

Advocate and Messenger

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136th Year AUGUST 1997 No. 8

Advocate and Messenger

"SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE" — Eph. 4:15

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KEPT BY HIS POWER

God's pow'r took dust, the lowly dust,
And made it flesh and bone,
And that same pow'r didst raise the dead
And broke the heart of stone.

The God who spake and worlds appeared,
Who spake and calmed the sea,
With equal ease can also bring
Vile sinners to their knee.

'Tis this great God in whom we trust
On Him we can depend;
The pow'r that kept us until now
Will keep us to the end.

10-7-94 R.E.H.

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ELDER RALPH E. HARRIS, Editor
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Advocate and Messenger

Devoted to the cause of Truth and Righteousness as believed and practiced by the Old School or Primitive Baptists in all ages.

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AUGUST 1997

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EDITORIAL STAFF

ELDER RALPH E. HARRIS, Editor 3687 King Rd., Caryville, Fla. 32427

Associate Editors, all Elders:

DENNIS H. JONES 927 McArthur Blvd., Warner Robins, Ga. 31093

RAYMOND WEBB 106 Ash St., Carthage, Il. 62321

MARK GREEN 156 Davis Rd., Booneville, Ar. 72927

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THANKFUL TO BE AN OLD BAPTIST

I vividly recall when many church members in our community did not own a car or truck and they either walked to the meetings or rode in horse-drawn wagons or buggies. The nearest Primitive Baptist church was only a mile from our home. My mother and her parents were members, and my grandfather a deacon, at the time of my birth in 1938, and my father joined soon thereafter and was ordained to the ministry a couple of years later. Hence I was taken to the church meetings from the time I was two weeks old.

I have often thanked the Lord that I was raised among the Old Baptists and for the influence it exposed me to. But above all I am thankful that the Lord blest me to see and understand what the Old Church believes and why they believe it. I am thankful that He saw

fit to take up His abode within my heart when I was but a child and make me to realize that I was a vile sinner by nature and that my eternal salvation rested solely and alone upon what Christ had done for me rather than upon anything I might do.

There has never been a time in my life when I could believe what the religious world teaches with regard to how people are saved, or, as they express it, how they *get* saved. If my very life depended on it I could not believe that I could be eternally lost one minute and eternally saved the next minute simply by accepting the Lord as my personal Saviour. And, by the same token, that I could be eternally saved one minute and be eternally lost the next minute simply because I committed some sin.

With me it has never been a question of my accepting the Lord, but rather a question of whether or not I have been *made accepted in the Beloved* (See Eph. 1:6). And if I have then it seems plain to me that there is no *circumstance* and no *creature* that can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord (See Rom. 8:33-39).

I cannot remember ever experiencing any negative feelings toward God or His dear Son. Neither can I recall a time when I did not hope that Christ already *was* my Saviour. There came a time in early adulthood when I made a conscious decision to unite with the old church and thus to make a public profession of my faith in Christ, but I never did anything with a view to *getting saved* for I knew that my salvation, as well as my calling, if I had either, was not according to my works but according to God's own purpose and grace which was given me in Christ Jesus before the world began (See II Tim. 1:9).

If believing in the works system, as advocated by other religious orders, was necessary in order for me to live with God in glory, then I would be eternally doomed and damned, for I cannot believe in that system, and never could. Therefore their method of salvation leaves me out. But the Bible way of salvation, as believed and taught by the Old Line Baptists not only reaches my case but it sweetly embraces me in covenant love and comfortingly assures me

that "He which hath begun a good work in (me) will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

Primitive Baptists are not perfect, just as no other people are perfect so far as perfection in the flesh is concerned, and there have been times when certain ones among them had a bad influence upon me, but so far as the things *most surely believed* among them they have never had a bad influence upon me, and they *cannot* for they are the very highest of principles, coming as they do directly from the hand of God as He moved holy men of old to pen them down under the influence of His Holy Spirit. They have taught me that I should reverence God with all my heart, soul and mind and that I should love my neighbor as myself. They have never taught me to believe, as some accused Paul of saying, that we should do evil that good might come (See Rom. 3:8).

My long years of experience with people of other religious orders has taught me that a true Old Baptist is more careful of his walk and talk than are most of those who claim to believe that their eternal destiny depends upon how they live. I am not ashamed of the Old Baptist Faith for it is the doctrine of the Bible. There have been times when I was ashamed of some of those who went by the name of Old Baptists, and in fact there have been many times when I was ashamed of *myself*, but I have never been ashamed of what true Old Baptists stand for. It is the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and I am willing to stake my eternal destiny upon it.—*Editor*.

HOW HAS IT BEEN WITH YOU

Some years ago the question was posed by one of the church papers as to whether or not we can know that we are saved in an eternal sense. Some responded that we *can* know, while others said we *cannot*. But I believe there is a middle ground here that is supported both by the Scriptures and by our experience. Knowledge of salvation is an experiential matter, and when we say "knowledge" we do not speak of *perfect* knowledge, for we do not have that in

this life. Perfect knowledge of salvation would be *a continual and unremitting state in which one was altogether positive that he was one of the elect and was absolutely incapable of being wrong about the matter*. Upon serious reflection, who would conscientiously make such a claim?

If a child of God were perfect in his being, as God is, and if he were perfect in all aspects of his existence, as God is, then his mental and emotional frame would never change — nor *could* it change. He would always be in one mind, as God is, and no *one*, and no *thing*, could turn him. But man is far from being perfect in the sense of fleshly perfection, and consequently he does not always stay in the same mental and emotional state of mind. Even a child of God needs to be renewed day by day in the inward man (See II Cor. 4:16) for the strength of his faith does not always stay on either a high or low level.

There are times in the experience of a born again child of God when he feels so low and cast down because of his sins that he wonders if the Lord's mercy is "clean gone for ever" (Psalm 77:8). At such a time he would not likely tell anyone that he *knew* he was saved, and if he did he would not be speaking according to his true feelings. But then there are other times when he may enjoy "the full assurance of hope" (Heb. 6:11) and of faith (Heb. 10:22), and at such times it would not be at all unfitting for him to say with Job, "I *know* that my redeemer liveth" (19:25).

Due to the fact that in this life we only "know in part" (I Cor. 13:9) and do not have *perfect* knowledge of our salvation, it is ordinarily much more becoming of such poor mortals as we to speak of eternal life in terms of *hope*, as did Paul to Titus (1:2 & 3:7). "*In hope of eternal life*, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to *the hope of eternal life*." (See also: Rom. 5:2, I Cor. 15:19, Col. 1:5, 27, I Thess. 4:13 & 5:8, II Thess. 2: 16, I Tim. 1:1, Titus 3:13, Heb. 6:18, 19, I Peter 1:13, & I John 3:2, 3.)

John said, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14), but here again John is

not speaking of perfect knowledge. The fact that we love the brethren is indeed a sweet evidence that we have passed from death in sins to life in Christ, but there are times when we feel so cold, dead and dull in our spirits that we even question whether or not we love the brethren.

Hence, as we said, the knowledge of our salvation is an experiential matter. Sometimes we are so assured of it that we do not feel it would be amiss to say we know that Christ is our Redeemer, but there are other times when we feel so poor, weak and worthless that we find it very difficult to imagine that we are the subject of His love and compassion. At least this has been the experience of the unworthy writer. How has it been with you? —*Editor.*

A GREAT CONFIRMATION OF FAITH

After the resurrection of Christ His disciples remembered a number of things He had previously said, which, at the time He said them had made little or no sense at all to them. One of these statements was in answer to the Jews when they asked, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:18, 19). Neither the Jews nor His disciples knew what He meant when He said this. The Jews, as a whole, were so spiritually blind I doubt that they were *ever* able to relate this statement to His resurrection on the third day after His burial, but the disciples did, and it strengthened their faith.

The Jews thought Christ was referring to the temple in which they worshipped, and they knew it had taken almost fifty years to build that temple. They thought Jesus was saying that if they should destroy it He would build it back in three days, which of course was ludicrous to them. If they had known the deity of Christ they would have known that so far as His power was concerned He could have both destroyed and rebuilt that temple of wood and stone in a moment's time, but their foolish hearts were darkened so that they

always put a carnal application on things which could only be understood in a figurative or spiritual sense. The spiritually blind are still doing the same thing today, and thus, like the Jews of Christ's day, they greatly err "not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29, Mark 12:24).

However, after Christ's resurrection His disciples remembered what He had said with regard to raising "this temple" in three days and they were then blest to understand that He had meant the temple of His body and they could then see that He had prophesied to them that after three days He would rise from the dead, and this was a great confirmation of their faith in Him. He had told them beforehand of His sufferings, death, burial and resurrection but it had not registered with them. They could not at that time understand what He meant, but afterward it all became clear. That which had been indiscernible to them now became one of the most comforting aspects of His life and teachings. His resurrection from the dead, and the subsequent resurrection of all His people to eternal life at last, became one of the chief themes of their preaching and one of the brightest objects of their faith. Is it not the same with us? Indeed, if there be no resurrection of the dead we are of all men most miserable.—
Editor.

HOW SAD IT WOULD BE!

On various occasions it has been statistically shown that the advocates of modern missions spend hundreds and even thousands of times more for such things as whiskey, tobacco, vacations, chewing gum, jewelry, etc., etc., than they do on trying to "save the heathen". This of course has always raised the question as to whether or not they truly believe what they claim to believe.

If they could actually get people into the family of God by contributing their money to missionaries how many more can we suppose they might "save" if they didn't waste so much fulfilling their own petty wants and desires"

The modern mission advocates have always been fond of calculating how many souls they have "saved" but I don't recall ever seeing where they have published any statistics on how many they have "sent to hell" by foolishly spending their money on things other than "saving the heathen".

Oh how good it is to know that God has a people; that each of them are eternally embraced in covenant love, called in time from nature to grace, justified by the shed blood and imputed righteousness of Christ, and that the whole innumerable host of them will at last be glorified without the loss of a single one.

How sad it would be for God to have established a system of salvation by which multiplied millions would be eternally lost because modern missionaries misspent their money! And sadder still that many of the ones who "made it to heaven" would be the very ones who were responsible for the others "going to hell".

Thank you, Lord, for showing some of us *Thy way*; the *better way*!—*Editor*.

GREAT BLESSINGS TO GOD'S PEOPLE

How greatly blest are those who know
 And love God's sovereign grace,
 Who understand that He will save
 His loved and chosen race!

They know that ere the world was made
 His people were foreknown
 And in His great electing love
 He claimed them as His own.

His great foundation standeth sure,
 He knows them that are His
 And to these meek and lowly lambs
 How great a truth this is!

They feel their utter helplessness
 Apart from saving grace
 And know that nothing short of this
 Will reach their lowly case.

Their hope is in their Saviour Christ,
 They trust in Him alone
 For life and peace and righteousness,
 They have none of their own.

They long to praise Him while they live
 For all He's done for them;
 They know from whence these treasures come
 They owe it all to Him.

Their hope burns bright for heaven's world
 Where joys shall never cease
 And saints arrayed in robes of white
 Have never-ending peace.

4-21-97

R.E.H.

PRISONERS OF HOPE—ZECH. 9:10

David said, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant" (Psalm 25:14). Never was this more true than on the subject of hope. To those whose hearts have not been opened, it seems such a frail foundation for salvation. So many worldly wise want to know, know without any doubts, that they are saved. Well, Saul of Tarsus felt that way once, and so did Job's friends, and countless others.

There are some things we do know. We know God exists, that heaven and hell exist. We know that there is absolutely nothing we can do to deserve salvation. Our hope is called hope only because it has not yet become complete, never because we doubt God's ability to save. It is founded upon the divine promises, upon our Lord's

perfect work for us. Now in this world the atheist may say there is no God, and hence he needs no salvation. The heathen makes offerings to his idols. The Pharisee trusts in his works, and the humanist in his own god. Ah, yes! Some trust in horses, and some in chariots, some trust in politicians and some in religious teachers! As for us, we must trust in God. We are prisoners of hope, there is no other path for us.

There is a principle that unites all the saints from all ages in this. Job had hope (Job 19:23-27). When Abraham went up the mountain to sacrifice his son, he had hope. David had it, for he said his soul should rest in hope (Psa. 16:9). Jesus had it, for as Peter preached at Pentecost, Jesus depended on that promise of God when he submitted to the death of the cross (Acts 2:26, 27). St. Paul certainly had hope even while being tried (Acts 28:20). The saint who has hope is in good company. On the other hand, people without hope are also without God in the world (Eph. 2:12, and 1 Thess. 4:12).

There are two kinds of hope. The first is a hope in earthly things, and the second kind is spiritual. Now it is right that people hope for things, else no one would have reason to labor for anything. A young man or woman who starts out in life wanting a home, a job, a good reputation, is infinitely better off than those who have no such goals. Sometimes those hopes are realized, sometimes not, or perhaps hopes may change with time. I want to add this, that there is no time or condition in life when God leaves His people without hope. From infancy to death, there is always the knowledge that God is there and will help, that there is something better ahead. The wicked are not so.

But as for our spiritual hopes, our hope of heaven and seeing the face of God in peace (that is what Abel sought!), this is something which cannot change. Sometimes in our busy lives we may cover up this hope for a time, but it does not leave us. There are three or four reasons why this is true. The love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts, and we are united with him by that spirit. God, who cannot lie, who gave a promise to Abraham and then confirmed it by an oath, gave His promise to us also through the gospel. This we

know from the prayer of Jesus (John 17:20). Our experience confirms our hope, for our Father in Heaven has been so mercifully kind in providing for us all our lives. And finally, there is simply nothing else for us to depend upon. We are His prisoners, bound to Him by this precious bond of hope.

While I live I would not have it otherwise.

ELDER RAYMOND WEBB

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Primitive Baptists have more reason than anyone to be a praying people, both privately and publicly.

Consider what a multitude of blessings we have, for which we should be constantly thanking our gracious heavenly Father when we pray. Never in the history of the world has a nation been blessed with such material abundance as we have, to the point that it has almost become a curse in that we don't have enough space to store it and to dispose of the waste products. The political freedoms enjoyed by the church under the United States of America are perhaps unparalleled, also. Above all, to have the truth of salvation by sovereign grace and the tradition of simple New Testament worship is a wonderful benefit for which praise should always be on our lips.

Like all mankind, however, Old Baptists are subject to the infirmities of the flesh, old age, loneliness, sickness, injury, etc. We are no more exempt from our multitude of troubles than is any people. Our bodies die, our souls mourn, our minds become confused with age and trials, and in addition we must suffer the opposition of those who hate the truth as we try to live a godly and upright life before God and men—and we certainly ought to be doing that. No amount of prosperity will ever remove troubles from man's lot. God's decree to fallen men was that we would make our living by the sweat of our faces and that women would have their sorrow and conception multiplied, and so it will be. If we find a way around

one difficulty, another takes its place. So, our cries will continually ascend to God from the midst of our troubles, but this call for divine aid is only as He has commanded: "Let your requests be made known unto God;" and "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you."

Understanding the doctrine of grace, Primitive Baptists of all people have reason to call upon an omnipotent, all-wise, loving, kind, long-suffering God—a heavenly Father who can and does answer prayer. We know that Christ's intercession at the right hand of the throne of God is that of a Saviour who did not fail, who was satisfied with what was accomplished by the travail of His soul, and who will present to the Father in a perfect, glorified state every one for whom He died. We believe in an irresistible Holy Spirit, that Wind which "bloweth where it listeth" among all the nations of the earth, unhindered by all the efforts of men and devils. We read that this Spirit makes intercession for the saints of God with groanings which cannot be uttered. We understand that the love of God does not change, but endures forever toward the objects of His grace, for He does not love us today and banish us forever from His presence tomorrow, as some teach. This is a God who does not change, and because He does not, we sinners are not consumed by the fire of His anger. We believe that all the wonderful gospel invitations which so sweetly beckon to the trembling sinner are for gospel subjects, men whose hearts have been made tender by grace and who have been feelingly taught the fact of their sinfulness. Such people as these have a reason to pray without ceasing, for they believe their prayers will be heard, and know something of *why* their petitions will be answered. A knowledge of sound doctrine greatly enhances the meaning of our experience to us.

"Pray without ceasing." That is a command for Primitive Baptists particularly to take heed to. How sad it would be if we did not take it to heart and regularly petition the throne of grace for an outpouring of blessings on the Lord's vineyard, where we have loved to live and labor! "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."

ELDER MARK GREEN

TARRIANCE

On my "Word A Day" calendar the word "tarriance" recently appeared. The definition given was "a temporary stay in a place; sojourn." I left the word taped to the partition in my cubicle at work for several days (it is a 1993 calendar), and got the benefit of meditating some upon it. It is a good one for a child of God to think about.

When we are born of the Spirit of God we are given a lively principle that is contrary to the elements of this old sinful world. It was never our friend, anyway, what with the sweat of our faces and the multiplied sorrow of child-bearing, but when the Spirit of God kills us to the love of sin, it is then that we are in a special way made lonely pilgrims in this low ground of suffering and sighing. Faith sets our eyes on something higher and better, a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Our hope is eternal life, promised us in Christ Jesus before the world began and precious in our hearts through the grace of faith. Our hope is not here, but like the saints of old, we see it afar off, and are persuaded of it and embrace it, and confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Christ the firstfruits has already passed into the heavens as the Surety of all those He represented on the cross. All our expectation is embraced in Him and the finished work of Calvary. All our hope is anchored within the veil where our High Priest has entered.

Is it not strange that we should become as attached as we do to those things which will perish, which are *not* the source of our happiness and which so often draw our minds away from Him who is altogether lovely? Why is it that our thoughts stay so centered on the earthly instead of being set upon the heavenly? Where our treasure is, there our hearts are. May a loving heavenly Father draw our attention away from the things of this world to things of eternal bliss! It will be to our benefit and to His glory, and will make our tarriance on this earth so much more pleasant and profitable in the kingdom of our dear Lord while we wait for His glorious appearing.

ELDER MARK GREEN

A WARFARE

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:21).

When this scripture rings true with a child of grace, certainly his warfare has begun. One that does not know his wretchedness will not be convicted that anything he has done or will do could be considered evil in the sight of God. O, praise the Lord when we see our unrighteousness and see the grace that abounds in Zion! What a blessed hope we have in knowing within our heart and soul that Jesus loves His children and makes intercession for them while here below! Can you imagine the patience and longsuffering our Lord has with us when we consider our waywardness?

I remember feeling so relieved after submitting myself to baptism. The days of guilt and conviction would surely all now be passed. Serving the Lord and simply going to church would be such a simple task. This is now my duty: pray for the pastor when we get to the church meeting, sing the songs of Zion, listen intently to the word of God, and try to apply it to the next six days ahead of me. O, what a mistake! Certainly these are all important, yet one important thing was missing. The scripture teaches that we are to submit ourselves unto the righteousness of God.

There is so much to serving the Lord in the way He would have us serve Him. In my early experience I thought I knew what the Lord desired of me in my service to Him. As He begins to reveal Himself to us we see that He desires complete submission unto His will. What a shock to the mind of carnal man! This old man is used to doing what he wants, saying what he wants, and thinking what he wants, with no thought or consideration to another. And now God expects us to submit ourselves to Him and His will? Thanks be to God that He leads us and feeds us in the way of His truth and righteousness! Isn't this the wonderful part of growing in grace. Jesus teaches us by His example. Left to ourselves we will only serve our carnal flesh. But to those whom God has called, He reveals Himself, and instructs them in righteousness through His Spirit.

What a sweet promise the Lord gave us when He said He would

not leave us nor forsake us! Can you imagine the feeling we would have if the Lord showed us our wretchedness and then left us to ourselves without hope? What despair we would feel, yet what love and peace we have known and enjoyed. Isaiah wrote, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." What a blessing and privilege to drink and partake of the living water in the Lord Jesus! How deep is this well and how refreshing to a thirsty child! This living water soothes and satisfies the soul. What peace!

What confidence we have in the One who died that we might live! As we grow in grace I trust our confidence in our flesh diminishes. My experience relates with Paul's in that "When I would do good, evil is present with me." This teaches us the great need we have of His grace to see us through each day. What a blessing to have this warfare between the Spirit and our flesh! The Spirit of God is greater than this mortal body. Let us pray that He would grant us grace to overcome our temptation and sin.

One more thought: When our warfare is accomplished and life is over, we have the great consolation that the power of God is stronger than any tomb in this world. What blessed hope for a wayward child who stumbles in sin.

ELDER BRIAN BALLENGER
Hagerstown, Indiana

The Lord sent Peter to get tax money from the mouth of the first fish he caught (Matt. 17:27). How weak and sinful it is to ever doubt His providential watchcare over His people!

How many millions of volumes could be written of lives wasted upon the vain pursuit of worldly pleasures and ruined by drunkenness and debauchery!

Dear Lord, "teach me thy way and lead me in a plain path" (Psalm 27:11). And may I never seek "great things" for myself (Jer. 45:5), but things that will honor Thee.

SECRET SOCIETIES

As it is time to renew my subscription to the Messenger, I feel like writing a little of my experience in regard to secret societies, for as much as I was a member of the Masonic fraternity up to the last of December 1867, before I received a hope in Christ the 10th day of January 1868. I had taken the three first degrees in what is called the Blue Lodge, besides several side degrees, then went on until I had taken the four degrees in the Royal Arch Chapter Lodge before I was stopped in my career. Hence, what I speak of is from knowledge combined with experience, and not from hearsay or guess-work as some have to rely upon.

At the time I joined the Masons I was under conviction for sin, and was a poor, heavy laden, sin-burdened creature seeking mercy and rest and finding none. For this reason I sought membership in the Masonic order, hoping that it might be of relief to me in some way, that I would find associates there in whom I could confide. In this I was mistaken. On my first entrance into the Lodge I was convicted of the wrong of it by seeing the sacred things of God's word made such mockery of. Men offer up a form of prayer who may have been cursing and swearing not ten minutes before going into the Lodge. But I persisted in going on hoping my mind would change, and I would see something more profitable and more comforting to me. The further I went the worse the thing appeared, the more sacrilegious it became, so that when I had taken the third degree I had determined to quit the order, being so thoroughly convicted of the wickedness carried on.

I was well acquainted with a prominent Methodist minister, whom I met one day, who was a Mason of the high order. We began talking on the subject when he told me that if I wanted to see something grand I ought to take the Royal Arch Chapter degrees; that the Blue Lodge was nothing to compare with it. He said if I wanted to take those degrees he would sign my petition and send it up for me. I thought to myself if there is any thing in Masonry I want to see it, as I had seen nothing attractive about it yet, only my poor heart had been made to ache under what I had gone through,

besides the great burden of my sins otherwise. The time came for me to take the other degrees. I was very hesitant about it, but from the desire to find out something good I ventured on. When I took the first degree the matter only grew worse, and the second degree, and third still worse, until I felt to say, "My Lord, what is coming next?" So when I took the fourth degree it capped all in point of wickedness to me, that I had ever seen. When the Lodge was dismissed one of the members asked me how I liked it. I told him well enough, but did not tell him how well that was. "There is something in it," said he, "isn't there?" "Yes," said I, "there is," but did not tell him what I thought was in it, for I verily believed that the devil was at the bottom of it. When I went out of the building in which the Lodge was held I looked back at it and thought, what a mercy of God that he spared our lives, and did not let the earth open and swallow us up as he did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram of old who provoked the Lord, (Numbers, xvi, 32). While I stood there looking at the building, and thinking of the Lord's mercy in sparing our lives, I promised the Lord that if he would spare my life, and not lay this sin to my charge, I would never darken the door of that institution again while I lived. Such was my trembling condition before a just God that I feared I would be struck dead if I ever attended it again. I stuck to my promise and never attended Lodge meetings any more.

Thus matters went on until the 10th day of January 1868. While riding along that morning, thinking what a poor, lost sinner I was, this passage of Scripture came to my mind—"The soul that sinneth it shall die." All at once my whole life was laid open to me as a dark page of sin, a transgression against God. No good thing had I ever done to merit his favor. But thus meditating over these things, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, my mind was caught away to Christ. He seemed to descend to about the tops of the trees (I was not looking with my natural eyes) and I viewed him as he died on the cross for poor sinners. Praises began to pour forth from my breast, while tears fast streamed from my eyes. How I did love him! My sins all pardoned, my guilt all washed away! Jesus, the dear Son of God, had died, my poor soul to save—had given his life a

ransom for me. I rode along for some distance, praising the Lord, though not a word was spoken audibly.

“O what love and condescension,
In the Saviour’s death I see;
Who the thousandth part can mention
Of what he has done for me.”

The Saviour had done for me what no human being could do, nor all the wealth of this world could procure. In this, and under the melting influence of his love, I felt to give up the world and all its vain pleasures and to devote my life to his precious cause. What a contrast was this sight to all I had seen in Masonry. The one swelling in wickedness and sin, and intermingling with the wicked in their sinful practice; the other the Lord’s mercy, grace, goodness, love, the companionship of God’s own Son, the home in heaven, the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and never to fade away.

How thankful I now felt that the Lord had driven me out of the secret gatherings of the wicked and brought me into sweet and living fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. I could now see why he so severely chastened me when I persisted so strongly in going on in the secret order. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” It was because of his love to me, because I was the purchase of his blood, and that he was bringing me into the heavenly fold to present me, holy and without blame, before him in love. I could now truly say with David, “Gather not my soul with sinners, for I love the habitation of thy house and the place where thy honor dwelleth.” I felt as much convicted for belonging to this secret order as for any sin I had ever committed in my life. If one is a phantom, a dream, a myth, the other is too, and my whole experience is a mockery.

Time passed on until finally the Lodge sent their officer to know why I refused to attend the Lodge. I told him that I was glad he came, and that I wanted to talk with him. I told him that I knew it was his duty and I had nothing to say against any one that belonged to the Lodge, as I considered them all my personal friends; but the

Saviour, the Son of God, had done for me what no human being could do. He had pardoned my sins, and I felt for this great work that he had done, I owed him my life, my all and that I could never be too devoted to his cause. I told him for them to do with my name whatever they saw fit, and I would not think hard of them. I felt that I had no time to waste on worldly institutions when the Son of God had spent his whole life to redeem my poor soul from everlasting destruction, that I might live with him eternally in the presence of his Father.

I read in his precious book these loving words, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." It seemed to me that my whole life would be summed up in "word or deed," and how could I do all in word or deed, and in his name, and belong to some worldly institution? I could only obey his command by doing it as a member of his church, his body, and thus glorify him and show forth his praises. But to go in the name of some worldly institution, the name of the blessed Saviour would be left out and forgotten, and the institution honored, which would be taking the jewels from the Master's crown and wreathing them on the devils's cap. Every drop of his blood seemed to appeal to me for obedience to him and to come out from the world and be separate, for, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." How can any one purchased by his blood refuse him his love? How can any one desire to remain in any society to the hurt of his dear cause? What poor, ungrateful wretches we are, to turn a deaf ear to the claims of our heavenly Father, who said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him."

Soon after I gave up the worldly institutions I had a talk with another person who belonged there who possessed a hope in Christ, and I found that he had the same experience I had with it, and was made to give it up. So this led me to talk with others until I found some half a dozen that had professed a hope in Christ and were made to give up Masonry, and we all joined the Old Baptist church about the same time. From all this that I know and have experienced,

I have been made to wonder how any one who had realized the love of God shed abroad in his heart, could want to remain in that, or any other worldly institution, to the hurt of the dear cause of our blessed Saviour.

I wrote my experience once on this subject and sent it to an Old Baptist paper and found the editor was a member. He published it, but criticized it by saying my convictions on the subject of belonging to secret societies was a conundrum to him, for when I was convicted of the wrong of the institution, why was it that I didn't quit it and go no further? This he could not understand. I explained this conundrum by asking him why it was when he was first convicted of sin that he did not quit sinning and never sin any more. He did not reply to me nor publish my reply. O, my dear brethren, is our religion a whim? Is the dear Son of God not worthy to be followed, to be obeyed and loved with all our hearts? If he hasn't done enough to demand our whole life's devotion to him, how much more do we ask of him? Do we not say by our actions that there is not enough in the religion of Jesus for us to give up every worldly institution for his sake? If he were here on earth in his humiliation, as he once was, and we were followers of him, what would be thought of us to step out of his ranks to dally away our time hidden from the rest of the disciples, reveling with the world? What would have been thought of Lazarus if, when the dear Son of God stopped in there to rest for the night, he not being at home, Martha and Mary should have told him that Lazarus was out reveling with the wicked at the Lodge? Would we not be better employed at home with our families reading the blessed word of God, and upon our knees in prayer, seeking that wisdom that cometh from above? What consolation will it afford any one when he comes to his dying couch to look back upon his life and think of it as having been spent reveling with the wicked in some secret organization, hidden from the eyes of his brethren in Christ. Would it make him feel with Paul, I am now ready to be offered up, for I have fought the good fight and kept the faith?

Oh, my dear brethren! let me beseech you with the beloved Paul, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice,


holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Is not the mercy of God in Christ enough to kill us to the world, and all worldly institutions, without us having to be persuaded, exhorted, entreated to leave all for his name's sake? O, let us beg the Lord to wean, or kill our hearts to the love of these things, so that we will not have to go to our brethren and say, "I will leave it for the peace of the church, but not for the wrong there is in the institution." It sounds too much like the man who gets drunk and will quit for the sake of peace, but not because there is harm in getting drunk. Isn't the secret society of which the dear Son of God is Grand Master. ("The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant;" Psalms, xxv, 14,) secret society enough for any dear follower of Jesus? A secret that we can talk openly and boldly about, and the signs and passwords are open before all, and the receiving of members is not hidden from the view of any, and no man knoweth it save he that receiveth it; Rev. ii, 17.

In this secret society we have the promise of the unfolding of the great covenant of God. I wouldn't give the opening of one secret in this covenant for all the secrets of all the combined societies of the world put together. The secrets of my Lord's society will pass its subjects through the dark valley and shadow of death, and unbar the prison doors of the grave to enter in through the portals of eternal glory to the presence of the eternal God himself. Then, O, why is it that any dear child of God will waste his precious time fooling with the secret organizations of this wicked world? Come, my dear brother, let us talk a little while about this secret organization of Masonry. Did you ever know that, notwithstanding they tell you that joining them "is not to interfere with your religious or political views, be they what they may," it is a religious institution, as much so as any pretended gospel organization outside the church of Christ? If you do not know it, I do know it; and there is as much consistency in your belonging to the Old Baptists and the Campbellites, the Old Baptists and the Methodists, as there is in your belonging to the Old Baptists and the Masons, or any other organization. Let them deny what they will, I know that the Masonic fraternity certainly believe

that in the end of time they, as a body, will assemble around the throne of God and God be the Grand Master of the whole business, as they exist. Does any religious society claim more? The lesser lights in Masonry may deny this, but I know if they continue on in the higher degrees they come to the degree in which they will have to renounce allegiance to all other religions, and cleave to Masonry alone as their hope of heaven. Any one who will take the time to read their published books on the subject will see this cropping out all through their teachings. The burial service itself is unmistakable proof of this, in which the dead brother is said to be taken from the Lodge below to the Lodge above, and to the Master (of the Lodge) above, etc. I have nothing personally against any one belonging to the Masons more than I have against any one belonging to the Methodist church, or any other religious society, many of them being my personal friends.

As to any good being derived from the workings of the institution, I leave them in the hands of God, as I do any other institution, either religious or worldly, and condemn no act of theirs in aid of suffering humanity. To organize in aid of suffering humanity is commendable, but not in the manner of secret societies, nor under a cloak of religion. As to God's dear children, there is but one rule for them, and that is, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Therefore go as a member of his body, of his church, as his child, as the purchase of his blood, and let his name have the honor, and the glory, showing forth his praises, who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Therefore, shine ye as lights of the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye live.

May the Lord bless his people, and deliver them from the snares and traps that are set to catch their unwary feet by the way as they journey to that land, to that heaven of eternal rest, where there will be but one people, and God be all in all.—Elder James J. Gilbert, *Primitive Monitor*, 1893.



NEWS NOTES

UNION MEETINGS

UNION (Summerduck, Va.) — First Sunday, Sept. 7, and Saturday before. All day both days. —**Elder Gary Utz**, Pastor. Ph. 540-636-9434.

NORTH FORK (Upperville, Va.) — Second Saturday, Sept. 13. All day Saturday only. Regular services Sunday. Will meet in the Upperville Primitive Baptist Church building at 10:30 a.m. both days. —**Elder Frank Coppedge**, Pastor. Ph. 540-948-4357.

MT. BETHEL (Three Churches, West Virginia) — Third Sunday, Sept. 21, at 10 a.m. Lunch and afternoon services. —**Elder Douglas Heare**, Pastor. Ph. 304-822-3228.

THUMB RUN (Near Marshall, Va.) — Third Sunday, Sept. 21, and Saturday before. Regular services on Saturday and all day Sunday. —**Elder Raymond Pressley**, Pastor. Ph. 540-948-4337.

UNION (Augusta, West Virginia) — Fourth Sunday, Sept. 28 at 10 a.m. Lunch and afternoon services. —**Elder Douglas Heare**, Pastor. Ph. 304-822-3228.

CENTER CREEK ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI

The churches composing the *Center Creek* Association invites all our peaceloving Old Line Primitive Baptists and friends to attend our association. We have the privilege to entertain the Association at *Clear Creek* Church this year. The meeting is scheduled to begin on Thursday evening before the third Sunday of September and continue through Sunday morning, Sept. 18-21, 1997.

We have room in our homes for many of our visitors, and we feel honored to have you stay with us in our homes. Also, there are a number of spaces and electrical hook-ups for campers on the church grounds. Also, there are several Motels in nearby Neosho, MO, should you prefer.

The church is located in the beautiful Ozark hills. To reach the church take state route 'HH' east off US 71 (alternate) and US 60 near Neosho. Follow 'HH' east 15 miles to Unicorn on your right. Turn right (south) on Unicorn and go about 1 mile to Palm Road (another small sign). Turn right on Palm (gravel) and follow the road a short distance to the church. Welcome!

For more information call Ezra Crawmer 417-451-6075; Marion Stanley 417-235-5729; George Martin 417-624-0332 or Elder Kenneth Clevenger 816-632-3032. —Elder Kenneth Clevenger, Pastor.

LITTLE WABASH ASSOCIATION

The Little Wabash Association will convene with New Liberty Church, 1714 West Springfield Avenue, Champaign, Illinois at 10 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 29 and continue through noon Sunday, Aug. 31. God's people are invited to join these brethren in their service to God. For more information call 217-469-2471.

OBITUARIES

SISTER MARTHA ELLEN BURFORD (110) was born Oct. 16, 1886 and passed away Jan. 28, 1997 at the age of 110 years, 3 months and 12 days.

Surviving are one daughter, Norma Casto of Cross Lanes, WV, six grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild, and a host of relatives and friends.

She was a charter member of the Naomi Primitive Baptist Church, 610 Patrick St., Charleston, WV.

Her life was an inspiration to all who knew her and she was very active in her church as long as she was able. She kept as many as 17 people at her home during the association and was a very gracious host. She loved to read, especially poetry.

Funeral services were held at the Keller funeral Home, Dunbar, WV, Friday, Jan. 31, 1997. A tribute written by Linda Gunnoe and her favorite poem, 'Sometime', was read by Brother Steve Pendleton. Her funeral was conducted by her pastor, Elder Monroe Hamon.

She was laid to rest in the Tyler Mountain Memorial Gardens to await the resurrection. Our loss is heaven's gain. —**Elder Monroe Hamon.**

SISTER ERNIE HALL TRUSSELL (94) was called from this life Oct. 4, 1996. She was born May 29, 1902, the sixth of eight children born to Brother and Sister John K. Hall. She was the last member of this large and faithful Primitive Baptist family. She joined Upperville Primitive Baptist Church on Nov. 4, 1925, and remained a true and faithful servant to her God unto death.

Sister Ernie was married to Arthur G. Trussell in 1920. To this union was born one son, Shirley G. Trussell. Both her husband and son preceded her in death. She is survived by one grandson, two great-grandchildren, and a great-great-grandchild.

For many years she had made her home with her daughter-in-law, Sister Bessanna Trussell. Their home was a delight to visit, with conversation of spiritual topics most important to her. Her concerns for her pastors (there were several in her lifetime) was heartfelt and voiced. One never had to wonder what Sister Ernie thought. She was straight-forward in conversation on any topic. In this vein she gave me a lot of needed instruction. She would not hesitate in her words if she thought it was for my own good. I did not get to see her that one last time, as I was undergoing double by-pass surgery on the day she passed away. Although I miss her, her straight-forwardness and her presence at Upperville Church, I know that our loss is her gain.

Funeral services were held on Oct. 7, 1996 in Purcellville, Virginia, with Elder Gary Utz officiating. Burial was at Friends Cemetery in Lincoln, Virginia.

May God in His infinite grace and mercy bless her family and her church in our loss. —**Elder Dwayne Fletcher.**

**DONATIONS TO THE
ADVOCATE AND MESSENGER, INC.**

Ruth D. Utz, Va., \$5.00; Elsie S. Payne, Va., \$5.00; Mary Lee Olinger, Va., \$5.00; A Friend, Ark., \$35.00; Mr. & Mrs. James Parsons, Ms., \$8.00; Kathleen S. Swing, Va., \$5.00; John E. Utz, Va., \$5.00; Elder S. O. Deese, Ala., \$5.00; Jerry E. Hirst, Co., \$10.00; Betty Corbin, Va., \$10.00; Marie Bradley, La., \$5.00; Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Hancock, Ga., \$10.00; Nettie P. Tannehill (In memory of Louise A. Sora), Va., \$20.00; L. E. Farley, Md., \$25.00; Lucille Fewell, Ind., \$10.00; Senora C. Keith, Va., \$10.00.

LITTLE FLOCK - 9 miles southeast of Amelia, Va., take Rt. 38 out of Amelia to Rt. 614, left on Rt. 608, right on 677 at church sign, church on left; 1st. Sun. 10:30 a.m., 2nd Sun. 10:30 a.m. and Sat. before at 10:30 a.m.; Communion 2nd Sunday in June; Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P.O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Kim Watley, Clerk, 13671 Lodore Road, Amelia, Va. 23002, Tel. (804) 561-2133.
July '98

MARTINSBURG - Martinsburg, W. Va., Corner Wilson St. and New York Ave.; meets 2nd Sun. 10:30 a.m.; Elder Phillip Johnson, Pastor, P. O. Box 283, Strasburg, Va. 22657, Tel. (540) 465-3118; Clerk, L. E. Farley, 9526 Downsville Pike, Williamsport, Md. 21795, Tel. (301) 223-6195.
Mar. 2000

MILL CREEK - Approx. 2 miles west of Luray, Va. - off of Rt. 211 on Rt. 766 on the Hamburg Road - Meeting house is on the east side of the road; Meets 2nd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ernest M. Long, Pastor, 3671 Farmview Road, Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763; Bro. Gary Bauserman, Clerk, 148 N. Egypt Bend Rd., Luray, Va. 22835, Tel. (540) 743-5014. April '98

NORTH FORK - Held in Upperville Primitive Baptist Church, Upperville, Va. 2nd Sunday 10:30 a.m. Elder J. Frank Coppedge, Pastor, SR4, Box 176A, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4357; Sister Elsie S. Payne, Clerk, 571 Curry Springs Place, Hamilton, Va. 20158-9526, Tel. (540) 338-5531.
May '98

ROBINSON RIVER - Brightwood, Va. on U.S. Rt. 29; Meets 2nd Sun. at 10:30 a.m. and Sat. before at 2:00 p.m.; 4th and 5th Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder J. Tolliver Utz, Pastor, S.R. 5, Box 540, Madison, Va. 22727, Tel. (540) 948-4803; Aubrey E. Utz, Clerk, Madison, Va. 22727, Tel. (540) 948-4360.
Dec. '98

THIRD SUNDAY

HAWKSBILL - Approx. 2 miles north of Stanley, Va., turn east off of Rt. 340 on Hawksbill Ave. (church sign on the right), go to the intersection of Farmview Road and turn right, church is on the left; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and Saturday night before at 7:30 p.m.; Elder Ernest M. Long, Pastor, 3671 Farmview Rd., Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763; Sister Helen L. Huffman, Clerk, Rt. 1 Box 309, Shenandoah, Va. 22849, Tel. (540) 652-8625.
April '98

MT. BETHEL - Three Churches, W. Va.; Services 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Douglas Heare, Pastor, H. C. 63 Box 2320, Romney, W. Va. 26757. Tel. (304) 822-3228; Wilson Saville, Clerk, R. R. 2, Box 78, Oldtown, Md. 21555, Tel. (301) 478-5253.
Aug. '97

NEW HOME - Covington Co., Ala., From Gantt, Ala. go west 5 mi. on 82 to 23 and take the right; Coming from Red Level, go east on 82 to 23 and take the left, go 4/10 mi. and take the right on 7, go 3 mi. on pavement and 1 1/2 mi. after pavement ends, turn at church sign at top of Clay Hill, Church 1/4 mi.; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ralph Harris, Pastor, 3687 King Rd., Caryville, Fla. 32427, Tel (904) 547-4615; Bridgman Harris, Clerk, 386 E. Saunders Rd., Lot E. 514, Dothan, Ala., Tel. (334) 792-5614.
Mar. '99

SIDLING HILL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - near Needmore, Pa., take 522 north to Needmore through town, second left on state road 655, three miles to Y in the road, take left to stop sign, take left 1/4 mile, sign on left to the church, 5 miles from Needmore, Pa.; Services each 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m. except for the month of March; Needmore Primitive Baptist Church meets 3rd Sunday in March at 10:30 a.m.; Elder William H. Payne, Pastor, 630 Warm Springs Road, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 722-4419; Sis. Alice Mellott, Clerk, RD 1, Box 1050, Needmore, Pa. 17238, Tel (717) 573-2885.
Oct. '97

SOUTH RIVER - Browntown, Va.; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Sister Marie Partlowe, Clerk, 2209 Gooney Manor Loop, Bentonville, Va. 22610, Tel. (540) 635-4718. July '97

THORNTON GAP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - Near Sperryville, Va.; Meets 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder David A. Roberts, Pastor, P.O. Box 572, Culpeper, Va. 22701, Tel. (540) 825-8394; Wayne Baldwin, Clerk, P.O. Box 572, Culpeper, Va. 22701, Tel. (540) 825-8394. July '99

THUMB RUN - Near Marshall, Va., Take Rt. 647 off of Rt. 55 (Flint Hill Road) about 5 miles, turn left off 733 - about 2 miles to the church; Coming off Rt. 211 on 688 (Orlean Road), turn right on Rt. 732 in Orlean, Approx. 4 miles to Church, Meets 3rd Sunday and Saturday before at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P. O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Mrs. Clydie Klopp, Clerk, 5867 Free State Road, Marshall, Va. 22115. April 2000

FOURTH SUNDAY

BARROWS RUN PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - 5 miles south of Warrenton, Va. on U.S. Route 29 and 15; 4th Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P.O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Mary Lee Olinger, Clerk, 67 Frazier Rd., Warrenton, Va. 22186, Tel. (540) 347-3538. Mar. '98

CEDAR CREEK - Frederick County near Marlboro, Va. on Rt. 722 and Cedar Creek Grade; Meets 4th Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ernest M. Long, Pastor, 3671 Farmview Rd., Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763; Sister Carol B. Swanson, Clerk, 249 Dower Lane, Strasburg, Va. 22657, Tel. (540) 465-8484. May '98

HAPPY CREEK - 202 Church St., Front Royal, Va., corner of Stonewall Dr. and Church St.; Meets 2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. and 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday before the 4th Sunday at 6:00 p.m.; Elder Gary Utz, Pastor, 429 West Duck St., Front Royal, Va. 22630, Tel. (540) 636-9434; Sister Hazel Priest, Clerk, 321 Blue Ridge Ave., Front Royal, Va. 22630, Tel. (540) 635-4764. June '98

MT. CARMEL - South Broad St., Luray, Va.; Meets 4th and 5th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Forest N. Atwood, Jr., Pastor, Rt. 1, Box 271-B, Shenandoah, Va. 22849, Tel. (540) 652-6482; Reda J. Johnson, Clerk, 1064 Redman Store Road, Luray, Va. 22835, Tel. (540) 743-9488. Dec. '97

SALEM PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - 9100 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Richmond, Va. 23225; Meets 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder James R. Kosch, Pastor, 168 Longstreet Ave., Fredericksburg, Va. 22401; Sis. Lynda Garner, Clerk, 112 Buckingham Dr., Colonial Heights, Va. 23834, Tel. (804) 526-2464. Dec. '97

UPPERVILLE, Va. - 4th Sun. 10:30 a.m.; Elder Dwayne Fletcher, Pastor, 2456 Hunting Ridge Road, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 667-4756; Sister Bessanna Trussell, Clerk, 138 Steepwood Lane, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 662-1605. Dec. '97

WASHINGTON CHURCH - (Meets at Bethel Church) 9101 Leesburg Pike (Rt. 7), Vienna, Va.; Meets 2nd and 4th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Bill Dillon, Pastor, 8459 Ararat Court, Annandale, Va. 22003, Tel. (703) 573-0854; Sis. Patty Dillon, Clerk, 8459 Ararat Court, Annandale, Va. 22003, Tel. (703) 573-0854. Dec. '97

WHITE OAK - On the White Oak Road, about 6 miles east of Fredericksburg, Va.; Meets every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Rodger Frazier, Pastor, 12045 N. Avey Rd., Remington, Va. 22734, Tel. (540) 439-3606; Betty Jo Lael, Clerk, 9701 Peppertree Rd., Spotsylvania, Va. 22553. March '99