to us, as it did to Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus, which spake, Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou me? and he answered, Lord, who art thou? Showing he felt it was the Lord dealing with him. Yet when he arose he saw no man, for he was without sight three days and nights, a time when the spiritual waters had sunken beneath the sand. Saul felt that the Lord had dealt with him, yet quickly had hidden his presence from him. And the Lord sent a servant (Ananias) that he might lay his hands

upon him (Saul) that he might receive his sight. When Ananias had come in unto Saul and put his hands upon him, and said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who spake to thee on thy way, hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, and he received his sight forthwith, arose and was baptized, and when he had received meat he was strengthened. This was the rising of the spiritual water above the sand. Dear brother, I hope by the eye of faith I have a period in my experience (if I have one) that I experienced this time of being without sight, after I had reached the full extent of all my power and been led to the place where I had lost all hope and confidence in my own flesh, and in that of every one else, and had come to the point where I had to say, All I can do is just to wait upon the good Lord, if he sees fit to pardon my sins, but if my soul be sent to hell his righteous law approves it well, and the time came when this burden which had been causing me so much grief and mourning, and causing the tears to roll from my eyes in streams that I could not hold back, was gone, and I knew not where nor why, yet immediately after realizing it was gone I felt I had been dealt with by the hand of the Lord. However, I could not feel that sweet rejoicing I had hoped to when I felt the Lord had dealt with me. I had heard people talk of some one who had striven with the Spirit of God until he had sinned away the day of grace. Had I done that? Why could not I feel happy with the Lord's dealings with me? When I felt sure he was dealing with me, for that burden was gone and I could not bring it back, not a tear could I shed. Had God turned his face forever from me and hardened my heart so I could not any longer mourn about my condition? Saul was blind until his eyes were opened, and when his eyes were opened he real-

ized the deliverance, just as did poor old Jonah when the Lord rescued him from the belly of the whale, and he said, I have vowed salvation is of the Lord. This opening of the spiritual eye and our realizing our deliverance is the rising of the water above the sand, and is an example of the deliverance of Saul, and every child of God when he passes through those cold, indifferent stages of time, when we would so much love to take the Bible and read it with understanding, but all seems shut in to us then. But after it is opened unto us again and we are delivered from this cold state we are allowed to read and meditate, to feast upon spiritual things.

Then when we follow on down to the irrigation district, where I viewed the flowing well of artesian water as it gushed up from beneath the surface of the earth through its grat casing, which was possibly fifteen inches in diameter and stood there continually throwing out a great stream of water day and night, which was carried out over each of the respective farms and watered them with such an abundance of water that all vegetation thereon grew so rapidly that it was called the garden spot of the plains. This conveys the thought to my mind of how this continual stream of God's love, mercy and blessings goes out from this eternal Fountain (God) to the individual heart of each of his little ones, and feeds it, waters it and causes it to grow in grace and thrive just as it so pleases God to have it do, until we feel in our minds to express praise with the poet,

*"Streams of mercy, never ending,
Call for songs of loudest praise."*

Dear child of God, it is true that when we are allowed to drink of the water of life which Jesus spoke of when talking to the woman of Samaria we experience the truth of Jesus' words, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give

him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." We do not feel that with all our songs and words of praise to Christ Jesus we can ever express the praise due him for what he has done for his chosen people.

This highly favored golden spot of the plains is an example of God's highly favored few, as it lies there in the heart of this semiarid desert land receiving daily an abundance of water, until the fields stand thick with tall corn, and great, tall, large-trunked trees stand in their splendor and beauty, the alfalfa fields are beautiful and green, and cotton produces over a bale to the acre. This irrigation district is surrounded by semiarid grazing land, which is very poor even for grazing, as one can tell from the condition of the herds of cattle and horses that feed thereon. This highly favored garden spot is an example of God's chosen people, those who are the called according to his purpose, and we are reminded of the parable of the clay in the potter's hand: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" "Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Can the desert land say to God who created it, Why did you not make me a fertile valley with artesian wells and abundance of water, that I, too, might be beautiful and produce an abundance of beautiful vegetation?

On the other hand, Adam was the first man, created and formed of the dust of the earth. We people of this day and time are only Adam multiplied, and when God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden he gave him a law to keep, therefore the law entered that the offense might abound. The offense, the breaking of God's law to Adam, brought sin into the world. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. Not for the entire

Adam race, but for those highly favored few only does this grace abound. Christ says, I pray not for the world, but for those that thou hast given me out of the world, and as many as thou hast given me I will raise them up at the last day, except the son of perdition, who was chosen for a devil. Also we read that Christ has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him, and that no man is able to pluck them out of his hand, neither can any man pluck them out of the Father's hand. My sheep hear my voice and they know me, and they follow me, and a stranger they will not follow. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that faith not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Here is another stream from that eternal fountain of God. That gift of grace, combined with that faith which is sufficient to save the soul of each and every one of God's chosen ones, is treasured up there in this fountain that has stood ready to be measured out to each one of them at God's appointed time, from the very beginning of time on down through all ages that ever have or ever will come, and that measure which is used by the Lord Jesus Christ is not only sufficient to pay the debt for his people, but it pays it double.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem (which is the true, invisible church of God), 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." We see by this that he, and he alone, has paid the debt for this highly favored few.

Take up the narrative of Jacob and Esau, we find that the Lord says, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The children being not yet born, neither having done good nor evil, that the doctrine of election might stand. Therefore

we find that this God purposes all things and works all things, both good and evil, after the pleasure of his own will, and none can stay his hand, or question him as to why he does things in this manner. He is the most high Power, and does all things according to his own purpose. Neither does he counsel with or consult any one or any thing as to whether they are willing to do his bidding, but he speaks and it is done, commands and it stands fast.

Just a sinner saved by the grace of God, if saved at all,

S. O. TATUM
Clovis, New Mexico
Feb. 12, 1934.

"Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps; set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest."—Jeremiah xxxi. 21.

To look at the past is often a blessed encouragement for the future. If we are travellers in the way Zionward, we shall have our various waymarks. A conspicuous call, or a signal deliverance, or a gracious manifestation of Christ; a promise applied her, or a marked answer to prayer there; a special blessing under the preached word; a soft and unexpected assurance of an interest in the blood of the Lamb; a breaking in of divine light when walking in great darkness; a sweet sip of consolation in a season of sorrow and trouble; a calming down of the winds and waves without and within by, "It is I, be not afraid"—such and similar waymarks it is most blessed to be able to set up as evidences that we are in the road. And if many who really fear God cannot set up these conspicuous waymarks, yet they are not without their testimonies equally sure, if not equally satisfying. The fear of God in a tender conscience, the spirit of grace

and of supplications in their breast, their cleaving to the people of God in warm affection, their love for the truth in its purity and power, their earnest desires, their budding hopes, their anxious fears, their honesty and simplicity making them jealous over themselves lest they be deceived or deluded, their separation from the world, their humility, meekness, quietness, and general consistency often putting to shame louder profession and higher pretensions—these and similar evidences mark many as children of God who cannot read their title clear to such a privilege and such a blessing. But whether the waymarks be high or low, shining in the sun or obscure in the dawn, the virgin of Israel is still bidden to "set them up," and to "set also her heart toward the highway, even the way by which she came."

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR FEBRUARY 1986

Mrs. Garlon Vick, NC.	\$ 5.00
John D. Manning, NJ.	18.00
Burnell Williams, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Lessie Sladky, NC.	7.00
Martin Brock, AL.	10.00
Mrs. Mildred Hanks, VA.	30.00
Mrs. Virginia Apple, NC.....	2.00
Elder J. A. Foreman, NC.....	2.00
P. B. Clifton, VA.	4.00
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Dan Anders, AL.....	2.00
Jack K. Hays, TX.	7.00
Roy S. Oxley, WV.	2.00
Mrs. Eula M. Langford, AL.....	5.00

MEETINGS

The Lord willing, our fifth Sunday meeting, (Friday, and Saturday before) will be held in June, 1986, at Hopewell Church, located six miles west of Winnsboro, Texas.

We extend a hearty welcome and invitation to all lovers of the truth to come so that we can enjoy your presence and fellowship together during this meeting.

For additional information, call 214-629-3561.

OBITUARIES

ELDER POSIE EDWARD INGRAM

Our dear pastor for 37 years at Town Creek Church died on January 30, 1985 at 83 years of age. He was dedicated, caring and generous to all, even giving money to the visiting ministers if he thought we had not taken care of them adequately. We have seen him cry when we gave him a little money at Christmas time because the humbling spirit of Christ made him feel undeserving. He gave us more than we could ever give him in every way, He wanted peace, not only in his churches but all of those in our fellowship. He did not put peace above right, and at times was so humble in order to maintain that situation. He was quick to apologize if he thought he had spoken quickly. We loved him be-

cause he loved us, and because he was steadfast in the faith, and because he was a good preacher and teacher.

Elder Ingram and his wife, Sister Lillian were Chiropractic Physicians for 50 years, and very good and knowledgeable ones. He was poetic and wrote lovely poems. At the end of his biography for the Church History for our bi-centennial commemoration, he said some sweet and loving things about his wife and ended with this verse:

*When we reach life's ebbing tide
We may in perfect love abide.
And when Life's sun shall set beyond the hill
We may go hand in hand together still.*

Written by members of Town Creek Church.

Elder Posie Edward Ingram of 301 Rives Road in Martinsville, Virginia, passed away on January 30, 1985, at the age of 85.

He is survived by his wife, Lillian Bryant Ingram, two daughters, Mrs. Earl (Jacqueline) Wagner of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Mrs. Frank (Patricia) Olenchak of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Also surviving are three sons: James R. Ingram of Martinsville, Dr. Phillip Ingram of Winston-Salem, North Carolina and Joseph Ingram of Augusta, Georgia. Also surviving are eleven grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Elder Ingram was born in Franklin County, Virginia, on September 16, 1899, a son of the late Flemon Ingram and Betty Turner Ingram.

Brother Ingram and his wife both graduated from the Palmer Chiropractic College in Davenport, Iowa, in the class of 1928. They came to Martinsville in 1938 where they had a joint practice for fifty years.

He served Knob Primitive Baptist Church for fifteen years, and for the past 37 years had served as the pastor of

Town Creek Primitive Baptist Church.

Brother Ingram loved peace, and longed to see the brethren set down together and come together in order, in peace, and in love. He was a man that loved to see the churches prosper in the Lord and he labored much to that end.

If he saw a brother hurt, he tried to help him and it seemed he did not want to hurt anyone.

I shall not forget the many times he would call me on the phone or talk with me when he saw me down and try to cheer me up when he knew that I was down. He was like a Dad to me.

In his declining days, he would call me to come to Town Creek to help him because part of the time he was not able to carry on the service.

I am thankful that I could go, hoping that it would be of some benefit to him. He and I and our wives would go to church together, Brother Ingram and I preached together, we would sing together, we would talk together on the phone, as brethren and as friends.

His funeral was conducted at Collins Funeral Home in Bassett by the writer and the chapel overflowed with many loved ones and friends.

His remains were placed in the cemetery at Town Creek Church to await the second coming of the Lord. Sleep on, dear brother, we hope to meet you where we will never part again.

Written by Request,
Elder Leonard J. Brammer

J. WRAY WILSON

On January 4, 1986, it pleased my blessed Lord to call unto Himself a dear deacon and true Old School Baptist, Brother John Wray Wilson. For more than 50 years, Brother Wray was a member and faithful deacon of Philadelphia Primitive Baptist Church in El-

lenboro, N.C. He was one who ever delighted to walk humbly in the "old paths," and was never afraid to stand out boldly when the truth was attacked.

Brother Wray Wilson was born on August 27, 1907 and died this January 4th. making his sojourn upon this earth exactly 78 years, four months, and eight days. Son of the late Oliver and HESSIE EDWARD WILSON, he was a native of Rutherford County, North Carolina and was a farmer about all his life. Our brother is survived by his wife, dear sister Vernie McKinney Wilson. Brother and Sister Wilson were married for over 53 precious years. Other survivors are one son James Wilson, a brother Russell Wilson and one sister Mildred McKinney, three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services were conducted on January 6th by Elder W. C. Edwards, with burial in Bethel Cemetery at Ellenboro.

Brother Wilson was a long time reader of Signs of the Times and said he often felt like he knew Elder Spangler, Elder Wood, and many of the other brethren connected with it. Our loss is very keenly felt at this time, but our Lord "doeth all things well" and we feel that Brother Wilson has left us a great example that we should ever adhere to the OLD WAYS of Grace.

Submitted by one who loved him,

Wylie W. Fulton

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DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA. JUNE 1986

NO. 06

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams
Route 1, Box 65
Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65
Keeling, Va. 24566
Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street
Greensboro, N.C. 27405
Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84
Fayette, Ala. 35555
Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road
Memphis, Tenn. 38115
Phone (901) 755-6049

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A
Winnsboro, TX 75494

Elder D. B. Stokes

1029 Daniel Court
Jacksonville, N.C. 28540

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566. All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

P O E M

Many, many years ago
God looked down and saw
The world was full of sin and woe,
For man had broken the law.

Then He said, I do repent
That I have made this man:
So the awful flood He sent,
And covered all the land.

He put a rainbow in the east,
For a token of His law
When the dreadful flood had ceased
He makes a promise now.

No more the world shall wash away
With such torrential rain;
But time and season, night and day
Men shall sow their grain.

Seed time and harvest moon
Shall go on just the same;
The fragrant flowers that bloom
Shall glorify His name.

The earth shall yield her increase
For man, and beast, and bird,
So bringing home the sign of peace
The lonely dove is heard.

The rainbow with its color
So dazzling, pink, and green,
The clouds must then pass over,
Before the bow is seen.

Whenever I look upon the bow,
I will remember then
This promise I shall always know
Was made betwix God and men.

*The rainbow, oh the rainbow!
As it bends into the blue,
Reminding us of long ago,
God made a covenant new.*

By Sister Evelyn Walker

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EDITORIAL

FALLING DOCTRINE

"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Isa. 55: 12, 13)

In this important prophetic announcement who is it that is the giver of the great blessings that we have before us? In this illustrious cluster of blessings who is responsible for them? Who is the beginning of this rich cluster, who is to be worshipped for what we have been gleaning among? Did any one of all that has come under our observation had anything to do in the saving influences that were brought to bear on these inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven?

Hundreds of times we are told that salvation is of the Lord. Was the dropping down of the doctrine as the rain the cause of all the obedience rendered or was it the volition of the will of those that received it? It begin in dead sinners or it begin by the influence and work of the Holy Spirit. In former treatments everything was hinged on the "As the rain and the snow came down from heaven," likewise the result was that the same divine power was manifested in the word of the Lord going out of His mouth.

In this gracious and almighty work of the word going forth out of His mouth I am sure that all of the source as well as all of the salvation stemmed from the Lord. Or did a small portion of the power come from that which had already failed. This indeed would be a poor mixture for poor sinners to depend on. This is not Bible doctrine; such a trashy poor doctrine has never been the system of salvation that fell from the hand of our gracious heavenly Father. He never had that kind of salvation in His hands. He knew more about the heavy indebtedness of His people than that. His coming was for a better purpose than that. That which He came to do was for a better purpose than such a trashy venture as that. He came to redeem His people from all of their sinful and polluted condition. But He laid down in the sacred Scriptures a pattern that would be followed in that redemptive work. The pat-

tern was true, and the righteous work of redemption was completed satisfactorily, for as the rain and snow came down and satisfied everything, even so, in the same way and by a satisfying way, the effectual word even at the cross, in the blinding overwhelming sorrow and anguish and dying, He said "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 24).

What keen anticipations thrill the poor sinner that has been subjected so long with the apostle, and not only he but every poor sinner that has battled with the dreadful problem, to wit, When I would do good evil is present with me. How is such a problem to be handled? Have you worked at such a problem? What? You do not have problems like that? Then have you ever been cast down to say, to even have it wrung out of you with groanings, Woe is me, for I am undone?

There is not a man or woman in the ranks of the church of Jesus Christ that can handle a situation like unto either of these dreadful situations, to wit, Woe is me, for I am undone, or O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death. Not for the purpose of jesting, God forbid, but to leave no hidden barbs of the nefarious doctrine of poor sinful wretches having to cause or to let the doctrine of God fall on us, let us keep before us these solid God given truths showing the absurdity of a man made and man projected systems of salvation as is being harped on by men at large and surprisingly, that is being palmed off on God's little frail helpless children.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance

of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord, that he might be justified (Isa. 61: 1-3). This is none other than the doctrine of God our Saviour falling on the children of God. Is this enough? Does this comfort you and make room as it permeates your being, in soul, in mind, in heart?

This falling doctrine is essential. It fills every need. This falling (and saving) doctrine burns up our sinful works, however, it doesn't leave you to carry the ashes of your condemned works. O no, not that, something falls in the doctrine that is better than that. It gives you beauty for ashes. Furthermore, it does not leave you with a sad countenance to wear around; it does not make you ashamed of having been crucified with your Saviour. No, no, not that, he gives you the garment of everlasting praise.

Salvation is the work of the Lord. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done. How contemptuously have men called vile names of brethren in Christ that no other charge was ever raised against them other than they contended that salvation, (without any suffixes or prefixes) was of the Lord. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void. My dear brethren and sisters, is this true? If it is true, then the doctrine of salvation alone by the grace of God is likewise true. Either God sends forth His Spirit in a saving way, or it returns to Him void. It accomplishes what He pleases or it does not accomplish what He pleases. Which is it? If the going out of His mouth His word accomplishes salvation, then, as a matter of Bible fact, then salvation is of the Lord, but if it does not accomplish salvation then, the going out of His mouth is not worth any more than my word going forth out of my

mouth.

But the going out of His mouth of His word is worth even more than that. Well how could that be? That is what Christ came to do, and at His appointed times He has been accomplishing His miraculous manner it has been prospering. Not failing, not returning unto Him in an empty void, doing His will and prosperity following it. And in my feebleness, I am still bold enough to say that there is prosperity among the children of God. Their King, their Chief, their Saviour is still head over all things and He has not lost a single supplicant. The Lord's people are in His Hand of grace and He and His Father are still in union and in unity. May God be praised.

You can call us behind the times if you want to. It hasn't stopped the gospel from being preached; it hasn't stopped it from being heard; it hasn't stopped it from being received and enjoyed. If He isn't making it manifest to but few, that is His business, even the making manifest of it or the hiding of it; in both cases there is prosperity accompanying it. Be it in small measures or in such overcoming prosperity as to stop the whole world at a complete stand still.

The poor and afflicted flock of God is marching triumphantly. There are no falling out along the way. The Physician of sinners is with them. Joy is accompanying them as they go. They are in peace one with another and their Captain is in peace with them. This joy and this peace will accompany them from the time that it is first spoken to their aching heart until they reach heaven's open door.

Yes, dear reader, mountains and hills will ever lie before you. Dismiss them as being enemies. Your Father has placed each one in your path. They are blessings placed there for your good for your welfare and for the glory of Himself. Do not think for a moment that they are the work of any enemy. Think it not strange

concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. If they seem to be obstacles, if they seem that they are a hindrance instead of a help, there is a precious accompanying need for you. They are a part of your trial, and rejoice dear saints. They were not set in your pathway by an enemy, but by the Friend of sinners. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. That is an allotment of your Father. That trial, being administered by your Father will yield you in season peaceable fruits of righteousness.

But there is more. The way gets better, it is leading nearer home. Eventually every child of God as he and she gets nearer home there will be a joyful theme of heavenly praise to our Father. The mountains will break forth in triumphant songs of deliverance. The hills and mountains that look so fearful to our weak faith will spring forth before us as kind and benevolent mercies bringing us nearer ever nearer our abode who has ever reigned to this glorious end.

This is a living multitude arriving home. They are all green trees, all bearing fruit in lofty praise to our Saviour. There are times of joy as we travel this highway of holiness. It is a highway lined with living trees nourished by the warmth of His love. When first looming up before us we think of them as trials and we do not see any way around or over them. As we are triumphantly steered around them, or we are given to see them as living evidence that our Father was looking after us, we are carried around them, the whole universe seems to be singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. These are evidences of His everlasting love, and our feeble voices, or the greenness of the life that is in Christ Jesus seems so vibrant with love that every tree (saint) is lifting their hand and their voice in praise to the great name of our Redeemer God. Then it is a way of peace in the Man of peace, and the trees that seemed to be hedging us in are replaced

by trees that signify a fragrant smell and greenness signifying live everlasting.

Remember me at a throne of grace.

Elder W. D. Griffin

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



FRIENDSHIP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Friendship Primitive Baptist Church on Route 1, Cottontown, (Sumner County) Tenn. is located on the Portland Road approximately two and one-half miles from White House, Tenn.

It was established in September 1836 on land donated by its first pastor, Elder William Jackson.

Elder Ramer Lee Biggs served as pastor from 1932 until his death in Sept., 1972. Elder C. Swayne Young of Mem-

phis, Tenn. served from October, 1972 until August, 1978 when ill health prevented his coming.

Elder Rush Hendrix of Hermitage, Tenn. is the current pastor.

Our meeting days are the 3rd and 4th Sundays in each month and we welcome any and all who have a mind to visit with us.

Marjorie Cook, Church Clerk

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

Nov. 8, 1918

The prophet said "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted." "O thou afflicted." The Bible says, Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them

all. Again it is written, I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. These poor people are poor in spirit, they are all alike. The Lord says, I will give them one heart, and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. God said to Eve, I will greatly multiply thy sorrows and thy conception. Then it is true we cannot

prevent being full of sadness. Multiply thy sorrows and thy conception. One definition of conception is, "to form an idea in the mind." How often do these afflicted people form in their minds dire trouble for themselves in the future? How many times do they fear and tremble on account of their sins? Like David, who said, I will fall some day by the hand of Saul, so they think they will be destroyed because of their sinful flesh, and they cry out, "In me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

*"Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the follower of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more."*

You ask worldly people, Do you suffer, are you afflicted on account of your sins? They always answer, No; but the children of God realize this world is not their home, they are pilgrims and strangers in the earth. How many times have you been in a crowd when they were especially merry, laughing and enjoying themselves to the fullest extent, and your heart was breaking with affliction and sorrow. You could not take part in their joys, you are not like they are, you are like all Primitive Baptists, think like they do, talk like they do, feel like they do, sigh like they do, love the same kind of food spiritually, enjoy the same company, love the same people they do. My son wrote me to sell all I have and go see the wonders of this world and spend what I had made and enjoy it. I told him I would rather attend one Old Baptist meeting than go to Europe and visit all the curiosities of the world. Job said, Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. His flesh upon him shall have pain and his soul within him shall mourn. Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. The Savior said, In the

world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace.

*"Afflictions, though they seem severe,
In mercy oft are sent;
They stopped the prodigal's career,
And forced him to repent."*

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Our sorrows and sufferings are for our benefit, and it is written, if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him. Your sorrows come and you cannot prevent them; they come when you least expect them. David said, Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me. When you were born of the Spirit you came in possession of a mind that could comprehend how unworthy and polluted you were, and how you justly deserved eternal banishment from God and the glory of his power, and you called to him for mercy. An unusually intelligent man is called a deep man. God is unlimited in wisdom, so he is indescribably wise, wonderfully deep. You called and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." You said, like David, Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, for lo, then would I fly away and be at rest. I would wander far off and remain in the wilderness. But go where you would, still your burden remained, your affliction was with you, and after you were relieved and thought the sin all gone and you were so overjoyed you never expected to have an enemy nor a sorrow, still you found you were mistaken, for the waves of sorrow and billows of distress came from time to time rolling over your defenceless

head, and you found your hand was too feeble to stay them; so now you can say, All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me. Were these great sorrows painful and hard to endure? This text refers first to your blessed Savior. Deep calleth unto deep. Hear him in the garden: O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, yet not my will, but thine, be done. Listen as he cries on the cross: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He said, I thirst, and they gave him vinegar to drink. You go to one of the world thirsty, and say something about your sorrows and thirstings, and they will give you vinegar to drink. They have told me when I was famishing for a cool draught of the water of life that I did not pray enough. The fact was every breath I drew was a prayer. Then you must go on and on in affliction greater or less until the time comes for God to call you home to rest. This is Zion, that is afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, and the Bible says, Zion, the people of God. Jesus came to save them, and he did what he came to do. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. All your distress is for your good.

*"In all thy distresses thy head feels
the pain,
Yet all are most needful, not one is
in vain;
In love I correct thee, thy soul to re-
fine,
To make thee at length in my like-
ness to shine."*

"Tossed with tempest and not comforted." It takes wind to cause the waves of the sea to roll and toss about. When the bitter, briny waves of the flesh toss you, and when the winds of adversity beat upon you and you have no rest in your spirit, how awful is your distress; and when you try to find Him who is a covert from the tempest and he hides from you, then you say, O that I knew

where I might find him; I would come even to his seat. All through the dark, tempestuous night you look and listen and wonder and wish for the morning, and cry out, Is his mercy clean gone forever? Many a poor shipwrecked person has been on the sea looking, wishing, longing for a ship, and passed through long, dark nights, and may have perished for food. It is just as true that the children of God as they cross the rough sea of this life are tossed and long for a place to rest, and for comfort and the water of life. So Jesus said, Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Often I have said, God does not love me, or I would not be so forsaken, and I could not see how he could love one so sinful. When tossed I have said, God hates me, and he ought to. Many, many times have I waked in the morning so distressed I would say, O why did I ever wake again? Why could I not have slept on forever and forever? Why do I have to go out again in this old sin-cursed world to struggle with the affairs of this life? You, little children of God, started out like all other people; joyous, with high hopes, building castles in the air, enjoying gay company, sailing along across the placid sea of this life with not a care, hardly a thought of trouble, but all at once the waves began to toss you and it grew dark and threatening, the lightening flashed and peal after peal of thunder burst above you and you thought, Surely I will be lost, and, like Jonah, for the first time in life you were made to say, I am the cause, my sins like mountains high appear to me. In Revelation it is written, Out of the throne proceeded lightning and thunderings and voices; and you heard, The soul that sinneth it shall die, the first time you had ever heard a voice say that. You may not have heard this in audible language, like we talk, but away down in your heart there crept a sadness you had never felt before, and you

realized you must have help or sink. David said, They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted because of trouble; they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Little children, this is your experience. God commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves; they mount up to the heaven. The waves of the sea are salty and slimy; so when God convicted you for sin the nice ballroom became sickening to you. Salt water makes you sick. These waves lashed over every place of amusement you frequented, and you became sick of them all. They go down again to the depths. Ah, yes, you were let down, down, and thought, Surely I am gone and none can help me. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them into their desired haven. Yes, you were tossed until you rocked to and fro and staggered like a drunken man, and got no rest until you went home to your friends and told them what great things God had done for you. So far as my case is concerned, it took many a wave to cause me to be willing to go home to the church of God, which is a haven. And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant. But I could not see this until God made darkness light before me and crooked things straight. He says, I will bring the blind by a way they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. He

does not say, I will leave it to you whether you come or not. Every thief, every murderer, every robber, every natural man, child and little negro, and big ones who have not been brought by a way they knew not, that believe in a hereafter, will tell you the way just exactly like the Arminian preacher does. They all think they can and are going to get salvation some time, and that it rests with them whether they do or not, but the Savior said, No man can come unto me except my Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. This tossing is experienced not only by the children of God individually, but is applicable to each church. Often the awful waves of contention arise in the church and it is terribly tossed, like the ship Paul was on when the storm struck it. That was a natural ship and a natural storm, but here is a lesson for us. Some of the sailors took the lifeboats and started to leave the ship, but Paul said, Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved. Possibly more churches are destroyed by division than any other cause. A house divided against itself cannot stand, so said the Savior. Forbear one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. There is no unity of the flesh; all the discord, trouble and dissension come from the carnal mind. Jesus said, But if ye have bitter envying and strife among you, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, &c. The prophet said, O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.

"And not comforted," comes next. We all love comfort. Ministers whom God has called and sends sometimes comfort the weary pilgrim, but the greatest comfort we have is derived from the holy presence of the Savior. When he comes and rejoices over you it calms all your fears, gives you beauty for ashes, the oil

of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The word says, "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." The purpose of the gospel is to relieve the fears of the people of God. The first proclamation of the gospel after the Savior was born was by the angel of the Lord. The Bible says, "There were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, and the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid." The angel did not tell them anything to increase their fears, nor try to impress upon them the necessity of getting religion, but said, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Not comforted? You will be. It is written, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Do you mourn? Then you shall be comforted. Mourn because you are a sinner. If you had no spiritual life you would not mourn nor even know you were a justly condemned sinner. If you had no life you would have no light, and if you had no light how could you see yourself a lost and ruined sinner? The Bible says, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Nearly all my time is spent in sorrow; seldom do I see a moment free from deep sadness. Sometimes a little comfort comes into my spirit, but long and cold are the times of my journey; yet we sorrow not as others who have no hope, for if we believe in Jesus some day we shall leave all sorrow and sighing behind and go home to enjoy the glory that awaits the children of God.

"There everlasting spring abides,

*And never withering flowers;
Death like a narrow sea divides
This heavenly land from ours."*

Not comforted. The prophet goes on in this chapter and tells what God is going to do for Zion who is not comforted. I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles, &c. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. Great shall be your peace, greater shall be your joy. Zion, said the Lord, hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me; but God says, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." He will never leave, never forsake one of these afflicted ones. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Isaac R. Greathouse

CORRESPONDENCE

March 31, 1986

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

For sometime I have been thinking about writing a few lines in the Signs Of The Times book and while meditating upon the precious word of God, I will attempt to write of which I hope will be in praise and adoration unto the True and Living God, Father of Heaven and Earth.

For me it is such a sweet privilege to write down on paper telling of the goodness and mercy of which only comes

down from the Ever to be adored Three in One God. God The Father, God The Son, God The Holy Ghost. I love so much to think upon him for he has been so good to me—for me he has answered many a prayer, soothed many a sorrow, calmed my fears and wiped the tears from my weeping eyes and if not a poor deceived mortal, has risen me from the dead state I was at one time in, unto a new and living way, one that will never, never die. “Oh, how precious he is to his children.” I believe with all my heart if we are a Chosen Vessel of his great love, sometimes here in this time world from the oldest down to the youngest will be one that will trust and think upon his dear name, dear children of mercy, haven’t you found in your life that he has delivered you time and time again.

We find in his Holy Word where he told his people, “I will be unto them a God and they shall be unto me a people.” Isn’t that the God we hope and believe in for if we are what we hope and trust to be, we know in whom we live, move and have our being. Dear little ones of the Kingdom, you need not fear what people may do, for he has promised to never leave nor forsake. I have often thought of the way and manner concerning bringing about the deliverance of John when he was in prison, as you know they intended to bring him out of prison at the time man had proposed, but the God we hope and trust in today, saw fit to bring him out before the intended time of man. And dear ones, that is the way I see and feel I too have been in my many, sweet and precious deliverances in this life was not brought about by any man, woman, boy or girl or any other creature, no, not anything on this Earth, but was brought about only by the True and Living God of which I feel deep in my soul to praise the rest of my remaining day’s, whether they be few or many, and look to the day with great anticipation for the expected Joy I hope to receive

when this life is over. I believe if a person has ever been made to see the true way, they will think time and time again while traveling upon this low ground of sin and sorrow of the one who died in their stead and rose from the dead in order that they might have life. I say again, “Oh, how precious he is to his Children.” I truly hope and believe he has blessed me with his sweet Holy Spirit, for it is sometimes I feel so much Joy and Peace of which I feel could only come down from his bounties. It raises the drooping spirit to that sweet spirit of Joy and Peace—what a sweet foretaste of Heaven if then be so sweet, just think of how it will be to be in that Heavenly bliss, to be forever in His sweet presence. I believe with all my heart if one has ever been blessed to witness such sweetness, then it is you can say life is worth living and death is worth dying. No wonder the poet could say: *“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer’s ear, it soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds and drives away his fears.”*

Each child of his can say the same for he knows their every need and administers unto them as their need arises. I remember well on one occasion in my life of a problem that had come my way, I tried to forget about the matter, but somehow it just wouldn’t go away. Upon retiring one night for sleep I had one of the sweetest dreams, I saw myself leaning on the strongest prop I had ever felt, somehow I knew (in my dream) he would never let me fall. I remember singing two Hymns, for the very life of me I just could not remember when I awoke from my sleep, the name of the first song I sang but did remember well of the second I was singing. About the time I started singing the second one, I remember looking around and seeing my sister, Mae, standing beside me. We were both singing together and I remember how happy we both were. These were the very words I remember we were singing. *“There’s a*

land that is fairer than day, And by faith we can see it afar. For the Father waits over the way to prepare us a dwelling place there." Then I awoke from my dream and the first thought came to mind was, now I've been delivered from that worry, sure enough it never bothered me again.

As you know we are told we would have trials in this life but he is the strong deliverer. As you Bible readers probably have read many a time in his Holy Word of his precious comforts and promises he has left on record for a true thild of his. If you will kindly turn to Chapter 3 of Malachi, it contains just one of the many when they would become discouraged by the way. Won't write all of chapter for it almost seems impossible to do so, but will pen down a few verses starting from Chapter 3, Verse 16. "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of Remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name and they shall be mine saith the Lord of Hosts in that day I make up my Jewels." I have had so many sweet and precious experiences and dreams in my life I would love to tell, but time and space is limited but would love to tell just one more of my sweet dreams for it has been so precious for me to meditate upon down through many years of my life. Thinking back, I believe it to have been when I was about 14 years of age. I dreamed I was out in our yard, just as I looked up I saw Jesus coming with angels all around him, it was from the east direction and was the most beautiful sight to behold, words cannot describe the beauty of it. I was so happy. I remember not having any worries at all, I felt to be in perfect peace. I have a precious hope this morning that I may be one in that God blessed number he was referring to when he told his people he would returen for them. His people will be looking for him to return. He explains so

well in Holy Writ when he said those that look for him would see him, sometimes I long to go home where there won't be any sorrow, death, pain or any such thing but will be only joy, peace and love.

Here we have joys mixed with sorrows, here we know in part, see in part but then face to face. How I long to see him the one who loved me so and would if I could tell one and all of the great love I have for him. When it is we have come to the ending of our allotted day's, then we can be able to shout, "Sweet deliverances on the other side." "We're Home at last."

I know here in time we have a few joys here and a few joys there but the one who's behind this pen can say from the bottom of her heart if one has ever witnessed that great love of a precious Heavenly Father they can testify that his love surpasses any natural joy we may ever have. May praises ever be flowing unto him from all the Heavenly Host whom I know dearly and truly deserves all the praise both now and forever more. Now in concluding I would like to quote two verses from the precious old Hymn in the little blue book of Primitive Baptist Hymn book, page 20, No. 17 of which I dearly love and which means so much to us all.

*Amid the glories of that world,
Dear Saviour, think on me.
And in the victories of thy death
Let me a sharer be.*

*His prayer the dying Jesus hears,
And instantly replies,
Today thy parting soul shall be
With me in paradise.*

What a precious hope we have. It is to me worth more than all this world could ever offer.

From one in hope of Everlasting Life.

Belle Chaney
Rt. 2, Box 141
Stuart, Va. 24171

March, 24, 1986

Doyle Oren Murphy
Arkansas

One of the greatest miracles that I am able to think of at this time is the so arranging of the super power that can cause a sin sick soul to hope and rejoice.

I have some beautiful thoughts going through my mind about what has happened to me within the last thirty days.

I have been stricken down by a dreaded and deadly disease. I was sent to a hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas for tests to confirm what it is. There was a dread by me for this. The miracle that I hope to describe is this. As I was carried from room to room and from departments for X-rays, bone scan etc. there seemed to be a light shining somewhere in the room or department or a guardian angel standing by. It seemed to me that nothing bad could happen to me under these circumstances. How beautiful it was! That something like this could happen to me, an unworthy sinner as I feel myself to be. This was a vision I hope. Thoughts like this were running through my mind. Even the linnens that I was laying on were so very soft and praising God. God can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are. I have derived much pleasure from this.

I would like to mention some Primitive Baptist people we met on a trip through Tennessee and North Carolina last fall.

Elder Kenneth R. Key and wife
Elder Leonard Key and wife
Deacon John Coker, wife and daughter
Deacon Hassel Allen, wife and mother
Elder Reeves Smith, wife and son
Elder Joe Sawyer and wife
Elder D. B. Stokes and wife
Elder Henry Jones, wife and wife's sister
Elder J. T. Prescott and wife

Elder Prescott carried us in his car on a day's journey of seeing old Primitive Churches, one established in 1754.

Dec. 16, 1918

Dear Brethren Editors:

The time has rolled around for me to renew my subscription to the Signs, as another year, with its joys and sorrows, has passed away. I have never attempted to write anything for publication, believing that others were more competent than I. We have some good writers for the Signs, fulfilling the command Jesus gave to Peter when he said, "Feed my sheep," and, to my understanding, most of their writings agree with the teaching of the Scripture. While we cannot all agree upon what the Scripture teaches, we should endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Paul said, "Who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." So no man can believe anything spiritually, only as that power is made manifest in regeneration, that raised Christ from the dead. My mind is called to a passage of Scripture recorded in the fourth chapter of Romans, fourth and fifth verses: "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." Paul is telling the Roman brethren how they are justified, and how they are not. He tells the Corinthian brethren, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." Now the first thing he told them was how Christ died for our sins. He said again, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." So we see we were made just in the sight of God without works. One of the writers said, Was not our father Abraham justi-

fied by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? Paul answered the question, If our father Abraham was justified by works he has whereof to glory, but not before God. He might be justified by his brethren, but not before God. Why? Because he was justified by faith before he was called to sacrifice his son. Therefore he had the faith to believe that if he took his son's life God was able to raise him from the dead, because the Lord had told him he would make a great nation of him: In thee and thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed. What is faith? Paul said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." What is the gift of God? Jesus Christ was the gift of God. It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Paul said, Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. When we say a man works, we mean there is an end to be reached by his work. Can a man in the state of nature work to please God? No. Why? Because his mouth is an open sepulcher, with his tongue he uses deceit, the poison of asps is under his tongue, his feet are swift to shed blood, the way of peace he has not known and there is no fear of God before his eyes. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Paul said, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his mercy he saved us. Paul was a good example, before he was regenerated, when he had letters of authority to bind all he found calling on the name of Jesus. I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. He thought he was doing a great work when he was casting the people of God in prison, and binding them. He also said he held the clothes of them that stoned Stephen, and was consenting unto his death. In all his work he proved he was dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore Christ said, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Now to him that worketh was the reward not reckoned of grace. Who was Paul talking to? He was talking to the church of Rome. He said, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." What is the gospel? He said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God." So if a man preaches the gospel he preaches the power of God, and not the power of man. A reward in natural things is something we strive to win. Is this reward Paul is talking about won by works? If so, there is no grace about it. There is no doubt in my mind that Peter was speaking of the same thing when he said we are begotten unto an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. None of our works change that inheritance. Why? Because Abraham received it by promise. There is where the gospel, or power of God, was preached to Abraham. When did Abraham receive the promise, in circumcision or uncircumcision? In uncircumcision. The Lord told him, I will make a great nation of thee; in multiplying I will multiply thee, and in blessing I will bless thee. Abraham did not do these things in order to receive a blessing, or to be justified, because he had already been blessed and justified before God. In the old law covenant there were no spiritual blessings promised, but all were natural blessings. But in the new covenant things have changed, the Lord no longer says, If you will I will, but says, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unright-

eousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Now under the old law the people had to be taught what God's law was, but now he says, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. So in the gospel day we do not have to have somebody tell us what God's law is, because it is written in our hearts. Christ told his disciples before he left this earth, If I go not away the Comforter will not come, but if I go away I will send him, and he shall take of the things of mine and shew them unto you. The Comforter is the Spirit of truth. The Spirit never teaches you that you can work and obtain that reward, but it is the flesh that teaches you that you can be justified by the deeds of the flesh. Paul said to the Galatian church: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" He wanted to know of them if they were so foolish as to say their spiritual blessings came through the flesh.

These are a few of my rambling thoughts as they came to me. I feel I have barely touched the subject. I leave it to you to do with as you see fit. I hope it is the Lord's will to give you both strength, and bless you according to his will, that you may still edit the Signs for the comfort and edification of his people here on earth. Earnestly contend for what you believe to be the truth, and the faith that was once delivered unto the saints.

Now may the grace of our once crucified but now risen Savior rest upon you and all the household of faith, is the prayer of your humble servant.

H. T. Hughett

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."—Hebrews xi. 1.

Jan. 13, 1919

Dear Editors:

As my subscription to the Signs is nearly due I am renewing for myself and my dear mother, and will try in my weakness to write a few lines by way of remembrance, but cannot tell whether it will be worth anything to God's dear saints or not. If my thoughts are not directed by the Spirit of truth they will not be worth anything to them that love the Lord, for every good and perfect gift is of the Lord, and is freely bestowed on them that are enabled by his grace to walk in the paths of obedience. His people are a poor and an afflicted people, and realize that they cannot do anything good of themselves; all goodness comes from him, and he will receive all the praise. Man is ever trying to receive the praise, but in God's own good time he will bring him down into the dust of humility, for every mountain and every hill shall be brought low and every valley shall be exalted. The mountains of human wisdom, their vanity and pride, shall fall before him who has all power both in heaven and in earth. The grass withereth and the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. No one knows anything about the power of the almighty God except those to whom his power has been manifested. He works in them to will and to do according to his good pleasure. I hope that power has been manifested in me, a poor worm of the dust, who am not worthy of the notice of his dear saints, and if I have any worthiness it is in Christ Jesus the Lord, for he is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; he is the life, the light and the strength of his people, and without him they can do nothing. It is certainly sweet when we are enabled to trust in him and to be reconciled to his holy will, but we cannot trust unless it is given us, for we are weak and prone to evil. I very

often feel of late to sin is all I do, and surely a child of God could not be as corrupt as I am, for sin is mixed with all I do. I cannot be what I would like to be. My nature is so corrupt that it makes me fear and tremble. I fall far short of what it seems to me a true follower of the Lamb of God should be. I sometimes decide that I had just as well give up and let my old nature take its course, as there is nothing but it in me, and I am only acting the hypocrite in professing to be a believer in God; but God, who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind, knows my weakness, and if I am a child it is according to his love and mercy, and I am safe in his love, for his love never changes, no matter how far we may go in the paths of disobedience. He is very watchful over us, and we can go no farther than it is his holy will for us to go. We are often turned loose to our own ways to work out our own destruction, as were the children of Israel when they thought they could fight their own battles; God turned them over into the hands of their enemies to consume them. So it is with spiritual Israel; they very often get to thinking that they are able to do for themselves, and it takes suffering and tribulation to keep them humble and make them know that God only is their keeper and their salvation. Great is the mystery of godliness! It is so great that the natural or carnal mind knows nothing about it. The only way that the children of God know anything about his mysteries is by revelation. He reveals to them such things as are needful for them to know, no more, no less. They will receive everything that is for their good and his glory. We very often think our lot is hard and grievous to be borne. I believe we all have an inheritance here on this earth, and when we have received all of that inheritance we shall leave this world of sin and sorrow. We will suffer every pain and every sorrow that is for us to suffer, and we shall receive every

joy. God has a glorious purpose in it all. David said, He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. David was certainly a sweet singer in Israel, for his songs of praise are in accord with the experiences of the children of God, for they do know what it is to be in that miry clay where there is no place to stand. They also know that they cannot get out until God takes them out to place their feet upon that rock which cannot be shaken. O, is it not glorious to be enabled sometimes to hope that David's God is our God? For if he is we have nothing to fear, He hath put a new song in our mouth, even praise unto our God. That new song is the sweetest song that ever was sung; it is the theme of his people to praise his holy name, and they will never get through singing that sweet song, which song is sung in the Signs of The Times by its editors and many writers, and also our preachers, whom God has blessed us with, are enabled by his grace to declare the unsearchable riches of our risen and exalted Savior, who was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Their preaching is not according to man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit. They do not preach for filthy lucre. Paul said he had nothing to glory in, for necessity was laid upon him, and "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." Whenever God calls his preachers he qualifies them to do the work he has for them to do, and they will do that work when the time comes, not one minute too soon nor one too late. They will fill the ministry wherein he sends them; no one can fill another's place, but can fill his own, for every member of the body of Christ is needed in that body and will fill its place. So may we be bound together in one bundle of love, which no one knows anything

about but those born of God. Where that love is there is peace and harmony. It is certainly sweet for love to be manifest in the church, then there is union and communion and sweet fellowship for one another. It is a blessing that this world cannot give, and worth more than the gold of Ophir or the cattle on a thousand hills. What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? What would it profit the children of God to lose their spiritual enjoyments of if they could give them for the vain and perishable things of this earth? All that it contains will not compare with the sweet enjoyments his people partake of in the Lord's bountiful store. What is of God is perfect, and he is from everlasting the same true and living God. What his people receive here is only a foretaste of heavenly bliss; we only see in part and only know in part here, but when raised with the likeness of the dear Savior we shall be perfect as he is perfect, for we shall know as we are known; no more doubts and fears, no sighs and tears, for he will be our song; no more of the cares of this vain world to hinder us in that perfect praise to the holy triune God.

Your little brother, I hope, in Christ
Jesus the Lord,

E. F. Readhimer

ARTICLES

CONCERNING ETERNAL LIFE

My very soul trembles in me as I ponder the question of could a child of Grace, a joint heir with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, an heir of Heaven and Eternal Life in the presence of a gracious and merciful God, die a spiritual death. I call your attention to Psalm

121, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore."

I would call your attention to Lamentation 3: 22, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

Also for your consideration, Proverbs 2: 7-8, "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous; he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints."

Proverbs 2:11, "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee."

John 10: 27-29, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

John 17: 2-3, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

John 3: 14-15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 4: 36, "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto

life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”

John 6: 45, “Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

John 6: 58, “This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.”

Titus 1:2, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that can not lie, promised before the world began.”

Titus 3:7, “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

I John 5: 10-11, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

I John 5: 13, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that you may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

I John 5:20, “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

Now if you died a spiritual death there would be nothing in you to lead you but your fleshly lust, which do not the things of God, so the results would be that you would follow after the things of this world and your fleshly lust. Having no spirit to guide you or lead you to the things of God, would you not miss heaven and hell would be your home. But if you be one of his, you are born of that incorruptable seed which according to the prophets, liveth and abideth forever.

Is this not the Spirit under consideration as spoken of by Jesus Christ when he said, “I in you and you in me and I in the Father and the Father in me.” If so, then

this is the Holy Spirit of God; this is the Spirit given by God as of Isaiah 42: 5. Was not this the spirit present at the creation, Genesis 1: 1. Was not this the spirit sent by God as spoken of in Psalm 104: 29-30. Is this not the wellspring of wisdom: Job 32:8. Is this not the Spirit that bring instruction: Nehemiah 9:20. Is this not the Spirit that was present at his Baptism: Mark 1:10. Is this not the Spirit that brings peace to your Soul spoken of in Isia 54: 13. Is this not the Spirit that dwells in each of us as spoken of in 1 Cor. 3:16. Is this not the seal of God. 2 Cor. 1:22. Is this not the comforter spoken of by John 14:26. Is this not the Spirit that teaches us the way. Psalm 143: 10. Is this not the Spirit that enables us to become the Sons of God, the Spirit of regeneration, the Spirit that increases our faith, the Spirit that raiseth us up and purefies our soul, aids our redemption, calms the troubled waters of our soul, convinces us of our sins, quickens our mortal bodies, endows us with grace. Is it not the basis of our life in Christ Jesus, giving us the wisdom of understanding, teaches us the way that we should go, reveal the truth of God.

To our souls show to us the purposes of God. Is this not the Spirit of Jesus Christ spoken of as being in you?

The Spirit that guides us in the truth.

Is this not the Eternal Spirit,

The Spirit of adoption

The Spirit of counsel

The Spirit of knowledge

The Spirit of promise

The Spirit of supplication

The Spirit of understanding

The Spirit of wisdom.

Is this not the eternal Spirit? If so, how can a child of God die a Spiritual death? Think you not that God would give unto you a Spirit to keep you, Teach you and lead you and preserve you unto himself. How could you die a Spiritual death and still be preserved unto God. I say no. The Spirit given unto us by our God is

that Spirit that liveth and abideth forever and preserves us unto that inheritance, reserved for us in heaven where we shall dwell with the God of all grace and his Son, Jesus Christ our Savior forever and ever.

Boyd Minter

EXPERIENCE

When I was very small I became concerned about my soul; It seemed the judgment day was coming and I was doomed to eternal punishment. I would go to bed at night and cry myself to sleep and try to beg God to have mercy on me and save me.

One night I dreamed it was judgment day, and I thought I was frightened and Jesus came to where another little girl and I were playing, and He put His hand on my head and said, "You're one of my little school children." The next thing I knew, I was sitting at a table and everything on it was white. Sometimes I believe I have been made to sit at the King's table, and I hope I've been taught in the school of His grace.

I told mama about this dream, and she cried and said it was a good dream. I was not satisfied though, and went on in much trouble from time to time, but I would have short seasons of being contented and went about playing with other children.

Again I dreamed judgment day had come and as before I was greatly frightened and I thought I saw the entrance of a building. I stopped here and a man showed me an open book and I saw my name and with my name these words, "I was with you always." And I said, "If I had known this, I would not have been afraid of the lightning." I was always afraid of storms. This satisfied me, and for several days I was in praise to God. It seemed all things had become new,

old things had passed away, but since that time I have had many doubts and fears. Often doubting if I'm in that number for whom Christ died.

That great love was given me, I hope, for Him and His people. I love Him because He first loved me.

I had another dream during this time. I dreamed about mama and me being together when the end of time came. I was afraid and started to speak to her and she was looking up and shouting and I looked up and saw Jesus, and I began to shout and I was no more afraid.

About six years ago I became so burdened I could not sleep or have any peace when away from my work; it seemed my mind was with the church at Dan River. I was concerned with asking a home with them. During the time I desired more evidence to tell them, when these words came to me, "What more can He say, than to you He hath said." When I was enabled to go over all the past experience and say, it is sufficient. I love the hymn, "How firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord."

I went to church at Dan River but couldn't tell them a thing about my dreams and travels. I did tell them how I had been burdened to come, while I didn't feel worthy, and don't yet. I just wanted to be one of them, they all looked so good to me. If not deceived, I was drawn there by the sweet cords of His love. I saw in my dream the place where I would sit and saw myself going alone, which I did. I thought my husband would go with me, but he didn't. He did come late though. I was in so much trouble the week following, fearing I had deceived the church, and my pleadings were, if I have "deceived them don't allow me to do them any harm." This is the way I have been brought along, I don't know whether it is an experience of grace or not, I just hope so.

The morning I was baptized these words came to me. "I cast down, and I

raise up, I the Lord do these things." You preached so beautifully on this subject I thought when you visited Dan River. I have been cast down in my feelings, and hope I know what it is to be raised u. We don't like to be cast down, if we knew it was the Lord doing the casting down, it would be different. Well, come to Dan River to see us again and bring Sister Adams, we enjoyed your visit very much.

Your little sister in hope
(Mrs.) W. C. Vipperman
Draper, N. C.

(From Zion's Landmark 1952)

CAVE ADULLAM.

"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men."—
1 Samuel xxii. 1, 2.

Cave Adullam was the place of David's hiding from his enemies, the secret place where God's anointed dwelt safely, to which his pursuers did not penetrate. To him here in this secret place came the needy, and over them he became captain. What a singular army was that made up of the distressed, the debtors and the discontented! There are few incidents in David's life that more beautifully and wonderfully prefigure the Christ than this of David's refuge in Cave Adullam. But a few in each age of time have appreciated the true character of Jesus. The popular conception of Jesus and his work has never been the truth. Jesus' real character has been known in th past, and is known now, only by those to whom faith has been

given to penetrate to his secret dwelling place. This is the result of revelation from the Father to his gracious subjects, for it is only by revelation that Jesus can ever be properly believed in. Jesus while in the world himself had two natures: the human and the divine. As a man among the men of his day he was known as being the son of a carpenter of Nazareth. His humanity was apparent to all men, and those who saw nothing but the outward man of him regarded him as a blasphemer, or as a fanatic, or as a heretic, or as an impostor, depending upon the individual viewpoint and judgment of those criticising him. In his essential character as the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the Savior and Redeemer, but few comparatively knew and loved him, and these because they had been taught of God to know and love him. Jesus, in his spiritual life, was a stranger to the world, and the world a stranger to him. The world could not penetrate beneath the outward mask of his humanity and discover the spiritual man hidden there. This was his Cave Adullam. That is, his Spirit self was his refuge from those pursuing and hating him, for this Spirit self was the God in him, and God kept him from being touched until his hour had come, and even when his hour had come to make the supreme sacrifice the persecution vented upon him bruised and wounded his body, but could not by any possibility damage his spiritual self. In order to come at the Cave Adullam, which is Jesus' real self, and there find the Captain of our salvation, one must be distressed, or he must be in debt, or must be discontented. Then, too, one must belong to Jesus' Father's house and be one of his brethren. This takes us back to before the foundation of the world, when God chose or elected his people unto salvation in Jesus Christ, the period known only to God, when he wrote their names in the Lamb's book of life. To have been thus chosen of God in

his Son before the world began means that some time or other, according as God has fixed, he will reveal himself to us. This revelation is the assurance of our pre-world election in Christ. One of the first-fruits of this revelation in the sinner's soul is distress. He is made to see himself wholly a sinner, without one good thing in him, full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores from the sole of the foot even unto the head, the whole man is sick, without one spot of soundness in him. This causes sharp distress to the conscious sinner, making him to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The sincere, heartfelt cry of the soul penetrates unto Jesus' real self, it finds him in his Cave Adullam. The sinner, thus made sensible of his sins, realizes that he is ten thousand talents in debt without one farthing to pay. He sees that he has never kept one single commandment of the law of God, and never can, that he has never done anything but transgress God's law in thought, word and deed. So he sees himself a debtor to the law. These are the characters to whom God gives the spiritual discernment of living faith to cause them to seek him whom their soul loveth and to find him in that cave retreat hidden from the gaze and understanding of all men. Another mark of the election of grace is to be discontented. That is, to be discontented with self, with sin, the flesh and the world. God's Spirit working in the subjects of his grace brings about this dissatisfaction with self. It is a mark of true discipleship that one hates his own life. Very few of those who openly and loudly declare their zeal for God really know what it means to hate one's own life. This Spirit-begotten discontent with self urges one on and on in quest of that which is infinitely higher than self: the selflessness of Christ. Thus do the discontented come unto him in his Cave Adullam, or the real inner self and character of the

real Jesus Christ. When John the Baptist was in prison and sent messengers to Jesus to ask whether he was the Christ or should they look for another, Jesus sent back the messengers to tell John again those things in which Christ is seen. The first of these evidences of the Christ is that the blind receive their sight. Has one ever been blind to the things of God? Yes, all of mankind are thus blind by nature, not one of them able to see God or to make themselves see him. But the Christ of God comes unto the elect of God from among all mankind and gives them eyes to view him. Then these say, once I was blind, but now I see. To have been blind and then to be made to see the things of God as they truly are is to have been visited by Christ, and to have gotten acquainted with him in the very essence of his being. To have had that lameness which makes one unable to walk the way of God's commands, and so to have been disobedient, and then to have had that lameness cured by the imputation of Christ's obedience, is to have known Christ. To have known the fearful lopsiness of one's sins, and then to have had those sins washed away in Jesus' blood, is to have known the true Christ. To have been deaf to the sound of the gospel, and then to be given ears to hear the joyful sound, is to have known Christ. To have been dead in trespasses and sins, and then to have been quickened by the Spirit and raised to the newness of spiritual life in Christ, is to have been brought into communion with our spiritual David in Cave Adullam. Have you ever been poor in spirit? That is, have you ever felt that you were lacking in all the things of God's Spirit? Have you ever in this poverty-stricken condition had the gospel preached to you with such power that you could not gainsay your interest in it? If so, you have seen and known the Christ. You have heard the call of your Captain from his Cave Adullam, that pavilion where he hides

you in the day of trouble, that secret of his tabernacle.

*"From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat,
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat."*

But for the mercy of God to usward in Christ we should be without any refuge in the day of trouble, any shelter in the time of storm. So, in the days of David, the poor and the sorrowful and the unhappy found a safe retreat with David in Cave Adullam. Infinitely better than that cave of old, but, nevertheless, foreshadowed by it, is that wonderful virtue and power of Jesus' real inner Spirithood to shelter his people in all their woes, to save them from all their sins, to protect them from all the poisonous, fiery darts of the world and the flesh, which constitute the adversary of our peace. We do not think one has ever found the secret of true living until he has been to Cave Adullam and has had fellowship and communion with Jesus in his true inner self. Men of the world and of the worldly churches have various and peculiar ideas as to what constitutes true living. From the scriptural standpoint, the true life is to know one's self as one really is. Thus, it is to know that one is a sinner, in debt, and extremely miserable therefor, then to be driven by the lash of one's very extremities to seek out Christ in the safe and sure retreat of the Cave Adullam of his inner and true oneness with God; this, we feel sure, is the essence of all true living. Those who, by the grace of God, have known something of this true life shall never really die. They may appear to die, but death can never really touch them, for they are God's anointed, and Saul cannot touch God's anointed. For them death is abolished and the resurrection assured. Every child of God lives two lives: the outer or fleshly life, which all men see, and by which men mostly know us; the other the inner

or spiritual life, the Cave Adullam life, which is secret from the gaze and understanding of all around us. This inner life is often to the tired soul a restful retreat from the storm and stress of the outer life. It is in this inner life that one holds sweet fellowship with God. It is with this life that we lay hold on more life to fight the good fight of faith, if we fight it at all. It is in this inner life that the Captain of our salvation trains and disciplines his followers to endure that hardness which is the lot of all the soldiers of the cross.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MARCH 1986

Mrs. Wylie H. Spires, VA.....	\$ 2.00
Clarence M. Kearns, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Flora B. Berry, NC.	2.00
Frank Richards, TX.....	25.00
Mrs. Bonnie R. Moyers, TN. ...	2.00
W. P. Potter, VA.	2.00
Mrs. D. A. Law, VA.	5.00
Mrs. Cliff Weaver, WA.	15.00
Elder Ben Preston, OR.....	7.00
J. E. Potter, NC.....	2.00
Mrs. D. V. Spangler, VA.	50.00
Martha & Levert Howell, Memorial to Sister W. D. Griffin, Al...	30.00
L. T. Sadler, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Pendleton, VA.	4.00

MEETINGS

ASSOCIATION NOTICE

The 145th session of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with

Malmaison Church on July 11, 12 and 13th of July 1986, which is the second weekend of the month.

Malmaison Church is located on state road 726 about 7 miles north of Danville, Va. This highway connects with the main north-south highway # U.S. 29. The church is about 3 miles from the exit from U.S.29 on the left.

All lovers of the doctrine of Salvation by Grace are invited to this meeting.

Burnell B. Williams
Association Clerk

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 6/86
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

OBITUARIES

ELDER W. J. BERRY

It becomes my sad duty to write an obituary for my dear husband, Winford Jennings Berry, Sr. He was born October 10, 1908 to John F., and Lucy (Holmesly) Berry at Coleman, Texas. He died in Alamance Hospital, February 10, 1986, age 77 years and 4 months.

My dear one had been a diabetic since 1941. His Dr. at that time, told me that he had a life-expectancy of 20 years. But he lived almost 45 years with this debilitating disease.

His entire adult life was dedicated to the cause of his beloved Lord, and His little ones here. He began to speak in

public soon after uniting with Seclusia Church in Santa Monica, Calif. in 1932.

He was Editor and publisher of Sovereign Grace, which he began to publish in 1932. Later he took over the responsibility of printing and publishing The Lone Pilgrim, changing the name to Sovereign Grace and Pilgrim. Beginning in 1936, he also started to publish Old Faith Contender, a semi-monthly magazine. The two papers were eventually combined, and published until January, 1981, when he was forced by very poor vision and declining health to discontinue.

In 1950, he founded the Primitive Baptist Library, contributing the building site, as well as his rather extensive personal Library. He authored and published *TRACING THE TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD*, and *CULTS*.

We moved from southern California to North Carolina in 1944, where he had served County Line Church over forty years, and others for shorter periods.

His ministry was a searching one, contending, in love, for the faith once delivered to the saints, humbly refusing to compromise, in a most humble manner, any principle he felt to be God honoring. God's glory and honor and the welfare of His people, were his primary burden. He contended for a practical godliness which must accompany salvation. His love for the Old School Baptists everywhere surmounted the many sad divisional boundaries. This he very ably expressed in his Editorial, "*The Whole Estate*."

Though he asked that no eulogy be made, I must say that he was one of the most self-forgetful, generous persons I have ever known, and I am sure that many will witness to this fact. He was unsparing in his labors, despite our anxiety, and his Doctor's warnings, he gave all he had. It seemed to me that his ministry caused him to be either greatly loved, or as greatly disliked according as his searching ministry was appreci-

ated and accepted or rejected. The love of so many who did appreciate his ministry is such a comfort to me now as I receive their words of love from him.

He was a tender, devoted husband, very protective, a loving father. But he had become so weary and we are consoled by the assurance that he is at rest. His precious body now awaits the resurrection and the coming of our Lord, in the Mausoleum in Memorial Park, Burlington, North Carolina.

In sorrow, but a sorrow sweetened with joy that his dear spirit is now resting in the arms of Infinite Love.

His unworthy companion,
Mabel Berry

ELDER RUFUS R. BROWN

The Church at Camp Branch deeply mourns the loss of their pastor, Elder Rufus R. Brown, who passed from this life unto the great beyond December 22, 1985. He was 82 years of age and had served Camp Branch Church as Assistant Pastor from 1960 to 1963. He was then made pastor, after the passing of our beloved Brother and Pastor, Elder Emory Burgess.

He was born December 23, 1903 and was married to Sallie Wilmont Dillon, Sept. 21, 1921. To this union was born ten sons and four daughters. His wife and two sons had preceded him in death in 1982.

He was the son of Will and Betty Brown. He was a member of Gills Creek Church and had been pastor there for years.

His funeral was held at Lynch Funeral Home in Rocky Mount, Virginia by Elders Denver Simpson, Elder Amos Hash and Elder Larry Hollandsworth. His body was laid to rest in Gills Creek Church Cemetery on December 24, 1985 by the side of his wife who preceded him in death on May 24, 1982.

He leaves to mourn his loss: eight sons, four daughters, two sisters, one brother and a host of friends and relatives.

Nancy Voorhees
Church Clerk

OBIE FAUCETT

It was our heavenly Father's will to call from our midst Brother Obie Faucett in October, 1985. Brother Obie was 84 years old. He joined Monticello Primitive Baptist Church Easter Sunday, 1963. Brother Obie was a faithful member and exhibited a true love for God's Church, attending as long as he was physically able to attend. He leaves to survive him his wife, Annie Pritchett Faucett; a son, Marcus; a daughter, Vivian Faucett; a brother Emmett Faucett; and a sister, Ila Faucett Herbin.

The funeral service was conducted by his minister, Elder Paul Lambe and was held at Lambeth/Troxler Funeral Home in Greensboro. He was laid to rest at Monticello Primitive Baptist Church cemetery.

SISTER BESSIE PARSONS

Sister Bessie Parsons was blessed to be called home after about ten years confined at home, the last seven years in bed, At the home of her daughter, Gertrude Davis. Who so lovingly cared for her, And graciously welcomed all her visitors. The last few years sister Parsons did not seem to know we was there until her pastor and others began singing Amazing Grace, She would sing every word with them. Her face would look like the face of an angel. She joined Old Mt. Primitive Baptist church in 1918. She was A faithful and devoted member as long as she was able to go.

She was the daughter of the late James H. Searce and Mollie Norton Searce. She was married to the late Deacon Grant Parsons, She lived her entire life in the Mount Cross area. Survivors include five daughters, Gertrude Davis, Brosville, Stella Soyars, Westover Drive, Mary Smith and Ruth Motley, both of Danville, and Lucy Shields, Parkway Drive, Four sons Clyde Parsons, and Joseph Parsons, both of Danville, Andrea Parsons and Wilford Parsons, both of Mount Cross Road, one sister, Nannie S. Turner, Danville, Four half sisters, Emily Lue Walker, Annie Ruth Phelps, Margaret Hammock, and Ollie Merricks, of Danville, one half brother, Tommie searce, Danville, 39 grand children. A number of Great grand children and four great great grandchildren.

Her funeral was held at Swicegood Funeral Chapel Dec. 2, 1985, by her pastor Elder H.W. Wray and Elder Amos Hash. Her body was layed to rest in Danville Memorial Gardens, Beneath A beautiful mound of flowers. May the Lord bless and comfort the family as only he can.

Done in order of church conference March, 15-1986.

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

BROTHER GEORGE POWELL

When the Lord called, Nov. 5, 1985, Brother George Powell fell asleep in his chair, just seven months after loosing his precious wife, Sister Gladys Powell.

He will be greatly missed as A member, as A song leader, and as A Deacon. It was A shock to us at Old Mt. Church. Our hearts go out to his close devoted family, who was so attentive to them both. Our sorrows and loss are great,

We feel his piece ans joy by far exceeds our sorrow.

Brother Powell joined Old Mt. primitive Baptist Church and was baptised April 17-1971. Was later ordained deacon.

Born Sept. 10-1907, in Pittsylvania county, A son of the late John H. Powell and Laura Searce Powell. He was married to Glarys Payne Powell. He leaves to mourn two sons, Bobby Powell, and Morris Powell, both of Dry Fork, two daughters, Marie P. Burke, Dry Fork, and Betty Booth, Ringgold, two sisters, Betty Watson, Danville, and Larua Ramsey, San Diego; three brothers, Claude Powell, Danville, Henry Powell, Roanoke, and J. Hampton Powell, Elmhurst, Ill; 12 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren.

The funeral was conducted at Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Chapel by Elder H. W. Wray, and Elder Wallace Smith. He was layed to rest in Danville, Memorial Gardens by his wife, Sister Gladys, To wait the call from their Lord, Saying come ye blessed of my father, Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

May the family be comforted and made reconciled to His holy will.

Done in order of conference at Old Mt. Primitive Baptist church March, 15-1986.

Elder H.W. Wray Moderator.
Sarah Barker clerk.

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DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA. JULY 1986

NO. 07

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84

Fayette, Ala. 35555

Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566. All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

H Y M N

*There is a world of perfect bliss
Above the starry skies;
Oppressed with sorrows and with sins,
I thither lift my eyes.*

*'Tis there the weary are at rest,
And all is peace within;
The mind, with guilt no more oppressed,
Is tranquil and serene.*

*Discord and strifes are banished thence,
Distrust and slavish fear;
No more we hear the pensive sigh,
Or see the falling tear.*

*Farewell to earth and earthly things;
In vain they tempt my stay;
Come, angels, spread your joyful wings,
And bear my soul away.*

*I long to see my Father's face,
And sing his praises too;
Adieu, companions, dearest friends;
Vain world, once more, adieu.*

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EDITORIAL

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.

This is probably the most quoted scripture in the Old Testament and especially among the Saints of God. It is very basic in the doctrine to all who have been called out of nature's darkness and blessed to rejoice in the marvelous light and liberty of the gospel of God our Savior. The very foundation of their faith is the omnipotence, omnipresence and the omniscience of a just and Holy God who is in absolute control of everything and who is of one mind and changes not. The above scripture embodies all of these characteristics and is realized and remembered time after time

in the experience of those who are led in ways that they know not and who see the majesty and wisdom as things unfold before them for good that they would never have known of themselves.

These are the experiences that are recorded throughout history as the Lords people are prepared for events that are to happen to them, and then how God leads them thru and the work is performed. Joseph did not know what was in store for him ahead as God's plan unfolded before him but in the end he saw the fulfillment of the dream that he had when he was but a young lad and he was blessed to see the wisdom and the purpose accomplished by the hand of God. There was a mighty work to be performed in the deliverance of Israel from the famine that was to envelop the land to manifest God's care for them as his chosen people. There was no power on earth that could prevent the work but the season of famine must occur and then the time and purpose of God respecting their experience is made known unto his chosen people and to them only. The world would see it only as luck.

The man who was born blind and whose sight was given by Jesus is a prime example of the season, time and purpose of God in the lives of his people. There was a long season of darkness in the life of this individual in which he could not see the light of day and the world around him, an example of the spiritual blindness of the natural man. When the appointed time of the Father came to make manifest his purpose in this. Jesus came along, gave him sight and said the purpose in all this was that the works of God should be made manifest in him. How like the spiritual awakening of each Child of grace who is born in a condition in which he cannot see the spiritual kingdom and experience the joys of salvation until Jesus comes by at the appointed time of the Father and makes himself known as he did to this

man, to the Apostle Paul, the Gaderine Cornelius and the list goes on and on to include the whole lot of the inheritance of the Children of Israel. There was a season of darkness in the life of this man but, thanks be unto God there was a season of light. There was a season of famine in the life of Jacob but there was also a season of plenty and the fat of the land. This is true in the lives of all of the heirs of promise as the various seasons are experienced and the time and purpose which they serve us made known to them. Joseph was blessed to experience many seasons and acknowledge as they were finished that they came about by man, his brethren, from an evil intent but God meant the same series of events for good as it is this day to save much people alive.

This same scripture applies to the experiences of Daniel, Job, Jeremiah and all of the writers of the old testament and they were blessed to record them and leave them, for the generations to follow, that they might know and understand a little more of their own travels. They learned by experience that regardless of what men or nations may do to accomplish something or to prevent something from happening it will be to no avail regarding that which is ordained of God. That which is to be, according to prophecy, will be and that which is not to be, in the wisdom of God, cannot be. Solomon was wiser, richer and experienced more than any of the kings of Israel before or after him and this was his conclusion: "That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." He also wrote, "So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: Also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: And this was my portion of all my labor. Then I looked on

all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." This is the testimony of one who was blessed of God and who was spoken of before he was born as being chosen for this work. Soloman knew that the devices of man are many and that the efforts of man would be endless to accomplish his own desire, but that in the end, when the season, time and pur

pose of God are present, then and only then will the thing determined be accomplished for which they were ordained. He also acknowledged: "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before him." And he also wrote, "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom."

These things are realized and experienced many times in the lives of those who have been Saved and Called with a Holy Calling, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose in grace. There have been seasons in their lives which they would love to return and experience again. They would love to re-live those earlier seasons when they experienced the first love and awareness of the presence of the spirit within their heart and soul and to hold onto the sweetness and beauty as long as they can. Alas! they cannot because the season and time are gone and the purpose has been accomplished in their lives. They can but go on, in faith, to other seasons and purposes trusting that he which has called them and sent them forth on this journey will continue to lead and direct their way and that they will learn more about these solemn truths and understand more about this new life they are living. They are made to hunger and thirst for more evidence that they are indeed and in truth on the

way that leads to life everlasting.

They have beheld and admired the older brethren and sisters in the faith and appreciated the wisdom, experience, patience and steadfastness in doctrine, and in practice and desired to attain to that state of seeming perfection to them in their earlier days. They continue on for a seemingly short space of time and then they realize the old ones are gone and now they find themselves looking and seeing the younger one newly come into the faith, and they love and admire them for their eagerness and vitality, and yet, their meek and humble countenance as they experience the understanding of these precious truths for the first time. All of these seasons through which each must travel teaches them the truth of the sovereignty of God and makes them realize that it is all sent in mercy and love from God to them according to his own purpose and grace. "O the depths of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgements and his ways past finding out."

To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. This applies to all the seasons, times and purposes and they are allotted to each vessel of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory, for their growth and learning of the depths of the truth of the perfection of God in all of his way. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever."

May God bless us all to run with patience the race that is set before us and to wait upon these seasons, times and purposes as they come our way, and when they do, may we be blessed to, be

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Mat. 7:12

still, and know that He is God and behold his wonderful works. How rich a heritage belongs to those who are saved and called with a holy calling from among the sons of men.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campbell

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

I CORINTHIANS 1. 21

"For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

We glean from the field of history, both of man and that which was inspired by God, that since the beginning of time there have been upheavals, convulsions, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and the like in the earth. Nature has been forced to find some way of casting off her surplus gases. In the animal and human world strife, warfare, extermination and death have been waged; species have come and gone; kingdoms, governments and nations have risen and fallen; every phase of life has had its perils. In the light of the past, it is no strange thing that there is to-day a great spirit of restlessness raging in what is commonly termed the religious world. Men are ambitious for leadership and notoriety, and are not satisfied to continue in the old order of things. Many self-styled "Sages of Divinity" are, therefore, making claims to scientific discoveries which, if true, tear down the very foundation upon which the church is built. Had not God declared by the mouth of his own Son, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." we would begin

to worry. Because the finite minds of men cannot comprehend or explain the mysteries of God they have the arrogance and impudence to tell us the Bible is out of date, contradictory, untrue and mythical. They deny the miracles of Jesus, and have no use for "old time religion," for they say, "The trouble is that oldfashioned religion really bores. That is the matter with it. It bores, and boredom is worse than murder. It kills as effectively." It is clearly seen they know not him who is the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely one, hence cannot say with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee." But those who love the Lord can sing, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah." Those who have the witness within that the Lord has been their dwelling-place in all generations will desire that he might so teach them to number their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom. "The natural man," however, "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." Men have become drunk with the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God, and they would do well to remember, "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." We are told, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Can it be possible that those who show such utter disregard and disrespect for our Lord have any fear or love in their hearts for him? It seems to us that were he not the God of matchless mercy that he is he would crush such defying creatures into dust and scatter it upon the

sea of his wrath. Had the Lord not put his law in the inward parts, and written it in the hearts of his people, it might be possible to deceive them; shrewd men might be able to confuse and convince them that the Scriptures do not mean what they teach, but when Christ has been formed in one the hope of glory, and he has been quickened by the mighty power of God that wrought in him in raising him from the dead, such questions as, Whether the conception was of the Holy Ghost, or, Hath he power to quicken the dead? are not debatable; they know such miracles have been wrought in them, and they can say with Peter, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." They know that part of the Bible which they have experienced is true, and by faith they believe all that God has said. They are willing to remain babes in Christ, and do rejoice, in spirit, with him in saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty," &c. We feel safe in saying Paul was one of the "not many wise after the flesh" whom God called, and yet he declares, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." The grace of God worked effectually in his heart and changed him from a giant Pharisee to "less than the least of

all saints." This is what it does wherever it is manifested, and where we see the spirit of defiance, rule or ruin, haughtiness and pride we can be sure they are not the fruits of the Spirit. God said, Except a man become as a little child, he cannot enter the kingdom. So-called ecclesiastical experts say, Except a man become a master in science he cannot find out God. Whom are we to believe? Let God be true and every man a liar. A babe, naturally, does not imply to our mind one possessing more than ordinary wisdom or strength, but rather we think of its helplessness, being wholly and entirely dependent upon the parent, and we like to think of its simplicity and childlike faith to believe all, everything, that the father says. Recently we have had occasion to observe the absolute confidence of the child in the father, trusting him so implicitly that he would step off into space if the father held out his arms to him. Surely those who have been led about and instructed by our heavenly Father, and kept as the apple of his eye, are willing to trust him just as implicitly. Their faith staggers not at anything, for they know things which are impossible with man are possible with God, that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think; they know whom they have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which they have committed unto him against that day. If it were possible to search out God through the medium of science it would destroy faith, without which it is impossible to please God, and it would do away with revelation. John said he wept much because there was found no man in heaven, nor in the earth, neither under the earth, who was able to open the book which he beheld in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, but he was told to, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven

seals thereof." It was perfectly sealed. In the beginning of the book of Revelation it is declared to be "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." Let those who will, deny it. As for us, we believe it with all our heart; yea, more, we know some things have been revealed to us. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever." This latest outbreak is nothing new, so to speak; it is the same old serpent that appeared in the Garden of Eden, lying to and deceiving Eve. In the days of Job, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them. He has ever been going to and fro in the earth, beguiling with his subtlety, and, at times, as Paul says, is transformed into an angel of light. He has even invaded the camp of Israel and driven his beautiful (?) wedges of "modernism" and "conditionalism" between brethren, but the Lord has him in charge and his bounds are set, and his destruction sure: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." We would that brethren might measure all things with the golden yastick of truth and weigh them in the scales of Holy Writ, lest they be deceived.

We shall now come directly to our text, which says, "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." This cuts the ground from under the feet of all workmongrels and science searchers, for we are plainly told here that it was verily according to the wisdom of God that the world by wisdom should not know God. This is diametrically opposed to, perhaps, ninety-nine per cent of all that is being preached and believed

to-day, but the system of creature works in obtaining salvation has no foundation in the word of truth. Some are cunningly endeavoring to mix works with grace, but they are, and ever must remain, as separate and distinct as water and oil. It is not true, never has been nor ever will be true, that God beseeches or pleads with his creatures to give their hearts, or to accept of his salvation. Preaching is not for the purpose of converting the world to Christ, as some affirm, but rather to save them that believe, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect, but with such simplicity that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. This preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto them which are saved it is the power of God. Paul said, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The cross of Christ does not consist only in the fact that nearly two thousand years ago he hung upon Calvary's cross for a few hours; while the physical pain his humanity experienced there must have been excruciating, to say the least, we do not believe for a moment that it compared with the awful agony of his soul in the Garden of Gethsemane when he sweat as it were great drops of blood, realizing not only that of the people there was none with him, and that his beloved disciples could not watch with him one hour, but worse, yea, ten thousand times worse, he felt forsaken of his Father, and was made to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" So far as we can determine from the record, with but one exception, his entire life in this world was a cross. He was declared to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; he came not to do his will, but

the will of the Father which sent him, to the end that of all the Father had given he should lose nothing. It was through the door of suffering he was to enter into his glory. The law demanded that the soul that sinneth, it shall die, and in order that he might redeem his bride from under the curse of the law, he, the just One, must lay down his life, pay the full penalty demanded by the law, to satisfy the justice of God in cancelling the debt against his bride, the unjust one. To preach that he did this and that "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," is to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, to 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. It is by the experience of these things that we are crucified with Christ; nevertheless we live, "Yet not I," said Paul, "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." It is when we are given to see that he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed, and that he is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption, that our hungry souls can feed upon the bread of life which came down from heaven. "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." God's people are living creatures, and except they eat his flesh and drink his blood they can have no part with him, for in him we live, and move, and have our being. We, too, must suffer, must endure the contradiction of the flesh, but when we are weak, then are we strong; when we are utterly lost, then are we perfectly saved.

"How strange is the course that a chris-

*tian must steer,
How perplexed is the way he must
tread;
The hope of his happiness raises from
fear,
And his life he receives from the dead."*

This kind of preaching saves them that believe; it finds those who are in the way, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and they are filled, or satisfied, with what the Lord has done.

*"I am, saith Christ, the way,
Now, if we credit him,
All other paths must lead astray,
How fair soe'er they seem.*

*I am, saith Christ, the truth,
Then all that lacks this test,
Proceed it from an angel's mouth,*

Is but a lie at best.

*I am, saith Christ, the life,
Let this be seen by faith;
It follows, without further strife'
That all besides is death.
If what those words aver,
The Holy Ghost apply,
The simplest christian shall not err,
Nor be deceived, nor die."*

We felt to take up our pen in defense of the truth, and have written for the consideration of those who know the truth. Jesus said to those which believed on him, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The Lord deliver us from error.

Elder R. L. Dodson

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH

GOOD HOPE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



Good Hope Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1874. The church is located about eight miles north-east of Winnsboro, Texas. Meeting time

is 10:30 on 4th Saturday and Sunday of each month. The present pastor is Elder Joe L. Hamrick, assistant pastor, Elder Jimmy Hamrick.

 CORRESPONDENCE

March 14, 1986

Charles B. Osborne
Quarryville, Pa.

To a dear brother,
in the flesh and in the spirit:

At our last visit to your home you were concerned that the "truth" be rightly divided and you asked me to read the passage of scripture in the gospel of John 3:16. Dividing the truth was, I believe, an instruction of Paul to Timothy, an undershepherd, a workman in the ministry. It is a good instruction for all true gospel preachers, but let us not expect truth from the false ones. It is written in 2 Timothy 3: 16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect throughly furnished unto all good works."

Peter has written, regarding the epistle of Paul, that there "are some things hard to be understood." But it is said that God is his own interpreter and that there is complete harmony in the Scriptures. The infallible rule for interpretation of seemingly difficult passages is to be sought by reading other portions of the Scriptures. On occasion, the disciples asked Jesus about his speaking in parables. For example, concerning the parable of the sower, Luke 8: 10, Jesus answered "Unto you (meaning the disciples) it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." Jesus continues in verses 17-18 "For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that

shall not be known and come abroad."

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."

How can anyone rightly divide the truth, except it be in fear and trembling and with the sure guidance of the Holy Spirit that bestows light and life upon those on the Good ground? In the sight of God nothing is secret, but those among the thorns, on a rock, and by the way side only seemeth to have something, but even that God shall take away. We know that all men cannot see, hear, or understand the truth, much less, rightly divide it. In Matthew 11:25 (Luke 10:21) Jesus answered, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because (that, in Luke) thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

So, to read a single verse of Scripture is often a dangerous thing if we hunger and thirst after the truth and righteousness. John 3:16 reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If taken out of context from the "scripture" that "is profitable" "for instruction in righteousness". John 3:16 can be likened to Mark 16:15 "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and the passage in Philippians 2:12 "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." These passages are favorites of the popular religions, of the antichrists who would serve mammon and enter the kingdom of heaven by the broad way and who would destroy the "hedge" about God's people. I believe these passages are typical scripture that serves to confound and mislead the wise and prudent and hide from them the secret of the saving grace that is given freely to God's people who were elected to eternal life and redeemed

through the atonement of Jesus so as to sing praises in eternity to his eternal glory. But for the lazy, the wicked, and the slothful (Matthew 25:24-30) there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The profitable workman will read more of John, chapter 3. He will notice verses 3, 5, 18-21. In reading Mark, chapter 16, the profitable workman will observe that the instruction "Go ye into all the world" was directed only to the eleven disciples (not to preachers in 1986), and verse 20 leaves on record that the eleven, with "the Lord working with them" preached "everywhere". The profitable workman seen in Ecclesiastes 3:14 that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it." Thus all the evangelism and missionary work of the wise and prudent will fail to save any of those that "will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" Matthew 7:22-23.

"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" Matthew 15:13.

The profitable workman will read more than "work out your own salvation" He will study the follow-on verse "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." In seeking, or dividing the truth, God's people must look for the harmony of the Scriptures. They must study scripture like Ephesians 5:6-21 which reads with emphasis in part as follows:

(6) *let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

(7) *be not ye therefore partakers with them.*

(8) *For ye were sometimes darkness,*

but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light....

(11) *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

(12) *For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret....*

(15) *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.*

(16) *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

(17) *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

Having cited John 3:16, what shall the workman do with scripture as in John 2:15-19, especially, "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....". In rightly dividing the truth, shall not one ask, is the world of 1 John 2:15 the same as the world of John 3:16. The antichrists, the missionaries, and today's evangelists would have us believe that *the world in the Scriptures is the whole of the planet Earth*. It is a major task to examine every reference in the Scriptures that contains the words, earth and world. In my analytical concordance I find about 1000 references to *the earth* and some to a *new earth*. I find, on the other hand, references to *this world* and to *that world*. But a remarkable (for me) revelation is seen when one finds:

Hebrews 1:1-2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets. (2) 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;*" and Hebrews 11:1-3 "Now faith is.... (3) *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*"

Therefore there are many worlds that require distinction. There is, on the

planet Earth, a world for the Lord's people that is hedged about and protected by God's sovereign grace so that none are finally lost. There is a different world for the carnal mind, for the damned, and for the reprobate. There is a world in the furnaces of affliction wherein every child of God is chastised, is tried, and perfected. *Jesus answered Pilate (John 18:36) "My kingdom is not of this world... but now is my kingdom not from hence."*

There are some workmen and some sheep among the visible church who proclaim entitlement to unbridled liberty of conscience, unique personal experiences, and a mere profession of belief in Christ Jesus as the only qualification for church membership. However "devils also believe and tremble", James 2:19. Let us not ignore the scripture of Jude verse 3, "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." Jude, verse 1, was writing specifically to "them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ." His epistle was not written to mankind in general as they are scattered throughout all of planet Earth.

In the sermon in the mount, our Lord and Savior, declared in the Beatitudes the elements of the *common experience* of every elect child of God. Jesus explicitly stated a rigid requirement, Matthew 5:20, for membership in his church, which is the kingdom of heaven here on earth. Jesus declared, "That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The Beatitudes, given in verses 3-13 of Matthew 5, reveal the *common experiences* of salvation by grace and not of man's work. In being born again, every member of the Lord's body must by grace be brought into poverty of spirit with a

recognition of their sinful condition. They are then brought by grace into a spirit of repentance and are made mournful and are given the grace of faith to be comforted. The fear of God is wrought into their hearts, for how else are they to be made meek. As the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom they are made to hunger and thirst after righteousness, after which they are filled not with self-righteousness and vanity in their own works, but through the free gift of grace they are filled of the righteousness of Jesus.

I ask, is there any righteousness among sinners greater than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, except it be the imparted and imputed righteousness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus? Should not then all profitable workmen and the visible churches they serve (not rule) refrain from begging and recruiting numbers to increase the rolls of the visible churches from among mere professors of religion who declare a literal belief in Christ; where no evidence is seen of poverty of spirit; of mournful condition; of a fear of God and meekness; and a zeal-hunger and thirst for understanding the truth as it is in Jesus and the Scriptures? To accept less is planting error - both on the part of the pastor (workman) and the members of the church - which leads to the ditch, Matthew 15: 13-14.

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" *Jesus did not answer, John 18:38.* The promise that "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." was given to those who are "disciples indeed" of Jesus, John 8:31-32. "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...", Jeremiah 6:16.

I beg that God extend his tender mercies to me, a sinner, and to every needful member of the Lord's body.

Eugene F. Osborne, Sr.

 ARTICLES

CONVERSATION

It is astonishing the force that certain words have as used in the Bible. Take this word "conversation," for instance. This word to-day, as used among men, means the interchange of thoughts and ideas between two or more persons by means of spoken language. This use of the word is very limited, as compared with the sense in which it was employed in ancient times. Biblically, the word referred not simply to personal social intercourse by means of language, but it meant the whole behavior, conduct or character of the individual. This is the primary meaning of the word wherever it is used in the Scriptures, with the exception of Paul's use of the word in his letter to the Philippians, in which letter the word "conversation" is used twice, and means "citizenship," or to behave as a citizen. "For our conversation is in heaven." We do violence to this expression, and sadly limit its meaning, if we say simply that our conversing or talking together is in heaven. But the word is given its full force when we understand it to mean that every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and that therefore his citizenship (conversation) is in heaven. Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and it is true of every subject of God's grace that they are translated from the kingdom of nature's darkness, in which they had been born dead in trespasses and in sins, into the light and liberty of the kingdom of Christ by his Spirit's regenerative work. They had been the slaves and servants of sin, but now are they the Lord's freemen, having and enjoying that freedom the truth of God alone can give. Being thus translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, the

children of God cannot eternally die, for death is abolished through Christ's victory over death and the grave, and life and immortality are brought to life, that is, into evidence and to our understanding, through the gospel. All subjects of the new birth, or of that birth which is from heaven, are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. They are governed in their hearts by the spiritual law of this heavenly kingdom, which law emanates not from the law of Moses as of old, but from Him who is forever King of kings and Lord of lords, and this law says simply, "Love one another." This is the love of God shed abroad in every citizen's soul, which love radiates toward all the household of faith. The citizens of this holy land are under the constant care and keeping of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps, and as the mountains are round about old Jerusalem, so the angel of the King's presence encompasses each and all the citizens of this better country. As far as the church of God is concerned, heaven is begun below; that is, if it is right to speak of anything eternal having a beginning. At least, there is a beginning to our knowledge of it. Every spiritually quickened and heaven-born soul breathes the atmosphere of heaven while yet dwelling here in this time state clothed in flesh. Also, the kingdom of heaven is within every one of them. Now, in the first chapter of Philippians we find "conversation" used thus: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." Again, this does not simply mean let our talking together be according to the gospel, but, if we give the word its full force, it signifies, Let your behavior, or life, as citizens of heaven be as becometh the gospel of Christ. A man may talk one way and do another, but God's people are not simply to talk of the gospel, but to live in it, and act according thereto. We have tried all our life since coming into the church to live and act according to the gospel, but with-

out success; that is, if we have ever done the thing we ought to have done it has never been the result of our trying to do so, but always the effect of some power other than self. We hope this other power has been the grace of God. Indeed, if it has not been the grace of God that has kept us upright, provided we have been upright, then we do not know to what to credit the power. There is but one principle that can instruct the people of God in the matter of right living. For that, see Paul's letter to Titus, second chapter: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Thus it is very plain that the very same grace of God that revealed to God's people the way of salvation is the very same principle that does not leave them after effecting that revelation in them, but keeps on abiding within them, to cause them to deny the flesh and all its lusts, to the end that they are thus enabled by grace to live and to behave as citizens of heaven should, soberly and righteously and godly while yet in this present time world. If there is any man but Christ in the soul that can teach us how to behave ourselves as citizens of that better country, we quite certainly do not know who it is. It is a sure thing that if we try to rely on our own strength and wisdom in this matter we are doomed to be ashamed of ourselves later on.

So much for Philippians. Now let us look at "conversation" in other places where it is used. In the letters of Peter, both in the first and in the second, we find the word used several times. Space forbids quoting all, to take a few, let us notice: "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation." "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, * * * from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers." Here in these two Scriptures, we have "holy"

conversation and "vain" conversation. Again, it is not that talking together is meant, but one's whole behavior or conduct. The conduct of God's people before redemption, and while still under the law walking according to the traditions and doctrines of men, was a vain or empty conduct. The conduct of believers in the Lord, who are risen with Christ from under the law, and who are seeking those things which are above all law and condemnation, is a holy conduct. God's people have been redeemed from their former vain or unsatisfying behavior under the law by the precious blood of Jesus. Redemption by the blood of Jesus is the one essential thing unto holy behavior.

In Peter's second letter, second chapter, we find it written that God delivered just Lot, who was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. This does not mean that Lot was vexed simply by the filthy language of the wicked, but by their filthy behavior. To prove this read the eighth verse: "For that righteous man (Lot) dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." In one verse we are told Lot was vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked, in the next verse, by their unlawful deeds. Therefore conversation means not simply talk, but deeds. Further, he was vexed not only by what he heard, but by what he saw, more proof that conversation scripturally used means the whole behavior of a person.

Turning back to the Psalms we find this: "The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation." It was in olden times quite the usual thing for highwaymen or robbers to lurk in secret along the beaten ways of travel to waylay travelers and to despoil them of their goods. Remember the man who went down the road from Jerusalem to

Jericho and who fell among thieves, who was robbed and beaten and afterward visited by the good Samaritan. Such cases often occurred along the roads of the ancients. God's people in this world who are effectually called by grace unto a godly life, walk in the strait and narrow way that leads unto life. But along this way are many pitfalls and dangers: the wicked with drawn sword and bent bow, who try to cast down the poor in spirit and those who feel their need of God, and who endeavor to slay those of upright life (conversation). The first man Adam fell in sin, the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, is the man of upright life. Jesus raised up his elect whom Adam had prostrated. Those justified before God in the resurrection of Jesus Christ are the ones of upright conversation or life, for the word conversation here means a course of life. Jesus lived a godly course of life while here in the flesh, so he was of upright conversation. But evil men beset his way on every side, tormenting him with all manner of temptations, and the wicked finally killed him, not knowing that in killing him they were defeating their own expectations. The life of a true christian, the course of the upright life, is beset with manifold temptations. At times it seems the evil triumph over one. One sees the prosperity of the wicked, and even at times envies it, but when the Lord brings the poor and needy into his sanctuary, out of the dangers of the trodden road, then is revealed the end of the wicked, which is inevitable defeat and perdition, then the upright's envying the wicked ceases.

Psalms 1. 23: "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." Again in the word conversation is presented a course of living. To him who orders his course, or manner of living, correctly will God reveal his salvation. Who is the one that orders his course of life aright? It is not you. It is not ourself. Who is it then? It is not,

cannot be, any mortal man. Who then? None other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He, being God tabernacling in the flesh, had the power to order the course of his life aright, and he did it, not making a single misstep, nor uttering one idle word from the manger to the cross. To him, Jesus, is shown the way of salvation. From him to his people and down into their hearts and souls distills this knowledge of the way of life. All God's people are taught of Jesus, so that their peace is an abiding peace. He reveals to them that his salvation is wholly of grace, and not at all according to creature works. None can teach this truth except Jesus, for he is the one and only man who ordered his life aright, so that to him alone is revealed the way of salvation in order that he should reveal that truth within every one of his children.

The word "conversation" occurs in various other places that we have not space to mention. Look them up and read them for yourselves.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

DESOLATION—THE WORK OF THE LORD.

"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth."—Psalms xlvi. 8.

Peculiar notions float in the minds of most men as to what constitute the works of the Lord. The shining of the sun and of the moon, the blossoming of trees and flowers, the falling of the snow and the rain, the singing of birds, the blowing of the wind, the birth of a child, the bestowal of happiness and of prosperity, all these most people would say are the works of God; but when it comes to the reverse of all these pleasant and cheerful things, to the things that produce pain or sorrow, death or disease,

these things most people prefer to ascribe to some other power than that of God. The truth is, that all these things come from the Lord, both those things that bring peace in their train as well as those things that leave a streak of fire behind them. War, famine and pestilence are a trio that go together, and rarely ever are separated; where we find one we are very apt to be able to discover the other two. A terrific world war has just spent its force in taking its terrible toll of the blood and treasure of the nations. Accompanying this whirlwind of destruction and following upon the heels of it comes famine, taking its toll of precious lives throughout Europe and Asia, many persons starving to death for lack of the wherewithal to sustain life. Probably even in our own land, and perhaps not far from our very doors, scores, and maybe hundreds, are suffering for the lack of the necessities of life. Hard upon war and famine comes the third of the trio: disease, or pestilence. The present epidemic of influenza raging all over the United States is really a pandemic, because it is worldwide, prevailing in the countries of the old world as well as here. The total of those who succumb to the pestilence will exceed in number the victims of the war. Thus we find ourselves in this present generation living in the midst of these monsters of destruction, things we have all read about in the history of the past, but which we ourselves hardly expected to see for ourselves. These are not the agencies or instruments of Satan, they are the works of the Lord. As it has been in the past, so it is now, and so shall it ever be as long as this old world remains constituted and organized as it is. The Lord in the days of Noah saved eight persons in the ark from the flood; all others living at that time were swallowed up in the deluge. Many people expressed themselves during the last four years that this war was the worst thing

that has ever come to pass, but we think they must have forgotten about the flood in the days of Noah, which desolation must have been terrible to those who perished in it, but which nevertheless was the work of God. Again, what desolation was that which God wrought when he overwhelmed Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, thus delivering his own elect people. Again, what desolation was the work of God when the earth opened and swallowed those who replied against Moses and Aaron, and two hundred and fifty men who offered incense were consumed by fire from the Lord. The word of the Lord by Ezekiel declares, "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the Lord have spoken it." You will notice it is not Satan who says this, but the Lord himself. In the ninth chapter of Ezekiel we have the vision given the prophet of the slaying to occur in Jerusalem: to six men who came from the way of the higher gate with slaughter weapons in their hands, the Lord commanded, "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women." This is by no means the only place in the Bible where the Lord commanded the killing of women and children. The Lord is not only a God of construction, but also of destruction; he both kills and makes alive as he sees fit.

But let us come to the forty-sixth Psalm and consider the desolation there spoken of. The first thing mentioned as being destroyed is war: "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth." And, by the way, the Lord is the only being that can effectually make an end of war. Some doubt the success of the attempt that is being made to make war obsolete. The world to-day is trying to devise a league of nations to establish worldwide peace. We hope for success. This plan may not

succeed, and we do not have to be a prophet to make such a statement. One needs only to carefully read the Scriptures to learn there that God alone is the author of peace, and that only the peace of God can endure forever. As long as human nature is what it is, and as long as the governments of the nations are organized as they are, there can be no worldwide permanent peace. However, the Psalm says that to the ends of the earth the Lord makes wars to cease. This does not convey the idea that God makes wars to cease all over the earth, but to the ends of the earth. The ends of the earth are the Lord's people. Every subject of God's grace is brought to the end of all earthly things, to the end of his strength, to the end of his wisdom, to the end of all confidence in himself or in the flesh. Thus, by the revelation of God's Spirit, the sinner finds he is full of all that is earthly, sensual and vain, and that there is no hope of salvation coming through the help or power of man. He finds the end of a man, and that the end of a man is vanity. This, the end of a man, is the end of the earth. Here is where the war ceases. Whereas before the sinner was fighting against God, at war with heaven and in league with hell, now by the work of the Son of God, and the death which Jesus suffered, this war or opposition against God is ended, and he is reconciled to God through the mediatorial work of the Redeemer. This is the war that ceases, and it ceases only to those who have been brought to the end of the earth. He takes from us all our weapons of warfare so that we can no longer struggle against him. "He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder: he burneth the chariot in the fire." The reason many believe that their works save them is because they have never experienced the destruction of their weapons of war at the hands of the Lord. No one can believe in salvation by works who has witnessed the Lord making

wars to cease to the end of the earth. The Lord strips the sinner of all his works, he humbles his pride in the dust, he destroys all self-confidence and all fine spun theories and philosophies which have for their aim the elevation of the creature in the place of the Creator. It is no wonder the Lord's people believe wholly in salvation by grace, for the Lord has wrought a work of desolation in them, a work in which he has destroyed their spears and bows and chariots, so that they no longer can trust in their own defences, but must be still and know that he is God. No one is ever still, that is, ceasing his own ineffectual efforts, until the Lord makes him to be still, and creates within him the knowledge of God, through the destruction of all creature fortresses and selfsufficiency. The Lord destroys as he builds up. There is no such thing as growing in grace without at the same time growing out of self. In order to be built up in the faith that is God's elect's one must have had faith in one's own self destroyed. Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, but one never waits upon the Lord until he gets to that place where he can no longer wait upon himself. This, for that one, is the end of earth. Here every vain imagination is cast down, every idol shattered; the sinner is abject in the dust, wholly surrendered to the King of heaven, for God has destroyed all his weapons whereby he might longer fight, and has consumed all his strength, so that he could not fight had he still the weapons. Thus does God exalt himself among the heathen. One who is an unbeliever in God is a heathen, whether he dwell in Asia, Africa, Europe or America. None can convert the heathen but God himself. He does it through the operation of the Holy Spirit and the revealing power thereof in the soul and the life of the one who is a heathen. Self, and all the things of self: the mind and the will and the affections of self, are abased

that God shall be all in all. This is the way God exalts himself among the heathen. It is through these bitter things that God's people are taught to lie passive in his hand and know no will but his. Thus comes into the soul that final abolition of all war, the peace that passes all understanding, the peace that the world can neither give nor take away. Experimentally, God's people are taught that God's glory is advanced through their self-abasement. That which is exalted must be abased, and that which is abased must be exalted. God's plan of salvation leads downward instead of upward, downward into the abysmal depths of self-knowledge, that one may know what is the height of that wisdom and knowledge that is of God.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

WHERE IS THE CHURCH?

An inspired writer has said, "As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters." None who are born of God and taught by his Spirit can doubt that this figure is intended to describe the condition as well as the superior excellence of the church above the daughters. She is called the "Love, Dove, and undefiled" of her Beloved. The figure of a *lily* not only describes the modest beauty of the church, but shows, according to the instructions of our Lord, that her exceeding glory, although surpassing that of the regal splendor of Solomon, is not the result of her own labor. She toils not to procure it, she spins nothing that would answer for warp or for woof; her life is derived from an invisible Root, and her head is bowed under the genial rays of the sun. But she is not only like the lily as that flower stands gracefully in the field, or among other beautiful flowers, but she is like the lily among thorns. How truly does

the church of Christ answer to the figure in all its fullness of illustration! God has chosen her in a furnace of affliction, and she has ever, in her militant state, been among the rude briars and thorns. The earth, groaning under the curse of the righteous Creator, is destined to produce thorns and thistles, and while this world remains the temporary abode of the church she must encounter them. One of her most prominent sons prayed no less than three times that the thorn might be removed, but was referred to the sufficiency of the grace of God to sustain him and bear him through all the buffetings of Satan. To those who have discernment in spiritual things how admirably does the church contrast with that by which she is surrounded. All that the lily is of itself is merely grass of the field which today is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, but God has so clothed her as to challenge comparison with the most exalted glory of the earth. All flesh is as grass, and all goodness thereof [that is produced by human power, or the flesh, for all that is born of the flesh, whether physical or mental, is flesh] is as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away, but the Word of the Lord abideth forever. While the flower thereof, that is, the goodness of the flesh, or grass, may adorn the meadow, but, in common with the grass with which it is connected, it cannot survive the dissolution of the flesh, or grass; but God so clothes it (the church) in the garments of salvation as to secure the glory as an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and cannot fade away.

*"Defiled and loathsome as we are,
He makes us white and calls us fair,
Adorns us with that heavenly dress,
His graces, and righteousness."*

Consequently the church is enabled through grace to sing, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful

in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decked himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. (Isa. xli. 10.) She "is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold, she shall be brought unto the King in garments of fine needle-work." (Psalms xlv. 13.) All human beauty and creature excellency, compared with the church of the living God, which is the ground and pillar of the truth, is but as thorns. Zion is pronounced in the language of inspiration *the perfection of beauty*; it cannot, therefore, be improved. Earth has no colors, nor has creation charms to lend which would not obscure her beauty. And although her peculiar excellency appears not to the eyes of an adulterous generation, for except a man be born again he cannot see her, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned; still all her attractions are clearly apprehended by those unto whom the Spirit of God reveals her. To them she appears as the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven adorned as a bride for her husband. She looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Understanding these to be some of the general characteristics of the church of God, may we not inquire, Where may she be found at this day? We cannot consistently believe that Christ has no church on earth at the present day; and if he has a church now upon earth she must bear the lineaments which are drawn in the New Testament. We shall not find her at the corners of the streets, in harlots' attire, seeking for lovers; from her lips will not be heard the silly boast, "I have peace offerings with me, this day have I paid my vows." (Prov. vii. 14.) She cannot be recognized in any other dress

than the garments of salvation which her Lord has given her. The daughters spoken of, Isa. iii. 16-26, with their haughty carriage, stretched forth necks, wanton eyes, and mincing walk, making a tinkling with their feet, with their cauls, and their round-tires like the moon, their chains, and bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, and the rings, and nose jewels, changeable suits of apparel, mantles, and wimples, and crimping pins, glasses, fine linen, hoods, and veils, are only the thorns by which the lily of the valley is surrounded. "There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines and virgins without number; my dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bear her."—(Cant. vi. 8 & 9.)

In order to demonstrate the existence of the church of Christ on earth at the present day, we must find a community of saints corresponding to the primitive pattern, of eighteen hundred years ago—a people whose only beauty consists in the comeliness which Christ has put upon them—a people saved by the Lord who is the shield of their help and the sword of their excellency, and whose enemies are found liars unto them—Deut. xxxiii. 29) A people dwelling alone and not reckoned among the nations, with no governmental patronage from the powers of the world—a kingdom that is not of this world, nor visible to the world, because they are the sons of God; the world knoweth them not because it knew him not—A poor and afflicted people trusting in the name of the Lord—a persecutee people; for if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus he shall suffer persecution. Their names shall be cast out of men, and they shall be hated of all men for Christ's name sake. They are regarded as the offscouring of all things, accused and slandered in like manner as their divine Lord and

Master was; for if these things were done in the green tree they shall be repeated in the dry; if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub they will also call them of his household so. also call them of his household so.

These are only some of the outlines of the church of Christ. She is also characterized by her "*one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.*" Her faith is as radically different from that of every other professing people on earth as are her Lord and her baptism. Of her faith Jesus is the Author and Finisher; but that of all other religious bodies either originates with themselves or is derived from the doctrines, traditions, and instructions of men. But blessed is she, for flesh and blood hath not revealed these things to her, but her heavenly Father has taught her by his Holy Spirit. She is the opposite of all other sects in regard to her food, her appetite, and the source from which all her supplies are received. Others can and do eat their own bread and wear their own apparel; but she must eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus. Nothing short of the true Bread which came down from heaven, that kind which Moses never gave, can satisfy her; but her neighbors, or the thorns among which she is situated, do not see why the bread that Moses gave is not good enough.

Christ's church is a peculiar people, in all respects essentially different from the religionists of this world. She comprises a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation, and shows forth the praises of him who hath called her out of darkness and translated her into the kingdom of his dear Son. The doctrine which her faith takes hold of is that which cannot possibly suit any body else under heaven. And if there be any who have not passed from death unto life, who fancy that they can understand and love the doctrine by which the church of God is distinguished, they are deluded. As none knoweth the things of a man

but the spirit of a man that is in him, (for the spirit of man being taken from any man but a dead and unconscious corpse remains,) neither knoweth any man the things of the Spirit but the Spirit. And unless we be born of the Spirit, and that Spirit abide in us, we are as dead to all spiritual things, as the human body is to natural life after the animal spirit has departed. It is, therefore, quite as practicable to teach the tenants of the tombs the English grammar, or any science, as to teach the things of the Spirit of God to unregenerate men. The church of God, if found at all, will be found in possession of doctrine which cannot be taught by every or any man to his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord; it cannot be taught nor learned in Sabbath schools, or what are called theological schools; nor can it be derived from reading the bible, or hearing it expounded, even if Paul himself were the expounder, for the natural man cannot receive it; it is spiritually discerned. Every organized body of professors of religion who hold a doctrine which they can teach their unregenerate fellow-men is a branch of anti-christ; and the nature and attainableness of their faith proves that they have not the faith of God's elect, and that their faith stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. See 1 Cor. ii. 5. The primitive church acknowledged Christ as the only spiritual King, the true and only Potentate, who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can attain unto. That church cannot now be identified where Christ is not so regarded; nor is he so regarded by any church, sect, or people who hold that there is spiritual life anywhere else, or that the light in which he dwelleth can be approached. To approach is to make some advance towards the object; but this no man can do, as the members of the church of Christ know right well. The true church now, as in her primitive days, depends on God to

raise us, qualify, send forth, and sustain the ministers of the gospel. Those who heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, are not the church of Christ. To him who ascended up on high, who led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, they look for all the gifts which the church can need,—to him who reigns, being exalted a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins, and to him alone they look to bring sinners to repentance and to cause the redeemed of the Lord to return with singing to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads. To him who opened the doors of death, and rose triumphantly from the grave, who conquered sin and hell, they look for support, comfort, deliverance and victory.

Finally, the church of our Redeemer is the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

J. C. Philpot

“A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.”
Proverbs 22: 1

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR APRIL 1986

J. S. Granberry, TX.....	\$ 2.00
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Mrs. Olive Hastings, MD.....	5.00
Mrs. Gladys Wright, PA.....	7.00
Mrs. Gladys Philpott, VA.	
In memory of husband,	
Harley R. Philpott	20.00

MEETINGS

OLD PINE CREEK CHURCH

An Annual all day meeting will be held, the Lord willing, at Old Pine Creek Church on the 4th of July, 1986. The Church is located off highway - 221, five miles north of Floyd, Virginia. Those coming from Floyd, turn left onto road # 682. Those coming from Roan-

oke, turn right onto road # 682.

All lovers of the Truth are invited and especially all ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Hale Terry

PIG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Pig River Association will be held, Lord willing, the First Sunday in August, Friday and Saturday before, Aug. 1, 2, 3, 1986.

Bethel is the host church for this setting of the Association. The meeting place will be Rocky Mount High School, Rocky Mount, Virginia.

Come into Rocky Mount on 220 Highway and exit on to Highway 40 going west, take second street to left to the High School.

We invite all our Brethren and Sisters that are in peace and good standing at home to seat with us.

Jamie E. Cooper
Association Clerk

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."

Proverbs 9: 10

OBITUARIES

BROTHER RUFUS R. BROWN

At the request of Gills Creek Church I will attempt to write the obituary of our beloved Elder, Brother Rufus R. Brown.

Brother Rufus was born December 23, 1903, the son of Brother William and Sister Betty Brown. On September 21,

1921 he was married to Sallie Dillion and from this union was born fourteen children, of which two preceded him in death, (Tyler and Wilton Brown).

Sister Sallie preceded him in death on May 24, 1982. Brother Brown seemed to lose his desire to stay here any longer after Sister Sallie was called to rest. Brother and Sister Brown are missed by those who loved them, but are remembered with many kind affections.

Brother Rufus and Sister Sallie joined Bethel Primitive Baptist Church June 6, 1942. They moved their membership by letter to Gills Creek Primitive Baptist Church December 9, 1956. Brother Brown was ordained as a gospel minister July 11, 1959. He served as Assistant Pastor of Camp Branch Church from April 30, 1960 to July 6, 1963, when he was put in as Pastor. He also served as Pastor at Gills Creek and Canton Creek.

Brother Brown was called to rest December 22, 1985. His funeral was conducted at Lynch Funeral Home Chapel, Rocky Mount, Va. by Elders Amos Hash, Denver Simpson and Larry Hollandsworth. He was laid to rest at Cross Roads Church Cemetery under a beautiful mound of flowers.

He is survived by four daughters, Sister Zelma Reed, Mrs. Hattie Minter, Mrs. Jaunita Hodges, and Mrs. Barbara Hughes. Eight sons, Brother Warren Brown, Brother Edward Brown, Jake Brown, Curtis Brown, Willard Brown, Wilbur Brown, Doc Brown, and Joe Brown. Two sisters, Mrs. Harry (Maggie) Condiff and Sister Posey L. (Ella) Plybon. One brother, Mr. J.D. Brown. Forty-four grandchildren and thirty-three great-grandchildren.

Brother Albert Hudson, Clerk
Larry Hollandsworth, Moderator

Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.

Proverbs 3: 7

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

It is with a sad heart I attempt to write the obituary of our Dear Brother Clarence D. Brumfield. He will be greatly missed by our little flock at Strawberry Church.

He loved his church and was a faithful member, always ready to help do anything for the welfare of the church. He loved the friendship and fellowship of his brethren and enjoyed entertaining them in his home.

God called Brother Clarence home to Glory, June 27, 1985. He was born February 18, 1901, to Brother Luther F. Brumfield and Sister Dora C. Brumfield. He leaves to mourn his loss, his dear wife, Sister Margaret L. Brumfield, three sons, Shirley M. Brumfield, Charlotte, N.C., Horace D. Brumfield, Newark, Delaware and Wayne Brumfield of the home. One daughter, Mrs. Vivian B. Fraser, Cookeville, Tenn., two brothers, Matthew C. Brumfield, Chatham, Va. and Charles F. Brumfield, Danville, Va. Three sisters, Ruth Brumfield and Virginia B. McDowell of Danville and Lola B. Fuller, Mount Hermon, five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

His funeral was held at Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Chapel, Danville, Va. by Elder Lane Carter and Elder O. K. Tench and was laid to rest in Highland Burial Park, Danville, Va. beneath a mound of beautiful flowers to await the coming of his blessed Savior to gather his jewels home.

Brother Clarence was a firm believer in Salvation by Grace. We miss him so much, but we feel our loss is his eternal gain. May we bow in humble submission to his Holy Will, who works all things after the council of His Will, he never makes a mistake. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, Blessed be His name.

May the Lord, Bless, Comfort and

give reconciling Grace to his dear family.

Written by a Sister in Hope
Who loved him
Sister Gertie Holley

SISTER ELVA FOSTER

It has pleased our heavenly Father to remove from our midst, our beloved sister of whom we all loved so dearly. Her daily walk and actions showed us she believed in a sovereign and all wise God.

She was born Sept. 4, 1915 and departed this life March 8, 1986, making her stay on this earth 70 years.

She was married to Leonard Foster, December 29, 1934, to this union was born one daughter.

Her mother was Sophornia Brown and father was Jack W. Brown.

Sister Elva Joined Dan River Primitive Church July, 23, 1972. She was a strong believer and attended her church faithfully until she became disable to go.

She leaves to mourn, her husband, Leonard Foster of Rt. 2, Ruffin, N.C. and one daughter, Mrs. Shirly Grant, Ringgold, VA., also two granddaughters and one great-granddaughter.

We at Dan River Church extend our heartfelt sympathy to her family and loved ones.

We will all miss her presence, but feel she is in the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ where there will be no more pain, nor tears to shed, there she can give all the praise, honor and glory to Him.

Her funeral was conducted March 10, 1986 at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church by her beloved pastor, Elder

Kenneth Key and Elder Haywood Wray.

She was laid to rest beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Written by one who loved her,
Mildred Strader

SISTER PAULINE N. O'BRYANT

By the request of our brother deacon, I endeavor to write a few lines in memory of our beloved Sister Pauline Noah O'Bryant, whom the Lord saw fit to call from her earthly bonds February 23, 1986.

The funeral service for Sister O'Bryant was conducted at Hillsdale Primitive Baptist Church, where she was a member for over fifty years, with Elder B. D. Hutchens officiating.

Sister O'Bryant was united in marriage to the late Elder David Archie O'Bryant on December 14, 1919.

She left behind to mourn her loss, three sons: Irvin, Russell, and James O'Bryant, and one daughter, Barbara Ann Lewis, and a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Sister O'Bryant was a kind and gentle lady, well known for her hospitality to those who passed her way. Always cheerfully welcoming brothers, sisters and friends who were blessed to visit her home.

She loved her church and was faithful to attend the meetings as long as she was able. The last few meetings she attended was with the aid of a wheel chair.

Although she loved her family dearly, she expressed to her pastor her desire to go on to her heavenly rest. Thus revealing the surety of her faith and hope.

Sister O'Bryant was laid to rest in the cemetery at Hillsdale, there to await the coming of our Lord on that great and

wonderful day, when He shall return to carry His little ones home.

Although we miss her sorely, let us rejoice in the thought that our loss is her eternal gain; and bow to the will of our heavenly Father who doeth all things well.

Written by the request of Brother Hugh Knight, Jr., and approved by the church at the April conference meeting.

Florence Knight, Clerk

SISTER ELLA S. M. PICKRAL

Sister Ella Stephens McClanahan passed from this life, January 17, 1986. Sister Pickral was born March 17, 1889. She was the daughter of the late Sam Stephens and Lorador George Stephens.

Sister Pickral was a member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, Gretna, Va. She was received by experience November 11, 1911. She enjoyed coming to church when she was able. She loved the doctrine and was a faithful member.

Sister Pickral was twice married, once to the late Oscar McClanahan and the late Robert Pickral. She is survived by two sons; Connley McClanahan of Altavista and Robert L. Pickral, Jr. of Fort Richie, Florida. Several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Sister Pickral was laid to rest in the family cemetery at Pitsville, Va. Her funeral was held by Morris Cather.

Sister Ella will be sadly missed by all who loved her.

Written in love and hope-

Carol R. Pickral

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

**DEACON
HAROLD D. WEATHERFORD**

It is with much sadness that I endeavor to write this memorial of our dearly beloved Brother in Christ. Brother Harold was a kind and gentle person and an inspiration to those who knew him.

He was born on July 14, 1924 in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, and died February 8, 1986 at The Memorial Hospital, Danville, Virginia. He was the son of the late Deacon Harry Thomas Weatherford and Beulah Dix Weatherford. Both parents were members of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church and served their church faithfully as did Brother Harold.

On November 6, 1948, Harold D. Weatherford was united in marriage to Frances Thompson. Four children were born to this couple.

He is survived by his wife, Frances Weatherford of Danville, Virginia; daughter, Deborah W. Slayton of Danville, Virginia and Ramona Weatherford of Media, Pennsylvania; sons, Bryan Weatherford of Rocky Mount, Virginia and Scott Weatherford of Danville, Virginia; sister, Mrs. Mildred W. Hanks and brother, William T. Weatherford, both of Danville, Virginia.

Brother Harold joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on March 23, 1958 and was baptized on the fourth Sunday in May, 1958 by his pastor, Elder D. V. Spangler. He loved his church dearly and was a strong believer in the doctrine of salvation by grace.

On October 24, 1965 he was ordained a Deacon at Dan River Church and like his father before him held this office in high esteem and served the church with honor and dignity. In April 1967 he was appointed trustee of church property and also through the years served on the

cemetery committee. Brother Harold will be sorely missed, but as we recall the years, we can appreciate the fact that we had the privilege of knowing and being in the fellowship of this dear Brother. He loved to sing the old hymns, and was a leader of the song services for a number of years. During his illness, long after his memory was gone, he could still hum the tunes of certain hymns, like "Am I A Soldier of the Cross," even though he could not say the words. According to one of his sons it seemed as if this was his way of praising God at that particular time.

His funeral was conducted on February 10, 1986 at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church by Elder Kenneth R. Key and Elder Julian R. Williams. The body was laid to rest in the Dan River Church Cemetery to await the coming of our Lord. May God bless this lovely family and comfort and reconcile them as only He can do.

Written by request of Dan River Church in conference on March 22, 1986.

In Loving Memory,
John Collir, Jr.

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

Psalm 116:15

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DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

“The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon”

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA., AUGUST 1986

NO. 08

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Route 6, Box 84

Fayette, Ala. 35555

Phone (205) 695-7756

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566.

All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

I CORINTHIANS 13

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

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 me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

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EDITORIAL

"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband; but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones." Proverbs 12:4.

It is by the request of Elder W. D. Griffin that I fearfully attempt to write a little upon the above passage of scripture.

First, what are the attributes of a virtuous woman? A woman who is blessed with moral practices or actions, conformity to the standard of right. Moral excellence, integrity of character, uprightness of conduct. Blessed with virtues as faith, hope, charity, patience and humility, these being infused by God into human nature. In chapter 31 of Proverbs, Solomon credits a virtuous

woman with the following qualities: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy." "Strength and honor are her clothing; and she will rejoice in time to come." "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." "Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

When God first formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, he became a living soul. God planted a garden in Eden and placed the man (Adam), whom he had formed, in the garden. The Lord God saw that it was not good for the man to be alone; therefore made him a help meet by taking one of Adam's ribs making a woman and bringing her to him. She became bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. The maker of all things took measure of man's need and constituted woman a suitable complement: "Who can find a virtuous woman?" This seems to intimate that few of the daughters of men measure up to this standard. Woman is the complement of man, a necessary part and there is no standard by which her value can be expressed: an help meet designed and bestowed by God in heaven. "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

Woman's place is important; God has made it so and made her fit for filling it. Man is incomplete without her. There is a blank about him which she alone can fill; it is here that her great strength lies. Man, though made for the throne of the world, was found unfit until he got the woman as his help meet. She became the completion of his capacity and title, she

became his crown. May the woman ever be content with the place that God has given her; let her be what God made her, necessary to man, and not to make herself independent of him. When a woman assumes an independent or rival place, she mistakes her mission and her power. In her own place, her power has a great influence in human affairs; out of it, her efforts only reveal her incorrect position.

It is of immense importance that all who regard the word of God should not underestimate the genuine value of the female character. In the fallen state of human nature, it is no wonder that but few (compared to the multitude), either men or women, measure up to what they ought to be. But thanks unto God, there are some women who measure up and answer to the description of a virtuous woman. The adoption of the feminine character to be the companion of man is one of the best defined examples of that great wisdom which pervades creation. When the relations of the sexes move in fitting of truth and love, the working of the machinery of life is a wonder to man, and glory to the creator God.

A virtuous woman fears the Lord, will reverence her husband, manages her house well with prudence and care, is charitable to the poor, and is kind to all. She will make her husband as happy as she can by showing him great respect and honor, therefore she deserves to be compared to a royal crown, enriched with those lovely virtues which are so important to the welfare of her husband. The effect of her amiable behaviour will no doubt act as a cause to cheer her husband in all the affairs he has to be engaged in.

To give cause of suspicions is bad in a woman; also, to suspect without any cause is extremely ungrateful in a man. It should be the duty of a virtuous wife to make sure there is no cause ever for suspicion and it will be a pleasure to her husband. The harmony of hearts arising

from mutual esteem in husband and wife afford the most delightful pleasure which anything less than true religion can give, and when true piety in both is added, it is similar to a little heaven here on earth. The prospect of future happiness with the husband who has a virtuous wife makes his heart rejoice. The virtuous wife is as careful to please her husband by an even and sweet temper, as she is to manage her affairs with discretion. She will labor to be the same day after day, neither sickness, nor poverty, nor old age will dampen her love for her husband. If the husband should speak in a somewhat harsh manner to her, she will bear with him and forgive him.

When a virtuous woman opens her mouth to speak, it is a pleasure to hear her for she usually speaks with wisdom. She will find time to read the Bible and other good religious books, and will often pray to the Father to lead and guide her in her duties as wife and mother. Her children will have a high esteem for her as well as her husband.

The term virtuous is used by Boaz in referring to Ruth; he says; "And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doeth know that thou art a virtuous woman." Ruth 3:11. A virtuous woman's reputation is established and her life is spent in a useful manner. Her conversation is also prudent and pious, cheerful and friendly. Kindness and wisdom will influence what she says. She speaks according to divine law which requires love and gentleness.

"But she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones." This is a horrible contrast to that of a virtuous woman. We need not be too surprised at this as the best of things abused can become the worst. So we see that the woman who is lacking in virtue makes her "husband ashamed is as rottenness to his bones." She is not a help but more of a

torment to him. When a woman is not virtuous, she can in many ways become a shame to her husband by her company keeping, gossiping, tale bearing, contentiousness, or extravagance. She is like a disease which wastes away the bones. She can injure her husband's character and prevent the proper care of his family. Woman is the very element of home wherein all its relations and affections live and move. When that element is tainted, corruption will make its presence felt. Let the wives consider seriously whether they wish for happiness and honor to their husbands, or disgrace and misery; whether it is better for themselves to prove helpers to the joy and crowns to the head of their husbands or as living plagues to them. Also let the husband give honor to their wives and encourage them in virtue by their kindness and tender love towards them. As Christ so loved His bride, so ought husbands to love their wives.

Few men understand more of women than Solomon to whom God had given much wisdom. Solomon knew her fragility and her virtues. Why does not Solomon mention beauty in the character of a virtuous woman? Because when beauty is not sweetened by virtue, it alone cannot secure that love which it raises. True piety is the beauty of the soul, and can far excel that which is just an outward beauty. A fortune in a wife is better than a fortune with a wife. A virtuous woman is a true woman, chaste, prudent, modest, loving, faithful, patient in suffering, and brave in duty, keeping within the orbit of her sex and lighting it with the graces of womanhood. Such a woman is a crown to her husband. Her love for him is a deep resistless current running through her nature, it is a love that "will do him good and not evil." It is a sunbeam that continues through all their lives the same yesterday, today, and forever..

Husbands and wives are one; and

they are so looked upon in the minds of others, as to be in a certain measure, identified, the respect or disrespect, felt for the one, in many ways extends itself to the other. It is usually a good relationship when husband and wife feel themselves as one. Superiority and inferiority is not a household item to them, for authority seldom ever need to be asserted and subjection is never felt, the one being exercised, the other rendered in love.

A prudent wife is the Lord's valuable gift to such as He favors. We may picture to ourselves a virtuous woman. After many years, her children have grown up and married having children themselves. What comes into their minds concerning their virtuous mother? Their mother is constantly before their eyes. Her tender guidance, her wise counsel, her loving disposition, her good example, her prayers are all kept in memory, and they will no doubt attempt to train their children as they were trained.

Just a few words on the virtuous woman whose husband has been called to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. Very few people perhaps realize the many sacrifices that a virtuous minister's wife makes during his many years in the ministry. Words cannot express her value to her husband while attempting to serve the children of God. She most always goes with her husband, watching over him and to live for him is her greatest happiness. When he is feeling low because of some untimely remark or criticism toward him, she is the first to console him. She is his constant companion in all his duties as a servant of Jesus Christ. Many future plans, such as family reunions etc., may have to be passed over in order to be with her husband and to be doing what she considers her more important duty to perform.

May God be praised for giving so many ministers virtuous wives as help meets to encourage, console, and comfort them

in all their endeavors in serving the Lord's people. A prudent wife is the Lord's most valuable gift to such as He favors. The many wonderful qualities of a virtuous woman will be a crown to her husband as long as she lives, and will

bring many precious memories back to her husband as long as he lives.

In bonds of love,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



FOREST GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Forest Grove Old School Baptist Church, Parsonsburg, Wicomico County, Maryland, was constituted January 26, 1886, by nineteen members from Little Creek, Nassaongo, and Indiantown Churches. The meeting called Elder John W. Timmons as first pastor; he died three months later, on April 24, 1886. The present meeting-house, the second, was completed in 1898. We feel highly favored by our

Heavenly Father to have Elder Julian Williams as our pastor. Meetings are third Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

The Lord willing, we will have our yearly meeting third Sunday morning and Saturday evening before in September. Supper will be served Saturday at the Community Building in Parsonsburg. We invite all lovers of the truth to this, our anniversary meeting.

"A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."
Proverbs 22: 1

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22: 6

CORRESPONDENCE

Route 1, Box 101
Willis, Va. 24380
June 13, 1986

Dear Editors,

Please renew my subscription to the "Signs of The Times" for two years. Use the remainder where needed.

I don't get to go to meetings as often as I would like to, so I look forward to reading my Signs each month. I am yet able to go to meetings at my home Church for which I hope I am thankful to God. I know, unless He gives us a thankful heart, we are not able to thank Him for anything, but I hope to be found praising Him in all things.

Remember me when at the throne of grace.

A sister in hope,
Margaret Quesenberry

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor
Route 1, Box 65
Keeling, VA 24566

May 7, 1986

Dear Elder Williams;

Inclosed is a check for a two year subscription to the Signs. I would like to state this publication has brought me many moments of pleasure in seeking truth and light in the Scriptures. I commend the Editors and also the faithful subscribers in the work and loyalty involved which has been necessary to keep such a devoted and loyal publication alive for over a century and a half.

I am also inclosing a letter I received in 1946 from one of the dear Elders of the East, it was my good pleasure and fortune to have known. The letter was to

me, then a young man, very much interested in but not yet confirmed in the Primitive Baptist Faith. The letter is from Elder Arnold H. Bellows of the State of New York who later retired to the State of Maryland and if I am not wrong may have been connected with the Signs Of The Times in those past years. The letter has a great deal of personal feeling, I'm sure would be of no value to anyone else but there is a simple and beautifully revealing sermon contained in the body. At the time I received this letter I was not capable of understanding it's beauty so my devoted mother just tucked it away in the pages of her Bible where I came across it once again after her death.

I don't know if material like this has any place in the archives of The Signs publications but I thought I would offer it as my appreciation and love for those who have gone on before us.

In sincere Christian love and hope,

John T. Brooks
902 Maple Avenue
Torrance, CA 90503

West Hurley, New York
April 11, 1946

Dear friend John:

With many happy memories of meeting you in the past and hoping to meet you again many times. I am writing you a letter. I was much pleased to see you at the meeting at our home this winter and to note what you said about Communion. You were right in your attitude. One can commune with Jesus if he has never united with a visible church. All admitted you were right after you left the meeting. And we all believe that you know something of the Truth and have a love for it and an understanding of it. You will understand more and more of it from time to time as the Lord reveal it unto you, if such is His will, as I fondly trust.

You are one who thinks things out for yourself. You realize that God is all powerful or He would not be God. You also realize that He must be all-holy, as He requires holiness from man in his holy law. He has all knowledge and wisdom else He would not be God. He then knew the end from the beginning and so chose the entire church in the person of His son who was to come into the world in time to be born of woman that He might take upon himself our flesh as his mother was descended from Adam same as we are. God's holy law required or demanded that man live a holy life. Man cannot do this because of the weakness of the flesh and so man is condemned by the law of God and unless redeemed, must suffer under it. But Jesus came clothed in human flesh, being God in the flesh, and kept the law for all that believe on him of any nation or creed. The law condemned sinful man to death and damnation, and so Jesus died in the sinner's place and for him, and the sinner being chosen in Christ before the world was, died in Christ, so the sinner rose in Christ and lives in Him, and so death can have no permanent power over the believer, and the grave can not hold the body of the sinner a prisoner. The Bible teaches this, and I think you believe it. It is a wonderful comfort.

A man can not bring about his own birth into the world in any natural sense, and so a child of God can not bring about his own birth into the kingdom of God. He can not give life to himself when he is dead, nor can he give life to another who is dead in the grave. So you see when we are born into the kingdom of God, it is by the power of the Holy Spirit. Another power outside of ourselves, that is God, must bring about our birth. By just teaching certain things to a child will not make that child a Christian. One sinful man can not save another sinful man. It takes the power of Christ who was without sin to save a sinner. We cry be-

cause we have life, not to get it. When one really prays, it is a sign of spiritual life. The dead in the graves do not stir or show life naturally, and so the dead in sin must have some higher power act upon them before they can live. We believe in preaching to those that are alive from death in trespasses and in sin, and so we preach to feed the flock of God, not to make sheep, for that we can not do.

I see your mother occasionally. I do hope she recovers from her trouble or gets much better so that she will not be inconvenienced, if it be the Lord's will that she shall not entirely recover. I feel very anxious about her. She is a good woman and a true Christian, and we all esteem and love your father dearly.

I hope you will come to some more of our meetings, and you will always be welcome. I feel an interest in you, for I have known you from childhood.

My best wishes in which my wife joins go out to you in all things.

Trust in the Lord and know that He will not fail you in all the problems that face you in life.

Very sincerely,
Arnold H. Bellows

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

While I attempt to write to you a few of my thoughts of the past several days it is my hope and prayer that God will guide my every thought so that all that is written will be to his praise, honor and glory and will be edifying to his beloved children.

My thoughts have been concentrated upon the body of Christ, both natural or literal, and figurative or spiritual. We will consider the spiritual body first. In this sense the church is his body. (Eph. 1: 22, 23). He is the head and we are the body. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. 5:30). In Psalms 139:15 we read, "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made

in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, being yet unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them." The body of Christ has never been, nor will it ever be, imperfect, but it will remain unperfect until the last member in God's book is born. How anyone can believe that he can do something to get his name added to that book is more than I can understand, yet the Old School Baptists are the only ones who do not believe or preach that this can be done. "If this doctrine is true," say the others, "God is unjust. He should give everyone a chance." As for this poor sinner, I am glad that this is bible doctrine, because this is my only hope of ever reaching heaven and immortal glory: for the carnal mind of man is emity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Rom. 8:7). If my mind is enmity (hatred) against God, how can I possibly worship him as my Savior? But if my name is written there as a member of his body it shall never be broken off, for the scriptures were fulfilled that, "A bone of his shall not be broken." This is indication that no member shall ever be broken. If my name is not there I am still sure that God will give me my must reward - a place in hell - and his holy law approves it well.

The natural man receiveth not the things of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Cor. 2:14). The carnal mind is a part of the flesh, and we are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that Christ dwells in us; then do we have the mind of Christ and are enabled to receive and discern the things of God.

Now let us consider the natural body of Christ. "Forasmuch then as the children were 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." (Heb. 2:14). In the flesh all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Sin is the transgression of the law, and God's law being just and holy, it demands the death of the transgressor. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4). However, Christ stood as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world to make atonement and reconciliation for the sins of his children: but in his Godhead, being a part of the holy Trinity, he could not die; and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. (Heb. 9:22). Under the old Livitical law priests were ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin, but the sprinkling of blood of animals or the ashes thereof could in no wise make them nor the people perfect. Otherwise there would have been no need for the precious blood of Christ to be shed. But this service under the old law only pointed to the coming of Christ and eternal salvation. It was by his own blood, not by the blood of bulls or goats, that he entered the perfect tabernacle, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Because justice demands the shedding of blood, Christ must have a body from which the blood could flow. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. (Heb. 10:5). Notice that he was a body prepared, not that a body was prepared for him: and there is a vast difference. If he had only entered a prepared body and that body died, even on the cross, it would not have been Christ that died, but a body only in which he dwelt; and if Christ died not, then are we still in our sins. It was not an inanimate body that sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground in the garden of Gethsemane; that asked the Father to remove the bitter cup from him, but said, "Not my will, but thine be done;" that cried, "My God,

my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that commended his spirit back to the Father; but it was Christ himself in his office of mediator of the new covenant and high priest of his people, who had come, not to do his own will but the will of the Father. And what is that will? "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John 6:39). It is by the will of God that we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, and by this offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. (Heb. 10:10, 14).

All of us were at one time under the curse of the law and condemned to die, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Great indeed is the mystery of the birth of Christ in the flesh. The natural mind of man cannot in any wise comprehend it. "Now the birth of Christ was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary, a virgin, and she conceived and brought forth a son. Therefore he is rightly called the son of man and the son of God, or the Man-God. Joseph knew this child could not be his own, and therefore he sought to put Mary away privately. But an angel informed him from whence this child did come, and said, "And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." To do this it was necessary for him to be born of a woman that he might become flesh and blood; that he be born under the law, for if he were not under the law, then how could he fulfill it? And it was necessary that it should be fulfilled to a jot and a tittle. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy but

to fulfill." The prophets of old foretold the coming of Christ and all that he should do, but they understood it not, nor was it revealed to them: but unto us it is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Christ has ever been with God: there is no beginning to his existence. He was with God when it was said, "Let us make man in our own image." Therefore the birth of Christ in the flesh is indeed a great mystery, but this is the way that God prepared him a body. I do not say there was no other way, but according to the scriptures this was the way it was accomplished, and by faith we believe it is so. By faith we also believe that he suffered and died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. The Just died for the unjust. How can justice be satisfied with this? All of God's attributes are perfect. One of them cannot outweigh or override the other. We know that God hath loved us with an everlasting love and that he is continually merciful unto us; but his perfect law demands perfect justice, therefore justice must be satisfied. When one is found guilty of a crime worthy of death and is sentenced to die, would justice be satisfied with the death of an innocent one in the room and stead of the guilty? Surely not. Taking the life of the innocent one would only be murder, and the guilty one would not be less guilty nor any less worthy of death. However, I think no one would deny that the Innocent Lamb of God died for the guilty when he shed his precious blood on Calvary. This being true, the question arises, was justice satisfied, and, if so, how? Yes, truly, justice was completely satisfied, and Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. 3:13). God laid our sins upon his beloved Son, who paid the price demanded by justice and we were freed from the demands of the law. The answer to the second part of the question, How? is

found in the first portion of this letter: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Christ being the head, and the church his body, when he died we also died with him; for the body cannot live without the head: and justice can demand no more than death. By the grace of God we have been freed from the curse of the law and from sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin. The death of Christ would mean nothing to us however if he had not risen victorious over death and the grave. God hath raised him up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. (Acts 2:26). "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his own power." (I Cor. 6:14). "In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Heb. 2 .17). Christ was made like unto sinful man, but without sin, and when the blessed Saviour shall return again he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. (Phil. 3: 21).

Beloved brethren, this is my hope, if I truly have a hope, and how sweet it is at times. And I desire to say with David, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Brethren, I wish I could have written all of my thoughts unto you as they were given to me, for they have caused me great pleasure. However, the few thoughts that I have presented are for your prayerful consideration. Only if God is in the matter will you be edified or rejoice in them. I ask that you receive them only as far as they are sustained by the holy scriptures.

May all praise be unto God, and remember me when at the throne of his grace.

C. C. Wilbanks

MEETINGS

ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The next Session Convenes with Pilgrim Rest Church. Located off Highway 167 north of Fordyce, Arkansas. Take Highway 273 about one-half mile to Church.

Session beginning on Friday before the 3rd. Sunday in September, 1986. September 19, 20, 21 beginning at 10:00 A.M.

Elder John C. Tounby,
Moderator

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the Smith River Association is to be held with Salem Church. Located in Floyd County, Virginia on Road # 221, between Copper Hill and Check, Virginia.

Beginning on Friday before the first Sunday in September, 1986.

We look forward to meeting our lovely Brethren and Friends there.

Yours in Hope,
Amos I. Hash

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

The South Ouachita Primitive Baptist Association is scheduled to convene with Newhope Church the fourth Sunday in September (25, 26, 27, 1986) Friday and Saturday before. Newhope Church is located near Spearsville, La. in Union Parish.

All lovers of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ are invited to visit and worship with us.

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

FALLS OF THE TAR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Church met in conference for the Ordination of Brother James Bunyan Pridgen as Deacon.

Elder W. L. Everette opened conference with song and prayer.

A Presbytery was formed consisting of Elder D. B. Stokes, Elder W. L. Everette, Licentiate Lester Eason and Deacons Thomas Pennington, Clyde Pridgen, James Arrington and M. D. Simmons, Jr.

A motion was made and approved for Elder D. B. Stokes to serve as Moderator.

A motion was made and approved for Sister Frances Arrington to serve as Clerk.

The Candidate was presented to the Presbytery by Deacons Clyde Pridgen and M. D. Simmons, Jr.

The charge was made by Elder D. B. Stokes, Elder W. L. Everette and Licentiate Lester Eason.

The candidate was charged to work as a Deacon, having the love of God in his heart; to sacrifice self for the church. He was told he would not feel worthy, that he would make mistakes, but God, with his infinite power, would take care of all things.

Elder Stokes read from I Timothy, 3rd Chapter.

He then charged him to be a servant, to work in harmony with the brethren as much as possible, but to stand up for his convictions when necessary. He charged him to strive for peace in the church, also for his wife Dora to help him and for them to work for the Glory of God.

Elder Everette bid him Godspeed.

The Presbytery laid hands on the candidate and the Ordination prayer was given by Elder D. B. Stokes, Elder W. L. Everette and Licentiate Lester Eason.

Deacon James Bunyan Pridgen was returned to the church by Deacons Clyde

Pridgen and M. D. Simmons, Jr.

It was moved and agreed for the minutes to be read.

It was moved and agreed the minutes be approved.

It was moved and agreed that conference adjourn.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
Frances Arrington, Clerk
June 8, 1986

PRESBYTERY FORMED AT REHOBETH CHURCH

June 7, 1986 was a special day at our church, Rehobeth, in Union County, Arkansas.

Several churches of South Arkansas and North Louisiana met for the purpose of presenting Brother Charlie Fox as a candidate for deaconship of Rehobeth Church. After singing several beautiful hymns to the praise of our God and a wonderful prayer by Elder George Jones a Presbytery was formed of four ministers and seven deacons.

Elder Graydon Smith served as moderator and Deacon Clifford Wilbanks was chosen as clerk. Prayer for the ordination was voiced by Elder Clovis Townley. Brother Fox was presented to the presbytery for consideration by Deacon Doyle Murphy. Bro. Fox was deemed a worthy candidate for the office of deacon. The laying on of Hands was done by the following Elders: David E. Turner, George Jones, Clovis Townley, Graydon Smith, and the following Deacons: Fred B. Murphy, Clifford Wilbanks, Frank Pilgreen, C. C. Barron, Doyle O. Murphy, Alvin Fox and John Smith. Bro. Fox was given the charge by Elder Turner and returned to the church as a full deacon.

The right hand of fellowship was given to Deacon Fox and his wife, Estelle, by the entire congregation.

Doyle O. Murphy
Smackover, Arkansas

 ARTICLES

I CORINTHIANS XV. 58

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

A sister in Ohio has requested that we write on the above Scripture. It is evident from her letter before us that she is distressed by the indifference to truth and godliness manifest among some professing to be Old School or Primitive Baptists. God forbid that we should sit in judgment upon our brethren, or lightly esteem those for whom Christ died, for our most precious moments have been when sitting at the feet of the brethren and the banner over us was love. We have listened to the heavenly theme of salvation by grace, and have seen Jesus exalted, and have loved the brethren so that we felt we could give our life for them. Then we felt our heart was fixed, and, like Ruth, we were steadfastly minded. We were sure these people were our people. Beloved brethren, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind;" there can only be true steadfastness where there is faith that works by love. Blessed souls they are who are possessors of this love: God's love. Such are easy to be entreated, and possess a willing mind. They want to be found in the Way, the good old way. This love constrains them, so that their walk and conversation are becoming; it "doth not behave itself unseemly." Where this precious love is shed abroad in the heart there is a right conception of truth and godliness, for it "rejoiceth in the truth," and the word of God is their criterion. It beareth all things, believeth, hopeth and endureth all things according to the word of God. One with such love may be deceived for

awhile by those who profess love to them, but the true test is, What think ye of the Beloved, and what is his word, his work, to you? for do not I love them that love thee? We are not commanded to love everybody, nor to fellowship anything contrary to God's word. If there are brethren for whom we have professed love and fellowship there can but be a desire in our hearts for them and their welfare, and a questioning as to the spirit that we ourselves possess. Are we prompted by love? Has love through all our actions run? We hear of many up and down this land denying this doctrine or subscribing to that, but we never hear of a poor sinner who has suffered under the condemnation of God's holy law, and God's grace has reached him, lightly speaking of grace. We mean the grace of God that bringeth salvation and worldly lusts. In the living of this grace there is a sure defence of the truth. Paul says, "Be ye steadfast." Where love is, there is the best ground for brethren to be rooted steadfast in the apostolic doctrine. "Unmoveable." There are many things calculated by Satan and his angels to move the child of God. Bonds and afflictions abide them, but Paul says, "None of these things move me." Faith looks beyond the things that are seen, it has respect unto Him who has promised, knowing that he who has promised is able to perform. Some to-day are not asking for the old paths where is the good way, but rather are departing from them, and are inclined to try and remove the ancient landmarks, but the Lord still reigns, and in his purpose there has always been a sifting of his people. In that sifting the chaff will go, but not a grain of wheat will fall to the ground. Sometimes there is a shaking by various winds of doctrine, but that which is steadfast cannot be shaken, therefore remains. The church is being sifted to-day, there are those in it who do not belong there, for by their fruit ye shall know them. While some

are denying the doctrine, others hold the form of sound doctrine whose lives are unbecoming, and in some cases, we fear, they appear to hide behind predestination. Remember the accountability of men and devils is just as truly set forth in the word as the predestination of God, and he who would hide behind predestination in his wickedness is out of the secret. There is in this day in many places a conformity to the spirit of this world, and wherever this is so the understanding becomes dull in the things belonging to godliness. The conscience is less tender and the affections cold, sin is not the burden it once was to the soul, and there is little crucifying of the old man and his deeds. Again, in this day there is an absence of spiritual conversation as brethren assemble together, and often worldly topics, foolish talking or jesting take its place. Paul Says, Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." We are called to glory and virtue, and in learning of Christ there is of necessity a putting off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

But to return to our subject. Throughout the whole of the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians, Paul is dwelling upon the resurrection of the dead, There were some among the Corinthian Church who said there was no resurrection of the dead. Such denial, if true, would remove all "hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Therefore Paul begins by declaring what he had delivered unto them, and states that his testimony was according to the Scripture. He makes mention particularly that he had testified of Christ's burial and resurrection, and then mentions many witnesses, including himself, and he informs them that the greater part of the said witnesses were still living, while some had fallen asleep. From the substance of the

whole chapter it is easy to discern that the closing verse is an admonition to the brethren to be steadfast in the doctrine, especially in the resurrection of the dead. To us the resurrection is a glorious, soul-cheering theme, too high for mortals to comprehend and too profound for controversy. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and while it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we hope we are not deceived when we say that there is that within us that says, like Paul, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." There are two ways of denying the resurrection: one verbally, that is, with our mouths, and the other by our walk and testimony in divine things. From verses thirty-three and thirty-four we have reason to think there were those in the Corinthian Church who denied the resurrection in their corrupt and unrighteous walk. Whilst there are none to our knowledge among the Old School Baptists who deny the resurrection verbally, yet there are those who deny it in their walk and conversation. The scriptural record is simple, and is sufficient condemnation to any who might verbally deny the resurrection, but it is our intention in this article to warn the brethren against such who say that Christ lives, yet deny him in their lives. Paul says, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received." Has there been anything delivered unto us? Have we received the truth that Jesus died, and that he died for our sins, and that he was buried and arose the third day for our justification? If we have received this we have received the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and we have in us evidences of a new birth, also of a deliverance from the law and its penalties by the body of Christ. We have evidence of the resurrection powers, for we

have risen by the operation of the gospel in us from under the condemnation of the law to the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free. The Scripture fits us then where Paul says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, and it can truly be said of us, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," so there is now a new man in Christ Jesus. There may be those who would say that the resurrection power manifest in this new man is all the resurrection he will know. Whosoever they are they certainly place themselves in the same error as Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already, thus overthrowing the faith of some. There is a resurrection still ardently desired by the new man, which we hope to show as we proceed. This new man is distinct from the old man, for it is a heavenly creation, created after God in righteousness and true holiness, yet it is the sinner that is born again, it is the sinner that is saved. Let us consider the new man "according to the scriptures," for while our hope is that we shall bear the image of the heavenly, we do not yet see ourselves in this heavenly image. This new man has a mouth, for he says, Thy word was found, and I did eat it, &c. What is this mouth? it is not the mouth of the natural man. He has a nose with which he smells the heavenly fragrance of the vine with its tender grapes; it delights to smell the unction of grace. He also has eyes with which he sees Jesus crowned with glory and honor; he also sees his calling. He has an ear also that hearkens to the truth and hears the voice of the good Shepherd, but it knows not the voice of a stranger. He has a heart that is a new heart, and it is with this heart that he believes unto righteousness. He has hands with which he gathers the handfuls of purpose that fall for him in the gospel field; he also clings to Christ, the blest angel of life,

saying, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. He has feet that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. With these feet he can run and not be weary, and walk and faint not. None of us can describe what this new man really is, but we know and can positively testify that as is the heavenly so are they that are heavenly (present tense), and we thank God it is written, as we have borne the image of the earthy (which image we have borne and are bearing), so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly. Lest any should say we have separated the new man from the sinner we will proceed further. This mortal body is the dwelling-place of the new man. Paul says we have this treasure in earthen vessels, also bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. By the quickening of our mortal bodies by the Spirit dwelling in us there is a painfulness, an anxiety, a questioning and a declaration, "O wretched man that I am," &c. Paul tells of an experience in which he saw things unlawful to be uttered, and he says, Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell. Many of the saints have had experiences similar to Paul, but while here in this time state they are in the body. There are also joys experienced, so that our whole body is filled with praise, and our mouth utters what our heart feels, and our eyes shed tears of joy. All this is not an expression of the old man, but of the new, and the sinner is the new man. The old man is crucified, for they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust. There is not one sinful inclination of the sinner but what the new man mourns over and would have it otherwise. This makes him long for cleansing blood, and he deplores his vileness, and will ever do so as long as he bears the image of the earthy. If the mind of man could be put in a beast it would not be satisfied, but would aspire to be equal with man, yet

having the mind of man he would feel more humiliation because he had a beast's likeness, which humiliation would not cease until he was in the likeness of man. So it is with us, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, and until this comes to pass the saying that is written is but a "saying." But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the "saying" that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory," and this victory is through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Elder George Rustin

Williamstown, Kansas
Jan. 9, 1924.

Dear Brethren Editors:

I feel quite unworthy to address you as brethren, but I trust you can bear with me. I have felt somewhat impressed to write a few lines for your consideration, and if you think it will be of comfort to any poor child of grace you are at liberty to publish it; or if for any reason you prefer not to publish it, it will be all right with me. The Scripture which I desire to notice can be found in Solomon's Song v. 4: "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him." The writings of Solomon, as well as all other writers of divine testimony, are laid deep in divine wisdom, and can be understood only as it pleases our God to reveal them unto us. But when we read what any of the divine writers say concerning the hand of God it creates within a feeling of reverence to his most holy name, for we know that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? The writing of this wise man is especially in-

teresting, as well as comforting, to the dear people of God, because, first, he represents the bride, the church, as well as every member in particular; second, because he seems to be holding such sweet and close communion with his beloved, and the interchange of compliments as passed between them will not be regarded as flattery on either side, but as words spoken openly from a pure and honest heart. Many of the expressions of Solomon lead us back in memory to our own experience when first we saw ourselves lost and ruined sinners. "Look not upon me, because I am black," he says, How well do you, child of God, remember how awful was the scene when first your eyes were opened to see the corruption of your own heart. No one could frame words to suit your feelings better than these of Solomon: "I am black," not fit to be looked upon even by my fellow-men, much less by the pure eyes of God. And what a surprise we were to ourselves when we first say ourselves thus. We had spent our lives in fancied security, feeling nothing of the weight and stench of sin, neither did we know anything of the joys of salvation. We may have spent our lives in innocent pastime, or honest toil, or we may have plunged deep into pharisaical religion with earnest zeal, and thought we were verily doing God service, or we may have been outlaws, fearing neither God nor man, and seeking nothing but selfish interests; whatever our former walk of life, this one thing is certain: we never had seen ourselves so black, so sinful. Hence I say, what a surprise when the light shined within and revealed all the blackness of our polluted heart. Our whole being seemed but one polluted mass. We may have regarded our former conduct as exemplary and above reproach, but notwithstanding this with all this display of blackness and darkness we can only cry, unclean, unclean. We pause and look backward now upon our past life,

and we find it is one continuous scene of sin and transgression against a just and holy God. It is quite common with the Lord's people when they arrive at this stage of their experience to feel that something is due on their part; in fact, they feel that something must be done to appease the righteous indignation of God or they are lost world without end. We sought to win the favor of God by trying to keep the commandments, but found we could not do that. We sought to do good, but learned that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. We sought to appear clean, but found we could not bring a clean thing out of an unclean. In all of our efforts, no matter with what zeal or energy they may have been put forth, this awful truth stood preeminently above every thing else: "I am black." Thus every dear child of God is made not only to see himself a sinner, but he is made to confess the same. It pervades his very nature, he feels it lurking in his every move, motive or ambition. In a word, he realizes he is lost, ruined and undone, as one having no hope, and without God in the world. Dear child of God, can you remember when you came to this stage of your travail? Or can you remember ever having begged for mercy until you were brought right here? The Scriptures abundantly testify that salvation is by and through the mercy of God. It is therefore necessary that we be brought down low, so low that we will even smite upon our breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is necessary that we be made to feel a real conviction of sin before we can pronounce God "just" in our condemnation. Indeed it is the design of God to teach his people the all important lesson that we are vile and full of sin, and he is full of truth and grace; that we should put our trust in none but him. As long as we were trusting in our own works, as long as there was a straw, as it were, for us to cling to, that was our hope, but, "as an eagle stir-

reth up her nest," these straws are removed little by little, until we are finally brought to see that our nest, our old resting place, where we were nurtured and brought up, is no longer a place of repose for us. Our old nest of fancied security has become decidedly uncomfortable to us. The little eagle when he is thus deprived of everything, so to speak, finds himself alone upon the high precipice of the mountain, a yawning chasm before him, no food in sight, and apparently forsaken of the parent bird. He feels that he must do something. He plunges forth, but alas he finds he is too weak, his wings have not the strength to bear him to safety. Down, down, until death seems his certain doom, when oh, to his glad surprise, the parent bird comes beneath, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them and beareth them on her wings, and by her own strength, to safety. So the Lord alone did lead Jacob. So our "beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door." Thus it is our heavenly parent that stirs up our nest. He shows us we are sinners, and shows us we are helpless to recover ourselves from that state. Indeed we come to the very place where we can see no hope of salvation, and as we give up all for lost we are given the sweet realization of the fact that his everlasting arms are underneath, and, as Solomon expresses it, "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." What joy and surprise to us who have seen ourselves so black, not to hear our Beloved address us as, "My love, my fair one." But such is the complete work of our Beloved, our Redeemer. He gave himself for his bride, his church, his beloved, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect." Through virtue of his perfect work he persists in his attitude towards his beloved, and says, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." Had not

our Beloved put in his hand, this gracious state never could have been attained to by us. "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door." "Of the door," are words written in italics, signifying they were supplied by the translator, and I fail to see how they add anything to the weight or importance of the subject. I am at a loss to know how to construe those three words in harmony with the subject matter of the text. But, "My beloved put in his hand by the hole." I think this will apply to our experience better if we say this hole is a horrible pit, such as he found David in, or the great chasm from which he delivered the little eagles, for in such places is where he finds all his little ones. The horrible pit, the miry clay, how well we remember those places; that helpless condition we were in we can never forget. Here indeed our Beloved put in his hand. He inclined unto us; he heard our cry; he took us up also out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set our feet upon a rock; he established our goings. He put a new song in our mouth, even praise unto our God. The hand of our Beloved did this. Our consolation is in the fact that as he did for Jacob, for Solomon and for David, so he does for all his little ones, for his mercy endureth forever. Men may boast of their progress and advancement in religion, but God's people know we are just as helpless as any of those whom he has set for an example to us. Dear trembling child, your condition was just as hopeless and just as deplorable as any of those, and many more who are mentioned in the Scripture, but your deliverance is just as complete as was theirs, for the hand of the same Beloved that was "put in" their case is "put in" in your case. You may have thought, perhaps you now feel, that you have strayed too far in the waste howling wilderness of sin; or you may feel that you are black, so black that you fear your Beloved will never look upon you, or you may have felt that you are in

the pit so deep and are so begrimed with the miry clay that he never would take up such an one as you, but he was there with them, he is there with you, his hand is stretched out still. You may feel that you are small, indeed you may feel that you are very small, but we have not read in the Scripture of anything that is too small or too great for our God to perform his wonders upon it. "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." This means you, dear child of grace. An isle naturally is a small body of land entirely surrounded by water. How well this represents the afflicted and poor people of God. The waters, an emblem of tribulation and distress and affliction, they surround God's people on every hand. The beloved apostle has said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." These he taketh up, and, like David, their feet are set upon a rock, and, like him, they sing a new song, even praise unto our God. Sometimes we falter in our uneven journey here, when trouble and distress roll in upon us, when we are stricken with grief or burdened with sin, but let us not be discouraged, for the hand of our Beloved is there. He measured the waters in the hollow of his hand. Our afflictions and distresses are measured to us, dear child of God, and each of us will drink just as they are measured to us by the unerring hand of God, and he alone doth know the full measure of our cup. It is enough for us to know his hand is there. He has declared by the prophet Zechariah, "I will turn mine hand upon the little ones," signifying that his hand covers ever one of them. They are all in his keeping, and their steps are all ordered by him. Our race is set before us. It therefore becomes us who are running in this race to be ever looking unto him who is the author and finisher of our faith. Yes, his hand is turned upon his little ones. The imprint

of every one is there on the palms of his hands, there is no danger of these falling away and being eternally lost, as we are sometimes told they may, or hear him say, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Truly it pleases him to sometimes lay his hand heavily upon us, but have we received good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not also receive evil? In all his dealings with us, his people are made to confess that he is just and righteous in all his ways. By this we know that all things work together for good to those who love him, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Truly indeed our Beloved put in his hand by the hole. Hence he says by the prophet Isaiah, "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."

Time and space forbid enlarging further upon this sublime subject. Time and language would fail me to speak of all the wondrous work of the hand of our Beloved, but it may be briefly comprehended in this: He worketh in all things after the counsel of his own will. May we all be humbled under his mighty hand, and upheld by his mighty hand, and may we join in the song,

*"Resistless Sovereign of the skies,
Immensely great, immensely wise,
My times are all within thy hand,
And all events at thy command."*

L. L. Schenck.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

REVELATION III. 20.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."

At the command of Christ, the glorious One whom John saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, the apostle wrote a message to each of the angels of the seven churches which were in Asia. Every one of these seven churches was a Gentile church. Therefore, the messages are especially adapted to the needs and conditions of the gospel church in this age of the world, an age in which the elect from among the Gentiles are being brought into the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. It seems to us that these seven churches in Asia represent the seven ages of the gospel church, beginning at the end of the time of the apostles and extending down to the end of gospel dispensation, the last age being the Laodicean period of the church's history. It is at the close of the Laodicean period that the bridegroom is to stand at the door and knock. Beginning with the message to the church at Ephesus, we have given us here a history of the Church's travel throughout this day, or age, of grace. If we had wisdom enough to tell just when the Ephesian age ended and the Smyrna age began, just when the Smyrna age ended and the next began, and so on down to the end of the Laodicean age, we could then tell the exact day and hour at which the Bridegroom shall stand at the door and knock. This can never be done by mortal man. No man, however wise, is able to take the centuries of history and divide them up into periods so as to exactly fit the prophecies of Scripture. To do so would enable such a man to tell at what moment the Bridegroom shall come, would enable him to

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date the appearing of Jesus to his people. That kind of proceeding would entirely displace faith and put the matter within sight. This can never be in the world, for the people of God must walk by faith, and not by sight. But while we cannot delimit the boundaries of the ages with such exactitude, we can, God helping us, glean some of the spiritual truth contained in these seven messages from Christ to his churches. To begin with, there have been but thirteen apostles, and there never will be any more than these: the twelve apostles to the gospel church among the Jews, and the one apostle to the Gentiles. Some think that Matthias, chosen to take the place of Judas after his death, was merely a filler-in until Paul appeared, and that upon the coming of Paul into the apostleship Matthias dropped out of sight, thus making Paul the twelfth apostle. We cannot see the matter in this light. There were twelve apostles to the twelve tribes of Israel. Aside from these, there is one to the Gentiles, and Paul is that one. Now, it was not strange that immediately after the apostles' day certain men should arise claiming to be apostles, and claiming their right to legislate for the church in matters of doctrine and practice. These men were impostors, and there were those of God's people who were not deceived by any such representations on the part of these men. In the first message, which was to the church of Ephesus, Christ commends that church for detecting the false claims of the would-be apostles. "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." There were other things about the church in that Ephesian age which were not to be commended. It had left its first love. This was regrettable, and Christ condemned this falling away from first love; but, on the other hand, the church in that age was endued with patience, it labored in the cause of truth, it did not faint nor become weary

in well-doing, and it could not endure them that were evil.

The message to the church of Smyrna plainly indicates that age of the church in which it suffered martyrdom for the cause of truth. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The expression "ten days" is not to be taken as meaning literally ten days of twenty-four hours each, as we count time, but it signifies a definite period fixed by the Head of the church (it may have been ten years or ten tens of years) during which the gospel church was to be persecuted and suffer martyrdom for the truth.

The message to Pergamos plainly indicates that age of the church succeeding the previous age of martyrdom, a time when the church ceased to be troubled so much by persecution from without, but a time when false doctrine reared its ugly head among the ranks of the professed followers of Jesus. "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam." "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." It is a peculiar mark of church history that purity in doctrine coincides generally with those ages in which the church endured severe afflictions, laxity in doctrine, and the inroads of heresy coincide with those times in which the church was at rest and more or less at ease.

The outstanding mark of the church in the Thyatira age seems to have been that the woman Jezebel was suffered to teach, that she called herself a prophetess, and that she seduced the ministry to commit fornication, and caused them to eat things sacrificed to idols. This was an age when the churches experienced great searchings of heart by the Spirit of God, it was a time when those who could

not be beguiled by this false woman and who could not receive her doctrine were commanded to hold fast that which they had already received by revelation from God, and to know nothing other than they had been taught by the Holy Spirit. This woman Jezebel does not simply mean a person or individual who was teaching at that time, but Jezebel is a generic name, signifying a diabolical false teaching abroad in the land at that time.

The especial mark of the church during the Sardis age seems to have been that she had a name to live, but was dead. This means that the church was professing to be the church of Jesus Christ, but that for many of them it was nothing more than a dead profession: a religion without a soul, faith without works. As the ages succeeded one another, the opprobrium which at one time attached to being called a "christian" wore gradually away, and it came in time to be a badge of respectability. Therefore many attached themselves to the church and professed to be christians who had never been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and who were utterly strangers to the actual life and experience of true religion. This was the condition of things in the Sardis age. Many had the name, but were really dead. However, not so all of them. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

This brings us to the Philadelphia age of the church. Like all the other ages which we have briefly and hurriedly outlined, we cannot tell what year it began nor what year it closed, but it was that age which was the cleanest and purest of all the church ages since the days of the apostles. In this period an open door into the sacred mysteries of God was set before the saints and there was such liberty of understanding and of utterance given the ministry of the Word as has

not been the case since that day. It was a good time in which to have been alive, but it has passed and the Laodicean period is upon us.

The Laodicean period is the last age of the gospel church; that is, of the gospel dispensation. It is a period when the church is neither cold or hot, but is lukewarm; a time when the love of many waxes cold, when enthusiasm and zeal flag and when spiritual winter holds the church in its icy clasp. We are not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but it has seemed to us that the church of Jesus is passing through the Laodicean period right at this time. How long it is to last we cannot tell, but at its close the Bridegroom will stand at the door and knock. Then, and not until then, will the winter be over and gone and songs of praise and adoration ascend upward to the most high God of our salvation. "I sleep, but my heart waketh," say the bride in the Song of Solomon. Being asleep, she is inactive, there is no spiritual exercise, life is dormant. She is not dead. Her heart is awake. Christ is her heart, and he never slumbers nor sleeps; but there are times when the saints of God sleep, times when they cannot talk nor think nor read of spiritual things, times when they have no manifestation of divine things, and no enjoyment in them. To be in such a case is to be right where the Laodicean church was. At such times only one thing can wake her up, that is the coming of the Bridegroom. At his appearing she awakens into activity. The singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle, the speech of love, is heard in her head. She says, "Stir not up, nor awake my love, till he pleases." No power under heaven can ever stir up nor awaken spiritual animation in the church of the living God until the Bridegroom, Jesus, comes. Let him but knock at the door and instantly she is all aflame with love, wide awake, eager for his coming. Whatever business or cares she may have

been engaged in, these are hastily laid aside, forgotten, all earthly cares and considerations drop away when he knocks at the door. "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone." But, at the end of the lukewarm Laodicean church age, when he shall knock at the door, he will not withdraw himself and be gone. No, but then unto all who hear his voice and open the door, that is, unto all his elect people (for none others can hear, and none others can open) he will come in and sup with them and they with him. In other words, right here fits in the Scripture in 1 Thess. iv. 15-18: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Thus shall the Bridegroom come, and thus shall his saints when he knocketh open unto him, thus shall they sup with him, and he with them. At his appearing they shall appear with him in glory, shall see him as he is, and be like him. They shall be raised forever above the reach of all terrestrial things. There is but one really soul satisfying experience which the saints of God have while journeying through this world, and that is the appearing of Jesus. At such times, "or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." Such seasons, rare and

splendid, are but foretastes of what is to come, of that glorious and wonderful time when we shall awake with his likeness, to be satisfied, not for a moment only, but forever and forever.

Elder H. H. Lefferts

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MAY 1986

Donald R. Arrington, NC.....	\$ 2.00
Julian Nolan, SC.....	20.00
Mrs. J. L. Marze, LA.....	5.00
Kineth Hollandsworth, LA.	2.00
E. R. Fraves, AL.....	3.00
Raymond Clayton, KY.....	7.00
A. R. Patterson, LA.....	10.00
Elder Noel Conner, VA.....	5.00
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Mrs. John O. Mitchesl, VA.	7.00
William L. Neal, NC.....	7.00
Mrs. Lora B. Tullos, AR.....	2.00

OBITUARIES

VEL HENRY ALVERSON

It is with sadness I attempt to write the obituary of our dear Bro. Vel Henry Alverson. Bro. Alverson was born April 10, 1903 and was married to Dora Ardina London July 24, 1921, who survives him, along with five children, Nettie Woods, Dorothy Smith, Barbara Harrell, Jean Nelson and Hunter Alverson. Bro. Alverson was accepted into fellowship of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church 1st Sun. in Aug. 1938 and was Baptized 2nd Sunday in Aug. 1938.

He passed from this life on Jan. 8, 1986

at Annie Penn Hospital, Reidsville, N.C. His funeral was held by his pastor, Elder Kenneth Key, he was laid to rest in the church cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Bro Alverson was an excellent father and husband, never spoke critical of anyone. He loved the church and always wanted to do his part, he filled his seat every meeting day when his health permitted, a faithful devoted member, a firm believer and loved the Primitive Baptist Doctrine. He will be greatly missed. May the Lord comfort his family and all those who loved him, our loss is his eternal gain.

Written by order of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church in conference.

In Hope and Love,
Sis Bea French

SISTER VERA LUCILLE COATES

Sister Vera Lucille Coates was born in Floyd County May 30, 1925. She was the daughter of Vollie and the late Grace Sowers. Departed this life October 19, 1985 at her home in Bumpass, Va. She joined Richmond Primitive Baptist Church at a special meeting by her pastor, Elder Bunn, in Richmond Memorial Hospital on July 5, 1967, and was baptized in a chair in Manchester Lake in Richmond on September 3, 1967. She married Charles M. Coates, Jr. on Dec. 7, 1946. They had three children (Maralyn C. Douglas, Sandra C. Kenrick, and Dale M. Coates), also a foster daughter, Sylvia Spradlin. She had six grandchildren, three foster grandchildren and six foster great-grandchildren. She also leaves three brothers, Marvin, Arnold, and Norman Sawers.

Sister Coates was afflicted with arthritis when she was only eighteen years old. Gradually grew worse, was in a wheelchair many years. Her faithful husband and children were so good to wait on her

and keep her at home. She was so patient with her affliction which she bore so wonderful. She would often say she was alright, never mumered over her condition. To know her, was to love her.

Her funeral was held at Salem Church by her pastor, Elder Denver Simpson. Was laid to rest in Rest Vale Cemetery in Floyd County.

This was written by her Aunts, Sisters Velvice Agee and Ora Conner.

I was her pastor for over twelve years and visited her many times, she bore her afflictions well, always greeting you with a smile.

Elder D. L. Simpson

SISTER PEGGY COLLINS

It is with a sad and lonely heart that that I attempt to write the obituary of Sister Peggy Collins, our Sister in Christ we hope, for I feel so unworthy to try to write this letter.

Sister Peggy was born April 21, 1943 and died January 16, 1986. She was taken with polio when she was 8 years old and confined to a wheelchair the remainder of her life. She was in the nursing home for 8 years until her death. Sister Peggy was a faithful member and attended church when she was able.

She is survived by her mother, Sister Blanch Collins, one daughter, Kimble Collins, and brother Billy Collins, two sisters, Vivian Morton and Marry Alice Kellum.

She was a member at North East Church for 10 years.

Her funeral was conducted by Elder Oliver V. Allen at Jones Funeral Home, Jacksonville, NC. She was laid to rest in the Collins family cemetery near her home beneath a mound of beautiful flowers.

This being written by the request of the Church in conference. Three copies to be made, one for the family, one for the church records and one for the Signs of The Times.

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

SALLY WORRELL LYNCH

Sally Worrell Lynch was born January 1, 1894. She was married to Jim Lynch who passed away in 1956. To this union was born ten children, six of whom are still living. They are Edna Varnell, Lula Dickens, and Lois Weeks of Rocky Mount, N.C. Will Lynch and Wiley Lynch of Marrow, Georgia. They are a close family and did all they could to make their mother's life pleasant and comfortable as possible.

She united with the Primitive Baptist Church at Pleasant Hill May 26, 1951. She attended church when she could. Her love for her church was manifested in the expression on her face when she came in the door. She was a quiet, unassuming, humble person but was strong in her convictions. I visited her one day in her later years and she said, "I have lived a long time. I have worked hard all my life. I have raised a big family. If the Lord hadn't been with me, I couldn't have done it and I thank Him for it."

She passed away February 23, 1986, making her stay on this earth 92 years. Her funeral was preached at Johnson Funeral Home in Rocky Mount by Mr. Horace Ward and Robert A. Phipps. Her pastor Elder Henry C. Jones was unable to attend.

She was laid to rest in Pinewiew Cemetery in Rocky Mount, N.C. beneath a beautiful array of Flowers that were given by her friends and family as an expression of their love for her. We will miss her but hope our loss is her gain.

Written by order of conference of Pleasant Hill Church, March 22, 1986.

Lessie L. Lancaster

*"Pride goeth before destruction,
and an haughty spirit before a fall."
Proverbs 16: 18*

In Loving Memory of
Eli T. Smith Sr.

November 27, 1896 - July 30, 1985

*"A life that touches the hearts of others
goes on forever."*

During his eighty-eight years, Eli Smith touched many hearts, some old and some young. He was rooted and grounded in the truth of his God, and set an example of behavior and loyalty to that truth. He never apologized for his belief in a sovereign God and his omnipotent power.

He united with the Aycock Primitive Baptist Church on March 28, 1935, and served the church faithfully as a deacon and clerk.

He not only served his home church, but was made clerk of the Black Creek Association, and served as deacon of the Wilson Church until that position was filled by a member of that church.

He had many beautiful experiences during his lifetime that related to his association with the many friends who were of the same faith as he. Not only did he serve his church and community, but when called to serve his country, he answered that command also.

He was the son of the late William Gabe and Molly Ballance Smith who were also members of Aycock Church, and his father served that church for many years as deacon.

He was married to Retha Blow Smith who preceded him in death. To this union were born three children, Eli T. Smith, Jr. (Pete), who is a deacon of Aycock Church, Mrs. Sedalia S. Green, and (Bill) William Henry Smith. He is also survived by four grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

His funeral was conducted at Shackelford Funeral Home, Fremont, N.C., by Elder Paul Lambe and Elder D.B. Stokes, his pastor. His body was laid to rest in Elwood Cemetery where again his many

friends were apparent because of the mound of beautiful flowers that surrounded him.

I shall never forget the help, kindness and understanding he gave so unselfishly, not only to his friends but also to his family.

Submitted by his daughter
Mrs. Sedalia S. Green

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

Jesse Robert Somers

Brother Jesse Robert Somers was called home by his Lord on September 21, 1985. His funeral was conducted by Elder Kenneth Key and Elder H.W. Wray on September 24, 1985 after which he was laid to rest in the church cemetery. He was born on October 15, 1898 to the late William and Mary Smithey Somers. Surviving are his wife, Sister Emma Stanley Somers, his son, Edgar William Somers, two daughters, Mrs. Lillie Mae Hiatt and Mrs. Mary Ruth Lee, nine grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

On Saturday night June 24, 1933 he was received into the Dan River Primitive Baptist Church as the hymn, "How Firm A Foundation" was being sung. The following day he was baptized by Elder David Spangler. Papa loved his church and his brethren with all of his heart. There is no where in this world that he would rather have been than filling his seat at the meetings and the Lord graciously enabled him to do that even when he became unable to walk. The last thing I would wish to do is eulogize him because he wouldn't have wanted that and I hope you'll forgive my familiarity in referring to him as Papa, but he meant so much to me and to all of my natural family. He was blessed to live the quiet, peaceful life that becomes a true follower of Christ. There were many trials in his life, but the Lord

blessed him with patience and a truly forgiving spirit. Though we did not recognize them at the time, there were signs that he knew his time was drawing nigh. There were some severe thunderstorms prior to the week of his passing, and he told my brother, Steve, that an old lady once said that she liked to hear it thunder because she knew the Lord was still alive, and he said that sometimes when it stormed, he wished the Lord would come. He also told my grandmother that it wouldn't be much longer before he went home and he told my mother, that very week, that he was ready to go. There is one other experience that I would like to mention as I feel it showed the gracious hand of the Lord. My grandfather had not seen my sister, Robin, in seven years and the Lord blessed him to see her one last time before He took him home the following morning. For that we are all eternally grateful if we know our hearts.

We feel that surely, Papa could say with Paul, "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." May the Lord bless all of us who feel an empty void in our lives due to his passing with the reconciling peace of knowing that he is where he most wished to be - with his Lord, and may we be blessed not to dwell on our loss but rather be given thankful hearts for the precious memories which we have of him and for the kindness and gentleness with which he touched all of our lives. May the gentle Shepherd be with our grandmother and bless her to feel the everlasting arms supporting her. In all things may the Lord be praised.

Humbly submitted
by his granddaughter,
Mary L. Hawkins

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA. SEPTEMBER 1986

NO. 09

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Highway 835, Box 57A

Boydton, Virginia 23917

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnboro, TX 75494

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566.

All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

Elder Smith wrote the following in 1944. When we visited with him recently, he recited the entire poem word for word from memory. He is now eighty-five years old.

Elder J. R. Williams

*EXIT THE OLD YEAR--
ENTER THE NEW*

*Farewell, old 1943;
Come in, thou '44.
I say to thee, old '43,
That I'll not see thee more.*

*And what, thou 1944,
Pray tell us, wilt thou bring?
Wilt thou bring troubles more and more?
No peace song shall we sing?*

*Wilt thou the war's death-toll increase?
Will casualties run high?
And the great prize--O lasting peace!
Will it be far or nigh?*

*I'm sure no living mortal knows--
Not Roosevelt or Pope;
And Churchill great, and Stalin too,
What hold they forth of hope?*

*Old '43 was bad, we know--
What anguish, pain and grief!
Could I it change, with '44,
I'd do so, and with lief.*

*And '45, through '48,
Will each grow worse unless,
It please the Lord to intercede,
With His great power to bless.*

*The nations seem not yet to know,
 Jehovah rules supreme:
 And that He issues weal or woe,
 Just as it pleases Him.*

*The monarch great, the peasant, too
 Both on the Lord depend;
 Though it may be they neither do,
 Nor can they see His hand.*

*Thy saints, dear Lord, keep by thy grace,
 Through this great conflict sore,
 Grant us the shinings of thy face--
 O may we trust thee more!*

*May we due strength, from thee on high,
 Be given to suit each need:
 And may we, Lord, be made to cry;
 With thee, O may we plead.*

*Nor may our pleadings be in vain,
 Thy ear it is not dull,
 Thy arm it has not shortened been,
 That thou can't save in full.*

*Thy power display, thy love make known;
 Come, save thy people sore:
 Then in that sweet and lovely home,
 We'll praise thee evermore.*

Elder John Lee Smith

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

Psalm 116:15

EDITORIAL

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or not. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Revelation 3:14-18.

“Amen” is much more full of meaning than we may have supposed, and as a title of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is eminently suggestive. Amen signifies true, faithful, and certain. Our Redeemer took this as a personal title to himself. He called himself “the Amen” and so he is, “the faithful and true witness.” He proved himself to be Amen; the God of truth, sincerity, and faithfulness in his fulfillment of covenant engagements. The Lord undertook to bring all His elect to glory. His Father gave him a people chosen in him to be his for-

ever; and he undertook suretyship engagements, that every one of these should be delivered perfect and complete without spot or blemish by his own hands. He undertook, in order to accomplish this, that he would suffer, bleed, and die for his Church; that all her debts should be discharged from his own veins; that a perfect righteousness should be wrought out for her, in which she will stand in perfect beauty in the sight of God. My dear brethren, do you not believe the Lord Jesus has faithfully kept his engagements? He has been "the Amen" to the full in this respect. "Lo, I come! (In the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Heb. 10:7. Seven years of toil for Rachel were achieved by Jacob, and seven years afterwards, and our Master has achieved the same. He has paid the price of his Beloved to the uttermost farthing, and it is said by him, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. "Having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end." John 10:1.

"The beginning of the creation of God." Christ is said to be the beginning because he was in the creation of all things. Without Him was nothing made which was made, and therefore he has Lordship and dominion over all. All power both in heaven and earth is committed by the Father into his hands. He has been given power over all flesh and all things.

The epistle to the church of Laodicea is not to be thrown into the waste basket and forgotten. Upon its pages still flow the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." "I know thy works." As much as to say, "Nobody else really knows you. Some think better of you than you deserve. You do not really know yourself. You think everything is excellent, but I know different." Their

works were not pleasing in the sight of Christ. Nothing can be hid from Jesus, He knows and sees all things. He knows our thoughts from afar off. He searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men. Our opinion of ourselves as a church and Christ's opinion of us may be very different and it is a very sad thing when it is so. "I know thy works." Does He make you feel this? Does He follow you in your secret life, in your purposes, your designs, aims, motives, thoughts and ways? "That thou art neither cold nor hot." Is this our state? If a church is in a lukewarm condition, it may feel comfortable; but is in a dangerous state and is dishonouring to the Lord. The church spoken of, no doubt, maintained much of the truth; but how did she maintain it? In form, but not in power; in the letter, but lacking in Spirit. Yet with all her decay, she was no doubt, a church of God; for she is addressed as such. The Lord gives counsels such as he gave her to those only that are his.

"I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot." They were not cold but they were not hot either. They were believers; but not in real earnest. They were not in real earnest, they were not disreputable in moral character, but they were not distinguished for holiness. They were not irreligious, but they were not enthusiastic in piety nor eminent for zeal. She was alive, but not lively; neither was she without some spiritual love to God, and Christ, and to his people. She was not without some light. They had a deficiency of real prayer and liberality. They were lacking in real piety and were careless in their walk. But everything seemed to be going well with them; what more could they expect. They were no doubt holding on to some phase of the truth while other phases of the truth were left wanting. Many of their members were attempting to serve mammon and God while some were sincere in only serving God. Some were no

doubt making all kinds of excuses not to be with the assembling of the saints, while others were eager to attend. As a whole the church was in a "lukewarm" condition.

My dear ones, I believe what Jesus is warning us concerning the state of the Laodicean Church should be of vast importance to us all today. Do we say, I believe what he teaches, but I do not think it is sufficient importance for me to disturb myself much about it? Did Jesus Christ think salvation of such importance that he must needs come from heaven to earth to work it out? Did he think the gospel which he preached so worthy to be made known that he must needs spend his life in proclaiming it? Did he think the redemption which he wrought out to be so valuable that he must needs shed his own precious blood in order to complete it? Should not we all who profess a blessed hope, be concerned over our present condition? Should we, as ministers of the truth, attempt to pray that God would give us grace and wisdom to preach the whole counsel of God? Do we degrade the mercy seat by not making it a wrestling place in prayer as Jacob did? Oh, how far short I see myself in all these things. No wonder the Lord has said to his people, you are "lukewarm."

Oh, if we could be blessed to look upon Jesus and say, "Oh, Jesus, thy heart was full of love for us in whom there was nothing lovely! Thou didst leave the glories of thy father's house to come down and become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet without sin. Thou didst fight our enemies and rescued us out of the hands that were stronger than we. Thy pangs were grievous, thy sufferings were bitter, and thy anguish was extreme. We look up to thy thorn-crowned brow, we gaze into thy marred face, and see those innocent eyes red with pain. Now may we be given grace to pray that thy love will

burn in our hearts as coals of fire. Oh, Jesus, thou art worthy of the best place in our hearts."

Jesus shows his faithful love to the Church by this letter to them and prescribes the only remedy and cure for the disease this church was under the power of. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." this verse may be somewhat confusing as the Lord has said the church was "poor, blind, and naked." How can she buy? What does she have to offer in exchange for "gold tried in the fire?" We may ask what does this gold represent? I believe it is faith which is a gift of God. But how is she to buy it? Only when the soul is deeply convinced of sin, of its helplessness, ignorance, blindness, wretchedness, folly etc. and when the Lord draws the poor, needy, guilty sinner to his bosom and enables him to lay them all at the Lord's feet and cross as the Holy Ghost dictates: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, He will sustain thee; he will never suffer the righteous to be moved." Psalm 55:22. The church had these things to give in exchange for "gold tried in the fire." This faith comes from Christ as a free gift. Was it tried in the fire? Yes, the hottest fire, the fiercest furnace that ever burned. Everything about this glorious Jesus, our Prince of Peace, was sorely tested. His life, his love, his patience, his obedience, his strength, all, all was put to the test his Father imposed. Sinners tried him, the devil tried him, imputed sin tried him, his own law tried him, justice tried him, his Father's stripes tried him, divinely made darkness tried him, death and the grave tried him. Only, Immanuel, our immortal Jesus could have overcome such a "sevenfold" furnace. This trial was necessary for the assurance, as well as the salvation of the church. The foundation rock on which the church was to be built must be well proved. This is the foundation on which our most holy faith is built. So says

Christ, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." He gives no other than this precious faith tried in the fire. What was the Church to buy with nothing? Nothing but our sins, our helplessness, our ignorance, our blindness and wretchedness.

"And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Why did the Church need white raiment? Because she was naked, defiled, polluted, and unclean. "For I say unto you; that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20. The Lord's people who are to dwell forever in the glorious presence of God must be suitably clothed. "White raiment," raiment for covering; white for purity, loveliness, and with absolute perfection. It is the wedding garment, it is the way in which she is made ready. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Naked and ye clothed me." Matt. 25:34, 36.

"And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." This eyesalve is surely heavenly teaching by the blessed Spirit of God. So this eyesalve seems to be made up of the Word of God which is our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6. Can we say with the man who was born blind, "One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see?" Can we see our sins, our pollution and hate them? Can we cry out from our hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" Why? Because the things we see by divine light concerning ourselves are not pleasing, but fearful to us. Perhaps some of you who have

had a zeal for the truth, are faithful in attendance etc. maybe troubled at times with doubts and fears as to your standing in the Beloved; but when these doubts and fears come across your soul and mind, can you not say with regard to them, I know one thing, namely, that I'm not what I used to be. I feel I have been brought into a new sphere of things. I have experienced many changes to which I was a total stranger. One thing I do believe, that once I was blind but now I see, I see Jesus as being my only hope of salvation. Is all this the truth? How can it be a lie when wrought forth by the Holy Spirit? When the time arrives for Jesus to reveal himself to our hearts and consciences, can we then sing that beautiful hymn:

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

We see Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. The Holy Ghost causes every soul he teaches to come with his sins to the Lord, willing and anxious to part with all. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." To buy, ordinarily is to exchange or give money for that which is of equal value. In this sense buying of Christ is impossible. What have we but corruption? Yet the Holy Spirit causes every elect soul to come with all in exchange for pure gold, his white raiment, and his eyesalve.

My dear brethren, what is the general state of the Church today? Are we all concerned on the growing decline of our churches for the past seventy-five years or so? Several associations in our country which were once prospering are no longer in existence. In the past ten years we have seen three of our churches in the state of Texas cease to exist. What sadness this brings to our hearts. Can we not keep from asking, is there not a cause? we know that we can relieve our

minds some by saying it is exactly as God wants it or He would change it. None of us would dare dispute the absolute sovereignty and authority of God in ruling all things because, "He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Dan. 4:35. But can we say, God is well pleased with the present conditions of our churches? Was He well pleased with the Laodicean church when He said, "I would thou wert cold or not?" Are we satisfied in our hearts as the Laodiceans were not knowing the sad state which they were in?

Are we as ministers of the different churches we have been called to serve and believe to be among His visible churches here on earth, preaching the whole counsel of God? We may as ministers say and feel that we need exhorting and reproof more than our brethren (and so we may) we therefore refrain from bringing forth these things before our people. But are we to go by our feelings or by the command of the Holy Spirit by the pen of Paul when he says, "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with longsuffering and doctrine." II Tim. 4:1,2, also "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." II Tim. 3:16, 17.

Do we who have been given a hope in Christ Jesus, and as Christians, have certain responsibilities to attempt to perform? Knowing without a shadow of a doubt that we cannot of ourselves perform one good act, but only by the grace and strength of God. Paul says, "I can

do all things through Christ which strengthen me." Phil. 4:13. We are not what we hope to be only by the grace of God? Paul also says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Cor. 15:10. which was with me." I Cor. 15:10.

No doubt we all believe that the sovereignty, foreknowledge, and predestination of God is the backbone of our precious doctrine. Naturally speaking, our backbone is a very important part of our body structure, but our ribs which are attached to our backbone play an important part for protection as well as other parts. Can we not also say that the promises, the precepts, the commands, the applications and exhortations in the gospel, also play an important part in our precious doctrine? How often do we all pray, pray, and pray that God will give us grace and wisdom to read and study the scripture with the correct understanding of them. Jacob wrestled all night praying to the Lord. Paul says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Tim. 2:15.

Our forefathers with much zeal for the truth in their hearts, endured bad weather, road conditions, and poor means of transportation to attend church. Where is the zeal they had? Some still have it, but do we all? Are we good at making excuses for not assembling ourselves together each Lord's day? "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Heb. 10:24,25.

I realize that some of the things written in this article may be offensive to some; but please try to accept it in the love and concern, I trust, in which it is written. As an Elder once said to me, "If

we disagree, let it be in love, and not with malice." I hope what has come on my mind to write was prompted by the Spirit and not by me. I pray that no one is offended. If I'm in error, please forgive me. I ask each of you when you are

given a mind to pray, remember our churches and remember me. I need your prayers.

A concerned sinner
in hope of mercy,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH

TARBORO PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



Tarboro Primitive Baptist Church is located at the corner of St. James Street and Albermarle Avenue in downtown Tarboro, North Carolina. It was established on February 7, 1819, by Elder Joshua Lawrence, Martin Rose, Thomas Billings and Thomas Meredith. Elder Lawrence is buried in the church cemetery.

The present church building was built in 1826 after the first building was

destroyed.

Elder D. B. Stokes has served us as pastor for the past 29 years. Previous pastors have been Elder Joseph D. Fly, who served for nearly 28 years, Elder S. P. Denny, Elder P. D. Gold and others.

Our meeting time is every first Sunday morning and Saturday night before of each month. We welcome you to visit us.

John H. Coker, Clerk

"A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."
Proverbs 22: 1

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22: 6

 CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editors,

We received our Signs this week and I have felt for sometime I wanted to tell you editors how very much we appreciate all the work and time you put forth that we may enjoy the Signs each month. We feel it is another of the many blessings we receive from the hand of our loving God and Saviour. He has been so good to us. If we could only praise Him as we should.

For awhile it seemed our Church went thru dark days but now with Elder Williams coming to us each month and Elder Robertson coming to the Salisbury Church and different dear Elders visiting, we feel we are receiving double blessings for all our troubles. It seems as we get older and the world means less and less to us we look forward to the weekend and our meetings more each month. Also each weekend seems more precious.

I wish God would move more of our Elders to write for the Signs and the Brothers and Sisters to write their experiences or how the Lord is leading them in this world. It is comforting to read the travels of those of like beliefs and faith.

Everyone has been so kind and thoughtful of us since Lawrence had the stroke. It melts our hearts in thankfulness.

When we were able we traveled some to the different churches and now that we cannot get around as we did, we remember with much pleasure the many Brothers and Sisters we met and friendship and fellowship shown us.

May the good Lord continue to give you health and strength for this work that means so much to all who believe in salvation by grace and in predestination.

Your grateful sister, I hope.
Ethel Holloway

Dear Brother Kenneth:

I hope all of you dear people are doing well, by the mercies of our covenant God.

I'm sending a sermon preached by Mr. C. A. Wood, while we were in attendance at one of his churches in England last year. I thought our people might be interested in reading a sermon preached by a Particular Baptist minister from England.

They call their ministers Mr. in place of Elder. We fully enjoyed meeting the people of the Gospel Standard churches affiliation. The Particular Baptist people in England have been blessed for many centuries to preach the truth, in fact, long before the United States was ever inhabited by our forefathers.

Elder Joe Hamrick

SERMON PREACHED BY
MR. C.A. WOOD, THURSDAY, 20TH
MAY, 1985---CROYDON, ENGLAND.

Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." **Isaiah 44: 21, 22.**

Distinguishing grace separates the believer from the idolator, the wheat from the tares, the wise virgins (having the vital possession of oil in their lamps) from the foolish. It distinguishes the true Israelite from Israel at large. Here the Lord is speaking: "Remember these," think of that state in which you were born, dead in trespasses and in sins, without God, without hope, without Christ. O wondrous grace that delivers us from

such a state! Nothing but God's mighty power in grace can deliver a sinner from that state in which we are born, with the carnal mind at enmity to God, turning away from the ways of God, not seeking God. But now, as one of our hymns says,

*But now, subdued by sovereign grace,
My spirit longs for Thy embrace.*

What cause have the redeemed to bless and praise God for salvation by Grace, redemption by blood and that mighty, effectual work of the Holy Spirit in the soul delivering it from that state of darkness and bringing it into the light of life. Those words have been fastened much on my mind lately - "the light of life." Where that spiritual light shines in the heart which was before in a state of darkness and of death, there is now spiritual life.

Quickened by the Spirit, made alive, brought out, God has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Remember then O child of God, from whence thou hast been called, thy wondrous deliverance, the matchless grace put forth toward thee, a lost, ruined and perishing sinner. It is God which hath begun a good work in you and He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Think of where you would be tonight, but for the wondrous grace of God. Certainly you would not be in this place, would you? Certainly you would be without love to the Lord, without a desire for the things of God! Certainly your heart would be destitute of a cry for mercy. Certainly this Jesus would be nothing to you. But now, called by His grace, you are a new creature in Christ.

O beloved, I say how precious is this Jesus to convinced sinners, taught by the Spirit their lost state and ruined condition. We often quote the line,

'Twas grace that taught my soul to pray

And it is all of grace if ever I pray to God, if ever I know the burden of sin, if ever I feel the solemnity of eternity, if ever such a vile wretch is directed to the cross to look to the Saviour of sinners, to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.

'Twas grace that taught my soul to pray

Yes, a spiritual groan is a prayer, the upward glancing of an eye when none but God is near, that "Lord, help me," that "Lord, save me" springing from the depths of your hearts, is blessed evidence of spiritual light and life in the soul.

*'Twas grace that taught my soul to pray
And pardoning love to know*

This is what some of you are praying for. Some of us have tasted just a little of it; we want much more, we want to know the full blessing of the second part of my test: "I have blotted out..." God has done it. No one else can do it. God has done it - "Blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins."

*And pardoning love to know
'Twas grace that kept me to this day*

So that you have not gone right back, turned back into the world, turned your back on Him whom your soul loveth, Alas! we have to mourn our backslidings, our wanderings. But God says, "return unto me." Look, poor sinner, "I have redeemed thee." So,

*'Twas grace that kept me to this day
And will not let me go.*

This is the wonder of it - "will not let me go." It holds me, it keeps me, and it will bring me to glory at last. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." We may look with pitying eyes, sometimes, alas, almost with self-righteousness, on the heathen man that

makes (as described in the Word of God) his idol of wood taken from the tree, shaped and fashioned. Part he burns, part he uses to warm himself, for cooking etc. Another part he uses to make an idol and bows down and worships it. Yet, my friend, as we look at the heathen, what can we say of any and all that are without Christ? What a mercy to have our eyes opened and to remember these, remember the futility of worshipping anything but the true Jehovah, or resting on anything but the finished work of Jesus Christ, of building on the sand instead of the rock. O beloved, may we pray to be preserved from a false religion, a vain hope, dead tradition, just a head knowledge of the truth. We want something wrought in our heart by the Holy Ghost and if we have this we shall look back with increased wonder and say, "Why such love to me, Lord?"

*Why was I made to hear His voice
And enter while there's room
While thousands made a wretched choice
And rather starve than come.*

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel." What need we have to be kept from going back. I know every child of God will be brought to glory at last but we have to be kept from backsliding or trusting in anything but Jesus Christ. How vain it is to lean on the arm of flesh, for if we turn our eyes from our God, if we trust in anything but our God, are we not guilty of forming an idol and bowing down to it, looking to man for our help? O may we worship God and "remember these," think of the lost, of that "so great salvation," of that mighty power of grace wrought in the heart. Then pray to be kept, for believers need to be oft in prayer to be brought to remember that word at the end of John's first Epistle, where it seems as though the Apostle of love closes with abruptness (we speak with reverence, for it is the Word of God) - "Little children, keep yourselves from

idols." He saw the danger, and we need to be kept from it.

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel." Jacob sets forth the wrestling one, but it also sets forth weakness, it sets forth "worm Jacob." Yet it was to Jacob that God spake "exceeding great and precious promises" at Bethel. It was this dear man who in his time of trouble and distress, called upon his God and pleaded a promise with a "Thou saidst." The Lord himself wrestled with Jacob and there Jacob's thigh was put out of joint. There the Lord said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh," and Jacob said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." Do you know something of prevailing prayer like that in your heart at times? Do you know something of such a need of Jesus Christ that you feel you cannot go on without a blessing for your soul? You are weakness itself, poverty itself, sinfulness itself. O cling to Christ! "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." As said Jabez "O that Thou wouldst bless me indeed." That is it; that is the language of this spiritual Jacob and this prevailing Israel. "And He blessed him there." So his name was changed from Jacob to Israel for "as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed." He prevailed by the grace of God, by the strength given him.

As Israel of old groaned under their burdens in Egypt, so God's people spiritually groan under the burden of their sin in this tabernacle of their body. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened," groan because of some besetting sin, groan because we come so short of what we want to be, of what we hope and long to be. Yet we cry out, and this is our mercy, that God hears a cry and a groan and in His time will come down and deliver the burdened soul.

One more thought here - "O Jacob and O Israel" - speaking of Nathanael the Lord Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite in-

deed, in whom is no guile!" He did not mean that Nathanael was sinless but that the grace of God in exercise in the heart will make a sinner honest and sincere so that they seek to speak the truth and will not go beyond what God has shown them, blessed them with, and taught them. The fear of the Lord implanted in the soul will undoubtedly affect and direct our spirit and the words that we utter. "For I have formed thee, thou art my servant." This fear will make us turn from idols to serve the living and true God. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." No man can serve two masters, so as the Lord works this mighty work of grace in a sinner's heart he will be like the Hebrew bond servant on the day of liberty when he was entitled to go free; but said, "I love my master." O Lord Jesus, help me to serve Thee, help me to love Thee, preserve me from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, help me to do the will of God, to be a true servant. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Was the cry of the Apostle at his conversion, and it is the language of those who are spiritually minded, exercised in the things of God. They constantly seek to serve God, and not like a slave who only fears the whip, and has not love in his heart; but as a child in loving obedience to the parent, knowing that it is for his own good. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

As we look at this word, "I have formed thee" we think of dear Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who was bidden to go down to the potter's house and there, said God, "I will speak to you." There was a vessel which was marred but it was made anew. "I have formed thee." O, when that work of grace is begun there is a new creature, a vessel made meet for the master's use. That vessel has to be cleansed; it has to be emptied. True grace has an emptying effect before filling. My friend, it is painful, but profitable, to be emptied, emptied of all vain

hope, all that is of the creature, all that is of dead religion, to be emptied, cleansed and then filled, held in the hand of the Lord Himself and used for His honour and glory.

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel!" Do not read this word too quickly, do not pass over the little word, 'O'. Just think what that means to you sometimes, when you feel so burdened, so cast down, such a sinner, tempted by Satan, accused by the enemy, derided perhaps by the world, burdened and distressed in affliction's path, in darkness and under pressure. What is then squeezed out of your soul? Not a very long, wordy prayer, but sometimes just this - "O, Lord." O, what a word! It comes from the depth of the heart; it is the upward glance of faith to God. But is it not God that is speaking this word, "O, Israel." This letter "O" has no beginning and no end. It speaks to me of the love of God, His everlasting love. It is as much as to say, "O Jacob, amidst all your distresses and all your troubles, O Israel under all your burdens, I love thee." Yes! though you may be passing through the fire, though you may have many fears, may be sorely tried, greatly tempted, though your sins are as great mountains before you, or as we have in the text "thick clouds" yet the love of God is everlasting, it has no break in it. From this love the dear people of God shall never, never be separated. If you are tired and tempted, turn to the Word of God and O that faith may rest in and lay hold upon such a word as this: "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In the words of our text tonight there is a love taken from heaven, it is a kiss

from His mouth to a poor trembling, burdened, sorrowing sinner, who feels to be so lonely, to be forgotten, forsaken, full of fears. You look at the future as you look at your present path, and perhaps you feel that nobody loves you. We do not despise the love of brethren, of husbands and wives, friends, brothers and sisters, but sometimes God's children may walk a very lonely path. But think of this: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." O think of it! I shall never forget hearing Mr. Pilgrim shortly after the death of my Pastor when this came as a word from heaven to my soul. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." "Moses, my servant is dead, now therefore arise, go over this Jordan. As I was with Moses so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee or forsake thee."

Brethren, your poor Pastor has to confess that he looks so much at the things that burden, press, try and trouble him and forgets the God that says, "I will not forget thee." We lose sight of our great God, the God of all grace, the God of all mercy, the God of all love, the God of all power. My friend, whatever your burden or need may be, whatever your weakness or need may be, whatever your weakness or your trial, your path, your cross, your thorn in the flesh, your cup, your dark valley, whatever you may be passing through, seek grace to look up. It is not all gloom, though it is through much tribulation that we must enter the kingdom, for there are times of blessing, green pastures, still waters, the love visits of our God. We can bear testimony to the truth of the Word before us: "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." When I had something before me my dear Pastor would say, "I will remember you." Sometimes you come to me and I say, I will remember you, but that is as far as it goes. The prayers of the godly are a great strength, a great support and help, but the God who says, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of

me," is our God, and there is nothing too hard for Him. Our God can make you strong out of your weakness. In the path that seems to us so strange, he can turn the curse into a blessing, the bitter into sweet and if your burden lingers and gets greater, do you mean to say that your God will fail you? Do you mean to say that He will not give strength to bear the burden? Your God has told you this, beloved, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee." He "upholdeth all things by the word of His power." He "hangeth the earth upon nothing." And he holds up, bears up and supports His dear children, even as we read a little later in this prophecy, "Even to your old age I am He, and even to Hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you."

He will bring you through the fire. Yes! God here speaks of the path of His dear people. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest" - you are walking step by step; you are not consumed in that fire, you are going to come through it; "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." The work of grace in your soul shall never be destroyed, that precious faith will never be overthrown, "neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." But I hear you say, "I am in the dark; I am in such a sad state, so cast down, so oppressed. I do not know where I am." But is there that cry from your poor heart for the Lord? Can you find light in your darkness, help in your trouble, strength in your weakness, joy in your sorrow outside Jesus Christ? Tell me, can you? You may be under the cloud, it may indeed be a dark path; but this word still stands. You may not have that faith in exercise to penetrate the dark cloud above, but God says, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgot-

ten of me." Joseph was forgotten by the butle, but he was never forgotten by God, never!

It is not an easy path and we do not use this word tonight as an easy way out of trouble, but it is a strength to us in our trial, it is a support to us as we go forth. Sometimes you may fear as you enter the cloud, but God says He will bless all who fear Him, both small and great. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." This is true in your providential concerns. Once they came to Peter for the tribute money and the Lord told Peter to go and cast a hook into the sea and in the mouth of the first fish he caught was money sufficient to pay for Peter and for Himself. Elijah proved it; the brook dried up, but He, God did not fail. There was a widow woman at Zarephath; she had only a handful of meal and a little oil but "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." Later when Elijah was under the juniper tree, His God had still not forgotten him but sent an angel. He knows what is in front of you and that the journey is too great for you. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me."

So beloved, what a strength and comfort this is. You may be passing through a deep trial. May the Lord sustain and support you and comfort you with this word. "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in his mercy." He will show love, pity, and compassion. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." We do not want to sing a song with a heavy heart, but where else can we go with our trouble? Dear Medley wrote hymn No. 7 on the occasion of the sudden death of one of his children. O what a mercy to have a God to go to!

*Too wise to be mistaken He,
Too good to be unkind.*

O, we want another visit from Him, another love token, we do long for the kiss of His mouth, we do want the sun to pierce the cloud and to hear His lovely voice

again speaking to us. Have you ever heard it? Has ever your poor heart been crumbled and melted and humbled as the Lord has spoken a word of His love to your poor soul? He will not forget you. He changeth not. He will not alter that word or go back on what He has said, "He is faithful that hath promised."

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." This cloud comes between your soul and God, between you and the enjoyment of His love. You say, "Lord, my manifold transgressions are like a thick cloud from me. Indeed Lord, every moment I live, every breath I draw, I am adding to the intensity of that black cloud of my transgressions, the cloud of my sins that comes between my soul and Thee." This black cloud speaks also of something else; it speaks of the wrath of God that should justly fall upon us because of our sins. But God says, "I and none else can do it." Blessed be His name, He has done it. "It is finished" was the cry of the Saviour on Calvary's cross. We cannot meet the demands of His holy law, but He blots the debt that we owe. God says, "I have blotted out all that debt." It is paid.

*Payment God cannot twice demand,
Once at my bleeding Surety's hand,
and then again at mine.*

What moves a thick cloud literally? Is it not the wind and the sun? When the Holy Spirit comes and bears witness in your soul of your interest in the blood, when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings, He pierces the cloud and shines with healing in His wings. He pierces the cloud and shines with love in your soul. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins.. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own

sake and will not remember thy sins." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

To whom then is this spoken? Why, friend, it is to a poor coming, venturing sinner, whom the Lord has drawn to himself, pleading mercy and looking alone to Christ, hanging on the cross.

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

"Saying unto my soul I am thy salvation." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just (you see, justice is on our side) to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The great cloud speaks of sins in our life. I look back on mine and you look back on yours, and we see things that grieves us. Our sins are as the cloud that covers the sky as we see sin mingled with everything that we do. But here is our God who blots out. And what is it that blots our sins? Nothing but the blood. What is it that you pray for and plead for? Nothing but the blood.

*Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood,
And bear Thy witness with my heart
That I am born of God.*

"Return unto me." God will bring them back, and what a path it will be! It will be with weeping, with tears, with sorrow. It will be coming afresh, feeling that load of sin, to seek the Saviour, to acknowledge what a wretch one has been and to stand amazed at the grace of God manifested towards us that in His long-suffering He has not dealt with us as we so richly deserve.

"Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." This redemption is by the blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord. "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me" right to the end of time. You may have a fear of death,

but this word shall stand. You may not have the comfort of it, but I trust you will have faith to believe it. The full enjoyment of it will be when you come down to death itself and you will be given dying grace in a dying hour. So you will prove that your God has never forgotten you, failed you or forsaken you. The Lord bless His word. Amen.

MEETINGS

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The Five Mile Creek Association will be held, Lord willing, the 3rd Sunday in September, Friday and Saturday before, September 19, 20, and 21.

Shady Grove Church is host for this Association. The church is located off highway 69 between Jasper and Cullman, Alabama at Bugtussle. Turn east and go to top of hill and then turn right on first road. Go about 4 miles to church.

Elder H. C. Moon, Moderator
Bremen, Alabama

SULPHUR FORK ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the one hundred and forty-first annual meeting of the Sulphur Fork Primitive Baptist Association convenes with Hopewell Church Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 3rd, 4th, & 5th, 1986. Church is located about 5 miles west of Winnsboro, Texas, just West of FM 515.

We extend a cordial invitation to all lovers of the truth to come so that we can enjoy your fellowship and presence in our homes. We have been blessed to have some wonderful preaching during these Associations and do gracefully welcome all ministers of our faith and order.

For additional information, call (214) 269-3561.

Elder Joe Hamrick

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Salem Primitive Baptist Church, Floyd County, Va., a presbytery met May 10, 1986 at Salem Church for the examination of Brother Andrew Agee, if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgement, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of Deacon.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder Raymond Goad. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the presbytery. Those present were as follows: Elders Larry Hollandsworth, Noel Conner, William Holland, Lane Carter, Junior Conner, Raymond Goad, Amos Hash, Hale Terry and Carl Terry.

The presbytery was organized by electing Elder Hale Terry as moderator and Elder Carl Terry as clerk. Elder William Holland and Elder Junior Conner was chosen to lead the examination of the candidate. Deacon Tiris Conner, having been duly appointed by Salem Church in conference May 10, 1986, as spokesman for the church, delivered brother Andrew Agee to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elder William Holland and Elder Junior Conner, using scripture reference Acts 6 and 1 Timothy, 3rd Chapter. The presbytery being satisfied with the examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands. The ordination prayer was delivered by Elder Amos Hash. Elder Lane Carter delivered the charge to the candidate. Scripture reference, 3rd chapter 1st Timothy, 6th chapter Acts, and 5th chapter 1st Timothy.

The moderator asked Salem Church if they were satisfied with the work of the presbytery, which was answered in

the affirmative.

A certificate of ordination was presented to brother Agee and the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood given. The ordained deacon was delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon of the Old School Primitive Baptist Church at Salem.

The minutes consisting of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. The presytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Larry Hollandsworth. Deacons present were: Harry Cannaday, Lawrence Myers, W.T. Conner, John Plunkett, Woodrow Abshire, Grover Semons, G. T. Abshire, Ed Dyer, Hancil Conner, Lonnie Nichols, Donald Agee, Bobby Bernard, Jamie Cooper, Nelson Bryant, and Claude Hopkins

Elder Hale Terry, Moderator
Elder Carl E. Terry, Clerk

BEL SPUR PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Bel Spur Primitive Baptist Church, Carroll County, Va., a presbytery met April 19, 1986 at Bel Spur for the examination of brother Carl Terry, if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgement, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of the Gospel Ministry.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder Leonard Key. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the presbytery. Those present were as follows: Elders Leonard Key, Kenneth R. Key, Larry Hollandsworth, Noel Conner, Jr., Amos Hash and Hale Terry. Deacons Nelson Bryant, Alan Terry, Claude Hopkins, W. G. Parsons, Donald Agee, Jamie Cooper, H. D. Ingram, Edwin Dyer, Wilson King, Lonzie Nichols, Grover Semons, Tyres Conner and Jimmy Holley.

The presbytery was organized by electing Elder Amos Hash as moderator

and Elder Hale Terry as clerk. Elder Kenneth Key and Larry Hollandsworth were chosen to lead in the examination of the candidate. Deacon Alan Terry having been duly appointed by Bel Spur Church in conference April 19, 1986, as spokesman for the church, delivered brother Carl Terry to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elder Kenneth Key and Elder Larry Hollandsworth, using scripture reference 1st Timothy, 3rd chapter. The Presbytery being satisfied with the examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands. The Ordination Prayer was delivered by Elder Junior Conner. Elder Larry Hollandsworth delivered the charge to the candidate.

The moderator asked Bel Spur Church if they approved the work of the presbytery, which was answered in the affirmative.

A Certificate of Ordination was presented to brother Carl Terry and the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood given. The ordained Elder was delivered back to the church as an ordained minister of the Old School Primitive Baptist Church at Bel Spur.

The minutes consisting of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. The presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Junior Conner.

Elder Amos Hash, Moderator
Elder Hale Terry, Clerk

ARTICLES

ISAIAH XLII. 16

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not for sake them."

The above prophecy is full of wonder to the blind. It is evident that this prophecy is to Israel; that is, the prophet was speaking to the house of Israel. There is no doubt this is a figure, or type, and did and does embrace spiritual Israel (the church) in her travels in this gospel day, for the prophet begins this chapter with the mark of attention: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." This can have reference to none other than Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, and this being so we see that the Gentile is embraced in those who are led in a way they have not before known. There are three things in this text I wish to notice. First, the leader, the one who says, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect," is God, and he says, I will bring the blind. No conditions nor ifs in it. Oh how precious is this positive declaration. No wonder Paul says the gospel of Christ is the power of God. No wonder it comes to the blind in demonstration of the Holy Ghost and in power. No wonder it comes with such assurance to the poor soul who feels ready to fall by the way, and says to him, You are not your own keeper, but are kept by the power of God. I am glad that Wisdom away back in eternity saw and prepared such a safe and sure way for these poor blind pilgrims who have no abiding place here, but seek a country where all the shade will be removed from their eyes and they will be blest to see their blessed Leader as he is and be like him. This anointed of the Father says, I am the good shepherd, and my sheep (the blind) hear my voice and they follow me; they know not the voice of the stranger. Bless the dear Lord for this understanding the blind have to hear and know the voice of their leader (Jesus), and we just as truly thank his holy name for making us (the blind) deaf to the voice of the stranger. Dear, blind brethren, lift up

the drooped head and receive strength for the feeble knees, for our God blessed this same old prophet to see this way so secure and sure that one, though a fool, should not err therein. Now we come down to the day and time when this blessed prophecy began to manifest itself, and let us (the blind) gaze upon the great mystery, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not," a way which they had never traveled before. Oh how beautiful is the way. Angels, with the heavenly host, awakened the shepherds who were watching over their flocks by night and led them in the way (Bethlehem), and their eyes (the blind) saw the way. I am, says the Anointed, the way. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and was God made flesh. As we follow him in the way every step is taken in wonder and amazement. It is a new way, it is God's way, and his way is as high above man's way as the heavens are above the earth. We see him in Simeon's arms, and hear Simeon bless God for what he (the blind) saw: God's salvation, and hear the old prophet say that he (Jesus) was a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. Simeon saw here what Israel saw many years before. Now as we start out in this way let us note the great mystery in the way, but in this let us not lose sight of the surety of the way. I will have to pass over many of the waymarks, on account of space, but before I leave the babe I want to notice some of the crooked things which are in this way, also the darkness that shuts it out from the wise and prudent of this world, but he who leads the blind reveals it unto babes. We see Joseph and Mary take the babe and flee into Egypt (darkness). Why did they go? Because he who said, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not," said, Go. What! the God of the whole earth running for his life? Yes, Herod will seek his life. Right here in the beginning of the way is a place so dark that nothing

but the light of the Spirit which Jesus says shall guide you (the blind) in the way can penetrate, and so crooked that the world, with all its boasted wisdom, can never find or get one of these blind ones. Now let us go back to the Father of this blind nation, Abraham, who is the father of all the faithful. See him when called out. Though blind to the way he staggered not at the promise of God, but went out, not knowing whither he went, but it was a strange land to Him. Here is evidence that he was led in a way he had never before traveled, but while it was a new way to him he did not stagger, and the reason he walked uprightly was because the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. It is said that the sheep know not the voice of the stranger. Oh how my poor soul does rejoice while traveling this mysterious way to find these immovable monuments of the faithfulness of our blessed Leader, who knows all the way, and who makes all the mountains of doubts as level as the valleys, and makes straight all the crooked ways that come up in the mind and heart. Dear ones, all this heavenly host of blind pilgrims was completely hid in the seed of Abraham, for in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. When this had come it was declared by the angels that this good news should be to all people, and as we journey on in the prophetic day we see them all stop and wonder with great admiration at these blessed waymarks. Take old Jacob, to whom this blessed promise was confirmed, after he had spent a life in this way, and had proved the faithfulness of God, his great leader, he could look back and see how wonderfully God had straightened all the crooked places and smoothed all the rough places. While passing through many of them he felt they were against him, but the dear Leader could show him, as he did Paul, that all things were working for the good of all the blind who

loved this way and were called to walk in it. Then please note Elijah, the old prophet, in this way felt in his very soul all his companions had been killed and that he was left alone with his enemies. Oh how rough and crooked was then the way to him, but God, faithful to his promise, removed every obstacle by showing him that he had reserved seven thousand who had not surrendered to his enemies, and the young prophet Elisha (the gospel church which followed Elijah, the church under the law) saw him as he traveled in this highway, saw him go up in a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire. This, to my mind, represents the fiery trials and afflictions through which all God's children must travel in this world. As we behold the dear church of God, which embraces every one mentioned in the text, in their fiery afflictions, singing as they go, we glory in tribulation, because it worketh patience, and in no way can the path of the weary souls be made smoother and straighter than to have patience to wait upon their dear Leader, knowing his faithfulness to all his blessed promises to his chosen and called. If we could see the end of the way (purpose of God) there would be no mystery, but our text truly teaches that this way was made for the blind (redeemed) to walk in, and they possess two natures: the Adamic, or carnal, which is enmity to their divine nature, which is spiritual. The gospel of God, which is Jesus, leads and guides us in the way of truth. The carnal mind was received from our earthly father, Adam, and is so corrupt it cannot understand the things of the spiritual way. Satan is ever present with his deceit, and tells us that God, who leads us, doth not know. Jesus, who is the way, was not exempt from this great deceiver, but God the Father prepared for him a body which was to atone for this blind nation, who should be led in this sure way. While he was tempted in all points as his brethren, yet without sin; that is,

the Spirit was given to him without measure, and he was able to resist all temptation and live a holy life, and in this he fulfilled the law, and all this blessed blind nation was in him, and he bore their sins in his own body and nailed them to the cross. If the knowledge of him and this blessed atonement had stopped at the cross we would have been like the apostle who said, If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable. But the promise in our text is that he will make crooked ways straight and rough places smooth, so let us wait upon the one who promises. We have now followed him as far as we can, and unless he rolls away the stone that has the king's seal (death) upon it we never will see the way. How true it is that we, like Israel, who came up to the great waters of the Red Sea, must stand trembling and wait for God's salvation, and, according to his promise, his angels on the appointed morn come and roll the stone away and the seal of death is broken and the eternal sun shines forth in all its glory and lights up the highway, and makes it so plain through the gospel which brings life and immortality to light. The prophet's vision is now made plain, for we see the blind as they are journeying and communing on the great mystery, the crooked and rough way. This eternal Light which is to remove everything that blocks the way appears, and shines with such glory it causes the heart within to burn with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Please look and listen to this wonder. Jesus says, What is it troubleth you so? With astonishment and wonder they say, Are you a stranger in Israel and know not the things which have taken place? O my soul, see how wonderful is the teaching of this Teacher. What things? Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, and we had hoped he would redeem Israel, but to our great disappointment they have crucified him, and this is the third

day, and some bring strange news to us, saying he is risen. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" He began at Moses and the prophets and straightened and smoothed the way so these blind and fools could not err in the way.

I must now leave this glorious subject with a short exhortation to the blind to watch for the footprints of the flock who walked this good old way, and be not carried away by the new ideas that are now being manifested among the flock. The gospel tells of these, and says, Go not after them, for they are designing men. They have men's person in mind, and not the welfare of our beloved Zion. In all your troubles rest with faith in your great Leader, for he has promised to bring us off more than conquerors.

J. T. Barnes.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."
Matthew xxii. 37, 39, 40.

The law, and all the prophets, and all of the glory of the Father's house were hung upon the nail that was fastened in a sure place. That nail is Jesus. Isaiah xxii. 23, 24: "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house," &c. The law was a part of the glory of the Father's house, because Paul says, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8: "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stone, was glorious, so that the children of

Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." Luke xvi. 16: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached." It is plainly set forth that we are not obligated to keep the law; none but the Savior did or could keep it. Our salvation depended upon his being able to keep the law. He loved God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. All the glory of his Father's house was hung upon him, and he had the power to fulfill the law, and kept it perfectly. It demanded perfect and perpetual obedience. He said, No man taketh my life from me. I have power to take it up again. In the first place, this party who wrote me cannot do what he thinks he can, and no one else can. Then if our eternal salvation depends upon something we cannot do, we are lost, unless it is so arranged some one else can do for us what we cannot do, and his doing is credited to us. Unless what the one does who is able to satisfy the requirements of the law is imputed to us we are lost. This is exactly what was done for us when the Savior came. By his righteous living, death and suffering on the cross in the garden, and by his resurrection, we were eternally saved, and absolutely by nothing else. "So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Rom. v. 19. Again, "Much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Man cannot do what the law says, so it is written, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."—Rom. viii. 3. This man the world thinks can keep the law is dead, blind,

and cannot hear what Jesus says. Jesus asks, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."—John viii. 43. Paul says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii. 14. There has got to be something done for these helpless, lost, ruined God-hating people, and God is the only one who can do what is needed to be done for them, and every time they are told they can love God, and are free to choose, and it is just left to them whether they will serve God or sin, and are free to choose between God and Satan, it is causing them to trust in man, whose breath is in his nostrils. The Bible says, "Vain is the help of man," and, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." No wonder crime is on the increase, when they are told all they have to do to be saved is to say three words, which are, I accept Jesus and that God will save them if they will let him. This causes the alien sinner to say, I will go on and have a good time, but as I can turn round and go to God, and as he is so anxious to save me he will do it, this doctrine is licentious. Let us see what God has promised to do for his people who cannot break away from Satan: They walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Isaiah xlii. 16: "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Did you ever hear anything more glorious than this promise? God has to draw them, because they are under the control of Satan and do not know it, and cannot deliver themselves from the power of darkness.

You say, "God does not want us to love him because he compels us to do so." I did not say God compels us to love him, but his love compels us to do things. His love moves us to action. All men naturally hate God. Paul says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."—Rom. viii. 7. Isaiah liii. 3. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." These men you say ought to love God, hate him, and no man has ever loved God until God has shed his love abroad in his heart. Therefore Paul says, Romans v. 5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us." Again, 1 John iv. 7: "For love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John ii. 29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." Every one ought to know that love controls us, instead of thinking we exercise it, and they would were they not drunk on the blood of the saints, and controlled by the wine of the beast, and were not in the school of old Jezebel. So it is written in Revelation, Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce my servants, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. It is the power of love that causes people to cast themselves over precipices, and into rivers, and destroy themselves rather than to be separated. Many strong minded men have lost their reason because disappointed in love. The nobleman's daughter fled with her lover. Her father caught up with them at the arm of the sea. The ferryman risked his life on account of her entreaties. The waves were rolling, white caps breaking, when her father saw the great danger, he cried out "Come back, come back, my daughter," but he was

too late, she and her lover and the ferryman went down beneath the awful waves, and to their long eternal home. It was love overpowered her father's anger. If natural love is so strong, what must the power of the love of God be? "God is love." Song of Solomon viii. 7: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned." If God is love, as the Bible says, it is clear that there is no power equal to the love of God. Paul says, 2 Cor. v. 14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." "Constrain" means to compel. Let this be quoted, "The love of Christ constraineth us," until it reverberates and resounds over every vale, leaping to every mountain top, reaching back and forth, rolling along in thundertones, smashing the doctrine of free will, scattering its advocates as chaff before a cyclone, resounding as with heaven's trumpet, until every child of God on earth shall take up the text and repeat it, while heaven breaks forth in unison with all the redeemed of God on earth, while spiritual cords in every heaven-born soul's heart tremble with rapturous joy and gladness, while tears of glorious emotion flow down the weather-beaten, furrowed cheeks of the people of God in all lands, while the heralds of the cross repeat this glorious truth in all countries where the glorious gospel is preached; in harmony with Paul saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and tell the church of God that the word "constrain" means to compel, and therefore an alien sinner will not turn his back on the pleasures of this world until this love compels him to do so. As Ephriam said, Jeremiah xxxi. 18, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." Let the truth be shouted from every watchtower by every faithful watchman, that "the love of Christ constraineth us," and tell them "constrain" means compel, until all the

denominations learn that the "free will" doctrine of Zoroaster is false, and that it is not left to the heaven-born children of God to do as they please, which is, they can join the church of God or not, come in or stay out as they choose, and that it is left to do as they want to, but that the love of God causes them to want to come, so as to find a place of rest. The love causes them to come, or they are scared into the church by fear of punishment, or some other impure motive. So the Savior says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Drawn by his love. No one knows this better than your poor, little, sinful brother. Ah yes, down there on the old farm on the river, as wild as ever grew, sinful and profane, until, as I hope, God called me by his grace, turned me, and I was turned, brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, set my feet upon a rock, put a new song in my mouth, ~~even~~ praise unto our God, and established my goings. (Psalms xl. 2, 3.) Do you wonder I have gone through cold and heat, rain and snow, leaving my loved ones, and am now giving all my time to my blessed Savior? If a man has a child that cannot know his father because he does not know him, is under the control of a party that teaches him that his father is a terrible tyrant, the child believes what he is taught, the father will have to do something to change this state of affairs, so as to cause the child to love him. This is what God does. The first thing God does is to give life, ("I give unto them eternal life") and enables him to see his lost condition, and makes him say,

*"If my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well."*

Sheds his love abroad in his heart, and he loves his Father with the very love his Father puts in his heart. Now he knows the devil had him, and if it had not been for the love his Father had for him, and

for his Father's superior strength and wondrous power, the devil would have dragged him down to everlasting darkness and eternal woe. No wonder he is willing to serve his Father. That is enough to cause any disobedient, hell-deserving child to be willing to obey.

*"Twas all of thy grace we were brought
to obey,
While others were suffered to go
The road which we chose as our way,
Which leads to the regions of woe.

Then give all the glory to His holy name,
To Him all the glory belongs;
Be yours the high joy still to sound forth
His fame,
And crown Him in each of your songs."*

One of the leading preachers in the south was at my house some years ago, and he told me he was traveling and preaching. He said his shoes were about worn out from walking, and I think he said his feet were sore or blistered, but the impression to go on was so strong he could not stop. Now the question is, Was it the love of God that was compelling him to go, or was it some impure motive? Was the carnal mind the moving power, or was it the power of the love of God? If I knew it was the love of God that causes me to go, I think I would be exceedingly happy. But I am so cold, so dark, so weak, so ignorant and little, sometimes I am alive to my situation. I am past seventy years old and must soon be called to try the realities of a never ending eternity. Have I, poor, weak, unworthy thing that I am, ever tasted of the good word of God, and the power of the world to come, and have all the impressions and power that have moved me been brought about by the love of God, or have they all been from one Paul writes about where he says, 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose

end shall be according to their works?" It was love that caused the Savior to bow the heavens and come down, and suffer, and die, and save his people from their sins. So Paul says, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Then if he loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation, redeeming the time because the days are evil?

Your brother in hope of mercy,
Isaac R. Greathouse.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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*"Pride goeth before destruction,
and an haughty spirit before a fall."
Proverbs 16: 18*

 OBITUARIES

SISTER FLORENCE M. HARBOUR

Sister Harbour was born in rural Patrick County, Virginia on December 13, 1892, the daughter of Andrew Jackson (Jack) Martin and Sarah Tilley Martin. Early in life she began to accompany her parents and some neighbors as they walked out of the mountain on their way to Liberty Church. Somewhere during that time, the Lord softened her heart with love for that Church and for the cause in which it believed, and she never returned from following after them.

In December 1926 she was united in marriage to Carper Alex Harbour, a widower with three children: Elwood, Eva and Henry Harbour. In due time the Lord blessed her and Brother Harbour with three more children: Mary, Sadie and Robert. The balance of her temporal life was devoted to her family, and in her mind and in theirs, she was a true mother to everyone of the six children. She never labored anywhere outside of her home.

On the first Saturday in June, 1969 Sister Harbour related to the Church her long-standing desire for a home. She was baptized by her pastor, Elder Bennie N. Clifton. Thereafter, she attended services as long as she was able, except when she stayed at home when Brother Harbour was unable to come. Brother Harbour united with the Church in September 1970, and both of them were blessed to adorn the profession which they made.

After an illness of several weeks, Sister Harbour died at home on November 5, 1985. All that human hands could do was done for her by her devoted family, both during her illness and long before. Her funeral services were held at Liberty Church on November 7, con-

ducted by Elder John Wingfield, and burial followed in the Church Cemetery, near the remains of several members of her earthly family.

Sister Harbour was survived by her husband, Brother Carper; all six children, Elwood, Henry and Robert, Mrs. Eva Wagoner, Mrs. Sadie Koger and Mrs. Mary Flippen; nine grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; and one brother, Forest B. Martin. She will be sorely missed by all her brethren and sisters as long as our memories remain, but we have the consolation of knowing that she is peacefully asleep in the everlasting arms of our dear Saviour.

Submitted by:
Elder John Wingfield

SISTER ALMA WRIGHT SHORTT

We, the County Line Primitive Baptist Church, feel "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, 46th Psalm, and at the request of the two surviving sisters write this memorial of Sister Alma Wright Shortt, born January 17, 1903 and died December 19, 1985.

Services held at Wood Funeral Home were conducted by Elder Noel F. Conner and interment was in County Line Cemetery, Floyd County, Virginia, on December 21, 1985. She was married to David G. Shortt who died October 30, 1982. Surviving are one daughter, Gearldine, one son, Rural and one daughter-in-law, Berneace. Also one grandson, Gregory, and one step-grandson, Maurice Quesenberry, and one step-granddaughter, Mrs. Joyce Hunt. Three step-great-grandchildren also survive. She had two surviving sisters, Mrs. Mamie Barton and Mrs. Dovie Nolen, both of Bassett, and one brother, Moyer Wright of Floyd-Virginia.

She was not quite one year old when

her father, Mr. Thomas George Wright of Patrick County, Virginia, died. Her mother, Mrs. Emma Houchins Wright, moved back to Floyd and after a few years married Mr. William R. Turner. They both joined County Line Church in 1920, and in 1922 Brother Turner was ordained Deacon. Both saw their daughter's interest and felt she was drawn to County Line, and longed to see her come home. The work of grace in her heart, her step-father saw became heavy on her heart and when she became more afflicted with heart and unstable blood pressure conditions, she while preparing to come to County Line meeting in June 1985, fell and broke a bone near the hip joint. While in the hospital she was visited several times, and in talking with her and in prayer, said "she loved the people at County Line, and would tell them so if she ever got there again." In the presence of her son, Elder Conner endeavored to pray and left. She seemed strengthened but said she was not reconciled about her surgery. We again visited her July 4, 1985, and prayer was made at the bedside again, and asked if she was of the same mind to tell her love for County Line, "and she related how she saw the beauty of God's people at one Association held at County Line, how happy they looked, and desired to live with them," but said, "I do not see myself as I see them, but to live with them is my desire, yet felt too unworthy." We received her into the fellowship of the church and hoped to see her baptized, what her step-father had so desired to see before he died.

She was a lovely daughter, a good wife, a precious mother and grandmother, good friend and neighbor. She and her husband living near County Line Church had a special care for the Church and Cemetery, and they gave time, work, money and cared for many visitors in their home from the church meetings.

She taught five sessions in public schools. All will remember her, and we do miss her. She had surgery after much delay July 11, 1985. She came to County Line meeting once a few minutes, and once to stay the whole meeting, four days later, she suddenly passed away. She gave good evidence that our loss is her gain, and we await the glorious resurrection morn.

One in a dream, several years ago, saw her standing in the water at the usual place of baptism. She was dressed in a beautiful white wedding gown and seemed to be gazing into the heaven above her and us, so happy and rejoicing. In the dream we remember she did not seem to see those standing on the banks waiting to see her baptized. And her baptism was of the Spirit we do feel.

Elder Noel F. Conner, Moderator
Catherine A. Houchins, Clerk

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Psalms 55: 22

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DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA., OCTOBER 1986

NO. 10

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Highway 835, Box 57A

Boydton, Virginia 23917

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnboro, TX 75494

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566.

All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

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PSALM 121

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hill's
from whence cometh my help.*

*My help cometh from the Lord,
which made heaven and earth.*

*He will not suffer thy foot to be
moved: he that keepeth thee will not
slumber.*

*Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall
neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is
thy shade upon thy right hand.*

*The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.*

*The Lord shall preserve thee from
all evil; he shall preserve thy soul.*

*The Lord shall preserve thy going
out and thy coming in from this time
forth, and even for evermore.*

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Rosa Graham Ratliff	

EDITORIAL

GAL. CHAPTER I, VERSE 9-11

"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man."

The Apostle Paul begins this epistle by stating, he being chosen an apostle is, "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead."

We are most sure, without a doubt

whatsoever, that if Paul was called of God, which we have every evidence to believe he was, to preach, he was also called to write as both are directed by the power of God. Therefore we have that certainty that whatever Paul is writing to the churches of Galatia is true in that day and is to-day.

Paul here is defending what he has preached and is preaching, as I believe each of God's called ministers delight in doing to-day.

We are taught in the above scripture as well as His law written in the heart of all true believers, that of all that preach; many men do preach another pospel, or one that isn't taught in the bible.

I think he is warning all that know the truth to beware of, to stay away from, notice the danger of etc. making sure they follow not or believe, any other gospel than that Paul is setting forth or that they have heard, the Word of God verifying all.

We have heard and believe that which is the nearest the truth is the most deceiving. Follow not doctrine which has an uncertain sound, but weigh all matter as to correctness.

Paul says "do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? There has never been an age or time in the world that the true and pure doctrine of God was pleasing to the entirety of mankind or would be received of the unbeliever or any one the truth had not been revealed to. His people shall know the truth and the truth shall make them free and that means in part, free from a doctrine of gospel that is untrue.

Do I seek to please men or God? should be a question in the mind of all that know the truth, especially those who are called to stand before a God fearing people, as all His people are. Notwithstanding we know not which are His, yet to please men or to seek to please men, would erase each from being a servant of God. This is a serious matter

brethren.

As God's minister stands, or is given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; is pleasing those he is before most in his thoughts or speaking that which is indited in his heart, in the fear of displeasing God, who call him by His grace. I fear many times, is it thus with me, but trust by the grace of God, there have been times, I cared not what men might think or say, but spoke from the heart, if ever I have. I don't believe if we were to try to please all that attend our assemblies we could preach the gospel of Christ.

We must declare He is of one mind, and changes not, the same to-day, tomorrow and forever. That all who ever know Him must be taught from above by His holy spirit. To know God is life eternal. Teaching we didn't choose Him but He chose us and called us into the knowledge of the truth at His appointed time. He looked down and there was none to help, His own arm, whom I believe is Christ, brought salvation.

Did not Paul declare as Jesus himself did while on earth, that all good and perfect gifts come down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We see Him as knowing all things, then does He wait for us to ask for what we need before He knows? Are not all our blessings stored up in Him from eternity, not a possibility of us missing one blessing. We are being kept by His power as He brings us to desire many times the very thing He has determined to give. "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." Do we believe this, or are we apt not to declare He doeth all things well and none can stay His hand? This should be our theme if we believe in Him.

If we please men we are not the servant of God. Then do we declare all we

believe or withhold part to please men.

We read of a day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess He is the Lord of glory. Have we been prone to water down the unchangeable gospel of Christ? If so, we have not or will not be His servant. A servant tries to please the one he serves, if he serves people, he is loyal to his employer, in fear of being discharged. If a servant of God, expecting nothing as a reward, just made willing to serve God, in fear and trembling.

May we ever be found striving to declare that truth once delivered to the saints, giving His name all the honor, praise and glory for all time, trusting He will guide our hand to write, as well as our speech.

Submitted by,
Elder J. R. Williams

CORRESPONDENCE

July 23, 1986

Elder Kenneth R. Key
721 Willard Street
Greensboro, N.C. 2405

Greetings:

I am so sorry to read the obituary of Elder W. J. Berry, Sr. in the June issue of the "Signs of the Times". He was a man that stood by his convictions and held the truth as "Gold tried in the Fire." I remember visiting him at his home and talking to him for several hours about the goodness of God to His people. Which were foreknown and chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

God's people are called with a holy calling here in time without repentance, unto grace and not by works. They are born not of corruptible seed, but incor-

ruptible and they cannot be unborn (John 3: 6-8). They are never more reckoned in the First Adam, but pass from death to life in the second Adam-Christ!

They are set apart by one offering. Perfected in Christ forever. Kept by the Power of God, members of one body of Christ. They are sealed by the Spirit of truth unto the final pay of Redemption, for they are "Accepted in the beloved."

They are given eternal life and this life is in God's Son. They shall never perish, eternally, nor can they be separated from the Love of God, which is in Christ, for they are loved "Unto the end."

They live because He lives also, and their lives are hid in Christ. Therefore, they are God's people, a Gift to His Son, Jesus Christ. (John 17: 6-7) What a wonderful God is this!

It is sad to live to be old and see so many of God's dear people go on in death, but like Job said: "I know Thou wilt bring me to death and to the house appointed for all living." I like to think of that house, not as the grave, but that heavenly house appointed for all the elect family. May this be of comfort to all of the household of faith everywhere.

Sincerely,
Horace E. Walker
6430 Kelley Street
Salem, VA. 24153

Saltillo, Tx.
July 23, 1986

Elder Kenneth R. Key
721 Willard Street
Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Dear Elder Key,

It was surely a pleasure meeting you the night we stayed with Elder Lenard Key. We enjoyed our visit with

you. I was very impressed with your preaching during the Smith River Association.

Brother Key, for several months now I have noticed a particular interest in the subject of Gods will. I have been impressed to write on the subject, because it has to do with the vital subject of faith and practice. Any preaching that does not give due observation to both, becomes either Legal or Antinomian and will lead away from vital truth.

It would seem in studying and observing Church history when controversy on either side there is a tendency of preaching continually on one side and lose sight of the "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." No question about it; when left to the flesh we go one way or the other and become unconcerned with Zions condition and God's judgement on us, (Rev. 2:23 and etc.). Then charging it all on the sovereignty of God and hiding behind the effectual workings of the Spirit as a refuge for our own sin of neglect. On the other hand, go in the opposite direction by imbibing a legal spirit.

Which of us can say we are not guilty, therefore I have tried in this article to stay free from both errors. If you deem it worthy of publishing, I would like for you to do so. It is at your disposal.

In much love for you and yours,
C. M. Haygood

THOUGHTS ON THE WILL OF GOD

The all encompassing will of God is proven by the following Scriptures Ps. 115:3; Isa. 46:10; Dan. 4:17,32; Rom. 9:18, 19; 11:33-36. God's decree and purpose, called His will, has ever been carried out, without change of which it is utterly impossible for any people, devils, or angels to change or

frustrate. "_____ For who hath resisted his will?" Rom. 9:19 "_____ His ways past finding out!" Rom. 11:33 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord _____" Rom. 11:34.

Are we obligated to use this as a guide or rule in practice as taught in the scripture? No, it is not for us to know. "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," Acts 1:7 for it is secret and "secret things belong unto God" Duet. 29:29 and unknown as the above Scriptures prove. Therefore His secret will and purpose being unknown, there can be no duty or obligation to endeavor to use it as a guide for our actions. There has been no event of time that has escaped the secret will and purpose of God. This is complete and perfect, no such thing as change or chance or uncertainty, "_____ neither shadow of turning," James 1:17. Thus proving it utterly impossible to change or transgress His secret will. Again is this a rule for us to endeavor to be governed by? No, if so it would be like a ship on the sea trying to steer it's course by an unseen star or compass or something to charter it's course by, it will very likely come to shipwreck, however, if it's course is chartered by a compass or star clearly seen it would surely bring it on its way.

When we try to adjust our conduct to God's purpose and decree as the rule of our life, thus error follows; which places a special emphasis on one portion of Scriptures and neglecting of others. As time goes on we become crystallized in expressions and when we endeavor to use His secret will, purpose and decree as our guide we develop a seeming dislike and shunning of treating upon the many precepts, responsibilities and commandments laid down in the Scriptures as a doctrine to be avoided.

Now let us further consider as taught in the Scriptures the other BRANCH

called the Lord or God's will, His commandments and our obligations. Out of fifteen passages of Scripture in the New Testament that I have noted, I have chosen four for reference called the Father or God's will, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. 2:12. "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," Matt. 12:50. "That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God" 1 Pet. 4:2. "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2:17.

From the beginning of time God commanded Adam "Thou shalt not eat of it." Gen. 2:16, 17, 3:11. The various commandments making transgression a sin. Man was put under law and obligation, (See November 1984 issue of The Signs of The Times, pages 248-251) not to sin. In every sin we set up our own will, forsaking His commandments, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight _____" 2 Sam. 12:9. Are we not under law and obligation to observe his (Christ or God's) commandments? Surely, Paul charged Timothy how we OUGHT to behave and conduct ourselves. "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," 1 Tim. 3:15. Also "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Ecc. 12:13. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. 28:20. After Christ came and fulfilled the law to a jot and tittle the justice and

wrath of God was completely satisfied for his People. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14. Are we now under no law or obligation? Surely we are. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Pet. 1:15, 16. "_____ That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Col. 4:12. Though such obligation and standard is not reached in this life; "— The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." Mark 14:38. As Paul says "Not as though I had already attained either were already PERFECT! but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," Phil. 3:12 "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," verse 14. The spirit doesn't enable us to live a perfect life in keeping all His Commandments but it is our desire.

The arminians teach that it is absurd to suppose that God required that which they are unable to do, but not so. This branch of God's will called the will of the Lord, which is revealed in the Scriptures for our guide is a perfect rule, Matt. 5:48, 1 Pet. 1:15, 16. But we are continually sinners (it is not given us to be perfect in keeping all his commandments) and transgressors if we ignore Gods will of precept; called his will, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. 7:21. "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," 12: 15. In denying this branch called God's will we run into contradiction of thought in the Scriptues. "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you

by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye OUGHT to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." 1 Thes. 4:1, 2.

Let us, the Lord willing, harmonize God's purpose and decree and the other branch of his will, our responsibility to Him. This is not engaging in a dangerous curiosity, but is in harmony and consonant with both. The revealed will of God is our duty and responsibility and is not speaking of his secret purpose and decree, but our guide and responsibility.

God's children are not a lawless people, "To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law" 1 Cor. 9:21. And "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. 8:7. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man," Rom. 7:22. Here we quote from a writer of old. "But to suppose that whatever God requireth of us that we have power of ourselves to do, is to make the effectual working of the spirit of non-effect, our duty is our duty constituted unalterable by the law of God whether we have power to perform it or not." Let us carefully note here our ability and our duty and obligation are not synonymous and does not have the same meaning in all cases.

It was God's command by Moses to Pharoah to send the Children of Israel out of Egypt (Exod. 5:5, 7:2) but he did not have the ability and it was his sin and destruction. It was Christs command, "Jesus said unto him, if thou will be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me," Matt. 19:21, but this was not in his ability, (V. 22) "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sor-

rowful; for he had great possessions," and this was his sin. A certain lawyer stood up "Tempting him (Christ) saying, what shall I do to inherit eternal life," Luke 10:25. Christ's command to him "thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live." Luke 10:28. Also Christ commanded him again, "Go and do thou likewise." Luke 10:37. But this was not in his ability and was his sin. Also Christ commanded his disciples in Gethsemane, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," Matt. 26:41. And this was not in their ability and was their sin.

All our ability to obey is from the Holy Spirit, He must work both to will and to do, (Phil. 2. 13). There is a great difference between do such a thing as a command and obligation and you shall do it by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. One is our duty and responsibility and the other by His effectual spirit. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not sinned; but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15:22.

Look at some of the exhortation given us as our duty, for example, of the four chapters of Colossians, two of them are preceptive and exhortation; of the six chapters in Ephesians the last three are preceptive and exhortation; of the five chapters in First Thessalonians, the last two are preceptive and exhortation, and all through the New Testament we find these precepts and commandments. Has Paul's charge to Titus become obsolete? "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." Titus 3:8. My brethren do we not all fall very short in these things? But if love is in our heart we will not use such exhortation as a rod in a legal way; as to use the precepts for others and not as a rule for ourselves also, provoking a spirit of bitterness and division, almost if not denying the power of God; as

though we by ourselves could lift ourselves up by our own boot straps.

So as we are blessed to preach in love, "I can of mine own self do nothing," John 5:30. And that "Without me ye can do nothing," John 15:5. As it has been said, "We have no power from the Holy Spirit unless we live in a persuasion that we have none of our own."

On the other hand, let us also preach and be just as insistent. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. 4:13. Dear ones, anytime we lose this balance of truth and begin to maximize the work of the flesh, I can't (John 5:30, 15:15); and minimize the work of the spirit, I can (Phil. 4:13); we are in trouble; or vice-versa. To continually make judgement about our disability and placing it against our ability and responsibility and God's commands; this my brethren is not exalting the grace of God, but our disability and weakness. Did Peter's weakness and disability of denying Christ release him from the sin of doing it, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." God charges sinners for their sins, not their weakness, not their disability. It is not right to try to justify ourselves, pleading our weakness and disability as an excuse for not obeying His Commandments. Dear brethren, how easy it is to enlarge on the purpose and decree of God to the extent, without realizing it, of developing a seeming dislike and shun the many precepts and responsibilities; taking refuge behind the effectual working of the Holy Spirit as a release from such obligations. Oh, how dependant on the Spirit to keep us from extremes both ways, (Isa. 31:21). God's children know where all their obedience comes from and how helpless they are. This gives great occasion for prayer and supplication to Him, to make His strength perfect in our weakness.

It has ever been Satan's cunning craftiness to tempt us one way or the other. Do we not all feel we have experienced

these temptations? May it please the Lord to keep us from both extremes; departure in doctrine or in practice, the things that accompany salvation, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak," Heb. 6:9. But give each their proper place preaching all the counsel of God, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," Acts 20:27.

To SHUN is to disguise any important truth, at least to decline the open publication of it for fear of displeasing those to whom it ought to be declared. If we go either way; one side arminianism---legalism. On the other, losing sight of the many obligations and exhortations laid down in the Scriptures, which begeth a spirit of indifference. Even going so far as denying responsibility or duty, much less exhorting the brethren daily. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," Heb. 3:13.

God's Children do not go through this world to heaven ANYHOW, but ONE HOW, by the GRACE OF GOD. This grace in their heart does produce a real change in their life bearing fruits of love, joy, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, crucifying the flesh and its affections. (Gal. 5:22) "Teaching us that we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world." Titus 2:12.

Teaching us that there is a necessity of striving to enter in at the strait (low, small and pressed) gate. (Matt. 7:13) It is not just professing "Lord, Lord," but in doing this revealed will and here in this sense we are justified by works. (Matt. 7:21. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone," James 2:17. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD?" (Verse 20). "Was not Abraham our father justified BY WORKS, when he had of-

fered Isaac his son upon the alter?" (verse 21) "Ye see then how that BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED, and not by faith only." (verse 24) "_____ so faith without works is dead also," (verse 26) surely it is not as easy as we might think to be a follower of our Lord. The Scriptures teach a vital experience of truth in the heart and fruit of the Spirit manifested by a godly walk and conduct.

When as enabled by the Spirit to exhort in love to such things, there is a tendency of some to hurl back the arrow of exhortation, rather than let it stick in their conscience by such false charges; "unsound, unsound," quickly change the subject by comparing NATURAL things with SPIRITUAL instead of matching or comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual," 1 Cor. 2:13. Now he is preaching you can do something without the grace of God; all we want to hear is comfort, there is no room for reproof, rebuke or exhortation "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4:2 (See also Dec. 1984 Signs, Pg. 271, 172 Article on Secret and Revealed Will of God, which I feel is sound.)

As we are blessed of the Lord our obligation to His revealed will, when we are blessed to read it in the Scriptures and hear it preached we should simply endeavor to obey it, not tarrying to inquire into His hidden purpose and decree or whether we shall be able to perform it or not. But my dear brethren, let us be very careful not to break the commandments of God, for the sake of what has been handed down to us, by tradition, "Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition," Matt. 15:3. And try and repeal and empty the commandments of our master of all

their meaning and force to us, as a guide and duty, just to suit our own tradition. "Thus have ye made the commandments of God of none effect by your tradition," verse 6. "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 1 Thes. 4:1, 2.

This makes me fear and tremble. Oh, how far short I have come and failed my brethren, so many times, but some how, by the mercy and Grace of God, I continue to this day and I want to live and die with you.

Now I feel a timely exhortation is in order "Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might." Eph. 6:10. And again "Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our People," and thus leaving it in his secret will and purpose, "_____ and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." 2 Sam. 10:12. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord," Prov. 16:33. (See also Acts 2: 23-26.) If we be his children, it is all working for our good. "_____ we are already more than conquerors through Him that loved us," Rom. 8:37. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord_____;" Phil. 3:1. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice." Phil. 4:4.

Written in Love,
C. M. Haygood

August 4, 1986

Dear Elder Key:

I don't suppose you'll ever know how much it ment to me your calling me this a.m. I've been awful cast down in spirit and health since I last saw you.

Sure wish I could have been with you

all at Greensboro meeting Sunday, Aug. 3. You sounded on phone as if indeed you did have a good meeting with the two visiting ministers from Texas and Alabama. It would be worth the drive for me to be there from S.C. every meeting day but it is now I don't trust my car.

The following is some of my experiences before I joined the church: All of a sudden this spring morning this terrible pressure began to build up in my chest and I knew it was God dealing with me but I didn't know what to do to get relief. I suppose this was what they call the Spirit of Conviction dealing with me and as well as I can remember, this stayed with me for maybe 36 or 48 hours. I called the Pastor (Preacher) to ask what to do and couldn't find him. I went to a certain woman in the office building where my business was because she was a regular church attender. I sat down in her Beauty Shop and she knew something was wrong and asked if she could help. God stopped my mouth so I could not speak. Finally, I thought of my mother at my home. She was a very religious person of her belief so I figured for sure she could tell me what to do, so I closed my business and raced home and told her I had to ask her something. When she asked what my problem was, my mouth was stopped again. So I knew no one else to turn to and I felt I would explode in my chest, so I hit the floor upon my knee's and cried aloud in tears "God Have Mercy." Then came wonderful relief and I got up rejoicing with a smile.

Sometime later in Mt. Airy, N.C. I was at home alone when I first experienced the power of God in the warmth and power of His Spirit upon me. If it wasn't a reality, it appeared to me, the house was shaking and cracking, I was reading where Abraham was justified by Faith without works. I thought I was going to be translated as I had read about Enoch. I begged God not to take me then so I could tell others, because I

thought at the time I was the only one who knew this wonderful truth. So it happened. But still for a time after this I was a terrible Pharisee.

I was placed as mens adult Sunday School Teacher. I questioned the Pastor for preaching works instead of Pure Sovereign Grace. His answer was that he knew it but the congregation dind't want it.

So I got onto the assistant Pastor for the same (only he was worse). He kept telling me if I believed so strong about Grace, I should join that old bunch of Primitive Baptist until I decided maybe I should and did after I searched for you people on Tate Street until the 3rd Sunday. When I finally found you, I remember Elder King spoke that day, and I left perfectly blessed. I hope I'm never turned to another belief than pure Amazing Grace. But I was still suspicious and had the Bible in question. I wondered if this was for real or was it my human emotion being stirred up, until one day it was proven to me with no doubt there is a real God.

I was in Jones Studio on Elm Street retouching negatives with no thought of God or religion on my mind, when all of a sudden, the most powerful and warm spirit began to descend upon me like heavy downpours of rain. It was so powerful it reminded me of the Scripture accout (King James) of the day when John the Baptist did Baptize Jesus and said without any ifs, ands, or buts and without doubt "Behold the Son of God which taketh away the sins of the world." Isn't it amazing that later when John was in prison, he doubted when he sent the messenger to Jesus (and you know the message). Just think of so many religious people who claim they have no doubts. Also when Jesus was on the cross he doubted evidently when the spirit was taken from him and he said "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." Elder Key and to all my

Brethren and Sisters in Christ, I say as long as I'm in my right mind, I'll never again doubt there is a true and living Spiritual God. I'll try to shorten this letter but feel I must refer back to when I cried unto God for mercy and got relief, I didn't even know who Jesus was or what he meant to me. And this reminds me of when Jesus said "I knew you before you knew me." I hope all my writtings and sayings are to the comfort and edification of the chosen saints of God and as it is written, "In all thy ways acknowledge The Lord Thy God." I believe we all do fail at times, I would rather it be so as it is written. I am so scared of this God Jehovah so much of the time, for it is written he is a terrible God as well as a merciful God. But I'm still relieved that my destiny is not in the hands of flesh and blood.

I'll sign off for now because there is no end. And believe me if I do any boasting, let it be in Christ Jesus and I do desire to be humble before God and his chosen Saints. Please forgive me if I seem otherwise.

Carl Richard Hoffman
4 Arbor Avenue
Hartsville, S.C. 29550

August 18, 1986

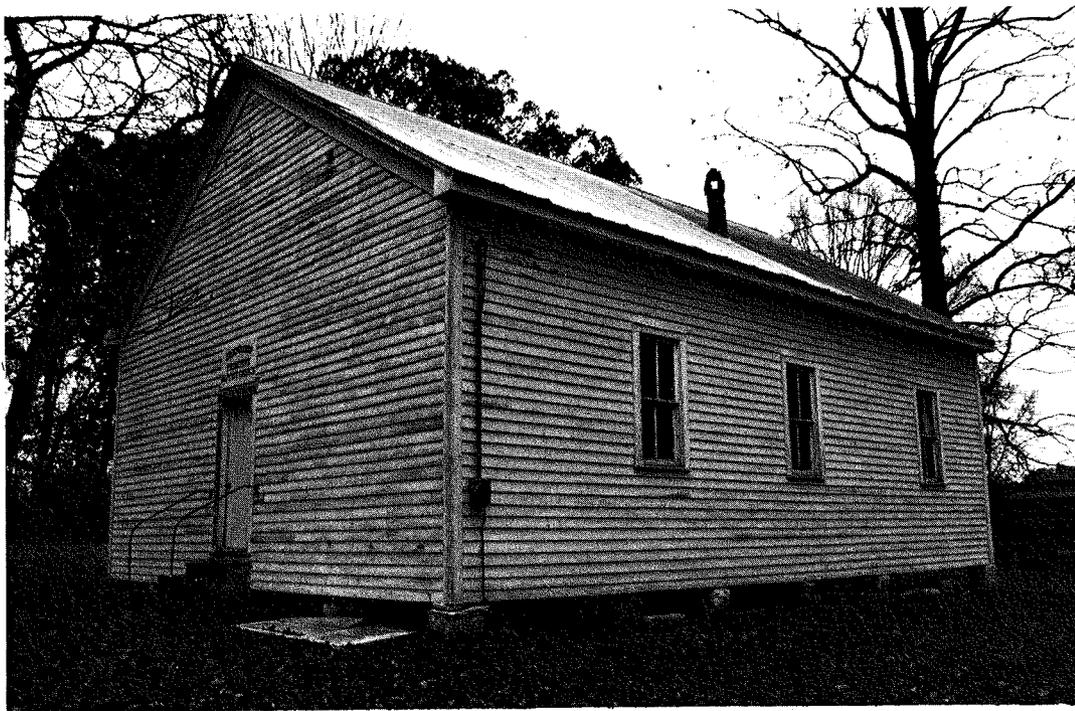
Dear Elder Kenneth Key,

You asked me when you visited my wife and I sometime back to write a letter for the Signs of The Times. I had never felt I was able to write for such a good paper and for the good people that read The Signs.

To start off with, my wife's health is not good enough to travel any distance much of the time and am afraid to leave her for fear she will need me.

I would like to express a few thoughts on the 6 verses of the 5th Chapter of Romans. I think Paul expressed justifi-

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



FRIENDSHIP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Friendship Primitive Baptist Church is located at White Pine, Tennessee (Jefferson County).

The church was established in 1819. It is one of four churches composing the original Powell Valley Primitive Baptist

Association.

Our meeting time is 11:00 A.M. Sunday following the 4th. Saturday (April through October). Elder D. R. Cabbage is the pastor.

cation very beautifully. Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulations worketh patience: And patience, experience, and experience hope; And hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. For when we were

yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

I have been thinking along these lines a long time also the 8th and 9th verses of Ephesians, For by grace ye are saved through faith and that not of yourselves: It is a gift of God. Not of works of man, lest any man should boast.

I may not have written it exactly as it is written in the Bible. But I guess I have read and re-read it ever since I was a child. Remember my wife and I to your family and may God bless you both.

Saved by Grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ if saved at all.

Carroll Ellwanger
716 Lawsonville Ave.
Reidsville, N.C. 27320

P.S. I love all the people at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church and try to attend whenever possible or any other Primitive Baptist Church whenever possible.

MEETINGS

CONTENTNEA ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the Contentnea Association will be held with the church at Goose Creek Island on October 10, 11, and 12, 1986.

The Church is located about 35 miles Northeast of New Bern, N.C. between Hobucken and Low Land.

All of our Brethren and Friends are invited to share the joy and fellowship of this meeting.

Milton Fountain, Clerk

HOPEWELL ASSOCIATION

The one hundred-second annual session of the Hopewell Primitive Baptist Association will meet, God willing, with Salem Church, Pickens County, Alabama, beginning on Friday, October 17, 1986, to continue through Sunday.

The meeting house is three miles south of State Highway 86 on a farm road which joins Highway 86 west of Bear Creek, near mileage marker 22.

All lovers of the truth are invited. For further information, call (205)556-5157.

Levert Howell, Clerk

DURHAM

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written word of God, Durham Primitive Baptist Church looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They therefore called for a presbytery to be formed Sunday afternoon July 20, 1986 at three o'clock at Durham Church, Durham, N.C., for the purpose of examination of this gift, brother Clifton Roberson, and if found qualified, be ordained to the full work and service of deacon.

All Elders of our faith and order present were invited to sit in the presbytery and all deacons were asked to sit together. The meeting was opened by prayer by Elder Paul Lambe. Elder Cleo Roberson was elected as moderator and Elder Kenneth R. Key to serve as clerk. Brothers Brinkly and Whaley acting as spokesmen for the church delivered brother Roberson to the presbytery.

The qualifications of deacon was read as set forth in 1st Timothy, 3rd chapter. Examinations followed by Elder Prescott and the presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifications of Brother Roberson proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elder W. D. Griffin. The charge was delivered to Brother Roberson by Elder H. W. Wray. He was then delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon.

The minutes of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. A copy to be placed in the church records, a copy to be sent to the Signs of The Times for publication and a copy to be given to Brother Roberson.

The presbytery was dismissed by prayer by Elder Cleo Roberson.

Elder Cleo Roberson, Moderator
Elder Kenneth R. Key, Clerk

 ARTICLES

“Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.”—Job xxxiii. 13.

When God made his covenant with Abraham he did not tell Abraham the ways of anything in that covenant. He made it, and it should be taken as his right, for he who made it cannot do wrong nor sin. He is not under law to any man or government. He is God. He told Abraham that in his seed should all the nations be blessed, and that in Isaac should his seed be called. This Abraham received, and believed. Yet that faith should be tested, or he should be tested in that faith. Isaac is born. Abraham saw that part of the fulfillment of God's promise to him. But here is the trial: “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Abraham did not say, God, you have promised me that I shall be a great nation, a father of many peoples, and my seed shall be in this very child. Now if I go and kill, and burn him thy word will not be true. None of these things were with him. The faith which God had given him was great, and that constituted him the father of all the household of faith, of the children of God. He believed that even though he should kill him God was able to raise him from the dead. That God's word was sure, that it could not fail. With this faith he arose, saddled his ass, took his servants and Isaac, and went, as God had commanded him, into the country of Moriah. His faith was not seen by Isaac at that time. Abraham had fire, he had a knife, upon the shoulders of Isaac he had wood. All were Abraham's, and pre-

pared by him for the fulfillment of the word of God to him. As they went there seems to have been no inquiry in the mind of Abraham. Whatever there may have been in his mind was known only to God, for he was silent. There he was still to know that he who had commanded him was God. There was an inquiry in the mind of Isaac: Father, here is the wood, the fire, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? He knew nothing of why they were going, only to offer to God an offering. The faith which God had given to Abraham saw in the distance the Jehovah-jirah of God. Not a word of all the promises of God could fail. He had not reached the top of the mount of God, but faith told him that that holy altar was there. “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering,” is the answer of faith. Could he see his dying son? We do not know, but if he could he could see the resurrection of God in him. He would raise him from the dead. His word was sure. He who is to be a blessing to all nations is to come forth from this child. That is the promise, and he who promised will surely fulfill all he has said. Isaac shall live. God will provide for himself an offering. All Abraham as a man could see was Isaac. But what did it differ? God had power over death as well as life. All were his to command, rule and overcome. Dead or alive may Isaac be, but the promise of God is sure. Isaac must live. He is the father of the promised seed. This faith moved Abraham to go with unfaltering step to the very spot. When he was there God showed him the place. There he built the altar to receive the sacrifice. The wood was put in order, the sacrifice was bound and laid upon the wood on the altar. Not one doubt is seen. The whole is a scene of faith in Him who had promised, and commanded. It is His ability which is being trusted. At last came the fatal step: the knife is taken ready for the last blow toward the offering. Sure there never

was such a trial in any other man, and yet there is not one lame step in it all. But behold the end of faith: "Abraham, Abraham," said an angel of God. "Here am I," said faithful Abraham. He had not failed in one point of all that God had commanded. "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Abraham had seen the provision of God only by faith, but now he looked, "and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offerd him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." Did not God know before all the way? Was there anything in all this that was new to him? Doubtless he did this to prove to Abraham his wonderful power to keep him in the most trying times which could come to him, and to all his seed that he was able to save unto the uttermost them that come to God by him. This is what he shows to us in his wonderful dealings with us in our poor hearts as he saves us from the power of our sins. Thus he brings our blessed Jesus to our view and we are able to see in him all we need, and that he is ever the Jehovah-jirah of our God to all his people. He did not give an account of any of these matters to Abraham, only as he fulfilled them in him and to him.

I have been made to feel that Elihu was a true type of the gospel ministry, and yet he could not convince Job of sin. His three friends had failed. To me they are striking figures of Arminianism which we have to contend so much with in the warfare with our old carnal natures. These know not the truth, and therefore cannot teach it. I have not been able to quote from them as the servants of God. They knew nothing of his inspiration. Eliphaz knew nothing only as a natural man. None of his words were inspired of God. They are not Scrip-

ture given by inspiration of God. He was a son of the tribe of Esau. He was of the non-elect family. When he said, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards," he only knew what he said literally. He had no inspired knowledge of what he said. It is fully proven in his other expression, "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." God has never made any such promise to his people. He has not in any way, nor at any time, limited his goodness to his people. His word to them is, Lo, I am with thee alway, even unto the end. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. The everlasting arm is ever underneath. Such are the words of God which are embraced in the faith of God. It was in these things that Abraham was moved forward in the service of his God without faltering step. Any who will read the fifth chapter of the book of Job will see that right in the beginning of his sermons to Job Eliphaz showed himself to be a strict Arminian. There is where you will find those quotations. He and his friends came to hold a protracted meeting to convert Job. This is the first protracted meeting I have any account of being held. Three preachers to convert one man. They began as if they were in earnest. They went at it with fastings. However not one of them had felt the conflicts which Job was feeling. There they could be no more than miserable comforters to him. They could not enter into his sorrows, for they did not know them. When Elihu began to preach the gospel to him he did not answer Elihu. But he could not bring the needed comfort to Job. Finally God spake, and the mouth of Job could not answer. He had said things which were too wonderful for him, therefore he put his hand upon his mouth and spake no more. His mouth was a stream of words before the three Arminian preachers, but how very quickly it was sealed when God spake. You know how it is. You

have traveled that way, and there is where it has to be learned. There is no other school where any one may learn of God. It was in the dealings of God with Abraham that he learned of him, and so must it be with all who learn to know Him and the power of his resurrection.

L. H. Hardy

Topeka, Kansas

Dear Sister:

I was so overwhelmed by distracting sorrow and distress I seemed to have forgotten the omnipresent God, and had no thought to call upon him as an ever-present help in time of trouble. But while so forgetful of him, he showed me, as I humbly hope, that he had not forgotten me, by speaking these words in my ear: As the days of a tree so shall the days of my people be. Then, in the midnight darkness and loneliness, in the midst of an ever-changing throng of a speeding train, I lay back in my seat, and with closed eyes, oblivious to all about me, a picture was spread before me such as I have never been able to portray with tongue or pen. The winter just passed has been another continuous siege of distracting grief and tribulation and my mind reverts to the view I then had, and I have wished I might express to those of "like precious faith," and also of like trials and conflicts, some of the thoughts those words have brought to my mind. Being spoken to me as they were, I thought they were Scripture, but the only text I can find is in Isaiah lxxv. 22: "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." No doubt the connecting sentences have a deep significance, and I would love to read after the pen of some one who is given understanding of them. As for me, if I at-

tempt to search and find out God, I am apt to find that his judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out, and can only speak of the things which are given and revealed to me. As I humbly hope, by his Spirit, and leave them to his elect, precious, to judge whether they are of him, or only the emanations of fleshly imagination. If it was not a token of remembrance from a compassionate, unchanging God, then I fear I have never received a seal of his love, as he sometimes allows me to dare hope he has given me. I was often made to reflect on the words, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." It seemed that in this the Lord quickened again my slothful, forgetful heart, and for a little while my troubles were put in the background and I was given a little surcease from the tempest raging in my mind, and instead thereof a season of refreshing from his very presence, which he made me feel was going with me.

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

*"When converts first begin to sing,
Their happy souls are on the wing;
Their theme is all redeeming love,
Fain would they be with Christ above."*

Oh what lovely blossoms, and what a sweet savor of Christ they send forth as

they call and beckon to us to "come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein." The trees of the field do clap their hands, the cedars of Lebanon (the older brethren) bow at his feet, and praise him in fullness of joy, resting in the blessed promise that the Lord will not leave himself without witnesses. Perhaps the little tree had stood unnoticed, apparently dead, until the little leaves began to grow and the signs of life involuntarily began to appear. What rejoicing now that we see it is not dead, as it appeared, and now we hope to see the sweet fruits of the Spirit evidenced later on, for they shall take root downward and bear fruit upward. But, as the days of a tree, by and by the sun does not shine so brightly, clouds appear, and oh how dark it becomes. A storm arises, and in the raging the poor little tree sways and bends, the lovely bloom is beaten off and swept away, or covered with earth. The storm passes, and the little tree is left standing, not so proudly, perhaps, but of a more sore dignity, as, the promising bloom gone, the fruit buds begin to appear, and as the fruit increases in the upward branches the root is taking deeper hold in the earth. So are the days of my people.

*"It is not long before they feel
Their feeble souls begin to reel;
They think their former hopes are vain,
They're filled with sorrow, grief and pain."*

Cannot every child of God go back in memory to the time they thought they would always go on their way rejoicing in the bloom of their earliest love, believing the enemies of their carnal nature were all slain, and would never vex or annoy them any more? But alas, the little clouds begin to arise, vexations come, and the lovely bloom is beaten off

as the sorrows of the world worketh death to the sweet spiritual enjoyment, perhaps leading them as far as Peter, to even deny the Lord, saying in doubt and unbelief, that after all it is only a delusion, and they were deceived and had deceived others. Where now is the blessedness ye spake of? The beautiful promising bloom which looked so pleasant is gone from their view, swept away and buried in the storm of earthly cares and sorrows that has so unexpectedly fallen upon them. "But the root of the righteous shall not be moved." The storm passes, and they find themselves still standing in the faith of God's elect, cast down, but not destroyed. Oh then the fruit buds begin to appear, as in humbleness they are brought to see that it is not in their own strength they stand. "I am the root and the offspring of David." This is the Root that extends downward in the earthen vessel of mercy. Each can say, O Lord, "my goodness extendeth not to thee," but his goodness does reach down to every vessel of mercy. The strong downward Root holds firm, and will not let them be overwhelmed. They are made to realize that "the root of righteous yieldeth fruit," which is borne upward in praise and thanksgiving to God for deliverance from the storm. The many storms of affliction and sorrow, trials and tribulations, perils and persecutions break and beat upon the "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord," until they bow and bend, so shaken in mind they fear they cannot stand; no, not another day.

*"I fear at last that I shall fall,
For if a saint, the least of all."*

Yet when the storm passes, and the Sun of righteousness once more beams forth, then in this light, and not their own feeble sight, they see it is not in their own strength they still stand, but the Strength of Israel has held them. Not by works of righteousness which they have done, not by might, nor by power, but by my

Spirit, saith the Lord. Much more of the cherished fruit is gone. But when blooming youth is gone, and old age comes on, we are made to realize that it is the bitter, gnarly fruit of self-confidence and fleshly ambition that is being beaten off. It came from earth, and must fall back from whence it came, for "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up," but the "tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord," its fruit shall remain. One by one we see every earthly hope and joy beaten off and swept away, but the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, oh nothing shall ever be able to separate us from that. How gladly we should have the gnarly, poisonous fruits of the flesh pruned away, so that we might shine forth as the morning, with not a cloud to intervene between us and our Rock, who shelters us in this weary land of storms and trouble. As the tree grown older, as the growth in grace and in the knowledge of truth increases, the poor tempest-tossed child of God seems to gain strength in the storms, often stands more firm, and is not so easily tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; does not so lightly bow and bend to the lo heres and lo theres, but the sweet fruits of the Spirit are borne upward to him, the Strength of Israel, the Root of David, in the earthen vessel, has kept him from falling, and enables him to say, I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. If it is his will that I shall weather another storm he will give the old trunk, stripped of all the foliage of youthful hopes and ambitions, every branch of earthly aspirations and joys broken off, strength to endure. But oh the weakness of the flesh. How we do shrink and dread when we see the storm coming, though there is a "needs be" for it all, and we know that

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

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

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

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

*"When a few more days I've wasted,
When a few more scenes are o'er,
When a few more griefs I've tasted,
I shall fall, to bloom no more."*

But not yet. The downward Root has not yet parted from the earthen vessel, and though I often feel, especially in the heart-rending trials I have endured of late, that there is no fruit borne upward from such a withered and weather-beaten old trunk, yet all the days of my appointed time I must wait until my change come.

One night as I lay thinking of the trials and conflicts of the Lord's peculiar people these words came to my mind with force, "I see men as trees walking," and I thought how like a tree is the walk of the Lord's people. None can see men, nor the people of God, walking as trees, until led out of the town, or world, as was

the blind man, by God's own hand, and how short the time until made to see that as the days of a tree, so are the days of the Lord's people. He sometimes lays his hand heavily upon us, showing us what great things we must suffer for his sake, until we cry, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." Whom he loves he rebukes and chastens, and it is his chastening hand that makes us look up, until we see clearly every man, every child of God, walking the same path, every one enduring the same storms and afflictions, for if ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards and not sons. There is no place of rest for us in the town, or world; we cannot go back there, or tell to any in the town of the things we see clearly. They know nothing of the reproach of the cross, and have no sympathy for the mourning people of God. But to our own house, there we may freely go, sure to find there the sympathy and fellowship we crave. There all speak the same language, weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who do rejoice. Here we see men as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, walking the same road, buffeted on every hand by storms without and within. The same storms that beat and bend one old tree beat upon all, and though one may feel that the storm has brought him a little lower than the rest ever get, yet all the rest feel the same way: less than the least of all saints. But in this is our fellowship and our love made perfect, and we often find the lowest tree bears the sweetest fruit, as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood. What a comparison. The low apple-tree is the one that bears the fruit. The ones that stand the highest are not always the most fruitful. But "as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." His loved ones among the

sons of earth are lowly. A proud look he hates and abominates. The proud he knoweth afar off. But the fruit of his love on the lowly trees is sweet to our taste; yes, sweet, because when we are made to look up we see that his banner over us is love, and know that, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me." "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

As the days of a tree, so are my people. As the tree falls, there shall it lie. It falls to earth, and returns to the dust as it was, and so shall it be until the bright morning of the resurrection, when the Lord shall bring again in power that which fell in weakness, and will clothe it again in the beauty of holiness, then shall we be satisfied. Every idol that now intervenes between us and our love will be swept away, and we shall see his face, and never, never sin. No more storms of darkness and sorrow falling upon us, no more crying of pain and anguish, no more griefs and heartaches, no more trouble and mourning, no more losses and crosses, no more wars and fightings, the conflict will be over, our warfare ended, and God himself shall wipe the tears from off all faces, for, "as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Then shall we see him as he is, and be like him. "As the days of a tree [He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief] are the days of my people."

Submitted to the discretion of the editors, and through them to the people of God, walking as trees, toiling, sorrowing, rejoicing, the half of which can never be told.

One of the least,
Mary Ellison.

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Mat. 7:12

ROMANS VIII. 28

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.”

These words bring to our minds solemn thoughts and reflections, of the ground they cover, and the real true meaning of the words here spoken by the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. How hard it is for poor insignificant creatures to understand or comprehend the working of his almighty power, as he (God) works all things after the counsel of his own will. As we contemplate the majesty and glory of our God in all his works let us ever remember that “as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” It seems to me that Paul was here contemplating the work of God from the beginning to the end, from creation to the final glorification of all the redeemed, and not a single link in the chain of God’s providence could be left out and his most holy will and purpose accomplished for his dear saints and his glory. We poor finite creatures cannot sit as judges of what our God should do or not do, or divide between the good and the bad, from our viewpoint. It has often been said that God predestinated the good things, but not the bad. Who of us is able to sit as judge and draw the dividing line; place the good things on the right, the bad on the left? Let us examine a few things left on record for our learning. God created Adam upright, a good created being, gave him a law. He broke that law and fell under its curse: sin and death upon all his posterity. Now we all know that our God could have made Adam strong enough to have withstood the temptation, but in the purpose of God, with an end in view in the far future, he made Adam just as he was. We would place this evil step on the left, not comprehending the thing to be accomplished:

the glorification of our God and his only beloved Son Jesus, the Savior of sinners. But I want it distinctly understood that God is not the author of sin; man is wholly responsible for all his sins and misdeeds. We note again among the “all things” the selling of Joseph. Joseph had a dream. (Read the narrative.) Was it a mere chance dream, or did the God of heaven inspire it? He had a purpose in it, therefore it was a link in the chain. Joseph told it to his brethren and they put their interpretation upon it (and a correct one). The evil of their corrupt nature arose and they conspired against Joseph and sold him to merchantmen, who carried him to Egypt. See the sorrow of poor old Jacob. Would we not all place this on the left, with the bad things, as old Jacob did when he said, All these things are against me? Dear reader, how often have we said in our hearts as Jacob did, not seeing the end? But, reader, follow Joseph in all his career, shut up in the prison cell by evil intention, is this for good? Yes, in the purpose of God, though yet hid from mortals. Pharaoh dreamed a dream, Joseph was there to interpret it. Suppose Joseph had not been there, then what? But he was there to interpret the dream. Seven years of plenty, seven years of famine. Joseph finds favor with the king, and is made head over all, to save much people alive. God sent him there; the end is good, and when made known his brethren bowed to him willingly, and Joseph told them, Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Again, the betrayal of Christ by Judas. Where in all the history of the world was there a blacker or more heathenish crime? Yet it was all in the fixed, predestinated purpose of our God. Suppose there had not been a Judas; then what? The Scriptures would not have been fulfilled, nor the purpose of God. It is written, “As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three

days and three nights in the heart of the earth." When Jonah took ship it was evil upon his part, but God meant it for good. He was to learn obedience by the things he suffered. The storm came. Was it by chance? Certainly not. They cast lots, and it fell upon Jonah, the guilty one, and they cast him overboard. Then what? Our God was superintending it all, and had prepared a great fish to swallow him up and carry him to the place appointed, ordained or fixed. Had our God control of that fish? Most assuredly he had, and when the three days and nights were up he was delivered. So they "were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Now how any true believer can repudiate and hold up to ridicule this blessed doctrine I cannot understand. I am satisfied many are prejudiced by wrong interpretations of evil doers. I have heard of some, in trying to refute the doctrine of predestination, taking up some atrocious crime of murder, and holding it up in all of its most heinous nature, crying out with a loud voice, Tell me that God made that man do this awful deed? Now that is a false statement. I have traveled extensively in twenty-two states, and Canada, and have never heard any one ridicule such an idea, and I could not fellowship any one who did. God is not the author of sin, neither tempteth he any man, man of his own lust is tempted. I know of one man who thus tried to justify himself in an evil deed, but the church excluded him, and did right in so doing. I have never favored setting this up as a standard in church fellowship, but have opposed it. I have full fellowship for those who do not see this as I do, and can stand hand in hand and fellowship with them, but cannot fellowship those who hold it up to ridicule. In all my travels I have met but one man who favored it as a standard. I opposed it, and do yet. For the elect's sake the world stands, and

many of the dark scenes that take place, that are beyond our comprehension, will be among the "all things" in the providence of God, and in some way, though remote, be for the good of his people, individually or collectively. The wrath of man shall praise God, the remainder of wrath will he restrain. The wicked are his sword for the chastisement of his people. What a sweet comfort when we can rest all in his blessed hand and power, and know that the darkest scene is as necessary as the brightest one. Darkness and light are alike with the Lord. He dwells in the thick clouds; he maketh the clouds his chariot. Truly it is a day of darkness. Darkness has covered the earth, and it truly seems gross darkness to the people, and I sometimes wonder why his wrath is not poured out; but for the elect's sake will the world stand until the last one for whom Jesus died be made manifest.

*"Chained to his throne, a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel's form and size,
Drawn by the eternal pen."*

What a blessed comfort to feel that

*"The steps that I tread, and the station
I fill,
My Father determined and wrote in
his will."*

Dear reader, I trust you may be favored to gather a few crumbs of comfort from these scattered thoughts, for there has been a little comfort to my soul as I have penned them, and a relief to an exercised and burdened mind. The dear Lord bless you all, and lead and guide us all in the pathway of peace and righteousness.

Yours in sweet gospel fellowship,
though the least and poorest in my Father's house.

P. W. Sawin

 VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

JOHN XV. 14, 15.

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends: for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”

Having meditation regarding the love and friendship of the Lord's people we quote the above as a basis of remarks to write unto you, our friends. Jesus expressed the first sentence, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,” which calls us to note the mutual love existing between Christ and his people, who are members of his body. They, being members of his body, are active in the body in accord with the mind, as the living Head commanded. The doing of the things commanded is but the action of life in his people. The action of life is not produced by a dead body, hence we must be alive to have active life. Man in nature is dead in trespasses and sins, and hath no spiritual life until he is quickened by the Spirit, and in this spiritual life is given understanding, and the Spirit maketh manifest the spiritual man which is in obedience to the Son, even as the Son is to the Father, and all the commandments of the law of the Spirit of life are in the heart and mind of every child of grace, which identifies them as his friends. What great love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the friends of his Son, and having that love for his commandments which constraineth us to be obedient children. The cause of Christ embraces fellowship, order and faithfulness in his house, and all these are commanded by him in his Spirit, of which we trust we are partakers. Henceforth

his Spirit taketh of the things of his and showeth them unto us. The child of grace has the mind of Christ, and the relation of obedience rendered by the Son to the Father is in the hearts of all the subjects of grace, and whatsoever he commands they do, and are a unit in action as they are led by him as their Shepherd, and they do what he doeth; as sheep of his pasture, they feed, and know he feedeth, and none other can give that food, for it cometh from the treasure of heaven, and none can give it but the Son. His friends know the things committed by the Father to his Son, and he hath made known unto us all things that he heard of his Father. The Father commanded his Son, and his Son was obedient to his Father in all things commanded. Jesus declared that he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. Jesus taught his disciples in word and act, and by the revelation from the Father they knew he was the Son of God, and the works manifested were beyond the power and comprehension of the natural man. The disciples of Jesus were spiritually minded, and all the commands of Jesus were felt and revered, by which they could say, “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Dear brethren, as we are united in the body, and every member of special use, we feel we want all to be present and feel the love one to another flowing from heart to heart. When the light of grace shines in the walk and conversation of an individual, all who see light rejoice in the light, and a special friendship is felt for the one who walketh in the light. This one perhaps has had a hope but a short time, yet is bearing fruit unto God through Christ, and we know it is a precious fruit, because of its sweet and delicious flavor. Having the sweet and precious fruit borne upon the tender branch, we are continually questioning, Why do they not come to the church? not realizing they must wait the Lord's time. When they feel the power of

his word, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done," they are made willing in the day of his power. We feel Jesus is a friend to the sinner, and one who never leaves nor forsakes, but keeps and saves with an everlasting salvation; where his Spirit ministers it is a sacred place. Jacob, when he lay all night with a stone for a pillow, and saw, as it were, a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and decending upon it, though restless and weary, yet, with the presence of God, he could say, This is none other than the house of God. The members of his body as his house are to each member as the poet expresses, "There my best friends, my kindred dwell, there God my Savior reigns," and if possible we would forever be in praise, and enjoying the sweet fellowship of the saints. We do not wish to be separated from them.

*"Bless be the tie that binds
Our hearts in christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."*

Dear brethren, it becometh all as followers of him to be faithful in every good work, keeping in mind the admonition of Paul to Timothy: Study to shew thyself approved unto God. In all deliberations as children of light their light shineth forth from their hearts, and others see of their good works and glorify God. Their good works are the working out from their hearts, which God hath worked in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and not the works of natural man. We can often sing, My dearest friends in bonds of love, whose hearts in sweetest union prove, &c.

We have some feelings along this line of thought we cannot express, but we hope the Lord hath commanded us, which enables us to realize a heart-felt power incomprehensible to the carnal mind, and we know we cannot find him out by

searching, but continue hoping unto the end. We desire in our conversation, either oral or written, to be mindful of the friends Jesus had in mind when he spake. All people with whom we are surrounded that we are blessed to live peacefully with those we call our friends, and are in this natural life, but not of the spiritual, though one might be both. Dear friends, may we be kept in that dear uniting love that will not let us part, and may it be felt in our hearts that we can say, come thou with us. May those who have gone after other gods, whom we have felt were of us, be made to know the friends of Jesus, and to those who have not been given strength may it please God to give strength for their day in trials, and may we be favored to see them coming home to Zion with song and everlasting joy upon their heads, doing whatsoever he commanded them.

Elder Charles W. Vaughn

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JULY 1986

Harold T. Clayton, NC.	\$ 7.00
Mrs. Nannie W. Wiggins, NC. ...	2.00
Frank Simkins, VA.	10.00
Julian L. Ray, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Frances Jarvis, MD.	2.00
Mrs. Ala Mae Noviello, TX.	2.00
Mrs. Clemmie M. Bishop, AR. ...	5.00
W. W. Abshire, VA.	2.00
Mrs. Annie C. Lawrence, VA.	2.00
Mrs. Lessie W. Tilley, NC.	5.00
Mrs. Ruth Vick, TN.	5.00
Mrs. Jessie Lambert, NC.	2.00
Mrs. Shirley DeBow, NC.	2.00
Elijah Palmer, AL.	2.00
Mrs. B. T. Hollandsworth, VA.	3.00
Mrs. Ina Hendrix, TN.	7.00
Mrs. Catherine M. Vass, NC.	7.00

 OBITUARIES

GEORGE W. EARP

Brother George was born December 21, 1912 and died May 12, 1986, Making his stay on earth just over 73 years. He was blessed to offer to our church and was received in full fellowship just one day before he passed away. Brother George was in the hospital at this time, therefore, was never baptized by water, but we feel he was baptized in the Spirit.

For some time, Brother George had attended our church. We all felt he was a believer of Salvation by Grace and it was nothing he could do toward his salvation.

To know him was to love him. We feel Brother George is no longer suffering from pain and is now resting in peace and love with our Saviour. We send our sympathy to his family and feel our loss is his eternal gain.

Done by order of conference at our June meeting.

Elder Joe Sawyer, Moderator
John H. Coker, Clerk

BROTHER EMMETT FAUCETTE

Be it resolved that we the members of Monticello Primitive Baptist Church do humbly submit to our Father's will in the calling home of our beloved brother and deacon, Emmett Faucette on March 11, 1986.

Bro. Faucette joined at Monticello on Easter Sunday, 1963. He was a devoted member, a faithful member, and served the church as a deacon from shortly after he joined (June, 1963) until his death. He suffered much the last few years but was always present on meet-

ing day unless he was physically unable to attend.

Left to survive him are his wife, Iola Pritchett Faucette, a son, Phillip, a daughter, Virginia, and one granddaughter. Also surviving him is his sister, Ila Herbin.

The funeral service was conducted by his Minister, Elder Paul Lambe, and included a hymn sung by his granddaughter.

Bro. Faucette was laid to rest in the church cemetery to await the resurrection day.

Written by request of the members with a copy sent to the family, the Signs of The Times, and one kept for the church records.

Shirley Donovan, Clerk

 ELDER JAMES ROBERT
HOLLANDSWORTH

It is with sadness we feel to make the attempt of writing an obituary of our dear Pastor who passed from this life March 30, 1986, and yet such joy and trust thankful to God for the blessing of having known one so trusting in his allwise God. Elder James Robert Hollandsworth, age 82, born August 12, 1903 to the late Thomas and Martha Turner Hollandsworth. Surviving are his beloved wife, Nannie Mae Hollandsworth, a daughter Mrs. Joe (Peggy) Pegram, Bassett, Va.; three sisters, Minnie Lou Foley, Patrick Springs, Mattie Lee Coleman, Kernersville, N.C. and Ida Ruth Foley, Ridgeway, Va. A brother, Green Hollandsworth, Collinsville, Va., and three grandchildren.

Brother Jim as he was known to us and many brethren far and near, walked humbly and softly among his brethren preaching most firmly Salvation by Grace, holding steadfast the Precious gift that (his God) had so richly blessed

him with. Brother Jim has so many beautiful and strengthening experiences of the Lord speaking to him and calling him by name, saying be still and know that I am God, and I will be with thee even unto the end. Of which we truly feel he (the Lord) was. His conversation was constantly on the scriptures and word of God, but he so humbly would correct one if he felt they were in error, showing a love for truth and peace, small in stature but when overshadowed with God's love he was bold and strong. He had an experience even to the end of being shown he would be called (home) on Easter of this year. He would so often tell us he would not be here long, we tried to close our mind to this, as our loss is so very great, but yet feeling our loss is his eternal gain and his reward is great.

He joined Riverview Primitive Baptist Church in 1935 and was ordained to the Ministry in early 1940. He was Pastor of Riverview, Bethel and Reed Creek Churches, and was blessed to serve each so devotedly.

His funeral was conducted at Riverview Church on April 1, by Elder Junior Conner and the following Elders: Paul Lamb, Leonard Key, Kenneth Key, Denver Simpson, Amos Hash, Hale Terry, Bro. Carl Terry, Tom Turner, Larry Hollandsworth, Noell Conner, Tom Soloman, Lane Carter, William Holland, Leonard Brammer, all spoke so comforting, with burial in Roselawn Burial Park in Martinsville, Va. Our loss is very keenly felt at this time, but our Lord "doeth" all things well and we feel Bro. Jim has left us a great example that we should adhere to.

Written by request of his beloved wife and a copy be sent to each of the churches he served, and one to his wife.

Unworthy
Posey & Elsie Poindexter
Clyde & Lucy Johnson

ROSA GRAHAM RATLIFF

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst Sister Rosa Graham Ratliff. Sister Ratliff was born and reared in Patrick County, Va., on January 17, 1893, a daughter of the late Jacob and Mary Graham. She departed from this life March 15, 1986 at the age of 93 years.

Sister Ratliff was the widow of the late Pierce Ratliff who died April 28, 1959. Also she was preceded in death by two infant daughters and two sons, Diamond and Daniel Ratliff.

Survivors are: Mrs. Rufus (Sadie) Joyce, Mrs. Jack (Nannie Belle) Martin, Mrs. Moir (Margaret) Hatcher, all of Stuart, Va., and James Alvis Ratliff of Patrick Springs, Va. Also (Sister) Josie Foley of Eden, N.C., a brother Mr. Edd Graham of Stuart, VA., 33 grandchildren, 70 great-grandchildren, and 19 great-great-grandchildren.

Sister Ratliff joined Liberty Primitive Baptist Church on the first Sunday in June 1940, by experience and was baptized by the late Elder S. D. Koger, Moderator at Liberty Church.

She attended Church as long as her health permitted, she lived in Blue Ridge Nursing Center for about 14 years before her passing.

Her funeral was conducted by her Pastor, Elder John T. Wingfield, on March 17, 1986, at Liberty Church and burial was in the church cemetery.

We at Liberty Church extend to the family our deepest heartfelt sympathy and hope they may be strengthened by remembering the Faith and Hope their Mother had.

Done by order of Liberty Primitive Baptist Church in conference on First Saturday in April 1986.

Submitted by,
Paul Puckett, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 154

KEELING, VA., NOVEMBER 1986

NO. 11

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Highway 835, Box 57A

Boydton, Virginia 23917

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Phone (214) 629-3561

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566.

All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Virginia 24566

PSALM 8

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained:

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field:

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 11/86
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.**

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EDITORIAL

FALLING DOCTRINE

Let us repeat that there is not any doctrine that falls except the doctrine of God. He does not drop a conditional doctrine. The angel's testimony was good news. The reason for it being good news was because that the child which the good news of heraldic declarations from heaven were of a saving nature, (Mat. I: 21).

This was (and still is) the best news that poor frail earthly creatures have ever heard. The most of us poor mortals think of angels as coming from above. This declaration of the angel to Joseph

is the most precious news that has ever been heard. I am not afraid to say that this was indeed the doctrine, even the saving doctrine of God falling upon poor lost and ruined sinners. The angel was from above; the doctrine that it brought was the saving doctrine of God our Saviour. It falls from God and its manner of falling is as the rain.

May the Lord give us grace to follow this falling doctrine, this falling rain. Before we launch out upon the memorable blessing, let us remember that we are speaking about saving sinners. All of the related figures and parts of speech must fit. God being with us as our guide we must not trifle with what God has said. For just this once let us as blessed of God stay strictly with the Bible. First, let us remember the present text. Losing sight of the given text oftentimes leads us into confusion. The text is, to wit: My doctrine shall drop as the rain. Let us remember that this dropping of the doctrine as the rain carries with it slack times of rain. Sometimes it comes down exactly as the rain does, some a heavy downpour, at other times it comes slow and easy; sometimes it comes as a hard crushing hail, of times beating down tender olants; sometimes it seems to us fragile humans, that at times it comes too much and at other times insufficient.

We have a case before us in which poor sinners would charge the Lord unwisely. Let us look in on our brother Jacob. In the outset let us remember that God loved him. It would seem to any one of us that God dealt extremely with him. Some of the time he was on a burning desert; at other times he was in a waste howling wilderness. Let us talk right much about this experience. First in a dry barren dessert, momentarily he was subjected to a waste howling wilderness. None of us know, how forsaken and how miserable that our dear brother was cast down unless we have been there. Let us take a step further with

him in his misery, and as we take this step, the picture changes and so it is us as poor sinners that are coming under the raining down of the sovereign doctrine of God our Father. Sometimes we are seemingly cast so far from him that we are ready to cry out, save Lord or I will perish.

But the rain or grace, or the rain of the doctrine is not finished yet. We are about to forget a part of this being taught under the jurisdiction of this lovely reign of grace. This is the place where the teaching begins. Let us not forget dear fellow traveller that God was with him all the while, and that the precious truths of the doctrine of God our Saviour were falling into his opened heart and mind. It was a long desert and wilderness road that was laid out for you to travel and to thus learn wisdoms ways.

One thing about this road of travel. Let us keep in mind that this lone wanderer is figurative of the lot of God's inheritance. Each of them were where Jacob was when the Lord found him; each of them have been over each sad event of the life that all of them live. The doctrine drops as the rain fell on the hot dry soil after a long drouth. I fled for shelter; I did not know what to do nor where to turn. If I could have devised a way, and had the strength to go that way. I would not be where I am now. I did not know that not only had He, as I look back and now hope, found me, but that He was instructing me. Come dear readers, come and listen while I tell about this instruction, At first I rebelled, but rebellion cannot last when the Instructor is present. My hope is that the doctrine fell in a torrent upon me and swept my ways and my thoughts asunder and brought me to the banqueting house of the Lord.

But I must hasten away. There is much dropping of the doctrine of God as the rain and the snow cometh down from

heaven thus watering the earth, sending saving showers of blessings to God's little children that I desire to mention. Perhaps we may become confused in following the dropping of the doctrine as the rain, but let us hope not so. At least God said that it shall drop as the rain, and He carried the picture far enough to include the hail and sleet and snow in the figure.

Let us separate ourselves from all of those that liken themselves unto God. God does not think as we think. He does not do as we do. We do what we can with what we have to do with. Therefore he does not have any limitations on what he does except that his will is done. He does not work at having the counsel of his own will being done, but He works all after the counsel of His own will. He does His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and during the reign there is none that can stay His hand (Dan. 4:35). Has there ever been a time when this doctrine was not true? Come tell me, has there ever been a time when He was not doing His will? Has any one inhabitant of the earth ever called His hand and stopped Him from what he was doing? If so, I would be through with the adorable doctrine of His Sovereignty. That very point of divine doctrine gives me something to preach; it gives me something to write about. O yes, bless his dear name. His ways are not like our ways. Bless the Lord O my soul what an adorable doctrine is ours to preach and to write about. He is not us, His ways are not our ways; He does as He pleases and none can say, What doest thou The heavens ARE higher than the earth, and His ways ARE higher than our ways. this history of His ways and our ways being different did not happen. Our ways declare far and wide that there is not any chance with God. Not any happen so with God.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not

hither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and the bread to the eater, 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 whereunto I sent it (Isa. 55: 10).

Dear saints of God, what is the Holy Spirit moving Moses to say to Israel? Is this a fairy story of a man that is raking these things out of his rattled mind. Or is this the inspired writings of God as He continues His instruction to His nation of people? What is he saying to them? I kindly call your attention to the inspired words of God as He moves Moses to write them. Let us look at the little word as. now let us ask ourself, Does it mean what it says? Does God mean to be saying to Israel what he is saying? If God means that the future falling of the rain and the snow is going to be like it has in the past, and that the effect is going to be like that it had been heretofore, will it be that way? To me it is simple for the sake of the little children of God. If there is an alternate way to say it so that no mention be made of the external fixedness of the weather, and seeing that that doctrine is so obnoxious, why did He not avoid that doctrine in both the weather and the dealing of God with the subject in writing about the experience of His dear children?

There isn't now nor has there ever been a man or a set of men, however strongly organized they have been that could regulate the rain and the snow coming down from God out of heaven. I do not mean to ridicule nor to cast odium at anyone, but I have been ridiculed and belittled over America as has been my brethren, until I would like to clear up the misunderstanding about predestination. Let us quote it once again. As the rain and the snow cometh down from heaven and watereth the

earth and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 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 where unto I have sent it. In that work, from the dropping of every drop of rain and snow upon the earth to every morsel of crop in the universe was settled in the mind of God from all eternity.

If this does not express absolute sovereignty, what words, what language would you use to do so? Now did God establish or predestinate or fix the weather and the harvest in that way and subject the balance of this universal government without any subjection to everything else? Would He do so haphazardly?

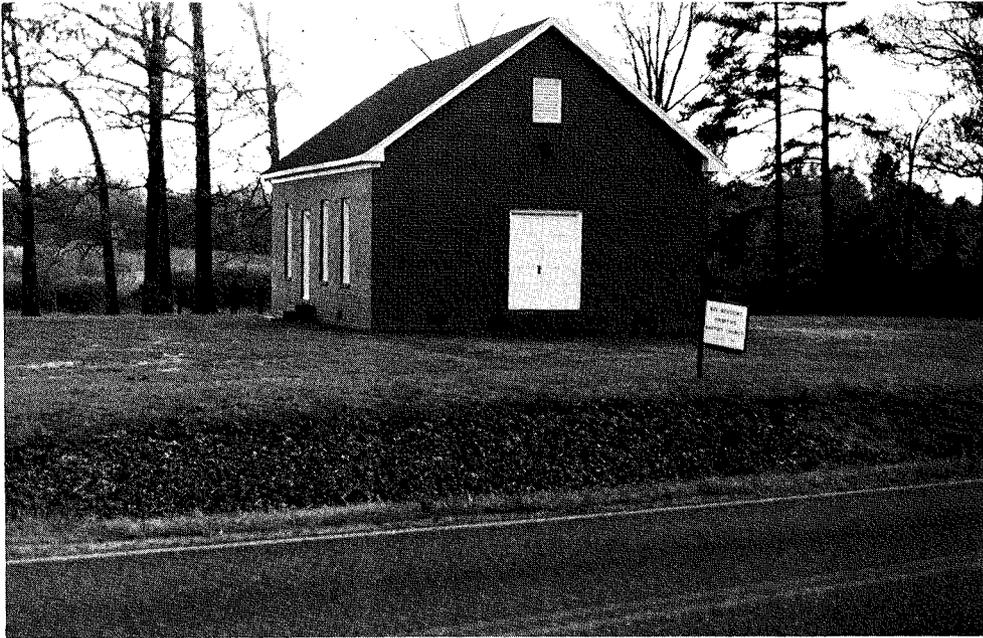
But as He did absolutely fix this part of his government, even so He did fix another part of his royal work. There isn't anybody that can successfully say and prove that He predicated His righteous work in His word going out The origin of the first is absolutely and unconditional the work of God. The second is in and of and from the same source. As one was altogether the work of God, so the second is the work of God. The desired work or intention of God was in both works the same. Imagine dear readers, God working in such a manner of Absolute Predestination in all of the features of this much of his world, and the balance of it left to happen or fall out at random?

God willing, the mercy of God as bestowed upon these objects of mercy on what the AS and So embraces and entails will follow.

In precious hope,
Elder W. D. Griffin

*"Pride goeth before destruction,
and an haughty spirit before a fall."
Proverbs 16: 18*

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



BIG MEADOWS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Big Meadows Primitive Baptist Church was organized 1843. It is located in Chatham County, N.C. approximately 20 miles south of Graham, N.C. Going south from Graham on highway 87, turn right a short distance after crossing Cane Creek (see marker at bridge) at the next road and go four miles to a cross

road. Turn left at this cross road and go one mile to church. We meet for services each second Sunday morning at 11:00.

We invite all lovers of the truth to meet with us. Elder Kenneth R. Key is present pastor and has been serving Big Meadows Church for twenty-two years.

CORRESPONDENCE

April 16, 1966
Route 1
Glade Hill, Virginia

Dear Brother Tench:

Recently your remarks in regard to Isaiah 54:11 and 12 moved me to forward to you the same and they are sent in hope it may be a benefit--. Nothing

I'm about to write is original with a depraved sinner like me.

"O thou afflicted tossed with tempest."

As in a tempest the heavens are black with clouds and there are just cloudy and dark days and God seems hid by terrible clouds. "Thou has and covered thyself with a cloud that our prayers should not pass thru." Lamentations 3: 44.

"God answers the sinner in the secret place of thunder and proves him in the waters of strife." Psalm 81:7.

So at such times every minister of

Christ is a Boanerges, a son of thunder and according to Mark 3: 17 you see. "God answers the sinner in the secret place of thunder and proves him and it seems as if seven thunders had uttered their voice at once--hence it is that God compares the case of the Gentiles under their afflictions to the deluge in the days of Noah. "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me for as I have sworn that the waters of Naoh should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee.--" Isaiah 54: 9

So the wroth of God is the storm the thunder and lightening which attended Zion. "For a small moment---in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee."

So Brother Tench, dear brother, to understand the text we must see the God compares the flood to the affliction of the Gentiles.

"The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up and the windows of heaven were opened." Genesis 7: 14. So that torrents from both above and beneath conspired together. So the sinner has a torrent from above and beneath and between these two is at his wit's end--the world tossed alludes to the ark--it is unspeakably horrible to be a sailer at sea on a sea that has no shore--especially if the waters are violently tossed and there is no prospect of reaching port. Such would be "tossed with tempest and not comforted."

Tossed first upon a broken law which works death and wrath--tossed in his own heart where he sees nothing but enmity and rebellion, tossed by his past life, tossed by his evil ways--tossed by a thousand crimes--tossed by looking to judgement day--tossed by the fear of The Righteous Judge which shall consume the adversan and from beneath tossed by every performance there is sin in them all--and if he looks to en-

couraging promises the accounts of imposters and apostates toss him there--if he looks to the saints their safe and happy state provokes him--and if he looks to his sinful companions they sun and ridicule him so that the sight of his nature within and his follies without the accusations of his conscience and the darts of Satan keep him full of tossings to and fro--both by day and night--.

To such a one Jesus says "Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors."

Any such sea sick sailor might be appreciative of having his feet o a Rock.

"I have laid in Zion for a foundation a stone," "a tried stone," a precious corner stone, "a sure foundation," and upon that rock shalt thou be built, and neither sin nor death shall ever prevail against thee or that, and in doing this "judgement also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet." Isaiah 38: 17

"Zion shall be redeemed with judgement" executed on her surety "and her converts with righteous" perfected by her Covenant Head--

And you that lie unpolished in the quarry of fallen nature will I bring to this foundation that I have laid in Zion and as livly stones I will build up a spiritual house--

"They shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up as as ensign upon His Head." Zechariah 9: 16

"They shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts in that day when I make up my jewels." Malachi 3: 16

Here are the stones of which the church is composed and God will lay them with fair colors that they may answer to the foundation which is of sapphires.

Now there are various colors in these precious stones and we see that the breastplate of the high Priest contains mostly the same kind as the foundation of the new Jerusalem.

The lustre and polish they require was

accomplished in their being so violently tossed.

There is not a black stone in the lot. Black was their natural complexion but their comeliness is borrowed, and is bestowed--None are pale in color which is a sign of sickness or death. (Rev. 6: 8) Take it altogether thus: My church is as brilliant as the diamond by sanctification in Christ; in the shining majesty of reigning Grace, as purple as the jacinth; in purifying faith, as rich and as yellow as the topaz; under the great atonement, as red as the sardius; in life and verdure, as green as the jasper; as a chaste virgin as fair and blushing as the sardonyx; and even the least of all the family under the influence of My Spirit are full, as green as the chrysolite or the beryl, not dried up but verdant; and every soul upon which the trice light shines like the chalcedony, has got a tinge of the rainbow and is coming into peace with me.

"I will" says God, "lay the foundation with sapphires." This is equally true, "Other foundation can no man lay.--" I. Corinthians 3: 11

And what a foundation it is!

In Him every perfection of God shines and harmonized in the salvation of our souls.

Here is the goodness of God to pardon, while justice by the blood of the covenant sends prisoners out of the pit. Life quickens us, omnipotence supports us, and omnipresence protects us.--Here pity and compassion are displayed where loving kindness draws us to Him and mercy is built up forever. . . . Peace is proclaimed, law is honored, reconciliation is made and grace reigns thru righteousness over all the abounding of sin, over death and all the craft and malice of devils.

Such is the foundation that God has laid in Zion and this foundation is laid with sapphires.

Here heaven is cleared of all of its

storms and transgressors of all their cloud of sin; while every perfection of Diety supports the throne and conspires to uphold and adorn the Church.

With all the best wishes and christian love, I remain your sinful servant.

Julius Bocock

Dear Editors and Elders,

As you will see that this is a personal letter from Bro. Frank Richards to me. I thought it is so good I hope if you think it is appropriate, I would love to see it printed in the Signs of The Times. You can be your own judge and use your own discretion.

I enjoy the Signs very much. I am not a member, but I really love the primitive Baptist.

Very Truly,
Lloyd Chance

7600 Willow Oak Ln.
Arlington, TX 76017
July 13, 1986

Dear Bro. Chance,

I hope you do not think it strange of me to write you when I could pick up the phone and call you. I want to tell you how much I do enjoy talking with you. You are one of the few people I can talk to with ease about Scriptures. I hope I do not bore you or think I have a lot of spiritual knowledge and understanding. Oh how I wish I was given the spiritual understanding of the deep and hidden things within God's Holy Word. We can only have what it pleases God to give us.

Aren't you glad, we believe in a God that gives us the perfect measure of Grace we need. Not too much or too little, but the perfect measure. We didn't or don't

have to go look for it but it is given to us in the self same hour, it pleases God to give it to us.

There is a Scripture on my mind, that I have wanted us to talk about. It has been on my mind for two or three months. The Scripture I have on my mind is recorded in II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The last half of this verse is what I want to comment on if God will give me the ability to do so. We have recorded in I Peter 4:11, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles (revelation) of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen." If I am able to address this scripture it will have to be by what God reveals to me.

Peter tells us who he was writing to in chapter 1:1. It is to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is to all God's people until the end of time. This righteousness is given to us by God himself for His own pleasure. Verse 3 tell us this. I hope you will read all this book. I find it, a very fruitful book.

I will try to get back to what I wanted to comment on. The churches or religions of the world would have us to believe that God is not willing for any to perish, all we have to do is just accept him or let him have his way. We are the ones with the power, all God can do is just make the opportunity available to us like is done in every world church every week. I hope we are given to believe that God is the one with "All Power". That all power was given to Jesus Christ by God and that there is no power in heaven or on earth except it be given by

God himself. It is God who works all things – ALL THINGS after the council of His own will. This leaves nothing out. He is the Potter, we are the clay. HE makes one vessel (person) of honor and another of dishonor. Can the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Rom. 9:20-21. In Rom. 11:2 Paul tells us, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." Rom. 11:5 "Even so then at THIS present time also there is a remnant according to the election of Grace." If God is not Willing for any to perish. Can any of God's chosen perish? I do not believe they can. i hope I am not implying that I am one of his chosen ones. I hope I am, but that is God's choice and not mine. We are told that it is not in Man that walks to direct his steps. We are also told our natural heart is desperately wicked. All our righteousness is as filthy rags.

God tells us that He gives his people a new heart when he calls them out of natures darkness into his marvelous light. Paul tells us we are saved first, then called with a Holy Calling. If this is true, then the decision for our salvation was made before He (God) called. He speaks and it is done; He commands and it stands fast. None can stay His hand or say what doest thou.

The New Birth, rebirth being born again is spoken in the pulpit somewhere every Sunday. I think the most beautiful illustration of this is found in Isa. 66. God says He has never caused a child to come forth and then shut the Womb. He has never called one of his little ones to be formed again, and then left the decision for them to come out of the Womb (World) up to them. An unborn baby cannot decide to come into this time World or stay in its Mother's Womb, neither can a child of Grace decide to stay in natures darkness, when called to come into God's marvelous light. The ones He has called and brought forth

are the ones He is not willing to perish. Not one will be lost or left because Jesus said He would not lose a single one, the Father gave him. He came to seek and save that which was lost. He did not fail in his work for he said, He had accomplished all the father gave him to do. If any was not saved that are to be saved, then he still has work to be done. All his suffering, the Crown of Thorns, and finally the piercing of the side was all in vain for some could still be lost that God was not willing to perish.

Brother Chance, there are still many many scriptures I can think of I would like to write about but I will stop for now.

Again, I sure enjoyed our phone conversation and am so glad to see you at Church.

With Brotherly Love,
Frank Richards

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

May the gracious God of heaven and earth guide my every thought as I attempt to write again unto you a few of my thoughts of the past several days. I do not know where it will end, but my prayer is that all will be to His praise, honor and glory and for the comfort and edification of His beloved children.

Many of my recent thoughts have never entered my mind before, that I can remember, yet they are thoughts on scriptures that I have read, studied and wondered about many times. This brings to mind the scripture that says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures of any private interpretation." No one can truly understand any scripture in truth until the Lord opens it unto him, as he did to the two men on the road to Emmaus. I do not know that I have been enlightened by the Lord, and being

subject to error I ask that you receive this only as far as it is sustained by Holy Writ.

My thoughts have mostly been concentrated upon the sword of God and circumcision. We read Heb. 4:12: "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 the spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The word of God is often referred to as the bible, and also one of the many titles properly applied to Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant and the life of his chosen people. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." We do not see this sword as a natural metal instrument, but as the words that he speaks, and they are quick and powerful. The word quick, as applied here, signifies life of life giving. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." Jesus does not speak unto the words without discrimination. In one place he told the Jews who he is, yet they doubted and said, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. And he answered them, I told you, and you believe not: the works which I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But you believe not, because ye are not my sheep." When he

speaks to his sheep however, his word enters the heart as a piercing sword, as it did on the day of Pentecost, and pricks the heart and is always effectual. This same sword cuts the flesh, which is soon healed, but does not touch the hearts of others, therefore they stop up their ears and gnash with their teeth as they did when Stephen preached unto them, for to them the truth is very painful. They stoned Stephen because he preached the word of the truth, and they tried many times to kill Jesus for the same reason.

The word of the Lord is powerful, and it endureth forever. He said, Let there be light, and there was light. He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. He said, "So shall the word be that goeth 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 whereunto I send it." That the Word of God, Jesus Christ, is powerful is abundantly demonstrated by his works when on earth, for he opened the eyes of the blind, healed the sick and the lame and raised the dead. He spake to Lazarus who had been dead four days, and Lazarus came out of the grave; he took the hand of the daughter of a certain ruler who said she was dead, and the maid arose; he touched the bier of a dead man and said Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. Jesus said to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: In another place he said, "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." All of the dead, both the just and the unjust, shall hear his voice on that resurrection morn and shall come forth from the grave, but this is not the death under considerations here. When Adam transgressed the law of

God sin entered the world, and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The first man Adam was of the earth, earthy; and he is the progenitor of all mankind. We, in the flesh, are only Adam multiplied. The second man is the Lord from heaven. As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Adam was flesh and blood and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. In the flesh there is no good thing, but in the Spirit there is good only. And because there is nothing good in our flesh, that is our propensity of natural inclinations being always evil, we cannot do anything that is good. Our works of the flesh are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." If Christ has spoken to you, and his word has entered your heart as a sharp sword, and awakened you to your sinful, depraved nature, shown you your lost and helpless condition, and then revealed unto you that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, given you a hope in him, then are you quickened or made alive. This is called the New Birth, the being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. This is Christ in you, the hope of glory. This is not a remodeling of the Old Man which is born of the flesh and is flesh, for this birth is of the Spirit and is spirit and is called the New Man. There are now two men, or principles, occupying one body, and they are completely opposite. One is corruptible, and the other incorruptible; one sinful and depraved, the other

holy and righteous; therefore a warfare is immediately begun, and it will continue as long as the body remains on this earth. Before this new birth our sinful nature did not bother us, for we were not even aware of it, but now that our eyes have been opened we seek to do good and shun evil; but we cannot, for we do not know how. As Paul stated it: "for the will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." In this statement Paul is referring to the flesh and the works thereof. However, we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us: and if he is in us, then we are in him also: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." In the flesh we cannot walk in good works, but in the Spirit we **MUST** walk in them; and these works are the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Without faith it is impossible to please God, and faith is a gift of God. Even the works of Abraham did not justify him before God, which is the cutting off of the flesh, and was given faith to believe in God. This circumcision was by sword, or word of God, which is always effective, and not the circumcision made with hands, which is a seal of the righteousness of faith, which Abraham received after he believed. This righteousness shall also be imputed to all who are circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands; for this righteousness is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. This thought is very comforting to me at times when I am given faith to believe that I am one of the seed.

That there is a spirit and soul in man is clearly stated in the scriptures, but I yet have difficulty understanding what

they are or the difference. However, the sword does divide them assunder. The Word of God also discriminates between the soul and spirit which is natural to all men, and that that spirit which is produced of the new birth. That which is born of the flesh is divided asunder by the sword from that which is born of the Spirit. The flesh is of the earth, sensual and devilish, while the other is heavenly and Christ-like. The flesh lusts against the spirit and brings a child of God into captivity to the law of sin and death. But this new spirit is after God, created in righteousness and true holiness, and when the two are cut asunder we are made to see how black and vile we are in our natural state, how lost and helpless. At the same time the righteousness of God, the way salvation, his love and mercy are revealed in this new spirit. This new spirit teaches us that all divine understanding is from above, that every spiritual feeling or thought is a gift of God, that the love we have is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and any good thing about us is because of the imputed righteousness of Christ. What a beautiful revelation this is to a poor lost sinner when he is given a hope in the righteous blood of the Son of God. Before this new birth we were dead in sins and the uncircumcision of our flesh, but he hath quickened us together with Christ and hath forgiven all our trespasses. By the quick and powerful sword of God we are circumcised, for the body of sin must be cut off. All of our fleshly powers, which we only believe that we possess, must be cut off before we can believe that he is the only power in whom we must trust. In Christ we are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. By the cutting off of the body of sin, we are now made free from the law of sin and death and made alive unto the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus

Christ. Nevertheless there is a law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, bringing us into captivity of the law of sin which is in our members; for in us, that is, in our flesh, there is no good thing. The mind which is constantly warring against the flesh is not the carnal mind, for the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be; but we have the mind of Christ, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us. The war that is waged is a constant pain and promotes great anguish in our soul, but the Spirit must always prevail in each battle, though the war will continue as long as we remain in the world. We dwell in a body of death and long to be delivered from it, and as Paul said, "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Yes, beloved brethren, on that great resurrection day we shall be delivered from this body of death, for we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. And as David said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." O, how sweet it is at times to feel a hope within that we shall be raised and changed in such fashion.

"And is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." There is nothing in our heart that Christ does not know, and this is a great consolation to his children, for he knows how to succor them when they are tempted, for he has already suffered the same temptations. There are times when he enters our heart

to give us peace and joy; at other times the sword is sharp, revealing the evil thoughts and intents of our hearts, not to himself, but to us. This turns us around and leads us into right paths: and he that is led by the Spirit of God is a son of God. "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Many times we do not comprehend the thoughts and intents of our own heart until his sword enters and enlightens our understanding. This in turn often causes us to fall upon our knees before his throne and beg for mercy and guidance.

Brethren, I have presented only a few of my feeble thoughts for your prayerful consideration, but this letter is perhaps already too lengthy. Remember this poor sinner when at the throne of Grace. Charge all error to me, and praise Him for any comfort of edification.

C. C. Wilbanks

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTY LINE MEETING

The next meeting of the West County Line will meet the fifth Sunday in November at Dan River Church. Dan River Church will be host to this meeting. We invite all who have a mind to come and meet with us. All ministers of our faith and order are invited.

Brother Boyd Minter, Clerk
Dan River Church

MEETING THANKSGIVING DAY

The Lord willing, Dan River Primitive Baptist Church will have a night service at 7:00 o'clock Thursday night November 27, 1986. We invite all lovers of the truth to come and meet

with us. Song service will begin at 6:30 o'clock.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Pastor
Brother Boyd Minter, Clerk

Elder Henry Jones, Moderator
John H. Coker, Clerk

ORDINATION OF LESTER L. EASON

The Williams Primitive Baptist Church in their conference on Saturday, August 16, 1986, agreed to ordain Brother Lester Lee Eason.

A presbytery was called for the purpose of an examination, and if found qualified, the ordination of Brother Eason for the full work of the gospel ministry.

Elder Henry Jones was chosen as moderator. Questioning of the Brother candidate was done by Elder Henry Jones and Elder Reeves Smith.

Laying on of the hands was preformed by Elder Jones and Elder Smith.

The charge was given to Brother Eason by Elder Reeves Smith. It concerned the duties of a minister. Elder Smith also spoke to Sister Eason concerning the duties of a minister's wife.

The work of the presbytery was accepted by the church and Elder Lester Lee Eason was delivered back to the church as a fully ordained minister by Elder Henry Jones and Elder Reeves Smith.

Elder Eason was given the full hand of fellowship by his family, church members and friends.

Ministers participating in the ordination:

Elder Henry C. Jones
Elder Reeves O. Smith

Deacons present at ordination:

Jesse Clyde Pridgen
Arnold Rasmussen
James Arrington
Troy G. Shepard
J. Carroll Williams
John H. Coker

NOTICE

The Primitive Baptist Library of Route 1, Elon College, N.C. is in need of a new roof and other repairs. Since there is no fund to take care of this work, we are asking for your help.

Elder W. J. Berry founded this library and spent many years collecting many books and periodicals of interest to the Primitive Baptist. There are many rare volumes by the Puritan authors of the 18th and 19th centuries; and many books and publications by the Strict Baptist of England: as well as various books and publications by the Primitive Baptist including associational minutes. The materials are available for research to all Primitive Baptist, regardless of factions. Visitors are welcome at all times. Since the death of Elder Berry, many have asked about the future of the library. The library operates under a board of trustees who will continue to keep the library open and available for all who may be interested.

Your reply should be made to Mrs. Mable Berry, Sec. & Treas., Route 1, Box 422, Elon College, N.C. 27244.

Committee of Library Trustees

NOTE: The vault in this library contains valuable old church records such as church minutes. These are not only of the local area but received from Primitive Baptist any where that wished to preserve them at this place. We consider this library a very worthy cause and urge all that can and are interested to contribute to the upkeep and further preservation of this library.

Editors

 ARTICLES

PSALMS CXXXIII. 1.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

To behold, in a spiritual sense, means to view with spiritual eyes; hence simply reading or speaking these words naturally does not make one see what the psalmist is talking about. To see what he saw is to be blest as greatly as he, in being able to write. Everyone who is enabled to glean even a little comfort from the Scripture is blest in the same way and by the same unchanging God who moved the holy men of old to speak. We can only understand and believe in one way, and that is by revelation in our experience. What we understand by revelation, is the giving to God's children spiritual thoughts and interpretations of the written word in their hearts and in their minds. We learn over and over again that these thoughts cannot be brought about by our own power, and yet we try to hunt up a text and study out a sermon. It is not strange that those who have learned that it is by grace will try this, but it is that we, whose only hope is the Lord, must be taught it again and again. No wonder Paul said, "O foolish Galatians;" and we are foolish when we try to improve the works of the flesh. Surely as it is God who began the work he will preform it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is only when the light shines in us that we realize how much we have been in the dark, and it is only when we get a glimpse of the true meaning of a text that we realize how little of depth and fullness we have seen. When Christ in you the hope of glory says, Behold, you see the treasures of this dwelling-place. With the command comes

the power to behold how good it is. Goodness includes strength, durability, perfection, and so we learn that our dwelling together in the unity of Christ is a strong place, built upon the rock of God's revelation, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: it is durable, lasting as eternity, and perfect as he is perfect. Pleasant it is as the garden of Christ, with her sweet smelling spices, fruits of the Spirit, flowers of grace; beautiful enough in every way to satisfy every need; pleasant with the singing of spiritual birds that leave the earth on wings of faith, and in open field of God's love they sing "sing surprising grace." All things are freely given us with him, and it is all for brethren, children of God. joint-heirs with Christ, who dwell together in him in unity. This dwelling together in oneness of Christ is so good and pleasant that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. It is like the precious ointment that runs down from the head to the hem of the garment which covers the whole body of Christ, dwelling together with him. Clothed in the righteousness of Christ we can shout in our innermost heart, that holy of holies, where none but he, our High Priest, enters, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" God give you a rest in that eternal dwelling-place, is the prayer of one of whose only hope is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Your brother, I trust, in him,
DUDLEY G. JOHNSON.

 EXODUS XX. 25

"And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it."

All the institutions for the religious service of Israel under the old dispensation presented a shadow of things to come, the substance or body of which is Christ, and the altar was among the provisions under the law for the sacrificial service of the children of Israel, and in which they were to be distinguished from all other nations and people. Nothing was valid in their religious exercises which God had not himself appointed; and every attempt on the part of Israel to improve upon what God had authorized, was regarded as a pollution. The altars of Israel, in general, seemed typically to allude to the great sacrifice which should be offered up for the sins of the spiritual Israel of our God; but there were other things also to be set forth by the patterns of the things in heaven, as is evident; for although there now remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, since Christ was offered up, yet we find there are sacrifices, figuratively so called, to be perpetuated in the gospel church by those whom our Lord has made kings and priests unto God, and destined to reign on the earth. The precise figurative import of the altar alluded to in the text under consideration, is not altogether clear in our mind; but the manner of building, and the materials of which this altar is to be composed, seems to agree with the gospel order of building up the church. The apostle says, (Heb. xiii. 10) "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Peter, in his first epistle, ii. 15, says to the saints, "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;" and in verse ninth, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," &c. As priests unto God, we certainly are not to offer sacrifices in atonement for sin, as there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, since Christ by one offering has perfected for ever them that are sanctified

or set apart unto salvation.—Heb. x. 14. But the scriptures speak of spiritual sacrifices, anti-typical of those carnal sacrifices which were offered under the old covenant, and upon Jewish altars. But the text under consideration forbids that the stones for the altar should be hewn. No improvement is to be made on what God has instituted. The materials for building up a church are not to be fitted for stations in a gospel church by human instruments or tools: like the temple, the church must come together without the sound of tools—without the polishing touch of human art or enterprise. No *front bench* tinkering, no protracted meeting efforts, no moral suasion exploits, no missionary, tract, Sunday School or other humanly devised instruments are to touch the work of building up the kingdom of God. The sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty must come in as the men, women and animals come into Noah's ark, just as God by his Holy Spirit shall teach, guide and direct them.

Again, the effect of lifting up human tools upon the lively stones of which the church is built up, has been sensibly felt in many places where we had hoped the Lord had graciously recorded his name; for instance, a young brother manifests a disposition to preach the gospel, he is thought by the sagacious to have rather a rough appearance, he is unlearned, his manners and language too rude for the polished age in which he must figure, yet he is a good brother, very zealous, and—and what? With a little hewing, and squaring, and polishing in one of our theological seminaries, he would be better qualified to do credit to the altar. With such and similar reasonings, modern religionists, like Israel of old, have provoked the Lord, and sacrificed in gardens, and burned incense on altars of brick, or hewn stone, or in some way in which their own handiwork is used to set off and improve upon the Lord's work

and the Lord's appointments.

Not only in convert or proselyte making do we see human instruments employed but also in regard to all institutions connected with the order of the church. Baptism administered in apostolical simplicity, has become too vulgar for the refined taste of many who claim to be Baptists at this day. They are shocked at the idea of men, and especially delicate females, going down into the river to be immersed in the presence of the gazing multitude, and they are tired of the scandal and reproaches which have been heaped on the Baptists by their anti-Baptist neighbors, and finally they have set their wits at work to hew down the institution, and throw off the offences of the cross; and in this work they have succeeded admirably, so that the Rantizers, of Roman Catholic emanation, have even laid aside their quart basins, and come over to immerse their converts in the splendid cisterns fixed in the basements of Baptist meeting houses, where an apparatus is ingeniously contrived to warm the water in the tub, so as not to chill the zeal of their candidates.

The Lord's Supper has also been hewn down; in many instances the wine is omitted, and water, or water in which dried raisins have been soaked, is substituted.

The laws for the government of the members of the church have not escaped the human appliances for modification. The New Testament is not sufficiently clear and explicit to answer as an only rule for the faith and practice of the saints, without some of the ingenuity of human invention.

In short, there is nothing connected with the faith or practice of the church of Christ, that is suffered to remain precisely as Christ has given authority; some improvement has been attempted, and all such improvements are regarded as a pollution of the altar of the Lord. Let

us then be admonished to adhere strictly to the law and the testimony, and turn not aside to the right hand or the left.

J. C. Philpot

PHILIPPIANS I. 27.

"Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ."—Phil. i. 27.

This exhortation to the Philippian church, is equally applicable to the children of the kingdom of Jesus Christ to the end of time. With a singleness of heart and purpose, it becomes all the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ to walk worthy the vocation wherewith they are called of God. We know that it has frequently been slanderously reported of the saints of God that they say, "Let us sin, that grace may abound;" and is it becoming those who bear the name of Jesus to give the least currency to this calumny, by a careless indifference in regard to our daily deportment? God has called us unto holiness, and if we have passed from death unto life, we cannot live comfortably in the indulgence of sin. Perhaps no greater reproach can be inflicted on the house of truth, than for men of corrupt minds and licentious habits to embrace the profession of it. Their unrighteous course is frequently brought forward by the enemy, to the deep mortification of the children of God, and urged as the legitimate consequence of adhering to the doctrine which we profess. The church of God is bound to maintain a strict discipline over her members, and every individual member is bound to watch over his deportment, and not suffer sin to rest on any brother unrepented. Every soul that has been taught of God, knows that the true tendency of the doctrine which we profess is to swell the heart with love and gratitude to God

as the Author of our salvation. To contemplate the eternal, discriminating and invincible love of God towards us, without feeling our souls drawn out in fervent desire to glorify, love, bless, adore and praise that Savior who hath loved us and given himself for us, would be a strange thing indeed. It does not require that we should live under the false impression that our final acceptance with God depends on our works, in order to impel us to action.

*“Not by the terrors of a slave
Do we perform his will;
But with the noblest powers we have,
His sweet commands fulfill.”*

Men who profess our faith have no claims on our fellowship while their faith is dead; and that faith which does not produce a conformity to the laws of Jesus, is dead, being alone.

While we as a people reject works as a ground of acceptance with God, we are bound also to reject that description of faith, in whatever form it may be presented, which does not dictate to us a correspondence between our profession and our conversation or practice.

J. C. Philpot

“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is wisdom.”

Proverbs 15: 33

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VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

ISAIAH XI. 6, 7.

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a young child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.”

Pursuit to a request from a reader of the Signs, living in Chicago, Ill., we will try to give our views on the above subject. Like so many other prophecies in the book of Isaiah that looked forward through unborn time to the gospel age, this text quoted above also describes in figurative language that which the Lord’s people in the gospel dispensation were to witness and experience, but which was never apprehended by those who lived under the law except by faith. Here we have set forth that which is contrary to nature, which the nature of men can never bring about, but a condition which, in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, is to be the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the effect of the grace of God. It is not natural for a wolf to dwell with a lamb, nor for a leopard to lie down with a young lion and a fatling. Further, it is not natural for the cow, which enjoys the vegetarian diet, to eat with the bear, which loves to devour flesh; nor for the lion to eat straw like the ox. All these incidents, though contrary to nature, are to be effected, because “a little child shall lead them.” This means that nature is to be brought into subjection, and held there, by the meek and lowly and gentle Spirit, which shall subdue the vile passions of men and shall cause them to dwell together in gospel love and fellowship as they

shall be brought by the power of God's grace to sit down with Abraham, Issac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God. We have been hearing a great deal for the past few years about an era of worldwide peace to soon be ushered in, when the nations of the earth shall learn war no more, when the swords shall to be beaten into ploughshares and the spears into pruninghooks. This is an outcome, no doubt, devoutly to be desired, for we all agree that war and strife are dreadful things, but these things which have been resident in the nature of man from the first of creation can never be abolished through human inventions and man ingenuity. If worldwide and everlasting peace is ever to prevail over a world weary of war, we must look to a higher power than our own. Such an age can only be drawn upon us through the victorious operation of God's holy Spirit subduing all that is opposed to godliness and giving rise to righteousness and wisdom that must prevail in and through all who inhabit the earth. There never can be any compromise with evil, nor any treaty with antichrist; these must be utterly destroyed if righteousness and peace are to prevail unmolested. So the prophet Isaiah through the divine telescope of faith was looking down the years seven hundred years beyond the period in which he was living and beholding the spiritual kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. In this church of God is that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, but which is eternal to all the elect of God, through the atonement made for their sins in the sacrificial work of Jesus. In this church are both Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, bond and free. The Lord himself, not the Missionary societies invented by man, brings his sons from afar and his daughters from the ends of the earth and calls then by effectual grace unto godly

repentance, working in them by his resurrection power to believe on Him who raised Christ from the dead. In this way all the nations flow up onto the house of the Lord, and the mountain of the Lord's house is established in the mountains. This is something that is going on to-day though men cannot see it with their natural powers. The kingdom of heaven is in the world and is within the subjects of divine grace. Jesus is living and reigning in his kingdom in the hearts of his elect, gathered from every nation which is under heaven. He has been gathering them into his gospel kingdom, he is now so gathering them, and he will continue so to gather them until the last vessel of mercy, beforehand chosen into glory, shall have been brought into this church of our God, and with this gathering man have had nothing to do. It has been all the result of that still small voice which, like the wind, blows where it lists. It has not been by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. As for man, he is altogether vanity, and all his works are a vain show. All of them are utterly condemned before God. God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions. He has invented ways to save the heathen from their sins and to bring them to God, he has schemed to win the whole world for Christ, and now he is scheming to abolish war and to usher in the millennium. All these inventions are a vain and idle show, and shall pass away into nothingness when the breath of God shall blow upon them. It will be noticed in the words of our text at the beginning of this article that, in the list of animals given, a wild animal is coupled with a tame animal. From the Jew standpoint, the Gentiles were to them aliens and foreigners, without any right participate in the services of the legal sanctuary, and strangers from the covenant made with them by the hand of Moses. Therefore, in Isaiah xi. 6, 7, the Gentiles are represented by the wild

animals and the Jews by the tame ones. The declaration, therefore, is that the time was to come when the barrier, or middle wall of partition, between Jew and Gentile was to be abolished through the work of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, and of the twain was to be made one new man. The Gentiles were no more to be strangers and foreigners from the commonwealth of Israel, but fellow citizens with the saints and with the household of God. (See Eph. ii.12-22.) These wild ones were to be brought into close spiritual relationship with the elect of God among the Jews, so all would be one body through one Lord, having one hope, one faith and one baptism. The gospel was first preached to the Jews. After this, the gospel was declared to the Gentiles. In the Acts we see many striking instances of God's work among the Gentiles, how that true believers were raised up among them, how that the prejudice between Jew and Gentile was overcome through grace, and all lived together in the church of God, forgetting their past differences and forgiving one another their transgressions. Peter, the Jew, was sent for to preach the word of the kingdom Cornelius, the Roman. We doubt if he would have gone on this errand had he not been prepared beforehand by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, knit at the four corners, containing all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air. Herein was revealed to Peter the truth that in God's covenant of election were included all the peoples of the world, that election is not confined to the Jews, but that God has a people among all kindreds, tribes and tongues that dwell on the earth. Having had this matter shown to him, Peter's prejudice against the Gentiles was overcome, and he was ready to preach the gospel to Cornelius. Here we see the wolf and the lamb dwelling together. Cornelius be-

longed to a nation that then dominated the world and ruled over the Jews, who to the Romans were a subject people. However, here we see an individual of the world-ruling people made willing to sit at the feet of the meek and lowly and despised Jesus, anxious to hear the word of truth, and believing in it with all his heart. Again, Saul of Tarsus, like a lion, went about the country hunting down and persecuting the Christians. But the time came when this roaring lion was subjugated by the mighty hand of God and brought under the swat of divine grace. He then was made to eat straw like the ox, to desire the same spiritual bread of life as the Jews whom he had been persecuting for believing in Christ. The little child Jesus led Saul and changed him into the humble Paul; the same little child Jesus brought Peter to preach to Cornelius, and caused Cornelius to embrace the formerly despised Jew in gospel love and fellowship. We believe, therefore, that the words of our text apply not to some far distant millennium framed in human dreams, but we think the spiritual meaning of Isaiah's words are realized in the gospel kingdom of the Lord, where dwell his honor and glory, and where is the habitation of his throne. What a great variety of natural dispositions and temperaments there is among the members of Christ's body. Some of us are like lions, others like wolves, and so on but all are chastened and subdued by reigning grace and made to dwell together in unity, when if left to ourselves, to act our individual likes and dislikes, we would be quarreling and contending all the time. All these strifes and contentions are annulled by the reign of the childlike Spirit of Jesus, causing his people to pray for one another, to bear one another's burdens, to esteem others better than themselves, all because he has taken out of them the stony heart and has given them a heart of flesh, wherein he has written his

royal law: Love one another. The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation. Though we may long look for some outward sign of approaching worldwide peace, we may never see it so long as man's nature remains as it is and earthly governments continue to be organized as they are. However, in the realm of Spirit, in that world which lies beyond the reach of all mortal senses, in that church of our God which is in the world, but is come through the death of Jesus. This is a peace which passes understanding and abides world without end.

Elder H. H. Leferts

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR AUGUST 1986

B. T. Jetes, VA.....	\$ 2.00
Mrs. Virgie Withers, TX.....	2.00
Friends, VA.....	50.00
Harry G. Troutt, NC.	2.00
J. L. Proctor, NC.....	5.00
Marvin J. Clay, OH.	7.00
Eld. Bernard Moon, AL.	22.00
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James L. Howell, AL.....	17.00
Mrs. Lelah Hill, CA. In memory of Eld. Winchell, Orville Winchell & wife Eva Winchell.....	15.00
Mrs. Lovie A. Thompson, NC. ...	2.00
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Mrs. Frank Scarce, VA.....	2.00
Oscar Pickral, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Rachel Hudson, VA.	2.00

"A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."
Proverbs 22: 1

OBITUARIES

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT
TO BROTHER LEE BROWN

In June 8, 1986, it pleased our Heavenly Father to call home our dear Brother Lee Brown. Brother Brown was born on April 17, 1896, making his stay on earth 90 years.

Brother Lee was blessed to join Tarboro Church on July 7, 1968, and was a faithful member until the end. He was a humble and peaceful member, never wanting to see trouble in the church. To know Brother Lee was to love him and his presence will be greatly missed at the Tarboro Church.

His funeral was preached by his pastor, Elder D. B. Stokes. We trust Brother Brown is at rest with our Heavenly Father.

The members at Tarboro send their sympathy to his family and trust they will follow the footsteps Brother Lee set forth.

The church agreed that three copies of this resolution be made: one to be sent to the family; one for the church records; and one to be sent to the *Signs of Times* for publication.

This done by order of conference at our July meeting.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator

John H. Coker, Clerk

LOUISE BARROW BRYANT

By agreement with Goblintown Church I will endeavor to record the life and passage from our midst of a very precious sister in Christ, Louise Barrow Bryant.

Sister Bryant was born in the Leatherwood section of Henry County, Virginia on August 27, 1907, the third of six children of the late Clarence and Kate Stultz Barrow. Her parents were Primitive Baptists and her maternal grandfather was an Old Baptist minister, Elder Bryce Stultz.

Shortly before her eighteenth birthday, Louise was united in marriage to Mr. Floyd H. Bryant of Fieldale. He was a native of the Union Church community of Patrick County, Virginia, and was also brought up among Old School Baptists. Their wedding ceremony was conducted by the late Dr. J. P. McCabe of Martinsville.

The Lord graciously blessed their union to endure for better than fifty-nine years, and they were truly a loving and devoted couple all the while. To them were born three daughters and one son, all of whom survived her passage. The are: Mrs. Roger (Catherine) Warrick, Mrs. Norman (Janice) Joyce, Mrs. Larry (Judy) Roach, and Floyd H. Bryant, Jr. All of them lived near their parents, at either Fieldale or Bassett.

After several years of marriage, Brother and Sister Bryant acquired some farm property west of Fieldale and built a

home there. In the years that followed, their home was a haven for Old Baptists from far and near. After Riverside Church was organized nearby in the latter 1930's the various pastors (including Elder Emmett Bryant and Elder James Gardner) and brethren were frequent and welcome visitors in their home. It is doubtful if the members themselves were any more mindful of the needs of that church than they were.

Following many years of faithful attendance, Brother and Sister Bryant united with Riverside Church and were baptized together on the first Sunday in July, 1962 by their very dear friend, Elder Bennie N. Clifton. In the following February Brother Bryant was set apart by a presbytery and ordained as a deacon.

As a member and deacon's wife, Sister Bryant gave the very best of everything she had to the cause of her church and its people. She was never forgetful to entertain strangers. She washed the feet of many of the saints and fed them at her table. She bore children to her husband and taught them to honor their father and mother. She was a "virtuous woman" and the name of her husband was respected where they were known. The law of kindness was in her tongue, and the love of God ruled in her heart. She was a pillar of strength to her entire family. Her strength was derived from her Godgiven faith in the Son of God, who doubtless led her about and instructed her. Her nine grandchildren all loved to come to see her and to dine at grandmother's table. Indeed, none could fail to enjoy the excellent hospitality of her home, regardless of how frequently they visited.

Brother and Sister Bryant removed their memberships from Riverside in August of 1981. Sister Bryant joined Goblintown Church on confession of faith the third Saturday in April, 1983. While she was not permitted to live long afterwards, she made an impact that

will be felt by that church for a long time to come.

Sister Bryant suffered from declining health for about her last two years. While a patient in the hospital in Winston-Salem, N.C., she was given a vision which strongly indicated her pilgrimage was nearly over. She saw in her vision the hand of her doctor come down in front of her, and his hand was withered. She told him that he would be unable to reach her case, and she was right.

On the morning of February 20, 1985 Sister Bryant was seated at her kitchen table when she collapsed and died in the loving embrace of her husband. Her funeral service was held two days later at Collins Funeral Home Chapel in Bassett by the author of this obituary. Her body was laid down to rest in the Oakwood Cemetary at Martinsville, near the final resting places of her parents. Mourners in addition to her immediate family were two surviving sisters: Mrs. Norma Slaydon of Deland, Florida and Mrs. Ruby Joyce of Collingsville, Virginia.

Sister Bryant died the death of the righteous, and sleeps the peaceful rest of the redeemed. Her soul waits in paradise for the return of her spirit which went back to God, and one day both shall be reunited with her glorified body and meet the Lord in the air; to be carried to the land where she shall sing the praises of the Lamb of God forevermore.

Submitted by,
Elder John Wingfield

DOLLY JEFFERSON CRAIG

Sister Dolly Jefferson Craig, a long-time precious member of Goblintown Church was born in Patrick County, Virginia on April 1, 1892 and died April 21,

1985, making her pilgrim journey on earth just over 93 years. She was one of the six children of the late Nathaniel and Mary Jane Spencer Washburn, who were both members of Old Baptist churches: he of Goblintown, and she of Liberty. One of their five sons was an Old Baptist minister, Elder 'Pete' Washburn.

Sister Craig joined Liberty Church by experience on the first Saturday in December 1913, and was baptised by the late Elder Lemuel Gilbert. April 1919 she moved her membership to the church at Goblintown. She was united in marriage to Charlie E. Jefferson, also of Patrick County. Their relatively brief union was blessed with one son, Brother Clinton E. Jefferson of Patrick Springs, Virginia.

Following the passing of Brother Jefferson, Sister Dolly was married to the late Mr. Jasper Craig, who was a believer though not a member. Their union was blessed with three children: Connell Craig (who preceded her in death), Randolph Craig of Collinsville, and Mrs. Robert (Avie) Peak of Bassett, Virginia.

Sister Craig was faithful to her church as long as her health permitted her to attend. For about her last fifteen years she was confined by very poor health to the Blue Ridge Nursing Home at Stuart. Her last days were attended by many bodily afflictions, including blindness.

When Sister Craig departed this world for that better one to come, she left behind the three children previously named; fourteen grandchildren; twenty great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. Her funeral service was conducted at Howell Funeral Home Chapel by Elder Leonard Brammer and Elder Leonard Corns. She was laid to rest in the Bowles Cemetery, near her original home.

We miss Sister Craig, but we are comforted by the sweet assurance that her soul is resting in Paradise while her

body peacefully awaits the second coming of the Blessed Redeemer.

Done by order of Goblintown Church in conference, the 17th day of May 1986.

Submitted by:

Elder John Wingfield

EDGAR JOHN HALL

We note with much regret the passage from our midst of Brother Edgar John Hall. A son of the late George William and Mary Ruth Pendleton Hall, Brother Edgar was born near the Charity section of Patrick County, Virginia on July 26, 1907. He resided in Patrick County until the last few years of his life, when he moved near Koger's Orchard in western Henry County.

As a young man, Brother Hall was united in marriage to Miss Eula Hall. To their union the Lord granted three sons and one daughter: Calie and Roger Hall of Bassett, Virginia, James Stewart Hall of California, and Mrs. Shirley Haven of Bristol, Va. Brother Hall made a living for his family first by farming, then by working in an area furniture factory.

In his experience, Brother Hall traveled a long and lonesome road, until he was brought to the very end of his own strength. He came before Goblintown Church begging for a home in June 1962, and his request was granted. He was baptized by the late Elder H.D. Prillaman, and lived quietly and peaceably in the church until his departure from this life on January 11, 1984, at the age of 76.

He was survived by his four children; his step-mother, Mrs. Beadie Hall Craddock; three brothers, Arthur, Charlie and Curtis Hall, and one half-

brother, Bro. Frank Hall; two sisters, Sis. Ethel Greer and Mrs. Daisy McAlexander, and two half-sisters, Sister Mae Chaney and Sister Everine Chaney; and four grandchildren.

His funeral service was conducted at Collins Funeral Home Chapel at Bassett by Elder Leonard Corns and the writer of this memorial. His mortal body was laid to rest in the Hall Family Cemetery near his parents' old home place at Route 2, Stuart.

Although Brother Hall suffered much in this life, we believe he suffered for Christ's sake, and will one day hence reign with Him in glory.

Done by order of Goblintown Church in conference, the 17th day of May 1986.

Submitted by:

Elder John Wingfield

HARRY E. PICKRAL, SR.

It is with sad heart, but sweet memories that I attempt to write the obituary of one that I esteemed so much higher than myself.

Brother Harry Edgar Pickral, Sr. was born February 21, 1903, son of the late David Wade Pickral and Hester McClanahan Pickral. He passed from this life June 23, 1986. His last breaths were as soft and gentle as his walk in life.

Brother Harry was a faithful member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, Gretna, Va. He was received by experience and baptized October 13, 1928. He loved the church and his Brethren.

He leaves to mourn him, his wife; Margaret Mills Pickral; seven sons; H. Edgar Pickral, Jr., Gerald Pickral, Bobby Pickral, and Reuben Pickral, all of Chatham, Va. Oscar Pickral, Judson

Pickral, and Charlie Pickral, all of Gretna, Va., three daughters, Betty Rowles and Shirley Shelton of Gretna, Va., Rebecca Shelton of Concord, Va., two brothers; Arthur Pickral of Gretna and R. Turner Pickral of Danville, Va., four sisters; Mrs. Ida Hamlett, Mrs. Ola Crawley, Mrs. Laura McMinnis and Mrs. Minnie Hedrick, all of Gretna, VA. Thirty-one grandchildren and twenty-two great-grandchildren.

His funeral was conducted by his beloved pastor, Elder O.K. Tench. His body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park.

We pray God will reconcile each of us to His will.

Written in love and hope
Carol R. Pickral

Elder O.K. Tench, moderator
Oscar Pickral, clerk

DURWOOD B. STOKES, SR.

By the request of Tarboro Primitive Baptist Church, I will attempt to write a resolution of respect in memory of our dear Brother Durwood B. Stokes, Sr.

Brother Stokes was born November 10, 1906 and died April 21, 1986, making his stay on earth 79 years.

Brother Durwood was blessed to join our church by letter from Red Bank Church in January, 1972, and was received in full fellowship. He was faithful in attending the church until his death. We feel he was a believer of Salvation by Grace and also the fact we can do nothing for ourselves. He was the father of our dear pastor, Elder D. B. Stokes, Jr., whom we love very much.

The church at Tarboro resolve our loss is his eternal gain and we feel he is resting in peace with our dear Saviour.

We send our sympathy to Brother

Stokes' family and trust God will send the Comforter and bless them to carry on.

This done by order of conference at our May meeting.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
John H. Coker, Clerk

DAVID RAYMOND WALKER

By request of Hillsdale Primitive Baptist Church, I write the obituary of our beloved Brother, who recently passed from this life unto life eternal. He was the son of Frear and Sue O'Bryant Walker. Born and lived in the Midway community of Rockingham County, N.C. He united with Hillsdale Primitive Baptist Church in 1973. The Church is deeply saddened by the passing of our beloved Brother. His presence and great bass voice are deeply missed. The community has lost a great friend and statesman, but heaven gained a saint.

He helped form and organize the Midway-Monractor V.F.W. Post 8297. Serving as its quartermaster since it was instituted on October 1, 1978. He did so, he said, because he felt a need to bring all the veterans of this community as children of God, to work together for the good of our country in a land where we could worship our God as we chose to. He felt the God that ruled his country was the same God that ruled his church.

He is survived by his wife, Sister Jean Everitt Walker, son Ronald Everette Walker, and daughter Sandra Walker Smith.

Elder B.D. Hutchens, Moderator
Sister Florence Knight, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL 154

KEELING, VA., DECEMBER 1986

NO. 12

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ISSN - 0199-0063

Subscription price \$10.00 per year - \$18.00 two years

Published each month by

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Established in 1832

Devoted to the Old School Baptist Cause

CIRCULATION OFFICE

Elder J. R. Williams

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

EDITORS

Elder J. R. Williams, Editor

Route 1, Box 65

Keeling, Va. 24566

Phone (804) 792-8758

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Editor

721 Willard Street

Greensboro, N.C. 27405

Phone (919) 273-7464

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Elder W. D. Griffin

Highway 835, Box 57 A

Boynton, Virginia 23917

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

Route 4, Box 21 A

Winnsboro, TX 75494

Phone (214) 629-3561

Elder Richard H. Campbell

9195 Holmes Road

Memphis, Tenn. 38115

Phone (901) 755-6049

All letters for this paper containing subscriptions and remittances, should be mailed to Elder J. R. Williams, Rt. 1, Box 65, Keeling, Virginia 24566.

All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

PHILIPPIANS 2

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

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

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

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Due to lack of communications the November issue of the "Signs" got to the printer without being proofed for typographical errors. This resulted in many errors and misspelled words. We apologize and will try not to let this happen again.

Editors

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EDITORIAL

JOHN 3: 14,16.

We find in the beginning of this 3rd chapter of John that the Lord Jesus Christ was instructing Nicodemus who seemed to be in darkness with regard to the new birth, and told him that unless he was born again he could not see the kingdom of God or enter into it. A wonderful truth this is, a truth that separates the lost and the saved, the dead in trespasses and sins and the living. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The flesh is corrupt, sinful, defiled and "dead in trespasses and sins." You cannot

make it any better, it cannot rise above itself. You must always be dead within self, it is a truth which shall draw an absolute distinction between flesh and spirit. You may have fleshly riches, fleshly knowledge, fleshly religion but it is still flesh. "You must be born again."

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness." I believe that Jesus sets before us a type of Himself. The type is the serpent of brass which Moses, by God's commandment, made for the healing of the Israelites who, for murmuring had sent upon them fiery serpents and they who were bitten were dying by the thousands. God commanded Moses to raise the serpent upon a pole that the bitten Israelites might look upon it, and in looking, by divine commandment receive healing. Bitten people, what does this mean? Are we not bitten by the serpent, the dragon, the old serpent, the devil, bitten by sin and the poison that is in us is rushing through our veins? The brazen serpent had the form of a serpent but not the poisonous nature of one. Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh yet without sin. He, was made sin for us, who knew no sin for He was sinless in himself but was made a curse for his people that he might redeem them from the curse of the law. The serpents that bit the children of Israel were many but the serpent that Moses was commanded to make was but one, so there is one Mediator between God and man, one High Priest, one King, in whom alone is salvation from the bites of Satan, sin, and self. "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." Because Christ is eternal everything He did was eternally efficacious. Therefore

they needed but one sacrifice, "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14. The gospel is the everlasting gospel because He is the everlasting Son of God. The redemption which He obtained when offering Himself upon the cross of Calvary was eternal redemption. He was a spotless, sinless, Sacrifice and died a sacrificial death to make atonement of the sins of His people. His people are the only truly rich people in this world. Had you not rather have Christ in your heart than to be a worldly king or prince? "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Heb. 24-26.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord." Rom. 5:21. Sin reigned unto death, and death will reign in the grave over our bodies until the resurrection. But though sin has corrupted our whole body, yet grace shall reign. Sin shall not have dominion over those who are not under the law but under grace for "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. 5:20. "Christ must be lifted up" for "without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins." Christ was lifted up when He was crucified. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. Christ uses the words "lifted up" to express the manner of death. Christ looked to the cross as the goal of all His exertions. It was the place upon which

he could say, "It is finished." He could never say, "It is finished" on his throne, but on his cross He could say it.

"Will draw all men." The all here means some of all classes, the "all" for whom He shed His precious blood. The Lord never does unnecessary work, we should never hear of Christ drawing if we could come to Him without being drawn, but the fact is we stay away from Christ, and love the distance; yea, we make the gulf still wider by adding to our original depravity. Men cannot come, so He casts out from himself bands of love and cords of gracious constraint of grace. He draws all His chosen among the young, the old, the rich, the poor, the learned, and the ignorant for He has "Redeemed us to God by thy Blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Rev. 5:9.

My dear brethren when we are blessed by God's grace to receive faith from Him to see Christ lifted up on the cross, can anything become more precious to us? For we see that "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily." Possessing in Himself human nature in its perfection. God will look upon nothing in His people for acceptance and salvation but what He has given to Christ for them. He has our nature in all the purity and perfection of it, and in our nature He met all the requirements that God claims from them. The lifting up of Christ upon the cross was according to the commandment of His Father. "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John 10:17,18. O, how precious it is when we are given faith and hope to see

Christ on the cross for us, to see Him there with our sins imputed to Him, there punished and deserted of His Father; cursed by the law which He as Surety had obeyed and fulfilled. Surely if we are taught of God, we will find on the cross grace, wisdom, love, mercy, and the power of God in the salvation of His people. Here on the cross "mercy and truth met together: righteousness and peace kissed each other." "He must be lifted up" for without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. May the Spirit of God so lift up the dear Son of God in our souls that we may be given to say, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief."

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." This verse of scripture is, no doubt, the most frequently used by the unregenerate and the most frequently abused as to its true meaning than any other scripture. Many worldly people are striving to prove from this scripture that Christ is trying or wants to save all people if they will but allow Him to do so. First, we must realize that the scriptures do not contradict, but they harmonize to form a beautiful picture of truth. This is true because the writers were all inspired by the same Holy Spirit. May God save us from such a falsehood as many have. Is man greater than his Maker? But regardless of the abuse of this scripture, it still remains intact as to its true meaning.

"God so loved the world." May we first examine the word "world" as used by the Holy Spirit. Can it mean all persons of the human race? Does God love all equally, all without exception? If so, would this not allow that God is impotent to save them?

"World" surely means all of God's elect both among the Jews and Gentiles whom God determined to save with an everlasting salvation. Those Chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world known to Himself alone; the objects of His everlasting love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jere. 31:3. Sometimes we find the word "world" used in Scriptures referring to the world of God's elect, to the world of the Jews, of the Gentiles, and the world of the unregenerate. "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." John 17:9,10. So we see that Christ prayed for the world that He loved, is this not the world of the text?

But God, who is love, willed to express His love on objects outside himself. From all eternity He decreed to have a people in whom He would bestow and make known His love. It is beyond our ability to comprehend, that God being so great, so holy, so sovereign should choose a people in His Son to love and bless them irrespective of what He knew they would become as sinners; that He should love them from aliens into children by adoption, by delivering them from their sinful death in trespasses and sins into a state of holiness that should fit them to dwell with Himself in heaven eternally. Love must give, it cannot keep back. God did that, "He gave his only begotten Son." Although man became a huge monster of iniquity, God was not alienated from the objects of His love. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither

the floods drown it." Song of Solomon 8:7. Jesus said concerning the objects of His love: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all." John 10: 27,28,30.

Jesus did what He came to do, to save His people from their sins. "His name shall be called Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21. All He came to do He finished. The moral law He obeyed perfectly: He was perfectly holy in all His life. No malice, no guile, no wave of enmity, no lie, no lust, no covetousness, no pride, ever in the heart or on the tongue, or in the acts of the Holy Lord Jesus Christ. My dear ones consider the completeness and perfection of Christ's work which ended in His death. Christ drank up to the dregs the cup of penal wrath His Father gave Him to drink. O, my dear ones, we shall need endless eternity to really explore the infinite riches of the grace and love and power of the Lord God in providing a Saviour and salvation for lost perishing men.

"That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." This is a portion of the text that is so widely abused. They say all you have to do is just believe and I believe therefore, I am saved. How deceitful can one become with just a head knowledge belief? No person ever savingly and vitally believed in the cross of Christ unless by divine teaching. The Lord brings His people along a certain pathway which they have not known, after being quickened by the Holy Spirit of God. "And you hath He

quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2:1. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." John 6:63.

The Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy says: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." II Tim. 2:11. When Christ was crucified, it is said, "We are crucified with Him." When Christ was interred in the sepulchre, we are said to be "buried with Him." What does this mean? Does it not mean as He died in His body, (if we be in union with Him) we must die inwardly speaking. Then there is such a thing as being dead with Christ and this being dead with Christ is an evidence of our being alive with Christ. Unless we die experimentally as Christ died actually under the law, we cannot be said to be dead with Christ. We are not to set up any rigorous standard of experience concerning this dying of His elect people. It is the same as natural death, we don't all meet death in like manner.

"The soul that sinneth it shall die." Eze. 18:8. When this sentence of death comes into our hearts and conscience, slays us as to salvation by the works of the law: it condemned us and killed us outright as to any hope that may have sprung from our self-righteousness, our creature strength, our own false religion, our own false head knowledge belief. We can now say with the Apostle Paul: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7:24. When His people experience something of this death, they feel the door to heaven to be closed to them and the door to hell stands wide open. But the Lord does not leave His people here. In time the Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to His people as being

“the way, the truth, and the life.” When we are blessed through faith to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ from our hearts, then this surely is the belief that is spoken of in the text. Do we not believe then that no person ever savingly, or experimentally believed in the cross of Christ unless by divine teaching. “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” No one ever believed in the Lord Jesus Christ except by divine teaching. No, this is not a head knowledge belief spoken of here, but a spiritual belief coming from the new spiritual life as having been resurrected from a death in trespasses and sins. Believing on Him is a mystery; faith is a mystery in the heart of His people. What is a mystery? It is a divine truth which is beyond the ability of flesh, sense, and reason to comprehend, it is hidden from the wise and the prudent. But it is revealed unto babes by the Holy Spirit of God through faith.

What does believing in Him consist of? Believing in Him by the grace of God, to put all our hope for eternal salvation in Him and Him alone. Looking to Him for all our needs, to go to Him in prayer, to trust in Him and Him alone as our only hope of ever entering heaven and immortal glory. Amen.

A sinner who hopes to spiritually believe in Him,

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters are fir.

Solomon 1:17

NOTE OF INTEREST

The following is an excerpt from the Signs of The Times dated 1835. You will notice among the list of contributors was one A. Lincoln. We assume this was Abraham Lincoln as we understand his parents were members of the Little Pigeon Primitive Baptist Church in Indiana and that Abe as a young man was interested and very active in their church.

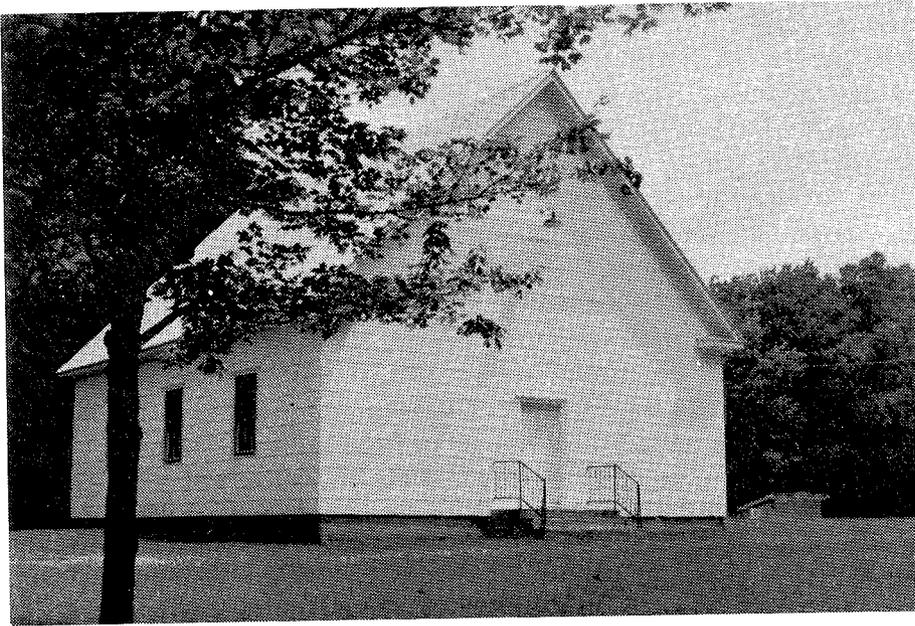
RECEIPTS.		
Burrel Lyman,	Pa.	\$1 00
David Bowen,	do	1 00
Joseph Tapscott,	Ohio.	13 00
Eld. Stephen Gard,	do	3 00
Wm. D. Ferris,	N. Y.	1 00
Eld. Gabriel Conklin,	do	20 00
David Jackson,	do	3 00
Xavir Abbott,	do	1 00
Benj. Corwin,	do	1 00
Eld. E. Halcomb,	Pa.	5 00
J. B. Goode,	Va.	5 00
John Hardy,	do	1 00
M. A. Staley,	do	1 50
Mr. Windsor,	do	1 00
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Eld. T. H. Owen,	do	10 00
Eld. E. Choat,	Md.	2 00
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Mrs. Mary Ott,	do	1 00
E. Grice,	do	1 00
Wm. Selman,	do	3 00
Eld. R. Reese,	Ga.	15 00
Eld. J. Henderson,	do	10 00
do do	do	10 00
Jonath'n. Cossington,	Ms.	1 00
C. C. Palmer,	Ct.	2 00
Robert Tripple,	N. C.	1 00
Total,		\$130 00

ST. JOHN, 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 12/86
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



LAUREL CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

L laurel Creek Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1854. The church is located in Floyd County, Pilot, Va. Meeting time is 2:30

P.M. on 4th. Sunday of each month. The present pastor is Elder Larry Hollandsworth we welcome you to visit us.

CORRESPONDENCE

Reuben Davis
March, 1984

Dear Brethren:

Somehow I have been impressed to write a few things. My mind goes back to happenings in my life which to me is evidence of a supreme power that rules all things, both natural and spiritual. When I was about sixteen, I quit school and stay-

ed at home with my Mother and Dad. We lived on a small farm and we had to strive to make a living. That was just after World War I.

I was born on October 1, 1905 in Henry County, Virginia. My Dad and Mother were not church members, but when Elder J.W. Wyatt or Isaac Jones would come through any-time in the week, he would make a special effort to go over to Axton to the Church to hear them. I would go with them and I would notice a lot of the time in their preaching that my Dad was enjoying the sermon so much that tears would be streaming down

his cheeks. I just couldn't understand his feelings, not only him, but a lot of others were so enveloped with the Spirit, it was very clear how happy they were. I went to Sunday school attended the Revival meetings of other denominations but, to me, their worship was not as heartfelt nor as impressive. I wondered and I read the Scripture especially to debate with my Dad on the subject of Pre-Destination and Fore-Knowledge of God, while we were working together in the fields. I was looking for definite proof that a natural man could acquire favor with God by his own conduct or if he was his own free agent to do a lot of meanness or not. But in my reading of the Old Testament, Moses chose rather to suffer afflictions with the children of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. This tells me that he was so enveloped with the spirit of Almighty God that the natural man, being so enticed by the sins of the flesh, was compelled by the Spirit not to follow the way of sinful flesh. Here we see the spirit working against the flesh, but all of those who have been born of the Spirit will come out more than the conquerors by Him who loved us and gave His life for us. We read blessed are those that walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. They are blessed not nor will be if they do certain things. Therefore, the natural man deserves no praise for the blessings he receives here in this world, be they spiritual or natural.

My mind goes back to my life at home with my parents. In the twenties or early thirties, I followed the dancing and music crowd throughout the whole community, enjoying all the natural pleasures for a season. I was about twenty-four or twenty-five years

old and had saved a little money. I had an Uncle who moved to town in the late twenties and rented his farm to a family who lived in town at the time. They moved down on this farm, about one mile from where we lived. As it was a general custom to visit a new family in the community, our nearest neighbors had been down. I asked one of the boys about the family. He said there was one young girl about fifteen or sixteen who seemed to be very quiet and not too happy with the situation (moving from town). She had three younger brothers and two older brothers, there at home. It seemed that a feeling of compassion was aroused, why I didn't know. I had not seen the young lady at that time. But when I did, her appearance appealed to me very much. Our courtship began and continued on for probably one year and in the meantime, my Uncle, who owned this property, decided to sell it.

This was in the early thirties. He authorized another one of my Uncles to sell it for him. So he came by and told me about it. He was asking \$3,000 for it. I told this Uncle I would give him \$2,500 for it. Time rolled on about two or three months. After that, the same Uncle came by home and said he had decided to take my price. I had to borrow \$500, as it must be cash. We made the deal that day, July 19, 1931, Depression Days. I was still very interested in the daughter that lived there. That fall, they moved to another farm about four miles west of Ridgeway, Virginia, about twenty miles from where I lived. We weren't engaged, and I was past broke (financially owed \$500 and had no way of traveling unless I caught a bus), so I decided to just forget about her. A-

bout six months passed and I didn't see her. But my love for her could not be quenched. Especially when I walked down on the farm that I bought. It had two good houses on it. Somehow, a feeling went over me that "this is where you all will live." The feeling was so strong that I decided if I ever saw her again, I would ask her to marry me. So I was fortunate enough to see her about once a month for about another year. We planned to marry and did in the fall of 1933 on Nov. 18th. In the year before that, my Aunt passed away. They lived about two miles from us. The funeral was at the home. They had a young preacher who stood in the hall and I was standing very close to him. I had never seen him before, but his countenance shined and the words he said were precious to me. I inquired as to who he was and was told he was David Spangler and that he operated a store in Cascade, Virginia. It dawned on me that if I ever got married, I wanted him to perform the ceremony. So, as my plans matured, a friend of mine took me to see him at Cascade and made the appointment to be at his home on Saturday afternoon November 18, 1933. We were happy and loved each other but I well knew that, without the blessings of Almighty God, our lives would be miserable. But He smiled on us with blessings untold. I will never forget that, in 1941, I planted my crop early, and had an especially nice tobacco crop. Sometime along the last of June, the County Agent came down and wanted me to work for him a few weeks. I refused at the time. I felt that I had excelled all of my neighbors with a nice early crop. I was preparing to save tobacco on the seventh of July, this being the afternoon of the

sixth of July. A small cloud just overhead began to make a noise and thundered in within a few minutes. It began to hail, the wind whirled, and in minutes, my tobacco crop was beat into the ground. I had a boy hired by the month and I also had a sharecropper who had three acres of tobacco here on the place. After the cloud passed, we went up into the fields: the tobacco was beat to the ground. My sharecropper was shedding tears, but it seems that I couldn't grasp just exactly how serious it might have been.

On the morning of the eighth, I decided that I and the boy I had hired would cut the stalks off and turn out a sucker (new leaf growths on tobacco stalks). We had cut off a few rows when several of my neighbors, older farmers than I, as well as my Dad told me I was foolish--it was too late in the year. As a result, we quit. The young man I had hired said he wanted to try to get another job. I told him to wait until tomorrow and we both would look for work.

Late that night (perhaps in the early morning)--I don't know if I was awake or asleep--I "saw" the tobacco fields in a beautiful crop about a shoulder high. I woke my wife and told her to get up and cook breakfast: I was going to get another hand or two and cut the tobacco off. She said, "You quit yesterday." I answered "Yes, but I am not quitting today." Only I knew how I felt. We cut it all off that day. I told the hired boy just to continue on as before.

In a few days, we began to leave the best suckers. The weather was dry for about three weeks-- it looked very discouraging, and I didn't hear many encouraging words. My faith got very small, but it began raining the first of

August and it rained almost every day for nearly three weeks. By that time, those suckers were all in top. I got some extra help and we topped every plant anywhere from twenty-four to twenty-eight leaves. This was about the first of September on Sunday morning after we had topped it. It was a beautiful crop. I walked up on the Ridge to look at the crop, and the picture I saw that night (before I began to cut the stubble off the second time) came to me so perfect--even to the shapes of the edge of the fields. As I stood there, it seems that a chill went over me as much as to say that the Lord took it away and He has given it back. It took just that to teach me whose earth I was using, just where all my strength and knowledge came from, and just how helpless and dependent we all are. Sometimes, we can pray with thankfulness in our heart, but how often we are like the hog eating apples off the ground, and never looks up to see just where they came from.

As time moved on from this time onward, I was deeply interested in going to hear men preach--especially the Old School Baptist. Once in a while on Sunday morning, I would walk around and look at the growing crops, and a feeling would so envelop me, I would hurry to the house to get ready to go somewhere to hear someone speak on the Great and marvelous things of God. I went to hear several different factions of the Primitive Baptist Church. Some of them said things that I didn't believe. But as the poet said, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear--it soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fears. It makes the wounded spirit whole and

calms the troubled breast, Tis manna to the hungry soul, and to the weary, rest." Sometimes, my spirit was aroused about as much what the Preacher didn't say as what he did. This drive to go and hear something only happened three or four times a year. It seems that most of the time, I was too deeply involved in natural things. A few years passed like this and I decided to build a fish pond--and did. I stocked it with fish and charged each person one dollar per day to fish. Also, I built a concession stand and sold candy, ice cream, canned goods, and cold drinks.

This project worked very well for several years (moneywise), but I didn't have time to go to church. In the year 1958 (about the first of May), the fishing business was very good--especially on Sundays. Cold drinks were very important. One Sunday morning, my drink box had conked out, and the drinks were hot. I had it repaired, and the next Sunday, it was "out" again. That week, I got a repairman: He said all it needed was some more gas in it, so he put gas in it. It worked a few more days and quit again, so I didn't have cold drinks that weekend. The following week, I bought another box from one of the drink companies--it worked very well.

However, on Saturday evening of that week, my youngest son, who was about nine years old, didn't eat any supper. He was complaining with his side. I called our family doctor--he said to bring him to his office. I carried him and he examined him. He said he didn't think anything much was wrong, probably a slight upset stomach. We came on home. The next morning, I got up early, about 4:30 a.m., as a lot of the fishers would

come in early. At about eight o'clock, my other son, who was about fourteen years old at the time, came up to the pond and said, "Mama wants you to come to the house as Clark (the youngest son, who was complaining the evening before) is very sick and walking bent over." I went down and called the family doctor who had seen him the evening before. He said for me to bring him to the emergency room and that he would meet us there. When we arrived, the doctor called in another doctor, who was a surgeon. He said that he had got appendicitis and must be operated on at once. They began to prepare him for the operation. By ten o'clock, he was in the operating room. It was about two hours before the doctor got through--Ordinarily, an operation of this kind wouldn't last over twenty minutes. I was restlessly waiting to hear why it took so long. The doctor came to me and told me that his appendix had erupted but that he had "cleaned" him out the best that he could. Also, he said that, with Clark being young, he felt that he would make it through this illness. To me, it was a serious report. I went to his room and saw all of the tubes in his nose and they were putting something in his veins, so I left the hospital. About four o'clock (on the way home), if I ever tried to pray, it was then. In my discourse, it seemed that a voice spoke to me very eloquently and impressively: "You are operating a fish pond on Sundays and not going to church. Neither of you have been baptized." I bargained with that spiritual approach as much as to say, "Lord, if you will just spare my son, I will walk differently." I came home and told my wife the sad story. I told her that there would be no more

fishing on Sundays. The following week (I guess about Wednesday), this being about the last of May, 1958, an old black man (whom I knew very well, and who lived about 6 or 7 miles from me with his son) came down to see if I had any tobacco plants. We were through planting, so I told him "yes" and I carried them to the beds and told them to help themselves. I went back to the house to hear from my son. When my wife came back from up at the hospital, she said that they thought he was a little better. Then, I walked back up to where the old black man and his son were drawing plants. I said, "Uncle Dillard, if you don't get enough here in this bed, on the other side over there are some more beds." This old man stood up and took off his hat and said, "Mr. Davis, I told my wife before I left home that if anyone had any plants to spare, it would be you. You have been blessed in all of your farming activities. What church are you a member of?" Why did he ask such a question?--He didn't know that my son was seriously ill at that time. I told him that I wasn't a member of any church at this time. He said, "Mr. Davis, you ought to join the church of your belief and be baptized." That hit me so hard that I was speechless for a minute or two. I had to agree with him. But when and where to go, I didn't know. I was in deep trouble. I began to go to different factions of the Primitive Baptist Churches, but when the doors of the Church were open for the reception of members, I couldn't move. This fearful condition went on with me for a month or two. But since I had closed the fish-pond on Sundays, a friend of mine asked to baptize in the pond on a Sunday morning during this period.

That Sunday morning, while they were baptizing, I went up there. My wife didn't go, and when I came back, it seemed that I could see a difference in her.

That night, sometime in the late hours, I missed her. The house was dark, and I wandered and began to search. I found her sitting on the back steps, crying. I asked her what was wrong and she said, "I think I am sure for Hell, I have sinned against the Holy Ghost." All of this loosened chords around my heart. I could see that my prayers were being answered as I had so many times tried to pray in my feeble way that she could see the things that I had been blessed to see: The mighty and mysterious works of the Lord and how He rules and guides His people and causes them to see their sinful and helpless state, and that then and only then will they call for mercy, and that that all-seeing eye which never sleeps nor slumbers reaches out His loving arms of Grace and Mercy, giving them a desire to follow their Lord in baptism. What a great comfort to feel and hope that, some sweet day, you will rest with Him in glory when the trials and troubles of this world are over.

Back to the following Sunday after this had taken place with my wife. It being a fourth Sunday, I understood that David Spangler preached at Dan River on that day. I began to get ready to go and my wife fixed two of the children, but she wouldn't go--she said she didn't feel like it. So, I and two of our children went. I didn't know that they were having a baptizing out at the pool. The people were standing all around. We stood on the outer edge of the crowd. David Spangler stood up on top of a cement step at the pool

edge and began to speak on the greatness and mercies of God. It seemed to me that his faced shined and that everything he said was directed to me. He said, "The doors of the church are now open, and if any of you feel a burden, to unite with the church and follow your Lord in baptism, now is as good a time as any." I gave my hat to my daughter and said, "I've got to go." I went through the crowd and up to Elder Spangler and told him I had put this thing off as long as I could and it was my desire for a home with the Church and to be baptized. Anything else I said, I don't remember. They accepted me. He asked me who I was, as it had been twenty-five years since he had united me and my wife in marriage (of course, he had forgotten, since he hadn't seen me since then). I told him, if it be the Lord's will, I would like to be baptized the next fourth Sunday. So the following week, Brother Deacon Gold Minter came up to see me and it was a great pleasure to talk to someone who understood the way my travels had been. My wife was so glad when I came back and told her that I had united myself with the church. She embraced me and we shed tears of joy together.

The following week, Elder Spangler came to see us and we were glad to see him and his wife. My wife was anxious to ask him some questions and tell him portions of her experiences. His talk to her was a lot of comfort. So the next fourth Saturday night, my wife offered herself to the church and was accepted.

On Sunday morning, Elder Spangler baptized us both. This was in 1958, the fourth Sunday of September.

We well realize we have enjoyed

many precious blessings in the last twenty-five years. Of course, we have had some natural disappointments - (and I realize these struggles in life are good for us to make us realize from whence all of our help comes--both Spiritual and natural) and I hope we thank the God of all mercy for our many acquaintances who have had experiences such as ours as it is a lot of comfort to witness such evidence along the way.

Reuben Davis

MEETINGS

SAINTS REST CHURCH

Saints Rests Primitive Baptist Church, 2710 Engle St., Dallas, Texas invites all brethren and friends to meet with us in our annual fall three day meeting.

The Lord willing, the meeting will begin at 7:30 P.M., Friday November 28, 1986 and continue through the 5th Sunday, November 30, 1986.

Local telephone numbers for contact: Elder Carey C. Morris 214-298-3269 Deacon Dean G. Connell 214-298-8086

Elder Carey C. Morris
Moderator and Pastor

Requested by Saints Rest Church,
written by Deacon Dean G. Connell,
Church Clerk.

1 PETER 5:10

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

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The next session of the Staunton River Union is to be held the Lord willing with Malmaison Church, the 5th Sunday - and the Saturday before - in November. A cordial invitation is extended to our ministers, brethren, and friends.

Elder O. K. Tench - Mod.
Peggy Wells - Clerk

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Signs of The Times, Inc.
Rt. 1, Box 65
Keeling, Virginia, 24566

ST. JOHN, 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

 ARTICLES

HEAVENLY REALITIES AND DIVINE CERTAINTIES

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

There is a reality in true religion, and indeed, rightly viewed, a reality in nothing else; for every other thing passes away a dream of the night, and comes to an end like a tale that is told. Now you cannot say of a thing that passes away and comes to an end that it is real. It may have the appearance of reality, of possessing a firm, enduring substance, when in fact it is but a shadow. Our very language, nay, the very laws of our land, embody this idea. We read or hear sometimes, for instance, that a man of wealth has died and left such or such an amount of real and personal property. What is meant by real property, and why is it called real, as thus distinguished from personal? By real property we understand land and houses. Money, jewels, pictures, books, furniture, securities, these are not called real but personal, and for this reason, that they belong to the individual and are therefore moveable and transitory. Money may be spent, jewels be lost, books be burnt, furniture decay, pictures vanish by time and age, securities be stolen. But not so with land; that cannot be burnt, nor stolen by night, nor dropped down a sink-hole, nor decay with old age.

Amidst all the changes of time there it remains in all its original firmness, and is handed down as a solid possession from father to son. The law therefore, calls all such property "real."

Is there not some similarity between this and the things of eternity? Nothing is real but that which has an abiding substance. Health decays, strength diminishes, beauty flees the cheek, sight and hearing grow dim, the mind itself gets feeble, riches make to themselves wings and flee away, children die, friends depart, old age creeps on, and life itself comes to a close. These fugitive, transitory things are then mere shadows; there is no substance, enduring substance in them. They are for time, and are useful for a time state. Like our daily food and raiment, house and home, they support and solace us in our journey through life. But real religion - and by this I understand the work of God upon the soul, abides in death and after death, goes with us through the dark valley, and lands us safe in a blessed eternity. It is, therefore, the only thing in this world of which we can say that it is real.

Is not this John's testimony? "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii. 16, 17.) What a testimony is here given that everything in the world is passing away, and that only one man abides for ever. And who is that man, that blessed man, who lives when all dies, who abides for ever when all others pass away into the outer darkness? It is he who doeth the

will of God. And how and when do we the will of God? When we believe in His dear Son by a living faith; for "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 40.) If, then, you have seen the Son and believed in Him, you have now everlasting life, and Jesus will raise you up in the last day.

Now wherever there is reality, there will be a measure, more or less, of certainty. If you are the possessor of a piece of land, it may be but a small field or half an acre of garden ground, you know for certain whether you are the possessor of that piece of property or not. When you walk up and down the length and breadth of it, even if a few yards be the full extent of your walk, you can stamp your foot upon the soil and say, "This is mine; this is my property." But we observe that there is a distinction between the certainty of right; that your title is good as well as your proprietorship. So in the things of God.

There is a certainty in the truths of revelation, and those who know something of the things of God in their soul are resting upon them as divine certainties, of which the blessed Spirit has borne in their conscience His sure testimony. And even where this is not clearly the case, where this inward testimony is weak, the possession of the fear of God, as the beginning of wisdom, gives to its owner a possession of the kingdom of heaven. Thus every child of God may not have attained to the certainty of title, though he has the certainty of possession. His title may be good in

itself beyond all doubt and question, as regards its reality; but if you ask him to produce it, he can scarcely find his deeds, or make out a title to satisfy himself, or fully to satisfy you. And yet if the Lord the Spirit has but begun the work of grace in his heart, he has the certainty of title.

What leads me to make these remarks upon realities and certainties? The peculiar language of our text, the firm reality, the positive certainty which stamp its declarations. Do we find any uncertainties here? Any "perhaps" or "peradventure," "I think it may be," or "I cannot tell whether it may be so or not?" Does the Holy Ghost ever speak the language of uncertainty in revealing to us the truth of God? Mark how clearly, decisively, certainly the man of God speaks here: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us and understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." What a certain sound the gospel trumpet here gives; with what confidence the man of God speaks. And if he did not, how could we believe him? If a man profess to be my guide, say on some Swiss mountain, amidst rocks and snows and falling avalanches, he must know the way and every step that he takes on that perilous ground or I cannot follow him with any confidence. If I own a ship, and a pilot undertake to carry it down the channel, he must know every shoal, or my ship and cargo and many precious lives may be lost through his uncertain handling of the helm. Other instances will occur to your mind in which we want certainties, that we may clearly know where we are, what

we are, what we are about, and whither we are going, in order to preserve us from being altogether wrong and going altogether wrong.

Now if religion be of all matters most important, if a mistake in it, at least a very serious mistake, be fatal, how desirable, how absolutely necessary is it to have certainties in our own case. The word of God in the hands of the Spirit is our guide; how needful therefore it is that it should be a certain guide; and may I not add that the interpretation of it by a professed servant of Christ should be as clear and certain as the word itself? God help me then this morning to be this faithful interpreter of His word. Our text is clear and certain. If in my interpretation of it then there be anything dark confused, or uncertain, to me must the fault belong. Still I hope that the Lord may enable me so rightly to divide the word of truth, so to dive into the treasures of our text, and lay them bare to your view, that you may with God's help and blessing, gather up from what I may bring before you something that may enrich, feed, comfort, and instruct your soul. I shall draw your attention to three points connected with our text.

I. - First, the positive declaration, "This is a true God, and eternal life."

II. - Secondly, the knowledge which the believer possesses that "the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true."

III. - Thirdly, the positive assertion, that "we are in him that is true."

God give the needed blessing!

I. - "This is the true God, and eternal life."

1. Whilst we are in nature's

darkness and death, we have no knowledge, and we want to have no knowledge of the true God. We are, as the Scripture emphatically declares "without God in the world;" and we love to have it so. If we have any thought about God - and where is the conscience that has not at times - some thought about Him? - we view Him for the most part as our enemy. We are told indeed that we ought to love Him, and in His holy Law He has bidden us to do so with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. But this we cannot do; for if we make the attempt we soon find and feel the springing up of that enmity of the carnal mind for it "worketh wrath," and by stirring up the wretched enmity of the carnal mind against Him of which Paul speaks. And indeed the law provokes it; for it "worketh wrath," and by stirring up the wretched enmity of our carnal mind, baffles every attempt at love.

Besides this wretched enmity of our heart, we have an instinctive feeling that God must be our enemy as long as we are living in wicked works; for even our natural conscience testifies to His holiness, and that holiness we see and feel firmly and unalterably directed against the sins and idols which we hug to our breast. Viewing Him, then, as our enemy, we shun His presence, and escape as far as we can out of sight. Under this feeling Jonah went down from the presence of the Lord to Joppa; and the prodigal son took his journey into a far country. So we get away as far as we can from anything which testifies of the presence and power of God. Any person, any place, any book, any conversation, and I may add, any thoughts which would remind us of the pres-

ence of God we get away from as fast and as far as we can, for we cannot bear the condemnation which His presence brings.

There is another reason why we wish to have nothing to do with God, and for God to have nothing to do with us. There is an inward conviction in our mind, that if we have to do with God and God has to do with us, we must give up that which our nature loves almost more dearly than our life - blood. We must part with our sins, pluck our idols from our breast, abandon love pursuits, relinquish dear friends, offend affectionate relatives, sacrifice cherished prospects, and, as the world says, ruin ourselves for life. Now no man can look this prospect steadily in the face, this utter crushing of our inmost heart, until he has the fear of God deeply planted in his soul. This was just the case with me. I had often wanted to be religious and sometimes tried to be so; but I never could bear the thought of what I must give up if I truly became so. The sacrifice was too great; and I could not make it. Thousands are held here who never proceed any further. Here they live, here they die, here they perish.

But God will not let His own dear children thus perish. He therefore arrests us in our ignorance or our indecision, in our unbelief and in our enmity, by His all-subduing work of grace upon our soul, which He himself begins, carries on, and finishes. Now, no sooner does a ray of light shine out of His fulness into our heart and divine life quicken our soul, than so far from seeking to escape the eye of this God whom we have thus far continually shunned, there is raised up in the bosom a deep-seated, abiding, and

almost continual feeling, that wherever we go that eye follows us. Thence springs the fullest conviction that there is no escaping out of His hand, or withdrawing ourselves from His heart-searching eye. We are also made to feel that if we live and die His enemies, under His wrath we must perish forevermore. This deep conviction at once puts an end to all our false conceptions of God, and to all the vain imaginations that we have formed concerning Him. It detects our false worship of Him, and how satisfied we have been with addressing Him with our lips when our heart was far from Him. It shows us that our strict morality, all our, as we thought, decided piety, all our religious thoughts, connections, and associations were but a form of godliness, whilst we really denied the power thereof.

I speak thus, for it may have been the case with some of you not to have been abandoned to any course of immorality, but on the contrary, to have been preserved in the greatest strictness of life and conduct, and yet by being varnished over with a false religion, to have stretched your limbs upon a bed too short, and wrapped yourself up in a covering too narrow. Whether then we lived in open sin, or were strict moralists, or false religionists, however it might affect our character and reputation, it made little difference when spiritual convictions entered into and laid hold of our awakened conscience. When God searches Jerusalem with candles, He lays bare every secret imagination of the mind: when He lays judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, He sweeps away every refuge of lies and His waters overflow every hiding-place. When the sword of

the Spirit, which is the word of God, pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The word of God thus finds us out, piercing and penetrating every veil and covering, and brings us out naked and bare in all our natural and hideous deformity before His heart-searching eye.

Under this work of grace, under these teachings of the blessed Spirit as a Spirit of conviction, we begin to have some acquaintance with the true God; learn to worship Him in spirit and in truth; and to have some right apprehension of His character, of His holiness, justice, majesty, and power. In all this we see the first budding fruit, and effects of that godly fear which He gives by His grace, and which He has promised to put into the hearts of those with whom He makes an everlasting covenant that He will not turn away from them to do them good. (Jer. xxxii. 40) It is in this way that we come to a knowledge of the only true God in His justice and holiness.

2. But after a time, as the Lord is pleased to work by His Spirit and grace, we come to a knowledge of the only true God as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. This we do not see at first. We read that "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing." (Prov. xxv. 2) Thus it is for His own glory that for a time He conceals from His people that which afterwards He reveals unto them. For the most part, therefore, He exercises them well and long with guilty apprehensions and fears of His great and terrible Majesty, that He may strip them thoroughly of all the rags of creature righteousness and bring them down to that spot

where He means to reveal in them and unto them His dear Son, and make Him precious to their souls.

Now no man can bring into his own heart a spiritual, saving knowledge of the Son of God, or give himself faith to embrace Him as the Christ of God, so as to have any assurance that He died for him. He may long to do so, and even attempt to raise up faith in his own bosom; but till the time comes when God is pleased to give some discovery and manifestation of His dear Son to his soul, he cannot see Him; for He hides Himself in the thick darkness; nor can he believe in Him so as to find rest and peace from an assurance of pardoned sin and acceptance in the Beloved. Men may question and cavil at these strong assertions, but I am very sure that I speak in the fullest harmony with the experience of every living soul in thus speaking; for all such well know that the faith that brings peace is not in their own power, but is the pure, sovereign gift of God.

When, then, any whom the Lord the Spirit is inwardly teaching has been exercised, some for a longer and others for a shorter period, with such apprehensions of the character of the only true God as to bring him down into the dust of death, this gracious Teacher in some most unexpected moment will bring some discovery to his soul of the Son of God as a Savior, suitable to his lost case and condition, and raise up faith in his heart to embrace Him as the Son of God. I cannot now stay to work this point clearly out in the experience of the Lord's disciples, as we see in the New Testament; but take it all in the words of Peter: "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are

sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John vi. 68, 69.) It is in this way that we are brought to see who the true God is, not merely in His character as holy, just, and righteous, inflexible against sin and determined to punish the guilty, but obtain the gracious view of His mercy, goodness, and love in the face of Jesus Christ. This is what the apostle means when he says, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

You will observe that our text says, "This is the true God." There is no other God but this. All others are false gods, the vain and vague conceptions of men's minds - not the true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all grace, of all mercy, and of all truth, as manifesting Himself in the Person and work of His dear Son. This revelation and discovery of the glory of God in the face, or, as it might be rendered, in the Person of Jesus Christ, changes the whole scene, brings the soul out of darkness into light, gives it a sweet deliverance into the mercy of God, makes Christ precious, fills the heart, according to the measure of the revelation given, with all joy and peace in believing. Then we can say, "This is the true God" - God in Christ, God revealing Himself in the Person of His dear Son, as pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin.

3. Now connected with this true God is "eternal life," for our text combines them as one: "This is the true God and eternal life." O the blessedness, which eternity itself can never exhaust, of possessing eternal life.

There is something to my mind so singularly blessed in the expression "eternal life," that I cannot help dwelling upon it. How the thought, the feeling of it expands the breast!

Compared with it, how poor, mean, and low is our temporal life and all its concerns - the short span which God has allotted to us here below!

Observe how our eye is directed by holy John to the true God as being Himself eternal life. He is not only the Giver, the Spring, the Subject, the Object of it; He Himself is it all. O if He has but quickened our souls by His Spirit and grace, we carry now, even now, eternal life in our breast; for this eternal life is the precious fruit on earth of that eternal life in heaven which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. (1 John i. 2.) We have no life in our own bosom independent of the Source and Fountain of life; for Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life." He is our life (Col. iii. 4.), and He has said, for our encouragement and consolation, "Because I live ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) If we have any light, any warmth, any fruitfulness, any motion, it comes from the Sun of righteousness; and so if we have any life, it comes from Him who is "the Fountain of life." (Psa. xxxvi. 9.)

4. How shall we know that we have eternal life, you may ask? How do we know that we have natural life? By an inward consciousness that we are alive; by the pulse which beats, the lungs which breathe, the eye which sees, the ear which hears, the tongue which speaks, the hands which feel; by the warm play of blood through our veins, by the thoughts which pass to and fro through our mind. Similarly we know the possession of spiritual life

by an inward consciousness of it and by its inward actings. And as where there is spiritual there is eternal life, as we feel the bubblings, springings, risings, and varied movements of this spiritual life in our bosom, we have a testimony that we have also eternal life; that this eternal life is in the Son of God, and from the Son of God has been breathed into and communicated unto our souls.

Preached at Providence
Chapel, Oakham, on Lord's
Day Morning, June 11, 1865.
by J. C. Philpot

AMOS III. 3.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

There was a time, child of God, when the world held in your heart the chief place. It was not so in God's heart. You and he were therefore at variance. But now, through grace, you are brought to make eternity your chief concern. You and God are agreed there; for in the mind of God eternity as much outweighs time as the stars in the midnight sky outweigh a grain of dust. There was a time when you loved the world and the things of time and sense; and earth and earthly things were your element and home. You and God disagreed upon that matter; because the Lord saw that the world was full of evil, whilst you saw it full of good. The Lord saw the world under his curse, and you loved its favour and its blessing-seeking madly and wickedly to enjoy that which God had denounced; therefore you could not agree. Thus you see that in order to be

agreed with God, we must have God's thoughts in our heart, God's ways in our soul, and God's love in our affections. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." But they must become such; and when once God's thoughts become your thoughts and God's ways our ways; when once we have the mind of Christ and see with the eyes of God, then God and we become agreed, and being agreed, we can walk together. What is it to walk together? Why, it is to enjoy union, communion, fellowship, and - friendship. Now as we are brought to agree with God, we walk with God. He has set up a mercy-seat on high, and when they thus agree, God and man may meet at the mercy-seat of the Redeemer. As the eyes are enlightened to see the truth of God; as the heart is touched to feel the power of God; and as the affections are drawn forth to love the things of God, we meet at the mercy-seat. It is sprinkled with blood; it contains and hides from view the broken tables of the law. There God meets man in gracious amity, and enables him to pour out his soul before him and to tell him his troubles, trials, and temptations. And every now and then he sweetly relieves by dropping in a gracious promise, applying some portion of his sacred truth, encouraging him to believe in his dear Son, and still to hope in his mercy.

J. C. Philpot

I THESSALONIANS v.6.

"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

Here sobriety is opposed to sleepiness, and is connected with walking in the light and in the day, as sleepiness and its frequent cause, drunkenness, are connected with darkness and night. One of the greatest curses God can send on a people and its rulers, its prophets and seers, is a spirit of deep sleep, as the prophet speaks: "For the Lord hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." But to be sober is to be awaked out of this sleep, and, as a consequence, to walk not only wakefully but watchfully. It implies, therefore, that careful, circumspect walking, that daily living, moving, speaking, and acting in the fear of God, whereby alone we can be kept from the snares spread for our feet at every step of the way. How many have fallen into outward evil and open disgrace from want of walking watchfully and circumspectly, and taking heed to their steps. Instead of watching the first movements of sin and against, as the Lord speaks, "the entering into temptation," they rather dally with it until they are drawn away and enticed of their own lust which, as unchecked, goes on to conceive and bring forth sin, which, when it is finished or carried out and accomplished in positive action, bringeth forth death.

J. C. Philpot

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

"THUS SAITH THE LORD."

The expressions, "Thus saith the Lord," "Saith God," and

including the sayings of Jesus, occur at least one thousand times throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Yet, despite this fact, there are to be found those who say the Bible is not the word of God. Indeed, beyond all successful controversy, it is verily the word of God. Jesus Christ himself is the living Word, the Scriptures of inspiration are the written Word. These two, the living and the written Words, do never contradict each other. They are in perfect harmony. The literal meaning of the Scriptures and the spiritual significance thereof, do never conflict. If at any time, any man thinks he sees contradictions and lack of harmony in the Word of God, the opposition is in the man himself. Every one of us by nature are in opposition to God's word. The carnal mind is enmity against God and the natural man knows not the things of God. No wonder, then, that carnal minds and natural men charge the Scriptures with being contradictory. Every man's opinion, every man's views, all preaching, all philosophy, all meditation and all sentiment, should be brought to the test of the written Word of God. If not in accord with the Scriptures, they must be cast aside and rejected, howsoever fair and plausible they may seem. Frequently we hear it said that one says the Scriptures mean thus and so, another man says they mean quite something else: therefore, it is said the Scriptures can mean anything. This is absolutely false. When the Scriptures are taken and handled honestly with no attempt to deceive and with no personal bias which twists them to suit our personal notions, they can mean but one thing, and that one thing is the truth of God

as revealed in and through Jesus Christ. God's people should not follow preachers only in so far as the preacher follows the Scriptures. The Scriptures should be the man of our counsel. The brethren at Berea were more noble than the other Christians because they searched the Scriptures daily to know whether the things said by Paul were so. (Acts xvii. 11) The brethren at Thessalonica were said not to have done as the Berean brethren did. We fear that in this present day there is entirely too little searching of the of the Scriptures by the brethren themselves and too much reliance placed in what the preacher says. If any man lacks wisdom, we are not told to go to our pastor about it, or to inquire of the preacher, but we are commanded to ask of the Lord and that thus inquiring sincerely of him, we shall receive. To go directly to the fountainhead of all Wisdom is vastly better than to inquire of one of the streams. No Scripture should ever be interpreted at variance with the context in which it occurs. If we pick out a verse here, another verse there, a word here and a word there, the most fantastic and absurd conclusions may be arrived at; but this is not right and certainly not honest. We fail to see how a man truly called of God to preach can conscientiously thus handle his Master's goods. What kind of an account will such a man give his stewardship? We are commanded to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen rightly dividing the word of truth and so needing not to be ashamed. The word of truth needs no addition and subtraction, but it is to be properly divided. This the servant of God does by that same Spirit which has called and qualified him as a ser-

vant of God. If the calling of God be absent, no amount of study will do any good. It is not necessary to study the Scriptures themselves, compare Scripture with Scripture, spiritual things with spiritual. No amount of Bible reading will ever make a man preach the gospel, but one who is truly called to the work of the ministry will feel to make the Scriptures the man of his counsel and will desire to read and search them, asking the Spirit to direct him in his perusal of them. In any walk or profession of life, it is needful to have the tools to work with. Are not the inspired Scriptures the tool of the man of God? Are they not for his furnishing to all good works and for his instruction in doctrine? If we cannot give a "thus saith the Lord" for what we believe and preach, we had better quit. Nothing is worth anything unless founded on divine authority. Divine authority for doctrine is to be found in the inspired Scriptures of truth. True Baptists all down the ages have always required spiritual proof for their doctrine and practice. Anything not sanctioned by "thus saith the Lord," they let alone. It is interesting to know the the word "bigot" arose centuries ago in France. "Bigot" comes from "by God." Today this word means a narrow-minded person and one who is very decided and uncompromising in his views, particularly on the subject of religion. In olden times, the Huguenots in France were called a "by God" people, because they demanded the word of God as their authority. Whenever approached by their enemies and examined by them to know why they believed as they did, they would refer their enemies to the Bible and declare that their faith was "by God,"

their doctrine and teachings was "by God," their practice was "by God," etc. Thus, it came to be that a "by God" person was one who demanded the Bible and the "thus saith the Lord" as his guide. This phrase "by God" has been by much use contracted into the word "bigot." Most people today hate to be called "bigots," but we who love the Scriptures should rejoice to have ourselves thus denominated, because when we know the origin of the word, it is complimentary rather than defamatory, since it stamps one as being an upholder of the Word of God. When we come, in our reading, to passages of Scripture which we cannot understand, let us await the Spirit's pleasure to unfold them to us: and as we thus wait, let us not deny them and us not permit our imaginations to range wildly over them unduly spiritualizing them. Imagination, someone says, is the biggest "nation" in the world. Surely it is and further the Word says the imaginations of our hearts are nothing but evil continually.

Elder H. H. Leferts

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR SEPTEMBER 1986

- Mrs. Lucile McGee, WA.....7.00
- Loy P. Rodgers, AR.....7.00
- Hassell A. Hale, VA.....7.00
- Mrs. Rachel J. Green, WV2.00
- Roy & Minnie Cunningham, OR..10.00
- Mrs. Minnie G. Roberts, NC.....2.00
- Mrs. S.G. Harralson, KY5.00

- Paul Smith, NC7.00
- Raymon Brammer, VA2.00
- Mrs. Clara Cumbo, VA.....2.00
- Mrs. J.E. Mosley, AL.....2.00
- Mrs. Tom Strickland, AL.....2.00
- Floyd K. Morgan, AR.....2.00
- Mrs. J.C. Macks, AR.....2.00
- F.G. Bird, OH2.00
- Eld. G.W. Jones, LA7.00
- Mrs. Ruth Blair, VA7.00
- Mrs. Donald Arne, SD40.00
- Mrs. E. W. Gibson, GA.....7.00
- Sam Edd Craddock, VA.....2.00
- Eld. Charlie C. Steward, NJ.....2.00
- Mrs. Joe Kee, TX.....2.00
- Mrs. Geneva Meara, CA.....15.00
- Mrs. Mattie Underwood, VA....5.00
- A. S. Blalock, NC.....22.00
- Eld. Amos Hash, VA2.00
- Mrs. Ruth Steiner, NY.....2.00
- Mrs. Nannie Moran, VA2.00

OBITUARIES

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

GEORGE TYLER RAKES

In my poor weak way, will try to write the Obituary of Brother Rakes.

Brother Rakes was born April 11, 1896 in Patrick County Va. passed away October 13, 1985 making his stay here on earth over 92 years.

He was the son of William Rakes and Lillie Helen Rakes. In 1923 was married to Zada Huff, to this union two sons were born, Marvin T. and Allen H. Rakes, 3 grandsons, 1 granddaughter.

Brother Rakes, joined Thompson Grove Church, July 3, 1960, was baptized the following day, by his pastor Elder J.P. Helms. On Saturday Oct. 3, 1964, was ordained a Deacon by presbytery Elder J.P. Helms Moderator. He had a drawn out illness of 11 years 6mths. and 2 days. During his afflictions he would often say I believe Salvation is by the Grace of God. Often during the many visits, he would speak of our Salvation on my visiting him, he would say I hope to come to church one more time. He was faithful to the church as long as he was able.

His funeral was conducted at Woods Funeral Home in Floyd Va. by Elder Hale Terry, and his pastor Elder Lane Carter. Written by request, by one who loved him for Christ sake I hope.

Elder Lane Carter

SISTER NELLIE J. TATE

Sister Nellie Tate was called home by her Lord on April 15, 1986. She was the daughter of the late Pink and Mattie Jarrell. In 1931 she was united in marriage to Harry Robert Tate who passed away August 29, 1964. To this union were born nine children, Robert, Dewey, John Dillard, Lorene, Cecil, Elaine, Bessie, George, and Debra, all of whom survive their mother. On August 7, 1967 Sister Tate married Brother John B. Tate who also survives.

Sister Tate joined Dan River Church on May 24, 1959. She was truly a gentle, loving mother in Israel. The

Lord blessed her with a desire to do for others and enabled her to do so. When it came to doing for others, he blessed her to rise above self and put others first.

A very special memory for me is how she tenderly cared for her flowers. She loved flowers. I remember sadly thinking as I passed her home after her passing, how beautiful all the flowers looked, but at the same time I remembered the words of her favorite hymn:

"How tedious and tasteless the hours,

"How tedious and tasteless the hours,

*When Jesus no longer I see;
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and
sweet flowers,*

*Have lost all their sweetness to me.
The mid-summer sun shines but dim;
The fields strive in vain to look gay;
But when I am happy in hime
December's as pleasant as May."*

I feel He has taken her unto Him on high "where winter and clouds are no more" and that she is one of the flowers in His garden. For her companion and her family, many of whom I have known since childhood, my prayer is that you might be blessed with the reconciling peace of knowing that though your mother loved you, she sought a happiness which this world could not give her but could only come when the Gentle Shepherd carried her home. May He bless you not to dwell on your loss, but rather give you - thankful hearts for all the precious memories of the life she was blessed to live here.

In all things may the Lord be praised.

Humbly submitted,
Mary L. Hawkins
