

Sovereign Grace by Elder Floy Gross

000 Title

SOVEREIGN GRACE

by

Elder Floy Gross

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I was born April 1, 1913, near Atlanta, Missouri, the son of St. Elmo and Lora (Grubbs) Gross. My father died when I was six years of age, and I was reared in the home of my maternal grandparents. I spent my early live on a farm and received my formal education from a rural school and the High School at Elmer, Missouri, graduating in 1931.

Naomi Ratliff, daughter of Steve and Nellie (Baquet) Ratliff, and I were married August 23, 1936. Naomi united with the Hazel Creek Primitive Baptist Church near Greentop, Missouri, in August 1926. I found membership in Chariton Primitive Baptists Church, near Callao, Missouri, in the autumn of 1931 and later moved my membership to Hazel Creek where we both now hold membership. We have one daughter, Mrs. Ronald (Carol) Snider, of Queen City, Missouri, and they have one son, David.

I was ordained to the ministry in October 1947, after having had a deep interest in God and His righteousness from a very early age. I began serving churches almost immediately, first as an assistant to the Elder S. L. Pettus, and now have the care of for little churches and am editor of the Gospel Witness, a little church paper that is published monthly. This last position I have held for the past nine years, since the retirement of Elder Pettus, the former editor.

I am strongly of the opinion that every gospel minister, especially a pastor of churches, needs a good wife, and I have surely been blessed in this way. It was largely through the common interest which we had in the church that we were attracted to each other, and Naomi has had a very important part in my ministry from the start. She had been by my side all the way. Any success that I have obtained as a minister she has been largely responsible for.

It is our greatest desire that we may be enabled, by the grace of God, to spend the remainder of our lives serving our Lord by serving His people. We solicit the prayers of the Lord's people to that end.

Floy F. Gross

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001 NOTES by Mrs. Floy (Naomi) Gross

NOTES by Mrs. Floy (Naomi) Gross

The above autobiography was written in 1971. In the early fall of 1977, Floy suffered a severe stroke which left him with partial paralysis of the right side and with a loss of speech. He is able to get around with the aid of a cane and although he is no longer able to actively participate in church services, he enjoys attending which we do nearly every Sunday. We thank God every day for these and many other blessings.

Floy had a radio program for about a year before he became disabled which he led Sovereign Grace; hence the title of this book. He has put a lot of labor and prayers into these articles, and I have felt deeply impressed to preserve them in the form of a book. We thank God that Floy was permitted to spend much of his active life endeavoring to spread the "Good News" of the gospel, praising and glorifying our Master. This is the work he enjoyed above all others.

We dedicate this book to the cause of Christ and to you, the reader. So if you are -comforted, if you receive strength, if these articles cause you to study the Word of God more thoroughly, if you reap any benefit at all—praise be to God, give Him all the glory.

Mrs. Naomi Gross
1980

NOTICE

Elder Floy Gross was editor of the Gospel Witness, a church paper published in the state of Missouri. He was editor of this paper from sometime in 1962 until 1977. The contents of this book is made up of some of the editorial writings of Elder Gross during that time.

002 CONTENTS

CONTENTS

By Sovereign Grace [SovGrace: 003 BY SOVEREIGN GRACE](#)
False Corners [SovGrace: FALSE CORNERS](#)
Whose I Am and Whom I Serve [SovGrace: WHOSE I AM AND WHOM I SERVE](#)
Vital Doctrines [SovGrace: VITAL DOCTRINES](#)
Vital Doctrines II [SovGrace: VITAL DOCTRINES II](#)
Moon-Day Special [SovGrace: MOON-DAY SPECIAL](#)
All Things That Offend [SovGrace: ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND](#)
The Rich Young Ruler [SovGrace: THE RICH YOUNG RULER](#)
In My Father's House [SovGrace: IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE](#)
The Church of God (Where Is It?) [SovGrace: THE CHURCH OF GOD \(WHERE IS IT?\)](#)
Too Wonderful For Me [SovGrace: TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME](#)
Increase Our Faith [SovGrace: INCREASE OUR FAITH](#)
Why Do We Not Have Sunday Schools [SovGrace: WHY DO WE NOT HAVE SUNDAY SCHOOLS](#)

Where God Meets Man

Article One [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 01\)](#)
Article Two [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 02\)](#)
Article Three [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 03\)](#)
Article Four [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 04\)](#)
Article Five [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 05\)](#)
Article Six [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 06\)](#)
Article Seven [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 07\)](#)
Article Eight [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 08\)](#)
Article Nine [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 09\)](#)
Article Ten [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 10\)](#)
Article Eleven [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 11\)](#)
Article Twelve [SovGrace: WHERE GOD MEETS MAN \(Article 12\)](#)

Chariot of Fire

Article One [SovGrace: CHARIOT OF FIRE \(Article 01\)](#)
Article Two [SovGrace: CHARIOT OF FIRE \(Article 02\)](#)
Article Three [SovGrace: CHARIOT OF FIRE \(Article 03\)](#)
Article Four [SovGrace: CHARIOT OF FIRE \(Article 04\)](#)
Article Five [SovGrace: CHARIOT OF FIRE \(Article 05\)](#)
Article Six [SovGrace: CHARIOT OF FIRE \(Article 06\)](#)
Article Seven [SovGrace: CHARIOT OF FIRE \(Article 07\)](#)

Mountains — A Valley, And A Way [SovGrace: MOUNTAINS — A VALLEY, AND A WAY](#)

Neither Poverty Nor Riches [SovGrace: NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES](#)

Beware [SovGrace: BEWARE](#)

Christianity or Evolution? It Cannot Be Both [SovGrace: CHRISTIANITY OR EVOLUTION?
IT CANNOT BE BOTH](#)

Tower of Babel [SovGrace: TOWER OF BABEL](#)

We Know [SovGrace: WE KNOW](#)

Eternal Security [SovGrace: ETERNAL SECURITY](#)

Jealousy [SovGrace: JEALOUSY](#)

Consuming Fire [SovGrace: CONSUMING FIRE](#)

Hope—What Is It? [SovGrace: HOPE – WHAT IS IT?](#)

Despised and Rejected [SovGrace: DESPISED AND REJECTED](#)

Flying Worms [SovGrace: FLYING WORMS](#)

An Open Mind [SovGrace: AN OPEN MIND](#)

Condemned Already [SovGrace: CONDEMNED ALREADY](#)

Visiting in the Cemetery [SovGrace: VISITING IN THE CEMETERY](#)

Into the Unknown [SovGrace: INTO THE UNKNOWN](#)

[2Co 6:14-15](#) [SovGrace: II CORINTHIANS 6:14, 15](#)

David's Sin [SovGrace: DAVID'S SIN](#)

The Way of Salvation [SovGrace: THE WAY OF SALVATION](#)

God's Mercy [SovGrace: GOD'S MERCY](#)

Meekness [SovGrace: MEEKNESS](#)

Resist Not Evil [SovGrace: RESIST NOT EVIL](#)
It is Sin [SovGrace: IT IS SIN](#)
Bridling the Tongue [SovGrace: BRIDLING THE TONGUE](#)
[Ro 13:8](#) [SovGrace: ROMANS 13:8](#)
Spiritual Singing [SovGrace: SPIRITUAL SINGING](#)
What Shall I Render, Article One [SovGrace: WHAT SHALL I RENDER? \(Article 01\)](#)
Answer to Prayer [SovGrace: ANSWER TO PRAYER](#)
Path of the Just, Article 1 [SovGrace: PATH OF THE JUST \(Article 01\)](#)
Eternal Redemption [SovGrace: ETERNAL REDEMPTION](#)
Where Are the Nine? [SovGrace: WHERE ARE THE NINE?](#)
Death—A Separation [SovGrace: DEATH — A SEPARATION](#)
The Hand of God [SovGrace: THE HAND OF GOD](#)
The Righteous Shall Flourish [SovGrace: THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL FLOURISH](#)
"—And the Land Had Rest" [SovGrace: AND THE LAND HAD REST](#)
Lessons from Book of Job [SovGrace: LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOB](#)
Oases in the Desert: Springs in the Wilderness [SovGrace: OASES IN THE DESERT: SPRINGS
IN THE WILDERNESS](#)
What Purpose? [SovGrace: WHAT PURPOSE?](#)
Love — Fear — Christianity—Religion [SovGrace: LOVE — FEAR — CHRISTIANITY —
RELIGION](#)
Exhortation to Boldness [SovGrace: EXHORTATION TO BOLDNESS](#)
Cloud of Witnesses [SovGrace: CLOUD OF WITNESSES](#)
Looking Unto Jesus [SovGrace: LOOKING UNTO JESUS](#)
Baptism [SovGrace: BAPTISM](#)
Jesus Saves [SovGrace: JESUS SAVES](#)
What Manner of Man is This? [SovGrace: WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?](#)
Song of Solomon, 1:7,8 [SovGrace: SONG OF SOLOMON 1:7,8.](#)
More Precious than Gold [SovGrace: MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD](#)
Limited Atonement [SovGrace: LIMITED ATONEMENT](#)
Remember Now Thy Creator [SovGrace: REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR](#)
Eternal Choice [SovGrace: ETERNAL CHOICE](#)
My Shepherd [SovGrace: MY SHEPHERD](#)
Golden Chain of Redemption [SovGrace: GOLDEN CHAIN OF REDEMPTION](#)
Perfected Forever [SovGrace: PERFECTED FOREVER](#)
Draw Near—Hold Fast [SovGrace: DRAW NEAR — HOLD FAST](#)
How Shall We Escape [SovGrace: HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?](#)
[Mt 18:15-17](#) [SovGrace: MATT. 18:15-17](#)
The Potter [SovGrace: THE POTTER](#)
Ownership and Service [SovGrace: OWNERSHIP AND SERVICE](#)
"I Create Evil" [SovGrace: I CREATE EVIL](#)
Delayed Sentence [SovGrace: DELAYED SENTENCE](#)
Among the Lilies [SovGrace: AMONG THE LILIES](#)
Religion—God Centered, Man Centered [SovGrace: RELIGION — GOD CENTERED, MAN
CENTERED](#)
Redemption Obtained [SovGrace: REDEMPTION OBTAINED](#)
Tell Him So [SovGrace: TELL HIM SO](#)

Total Depravity [SovGrace: TOTAL DEPRAVITY](#)
Water and Spirit [SovGrace: WATER AND SPIRIT](#)
Pride [SovGrace: PRIDE](#)
By Degrees [SovGrace: BY DEGREES](#)
Bought with a Price, Article One [SovGrace: BOUGHT WITH A PRICE \(Article 01\)](#)
Path of the Just, Article Two [SovGrace: PATH OF THE JUST \(Article 02\)](#)
Hospitality [SovGrace: HOSPITALITY](#)
Predestination, Article One [SovGrace: PREDESTINATION \(Article 01\)](#)
It Is Finished [SovGrace: IT IS FINISHED](#)
Joh 3:16 [SovGrace: JOHN 3:16](#)
Everlasting Love [SovGrace: EVERLASTING LOVE](#)
Spiritual Growth, Article One [SovGrace: SPIRITUAL GROWTH \(Article 01\)](#)
Written Articles [SovGrace: WRITTEN ARTICLES](#)
Bought with a Price, Article Two [SovGrace: BOUGHT WITH A PRICE \(Article 02\)](#)
Repent [SovGrace: REPENT](#)
Diety of Christ [SovGrace: DIETY OF CHRIST](#)
Spirit and Truth [SovGrace: SPIRIT AND TRUTH](#)
I Believe [SovGrace: I BELIEVE](#)
Our Warfare [SovGrace: OUR WARFARE](#)
Preach the Word [SovGrace: PREACH THE WORD](#)
Following Jesus [SovGrace: FOLLOWING JESUS](#)
Neglect Not! [SovGrace: NEGLECT NOT!](#)
Concerning "Overseers" [SovGrace: CONCERNING "OVERSEERS"](#)
Love Not the World [SovGrace: LOVE NOT THE WORLD](#)
Repent, And Be Baptized [SovGrace: REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED](#)
No Other Foundation [SovGrace: NO OTHER FOUNDATION](#)
The Body of Christ [SovGrace: THE BODY OF CHRIST](#)
Sowing and Reaping [SovGrace: SOWING AND REAPING](#)
Walk About Zion [SovGrace: WALK ABOUT ZION](#)
Perfection of Beauty [SovGrace: PERFECTION OF BEAUTY](#)
Greatest Forces [SovGrace: GREATEST FORCES](#)
Follow Me [SovGrace: FOLLOW ME](#)
Ambassadors for Christ [SovGrace: AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST](#)
Appearance of Evil [SovGrace: APPEARANCE OF EVIL](#)
Our Special Friend [SovGrace: OUR SPECIAL FRIEND](#)
Miracles of the Bible [SovGrace: MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE](#)
They Had Been With Jesus [SovGrace: THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS](#)
The Beautitudes [SovGrace: THE BEAUTITUDES](#)
What Is Most Needed? [SovGrace: WHAT IS MOST NEEDED?](#)
Utility of the Gospel [SovGrace: UTILITY OF THE GOSPEL](#)
Rightly Dividing [SovGrace: RIGHTLY DIVIDING](#)
A Child Shall Lead Them [SovGrace: A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM](#)
Vanity of Vanities [SovGrace: VANITY OF VANITIES](#)
Let There Be Light [SovGrace: LET THERE BE LIGHT](#)
Reality [SovGrace: REALITY](#)
Spiritual Growth, Article Two [SovGrace: SPIRITUAL GROWTH \(Article 02\)](#)

For Whom Did Christ Die? [SovGrace: FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?](#)
Predestination, Article Two [SovGrace: PREDESTINATION \(Article 02\)](#)
Body of Christ [SovGrace: BODY OF CHRIST](#)
Why the Contradiction? [SovGrace: WHY THE CONTRADICTION?](#)
More Blessed to Give [SovGrace: MORE BLESSED TO GIVE](#)
Ecumenism [SovGrace: ECUMENISM](#)
A, Brief History of the Bible [SovGrace: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BIBLE](#)
The Apostolic Church [SovGrace: THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH](#)
What Shall I Render? Article Two [SovGrace: WHAT SHALL I RENDER? \(Article 02\)](#)
Time of Trouble [SovGrace: TIME OF TROUBLE](#)
Trust and Obey [SovGrace: TRUST AND OBEY](#)
Charity—Greatest Thing In the World [SovGrace: CHARITY — GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD](#)
Without Sin Unto Salvation [SovGrace: WITHOUT SIN UNTO SALVATION](#)
A False Philosophy [SovGrace: A FALSE PHILOSOPHY](#)
The Sin of Indifference [SovGrace: THE SIN OF INDIFFERENCE](#)
A Dangerous Thing [SovGrace: A DANGEROUS THING](#)
Appendix—An Apology [SovGrace: ZZ APPENDIX - AN APOLOGY](#)

003 BY SOVEREIGN GRACE

BY SOVEREIGN GRACE

Primitive Baptists believe that Eternal Salvation is by the sovereign grace of an all-powerful and miracle-working God.

I don't recall having ever heard the term, Sovereign Grace, until I heard Eld. Lasserre Bradley use it on his Baptist Bible Hour radio program and read it in his paper, The Baptist Witness. But I understood immediately, why he used that expression. Multitudes of those believing that our eternal inheritance depends upon our works and (or) our faith, will yet claim to believe in salvation by grace. They will say, "Sure, salvation is by the grace of God, but - - -". So the word, sovereign, is used to indicate that the grace we are talking about is sovereign and requires that nothing be added to it in order to make it effectual. I know the Bible says, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: etc", but I am not at all sure that the salvation mentioned there is eternal salvation. If it is, the truth yet remains that faith is the gift of God, and not something that we generate within ourselves. It is a distinct property of spiritual and eternal life, and the Bible lists it as one of the "fruits of the Spirit" (see [Ga 5:22](#)).

Before one can have faith, then the Spirit of God must be there to produce that faith. And the Spirit dwells only in those individuals who have been "born again", and it is utterly impossible for any person or thing to "born itself". No unborn individual has ever yet willed or believed themselves into being born. This is true from a natural standpoint, and is equally true with regard to spiritual birth: else Jesus would not have spoken of it as a birth. "Ye must be born again." Notice, he did not say, "Ye must get born again." **We know that faith and good works are the result and not the cause of us being born again.** It seems that many folks are unable to distinguish between cause and effect in regard to spiritual and religious things.

We are sure we are correct when we say, "**Eternal salvation is the result of what God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) has done, is now doing, and has promised to do in our behalf**; and not the result of anything that we do or shall do. Much is spoken by the religious world as to what the sinner must do in order to get born again. The most commonly mentioned thing is to "accept Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior"; but we are sure that, when this is done, it is too late for that person to get born again: he already has been born again; otherwise, he would have no will or desire to "accept". The popular idea seems to be that the dead, alien sinner can be reached by the Gospel; but the Bible says that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." The Bible also states that these things are "revealed from faith to faith", and we must remember that faith is the gift of God and is not of works, "lest any man should boast." Jesus said, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they that testify of me." **Eternal life is in Jesus and in him alone**: He has said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." If I could express these thoughts in a better and more con-vincing way, I would do so. May God add his blessings.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

I have thought that a brief history of the Bible might be in order at this time, and perhaps very helpful; especially, since there are now several versions, translations, or revisions in use; all of which may have some value for study purposes (by comparison etc.) but none to equal our time-tested, and we believe completely reliable "King James Translation." The other "Bibles" now in existence, may help us to a better understanding of our "King James" Bible, because some of the language used there has changed in meaning, and some of the words have become obsolete (with the passing of time) ; but these, as is true with all study helps, should be used with extreme caution. Such is my confidence in the translation we love and cherish, that I believe it should ever be used as our measuring rod; and whenever we find something that is out of harmony with its teachings, that something should be immediately rejected. But we do need to realize that the Bible, as we have known it, does not speak in the exact words in which it was first delivered to Lord's people. We do have every right to believe that the essential teaching is the same however. But since none of it was first written in our language, and since languages have changed with the passing of time, it became necessary to translate and revise during the thousands of years which have passed since the various books were first delivered. But, when we consider the great care that was taken, in comparing manuscripts etc., and, more especially the fact that the same Divine Author who inspired men to write, was certainly able to guide and assist the translators, and thus protect his Holy Book from error; we see that we can safely conclude that our Bible is still the inspired and authentic Word of God. It has been found, by consulting the oldest manuscripts now in existence, that the expressions are surprisingly similar to those contained in those same scriptures as they now appear in modern form; and the teaching is essentially the same.

This article will largely consist of quotations from two books from my library — "A Dictionary of

the Bible", by Wm. Smith, and a book entitled "Down Through The Ages", by Gaeblein. I shall quote first from Smith's Dictionary.

"The Bible consists of two great parts, called the Old and New Testaments, separated by an interval of nearly four hundred years. These Testaments are further divided into six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. These books are a library in themselves, being written in every known form of literature. Twenty-two of them are historical, five are poetical, eighteen are prophetic, twenty-one are epistolary. They contain logical arguments, poetry, songs and hymns, history, geography, parables, fables, eloquence, law, letters and philosophy.

There are at least thirty-six different authors, who wrote in three continents, in many countries, in three languages, and from every possible human standpoint. Among these authors were kings, farmers, mechanics, scientific men, lawyers, generals, fishermen, ministers and priests, a tax-collector, a doctor, some rich, some poor, some city bred, some country born — thus touching all the experiences of men — extending over 1500 years.

Yet the Bible is but one book, because God was its real author, and therefore, though he added new revelations as men could receive them, he never had to change what was once revealed."

"The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, with the exception of a small part which was written in the Chaldee language. The New Testament was written wholly in Greek. There are no Hebrew manuscripts older than the tenth century (The finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls may have changed that. Ed.), but we know that these are in the main correct, because we have a translation of the Hebrew into Greek, called the Septuagint, made nearly three hundred years before Christ. Of the Greek of the New Testament there are a number of ancient manuscripts."

"The first English translation of the whole Bible was by John Wickliffe (1324-1384). Then followed that of William Tyndale (1525) and several others.

As the sum and fruit of all these appeared our present Authorized Version or King James Version, in 1611. It was made by forty-seven learned men, in two years and nine months, with a second revision which took nine months longer. These forty-seven formed themselves into six companies, two of whom met at Westminster, two at Oxford and two at Cambridge. The present English edition is an improvement, in typographical and grammatical correctness, upon this revision, and in these respects is nearly perfect."

"The first book to be printed was the Bible; and more Bibles have been printed than any other book. It has been translated into 226 different languages." End Quote.

We are told, that in translating from one language to another, it is not always possible to find a word of exact meaning to the original, so combinations of words must be used, or the expression changed, to convey the original meaning. Of course the problem for the translators is to change from one language to another without changing the meaning. We believe the translators of the

Scriptures have done a remarkably good job of this.

To prove this last statement, I shall now quote from the book, "Down Through The Ages." — "No book in the world has had the reverent, the fastidiously careful treatment that throughout the centuries has been given the Bible. It has been copied by scribes who regarded mistakes with superstitious terror. In making it known its translators added to their labor their lives. Throughout the dark ages monks in obscure retreats toiled over its pages. For hundreds of years Jewish scribes labored upon the texts of the law and the prophets; painstakingly they revised, interpreted, and cleansed the sacred word from error. The ancient Greek copyists recorded the number of verses written. The Hebrew scribes counted not only the verses, but each word and each letter. Distinguishing the central portion of the book copied, they marked the middle letter of the whole work as a key stone, so to speak, on which to base their ideal edifice of perfect copying. If they detected the slightest error, even unto the miswriting of a single letter, it was their duty to destroy at once the page upon which the error appeared. They wrote with a particular ink upon sheets made from the skin of a "clean" animal. They spoke aloud each word before writing it: to write even a single word from memory would have been a gross crime. It is said that these scribes prayerfully wiped their pens before writing the name of God, and before writing that most holy word "Jehovah" they washed their whole bodies. After these rules had been observed in the production of a new manuscript, it was compared with the original; and if one wrong letter were discovered, the whole copy was rejected. The solemn warning of one rabbi to a scribe has been recorded: "Take heed how thou doest thy work, for thy work is the work of heaven, lest thou drop or add a letter of the manuscript and so become a destroyer of the world!"

The piety which characterized these Hebrew scribes was passed on to the Christian copyists. The very ornaments which beautify the monastic manuscripts, the elaborate initial letters, the splendid coloring of the conventional designs, are all witnesses to the reverence with which the copyists worked.

Then he has this to say about the "King James Bible" (our Bible), "No student of English would think of denying its pre-eminence. Despite differences of creed or of interpretation, literary critics unite in giving primacy to this book, a book that is more than a mere translation in that it recreates for the English-speaking world the very spirit of inspiration in which the originals were written. And how could it be otherwise? This is the book in the making of which the blood of brave men was shed. They counted the labor of translating worth exile and even death in the flames. This is the book that was burned in public, yet snatched away and cherished in secret. This is the book that was read by a nation that was taken by fearless men to an unknown land where, on the foundation of the morality inculcated by its teaching, a great republic was built."

"F. W. Faber, writing truly of this version, has said "It lives on the ear like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells which the convert hardly knows how long he can forego. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness."

"No wonder the translators wrote words of supreme beauty. They were dealing with a divine Book." End Quote.

I can find much to criticize in the new "modern" translations, which are the product of an apostate age. In regard to them, caution is the word.

A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

The wolf 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 little child shall lead them [Isa 11:6](#)

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 the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. [Mt 18:2-4](#).

I believe the prophecy contained in [Isa 11](#) deals primarily with conditions which shall exist in a later day than this, for we find the expression, "Then shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters that cover the sea." There are also many Scripture passages which lead me to this view.

I also believe, however, that this condition is now partly accomplished in God's heaven born people who have been incorporated into the Christian Church. I hardly think this language is to be taken literally, because I doubt if there will ever be a time on this earth when the beasts of the wild will have their natures changed to fit the prophecy.

I think this prophecy refers to men, and how God, by His grace, subdues the wild nature of men and cause them to eat the same spiritual food, and drink the same spiritual drink. Under grace men, who by nature were fierce as the lion, are subdued, given the nature of sheep and made to "lie down in green pastures."

Man is, by nature, proud, willful, and rebellious against God. The effect of the new birth and the Christian experience is to subdue this natural tendency, and to conform rebellious man to the love and obedience of God. But even among the followers of Christ we find the old nature cropping out again and again. We have need to humble ourselves "under the mighty hand of God."

It seems the disciples had been arguing the question as to which one of them should be the greatest in the Master's kingdom. Each of them, or at least a number of them, each wanted to

be His right-hand man.

Jesus said unto them, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

Then He emphasized this teaching by saying, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." [Mr 10:42-45](#).

Again he emphasized this most important teaching when supper being ended He girded Himself with a towel and began to wash His disciples' feet, an humble task reserved for servants.

Again he emphasized it by setting a little child before them and pointing him out as an example of what they should be in this particular respect. They wanted to be the greatest but He told them they could have no part in the kingdom at all unless they be converted and become as a little child; and if they would be the greatest in the kingdom they must "humble themselves as this little child."

A little child possesses many qualities which are becoming in the Christian. But the quality especially referred to is the quality of humbleness. A little child trusts its parents and recognizes their authority, and the lesson is this; unless we trust in our heavenly Parent, and obey Him, we can have no part in His spiritual kingdom here in this world.

It would immediately follow that our importance to this kingdom will depend upon the degree of our trust and obedience (faith and good works). Our eternal inheritance is not based upon these things, but our joy and our worth in the kingdom is.

A DANGEROUS THING

A DANGEROUS THING

Someone has said, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." I believe that statement to be true, and that it is no more true anywhere than in the field of religion. Just a little knowledge is indeed dangerous, for it will likely lead to all sorts of misconceptions. It certainly behooves all of us then, to make sure that we have more than just a little knowledge.

The person who has "a little knowledge" is apt to conceive the idea that he "has all the answers", but the increase of knowledge will have the effect of convincing him of his first mistake. The more he learns, the more convinced he becomes that he knows but little of the sum-total of what there is to know; and, if his learning continues, he may finally come to realize that he doesn't actually know very much after all. "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him."

It is true that we have a Book that is "a thorough furnisher" to the man of God, for it is a revelation from God himself. However, the danger of just a little knowledge is that he who has no more than just a little, knowledge may make the mistake of taking what he reads at purely face value. I mean he may read something and conclude that it is just that way "because I read it in the Bible", when perhaps a little more knowledge and a further investigation would convince him of the fact that the particular statement he read, means something entirely different than what he first thought it did.

Before one can really study the Bible, one must know **how** to study. Simply reading it is not enough. Reading and meditating is not enough. For every text must be studied in the light of its context (the verses that surround it). Few texts can be safely taken out of context, and but few texts will "stand alone" without other texts to support it. The best and safest way is to compare scripture with other scriptures (one text with another.) Then we may be sure of what the Bible actually teaches.

I feel convinced that the false teachings (heresies) that have plagued the church through the centuries, and even in our day, have been quite generally caused (and certainly encouraged) by those who had but "a little knowledge". For, if one has a "pet" idea that he wishes to defend and advance, it is always possible to find something in the Bible that can be used to supposedly support that pet theory. It has been said, by those who would like to discredit God's word, that "you can prove anything by the Bible." That is true, if you want to seek out a favorite text, jerk it out of context, and make it mean something it never was intended to teach. I am sure this has been done times beyond number, and those with only a little knowledge have accepted it as truth. Remember, our enemy, Satan, is the great enemy of truth. He delights to quote scripture out of context, and takes special pleasure in a little knowledge."

There is a way, however, to defeat Satan in this. It is to heed the admonition of the apostle Paul, where he said, "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." [2Ti 2:15](#). And of Peter, when he said, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." [2Pe 3:18](#).

A FALSE PHILOSOPHY

A FALSE PHILOSOPHY

There is a false philosophy prevailing in the world, of which Satan is no doubt the author, which teaches that man is inherently good. This is very appealing to the flesh, and the worldly individual swallows it up with the greatest of relish and enthusiasm. It is indeed so popular in the world today that it underlies and influences all political and social science. The religions are permeated with it, and many of the Lord's dear children are so influenced by it that they have become the friends of this world and enemies of the cause of Christ. They seemingly have forgotten, or are entirely ignorant of the fact, that the Bible teaches that the wisdom of this

world is foolishness with God, and that he who will be a friend of the world is an enemy of Christ.

It is reasoned that, since man is inherently good, all we need to do is improve his environment, educate him (just remove the obstacles) and the good will come out. It is therefore wrong to punish the child for his wrong doing — especially to use the old fashioned woodshed method — we should analyze him and work psychology upon him and be very careful not to thwart his initiative. This is the method to be used on the juvenile delinquent: be very patient and understanding with him, and use the soft approach — all boys are good boys underneath — something has simply gone wrong in his environment. The same philosophy is behind our modern treatment of adult criminals. They should be treated good, and by all means capital punishment should be done away with. After all, the worst of criminals is simply some mother's good boy or girl who has "made a mistake". According to this philosophy, the individual is not to blame for his misdeeds -- the blame must be placed on society in general. Sin is an old-fashioned word that should be relegated to the trash heap. The word now is social maladjustment. When it is pointed out that the Bible teaches otherwise, the reaction is "What is the Bible? The Bible was written by men who lived thousands of years ago. What did they know about modern progress?" So they proceed to build a "Great Society" without the Bible and without God.

Just what does the Bible teach in regard to sin, and punishment, and chastisement, and the inherent nature of mankind? The Bible teaches that MAN IS INHERENTLY EVIL, and that nothing can change him apart from the SOVEREIGN GRACE of God. Education is like a coat of veneering on furniture. It simply covers up, and does not change the rough interior. Human education can teach the mind, but only God's sovereign Spirit can teach the heart.

The Bible teaches that even those who have been "born again" have their carnal natures to contend with as long as they live in this world. The Bible teaches that when we spare the rod we spoil the child, although not in so many words. The Bible teaches that when "judgment is deferred, iniquity shall flourish." It also teaches that "he that sows the wind, shall reap the whirlwind." The Bible teaches that "the wicked shall be cast into hell, and that NATION that forgets God."

We have cause for great concern and for solemn meditation.

ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND

ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND

"For behold, the day, cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh, shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." [Mal 4:1](#).

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all that offend, and then which do iniquity; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." [Mt 13:41-42](#).

Our first text is a prophecy by the last of the Old Testament prophets, and our second text is language spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ. More than 400 years had passed between these two prophetic utterances, and yet I believe both texts refer to the same event or events.

If our readers will turn and read the last two chapters of the Book of Malachi, they will find a graphic description of the state and condition of the Lord's chosen people at the time Malachi lived and wrote, and also when our Lord made his entry into the world. Israel had become guilty of idolatry and were under the indictment of having robbed God. "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." God then tells them what he will do for them, if they will repent. He also warns as to what he will do to them, if they continue in their wickedness. The Old Testament ends with this warning, "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

In connection with our second text, Jesus tells the parable of "the tares of the field." The owner of the field sowed "good seed" (wheat) but his enemy sowed tares (weeds) in the same field. The wheat and the tares (which closely resemble wheat) came up together, and the laborers wanted to know if the tares should be pulled up immediately. And the answer was "No" — "lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." He instructed them to wait until the harvest. Beginning with the 37th verse ([Mt 13](#)) we read Jesus' explanation of this parable. "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed is the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: etc."

Here we have the two classes of humanity, the wheat and the tares: the tares to be burned, and the wheat to be gathered into the Master's barn. Unless I am badly mistaken, we have here the "elect" and the "non-elect": God is responsible for the one, the devil is responsible for the other; but God will take care of both. God permits both to live together in this world, and sometimes tares get into the church. Notice, however, he does not say that the field is the kingdom. What he does say is that "the field is the world." The good seed is the "children of the kingdom": so the children of the kingdom are in the world, and the tares are there also. Now in order to gather "out of His kingdom all that offends" it is necessary for God to effect a harvest. So, at the time appointed, God will visit judgment upon the inhabitants of this world — just as I suppose all professing Christians have believed. But, for now, it is needful that both the wheat and the tares remain in the field. So the fact of the tares being here, should be no obstacle to God's people's faith. God watches over his field, and He will see to the Harvest. He has not instructed his ministers, or his church, to go out and make war (carnal war) to destroy the children of the devil.

I believe this prophecy was partly fulfilled when God visited his judgment upon the Jews, in' the great destruction which came upon them by the hands of the Romans. Jerusalem was destroyed, the land laid to waste, and the inhabitants were dispersed among the nations. But I do believe there is a judgement awaiting God's disobedient people among the Gentiles; and since they are found in all nations (I speak of the spiritual Israel now) God will judge the gentile nations. It is written, "to Him every knee shall bow, and to Him every tongue shall confess." Then, of course, there is also the final judgment, when "the books shall be opened" "and the dead, both small and great shall stand before God etc." The moral of it is that we should wait with patience, and look forward with joyful expectation to the harvest; for that will be a joyous time for all lovers of God and righteousness.

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

· Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. - Cor. 5:20.

The above text plainly declares that the apostles of our Lord were ambassadors for Christ and, insofar as His ministers of today preach the apostle's doctrine, they also are Christ's ambassadors. When we understand what an ambassador is, we are made to realize something of the great importance of the position occupied by the gospel minister and of his work. According to Webster, an ambassador is "a minister of the highest rank sent to a foreign court to reside there and represent his sovereign country." In the light of the text and the above definition, it may be clearly seen that the gospel minister is a legal representative, in the highest order of the sovereign (king) who has placed him in that office: of King Jesus. Now if the gospel minister is an ambassador, the church here in the world is an embassy (the residence or office of an ambassador). Our nation, America, has her embassies in all the major capitols of the world, and I believe I am correct in saying that in every country in which our nation maintains an embassy, that embassy is a part of America. So I think it also true that the church of Jesus Christ, here in the world, is the property of the heavenly government and a part of heaven itself. Perhaps we haven't thought of it in this way.

The importance of these ambassador's work is stressed by the words "as though God did beseech you by us" and "we pray you in Christ's stead." Notice he says "IN CHRIST'S STEAD." That means in Christ's place: Christ is not here (in the flesh) as he once was, to declare his own everlasting gospel and to plead with the people; so his ministers must carry on this work — until their Lord returns. What is the message they are to convey to the Lord's people? In order to answer this question we need to refer to the context: the accompanying verses. So it will help very much if our readers will get their Bible and read the latter part of the chapter, beginning with the 17th verse.

Notice specially the 18th and 19th verses — "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us

to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. I feel sure the "ministry of reconciliation" and "word of reconciliation", spoken of here, is the gospel of Christ. He very well could have said "the gospel of reconciliation." The text declares that we have been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ and then tells what that work consists of. It says that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. I am sure that the "world" spoken of here is the elect world of God's people, and not the whole human family. We may be sure of this, for this is followed by the statement "not imputing (charging) their trespasses unto them: if it is the whole human family that is under consideration, then the sins of none of the human family is charged to them, and this would be universal salvation; which we are sure is not taught in the Bible. But it is certain that the trespasses (sins) of those under consideration are not imputed (charged) to them. If not imputed to them, then to whom were they imputed? The answer is, unto Christ; and that is how God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. This is declared to be the word (gospel) of reconciliation. To reconcile, as used in this text, means to "make or restore peace." Through the violation of God's holy and righteous law, all men have sinned and come short of God's glory. "There is none righteous, no, not one." [Ro 3:10](#). God's elect people were included in this so far as inherent righteousness is concerned. They were all "children of wrath even as others." [Eph 2:3](#). Therefore, on account of sin, a condition of enmity was brought to exist between the offending creature and the offended Deity. Peace was restored by and through Christ, in behalf of all those whose sins were laid on him. In the words of the last verse of the chapter, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The word, reconciled, in this text means to be content or satisfied. So Paul here declares that "we pray (beseech: beg: entreat) you, be ye reconciled (content: satisfied) to God (to God's arrangement in this matter: to God's own will and way)."

Oh, so many, of God's people are not reconciled or satisfied with this, and so they continue to trust in their own faith and good works for eternal salvation. Of such it is written, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness (Christ), and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (have not become reconciled to the true gospel of Christ)." [Ro 10:3](#). Paul's heart's desire and prayer to God was, that they might be saved (delivered from error, and to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus). This is our prayer also.

AMONG THE LILIES

AMONG THE LILIES

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. Solmon's [Song 2:1-2](#).

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines for our vines have tender grapes. My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. Solomon's [Song 2:15-16](#).

The first of the above texts is a text for flower lovers, but is to be understood of Christ and His church. The rose is sometimes referred to as the chief of flowers, and Christ Himself preferred the clothing of the lily to the rich clothing of Solomon. Christ here refers to Himself as the rose and the lily. He says, "I am the rose of Sharon", where no doubt the roses grew in great profusion, and "the lily of the valleys" where no doubt they were found in great abundance. Our Lord was accustomed while here on earth, to use for illustration things with which the people were acquainted, and in which they were much interested. What could He better use to describe Himself and what He is to His people, than these two very beautiful flowers? He does it to express His presence with His people in the world, the easiness of their access to Him, and the beauty and sweetness which they find in Him; and to teach them to adorn themselves with Him, as shepherds and shepherdesses when they appeared gay, decked themselves with roses and lilies, garlands and chaplets of flowers.

Christ here refers to His church as "my love", and declares His love to be "as the lily." Christ IS the lily, and his church is AS the lily. The beauty of the church consists in her conformity to Jesus Christ and resemblance to Him. This is true of the members of the church both individually and collectively. But the church is "as the lily among thorns", as a lily compared with thorns. The true church of Christ excels all other societies as a bed of roses does a bush of thorns. Although, in this case, the lily is among thorns, she must not become like them: she must still remain "as the lily". The church must keep herself pure and clean: "unspotted from the world" if she would remain as the lily, and rejoice the heart of her Lord. Indeed it is in this way that the church has maintained her identity through the centuries.

In our second text Christ refers to the church as a vineyard and the members of it as vines. He also warns of foxes, little foxes, and declares that they spoil the vines. I have no doubt that the foxes spoken of are sins first of all, although they might sometimes be things or even individuals. Anything, small though it may appear, if it tends to destroy the vines should be taken and disposed of—"for our vines have tender grapes". That is just a way of saying that the usefulness of our vines is easily destroyed; even little foxes are able to do that.

Now when is the best time to catch and dispose of little foxes? The answer to that question is very easy — when they are little. Because, when left alone, little foxes get to be big foxes after a while. Now if little foxes are able to spoil our vines, what can big foxes be expected to do? Surely they will be harder to catch, and, if not caught, will destroy the vineyard. So as soon as a thing is proven to be a fox, the most logical course would be to take care of it immediately. "But the poor cute little thing, and how innocent. How can you be so heartless?" Oh, but it is a fox, and has the nature of a fox — cunning, crafty, destructive; and, if left alone, it will spoil the vines. "But time will take care of it: perhaps it will die." Yes, little foxes do die a natural death sometimes I suppose, but this is not to be normally expected: the natural tendency is for them to grow bigger, stronger, faster, and more cunning.

I suppose it would be possible for us to write a long list of little foxes, calling them by name, but we don't suppose that necessary just now. Enough to say that anything which serves to take our affections away from Christ, His church and His people is of the nature of the fox, and in the beginning it is a little fox: card playing, and dancing, and even theatre going, television, and radio (if carried to extreme, and without proper discrimination) will tend to destroy the fruit of our vines. "And if our vines be destroyed, and even our whole vineyard; what then?" How could any one of the Lord's children, who have been brought to love Him and His church ask a question like that?

But the answer, as to why we should be concerned about this, is contained in the closing words of the text: "My beloved in mine, and I am his: he feedeth AMONG THE LILIES.

AN OPEN MIND

AN OPEN MIND

The expression is often made that we should view this or that with an "open mind." We do not mean by this that we should approach the subject without an opinion, but that we should not be so opinionated as to shut our minds to all reason and judgment. It is true that, sometimes, we are without an opinion on some subject or another, and, in that case, we have no difficulty in exercising a truly open mind — for that is all we have to exercise. But, generally, we do already have an opinion; and that is good — we admire folks who are sufficiently interested to study and form an opinion. After careful investigation, it is good for us to have strong convictions — — but we should never get to the place where we are unwilling to consider the other side of the question; we just possibly could be mistaken, you know. It is very probable that better and — wiser people than we, HAVE been mistaken on occasion, and likely they were as sure of their ground as we ourselves. So we should be willing to read or listen to the other fellow's argument. It is in this way that we learn. His argument will, at least, cause us to think — and our minds need exercise as well as our bodies.

A very able minister said to me one time, that most people, as they grow older, tend to one or the other of two extremes: to either become so opinionated that they cannot be reasoned with, or to become "Yes Men" and agree to anything. I feel sure we all need to labor to avoid this. We should seek to keep our minds pliable, and this can be accomplished by keeping them active. We should also be willing to exercise our "will power" by managing to say "No" when the occasion calls for it.

AND THE LAND HAD REST

— AND THE LAND HAD REST"

The title of this article sounds very beautiful and inviting, does it not? It suggests peace and prosperity, and that is something that men have always desired — but, of course, on their own terms (generally speaking).

But the only way to actually obtain it is on God's terms. Oh, we may obtain a temporary victory over our enemies, and a temporary peace and sort of artificial prosperity on our terms, if we are strong enough and wise enough; and provided God is pleased to permit us to do so. But, unless we take God for our leader, and operate within the circle of His will, our temporary victory and peace, and our illusionary prosperity will soon fade away; only to be followed by a greater chaos and powerful manifestation of the wrath of God. The history of the ancient Hebrews proves this. But it seems that men repeatedly refuse to observe the lessons of history for long, and those people proved it themselves.

God had chosen His people, Israel, for his own purposes; to reveal His will in them; and to provide a lesson for all generations following. He had given them an inheritance, by promise, and a place among nations. God had miraculously delivered them upon many occasions, and had said to them — "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." He had delivered them out of "land

of bondage". He had led them through the wilderness. He had miraculously provided for them. He had brought them into the "land of promise." And He had, in effect said to them, "You shall not go 'a-whoring after other gods; and if you do . . ." But they did! Again and again they did. I have been reading from the book of Judges. And find expressions like this to abound — "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about. so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

"Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but went a-whoring after other gods etc." These expressions stand out, again and again in book of Judges - "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord." "And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer etc." And to prove that they did not long benefit by the lessons of their own history, we find these expressions. "And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." But during the life of the judge, and while they obeyed God, we find this expression to apply — "And the land had rest for —(a certain period of years)."

Now how does this lesson apply to us today? That was the national Israel We are the spiritual Israel. God has not chang-ed: He still blesses his people in obedience, and He still chastises them in disobedience. This not only applies to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it applies also to the nations of this world: it applies to America. "The Wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations forget God." [Ps 9:17](#). How long can this great nation, founded upon Christian principles and having prospered under the grace and providence of God; and now having so largely forgotten God, and so far departed from God and Godly principles, endure?

All the nations of the earth are under serious indictment; but it seems to me that America may be under the most serious indictment of all: because she has, in such great measure, known the ways of righteousness and has experienced the affects of a Godly profession —and yet has departed. Our motto — "In God we trust" —"One nation, under God." I say, having made a Godly profession. But now, even professing Christians, for the most part are having but little use for God's inspired word (the Bible). Our children are being taught the doctrines of godless evolution, avowed communists are being allowed to lecture to our young people and even to teach in our colleges and universities, and "Liberal" ideas and policies are tearing away at the very foundation of our great nation. America is still a great nation, and the one we love and value above all others. God still continues to bless us as a nation and as a people; but I ask, "how long?" I believe our only hope of escaping the impending wrath of the Almighty, is in a possible awakening and turning about: a returning to God and godliness. I think the answer is found in the following text, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." [2Ch 7:14](#). The main burden of responsibility rests upon professing Christians, as emphasized by the words, "who are called by my name." So, the

question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" [Heb 2:3](#). The apathy of Christian people is very appalling to me.

ANSWER TO PRAYER

ANSWER TO PRAYER

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open unto you." — [Mt 7:7](#)

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." [Mt 21:22](#)

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." — [Jas 4:3](#).

I intend this to be a sequel to my article in our June issue. In the former article, I pointed out the fact that those were the days when our Lord bestowed very special and extraordinary gifts upon his disciples — which gifts evidently ceased with the close of the apostolic era. It was necessary that special powers and answers to prayer should be given during the infancy of the church — in order for Christianity to become established. After Christianity had gained a firm foothold in the world, God evidently no longer considered it necessary for those "visible signs" to continue, and so withdrew this visible evidence in order that his people should "walk by faith, and not by sight." I believe that these statements will help to explain and harmonize the above texts. We need also to consider the fact that the Bible often speaks in generalities, and one expression will serve to qualify and limit another. As we compare the three texts at the heading of this article, we can see immediately that the Bible does not teach that we may expect an affirmative answer to all of our prayers — for it is possible for us to "ask amiss". This may also help to explain why so many are disappointed who place confidence in so-called "faith healers". God does still answer prayer, and He is still able to perform miracles; but I am very glad to know that He is not the kind of indulgent parent who will give his children everything they ask for. If God was that kind of parent, I am sure that praying would be very dangerous business. We have neither the wisdom nor the disposition to always pray wisely, and the only really safe prayer is the one that includes "If it be according to thy will".

Someone has very ably said that God answers every prayer in one of three ways: "Yes", "No", or "Wait a while". So when we complain that our prayers have not been answered, it may be that we have simply not recognized the answer when it came. We need to understand that the answer to prayer is not always in the affirmative: sometimes the answer is "No" or "Wait a while".

Often our prayers include things that would not be good for us, or even detrimental to the cause of God and righteousness. We should be very grateful that our Father withholds these things from us; and we must not be too insistent in our prayers, or God may eventually "give in" — so to speak, and grant our petitions for our correction. The perfect example of prayer is found in the sixth chapter of Matthew — which begins, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

APPEARANCE OF EVIL

APPEARANCE OF EVIL

Abstain from all appearance of evil. — [1Th 5:22](#).

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men. — [2Co 3:2](#).

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. — [Mt 5:16](#).

I have selected the above texts for the purpose of showing that Christian people are not only to avoid the very appearance of evil in their lives but also to explain why. Often the contention is made and question asked, "There is nothing wrong in — (this or that thing), so what is the harm in me doing it?" If it is likely to leave a wrong impression with others, or exert a wrong influence upon them it is indeed wrong for us to practice. Many things may not necessarily be wrong within themselves, but may be misunderstood by others and thus weaken our influence for good as we endeavor to witness for Christ. We may have a habit which does us no harm personally, but may become a corrupting influence in the life of another —especially some boy or girl. I am thinking now of smoking, social drinking, dancing and a number of other things.

In order for our testimony to be fully effective, we must be different from those of this unbelieving and ungodly world, and the distinction must be plain enough for non-Christians to notice the difference. I am not however, recommending that Christians be "stuffy" — overly pious, or that they assume a "holier than thou" attitude. But neither do I recommend a compromise with the world for sake of popularity or pleasure where godly principle is concerned — nor the appearance of such compromise. The apostle Paul said, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." [Ro 14:21](#).

I believe the above thoughts are worthy of very careful consideration.

BAPTISM

BAPTISM

" - - once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereinto even baptism doth now also save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." [1Pe 3:20-21](#).

"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." [Ac 3:26](#).

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [Joh 3:5](#).

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." [Ac 22:16](#).

The four texts listed above, are some of several which are frequently used in an effort to defend what is commonly referred to as the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration", or that water baptism is essential for eternal salvation, and that this religious rite must be performed upon an individual

before that person can be "born again". This is a very popular doctrine with a large segment of the religious world today. It will be the purpose of this article to try and explain these texts so as to prove that the above mentioned is untrue, and that such ideas concerning water baptism are not supported by the Bible. I shall begin by saying that the proponents of this doctrine (Baptismal Regeneration) operate upon the assumption that the great overall purpose of the Bible is to get folks into the position where God can save them eternally. Therefore when they see the words save, saved and salvation in the Bible and in connection with the gospel, they immediately think it is eternal salvation that is under consideration. This, my friends, often is not the case. The word, **salvation**, simply means **deliverance**; and when we try to restrict its meaning without proper investigation (in any given case) we are likely to do violence to the scriptures. Now, let us consider our first text. I notice the text says that, in the days of Noah, eight souls were saved by (meaning through) water. The text doesn't say from water, but by water. Now we know that the lives of these people were not saved by the water, but they were saved from the water. In other words, it was not the water that saved their lives upon that occasion but the ark — and the ark represented Christ. But the water did save them from something; what was it? The answer, to me, appears quite simple. The water was what saved them from that wicked Antediluvian world: wicked and ungodly men were destroyed by the water. The deeds of that wicked world had been a continual source of grief to Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, and very probably so to his sons and their wives also. They were saved (delivered) from that wicked world by water. And so it is in this day. The souls of truly righteous individuals are sorely vexed by the wicked and ungodly deeds of "this present evil world." "But," you say "I can't see how baptism can possibly save me from this evil and corrupting influence." Well, the simple act of being immersed in water certainly can't do it. But true gospel baptism consists of much more than simply taking someone to the creek and pushing them under. It requires faith, both on the part of the candidate and the administrator. And that faith must be centered upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Not upon the act itself, but upon what the act signifies or represents. In other words, baptism must be "the answer of a good conscience toward God" as the text states. Such baptism as this must of necessity be accompanied by true repentance for past miss-deeds, and a hatred for sin itself. Certainly this will not atone for (or put away) past sins. Neither will it enable the individual to live entirely above sin (far from it). It will not put away the filth of the flesh, as stated in the text. But it **does** have a saving effect upon that individual. The knowledge that one has made an open confession, has taken up membership in Christ's visible church, and has been "buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life", sets that person apart from the world and becomes a controlling influence in his or her life. Like the gospel itself, there is a saving power in baptism. But baptism does not proceed (go before) nor transcend (become of superior importance) the new birth (regeneration). Only Christ (by His Spirit) can give spiritual and eternal life. This he does (sovereignly) and that life can never die. **So whether one has been baptized (in water) or not, makes no possible difference where eternal life and eternal inheritance is concerned.** The Bible sets forth the certain evidences of eternal life, and we know there are many who have never been baptized or united with any church who bear, in their lives these evidences (fruits of the Spirit). I can boldly declare that **everyone who loves God and righteousness will finally be saved with an everlasting salvation.**

Our second text admonishes to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." But it is not baptism that is for the remission of sins, but Jesus Christ. The name, Jesus, means Savior; and the name, Christ, means Anointed. So the expression could read

like this, Repent and be baptized in the name of **Savior Anointed for the remission of sins**. That is what Christ was anointed for — for the remission of sins.

In our third text, we find the expression "of water and of the Spirit". The word, and as used there, means even: of water, **even** the Spirit. Water is a cleansing agent, and so is the Spirit of God. Water cannot "put away the filth of the flesh", but the Spirit can and does.

Our fourth text deals with only a ceremonial washing away of sins, and not an actual "putting away of the filth of the flesh." When our Lord took the communion emblems saying, "this is my body" and "this is my blood", we know he did not mean that the bread and wine had actually become his body and his blood, but only an emblem or a sign. So it is with baptism, it becomes an emblem or sign of his death, burial and resurrection.

Every true believer should gladly submit to this ordinance, for Jesus "so it behooveth us to fulfill all righteousness."

BEWARE

BEWARE

“Then Jesus said unto them, ‘Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees’” [Mt 16:6](#).

The chief sects among the Jews were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, who may be described respectively as the Formalists, the Free-thinkers, and the Puritans. – Smith’s Bible Dictionary. Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees came in for their share of rebuke from the Lord Jesus, but his strongest words of criticism and rebuke were reserved for the Pharisees and also for the Scribes, who were the men of letters: the recorders, copyists, and translators.

All of these had become guilty of very erroneous conceptions of God and of his requirements for his people. But the Pharisees had become especially contemptible. These were given to making a great show of religion, with pretensions of extreme piety. They were very proud, self-righteous, and arrogant. It is said that they not only refused to eat with publicans and sinners, but would also draw the skirts of their garments closely about them, as they walked in the streets or in the market place, lest they should brush against those of the common crowd. The Pharisees, in collaboration with the scribes, had perverted the law of God by substituting the doctrines and commandments of men. They not only split hairs over technicalities, but split them again and again — until they had made it utterly impossible for anyone to live up to their demands. They placed great emphasis on non-essentials, to the neglect of more important things. Jesus accused them of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. Because they made merchandise of religion and pretended to be what they were not, Jesus called them hypocrites. The religion of the Pharisees was almost directly opposed to the teachings of Christ and, after denouncing them most severely, he came forth with these words "O ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

But the Sadducees, also, were guilty of very great departures from truth, for they denied the existence of any soul or spirit and also the resurrection of the dead.

The main difference between the doctrines of the Pharisees & Sadducees seems to have been their opposing views concerning the law, — the Pharisees insisting that God had given a written law and an oral law. They insisted that the oral law, handed down by tradition, was the key to the understanding of the written law of Moses. The Sadducees denied this, and were sticklers for the written law as recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. It seems that both sects, however, failed to realize that the law of God is spiritual: they were looking only to the outward observance of it. Of course there were individuals among them who did have some degree of spiritual light and understanding.

After Jesus had said "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" he explained to his disciples that it was their doctrine that he was warning against. He called it "leaven" because of its tendency to enlarge itself and spread, and because of the danger of these false teachings to the newly formed Christian church. When we study the history of the church, we discover that Christian people did not give sufficient heed to their Lord's warning. The "leaven" of the Pharisees resulted in the gradual formation of the great apostate church that "made war with the saints", and the leaven of the Sadducees has also left its mark upon the church, and is still found among those who bear the name. Christian.

The church has ever had to battle against these corrupting influences, in order to retain her identity. We find these same influences at work today, and the admonition still applies, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of the Sadducees".

It has ever been necessary for those who would be truly faithful to their Lord to try and distinguish between those traditions that are supported by God's holy and written word and those that are purely traditions of the church and unsupported by divine authority. We must ever seek a "thus the Lord" for what we believe and do.

BODY OF CHRIST

BODY OF CHRIST

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. — [1Co 12:27](#).

Thine eyes did see by substance yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. — [Ps 139:16](#).

And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world
etc. — Rev. 17 :8.

The language of our first text is directed to "the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." [1Co 1:2](#). The "body of Christ, then, is the church.

For a wonderful exposition of this text, please read the entire 12th chapter. The members of the church (the body of Christ) is likened to the various (members) of the human body, and Christ is declared to be the head. ([Eph 1:22; 4:15; Col 1:18.](#)).

Our second text is found in [Ps 139](#), which is declared to be a psalm of David. The psalmist here speaks in the first person, and refers to the wondrous workings of his own body and to the miracle of birth. But we must ever remember that in the Old Testament types and shadows, David is a type of Christ. Please read [Ps 89](#), for here we find language that cannot possibly apply to the psalmist himself, and can apply to none other but Christ (verse 27 for instance). So I think our text refers to Christ and his mystical body (the church). But when we think of the "body of Christ, we must think of the "church triumphant (all of God's elect family: all who shall finally be saved with an everlasting salvation). The members of Christ's body are all those "whose names were written, in the Lamb's book of life."

I have included our third text simply to show that their names were written there, and when.

It was done "before the foundation of the world". Then they were "in continuance fashioned." Indeed, Christ's body is not yet complete (in the fullest sense of the text) nor will it be until every member of it has been born into the world and then born of the Spirit. Finally it shall be complete, and then "time shall be no more".

From the standpoint of the text, Christ can say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." —[Ps 139:14](#). Speaking of our own bodies, we can say the same thing.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE (Article 01)

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

Article One—July 1972

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver, and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. [1Pe 1:18-19](#).

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's. [1Co 6:20](#).

Notice the expression, "ye are bought with a price," and "ye are not your own." The knowledge of this should inspire us to love and good works, and should also cause us to rejoice, for our text tells us whom we belong to; we belong to God. I like belonging to God, don't you?

But this fact, and knowledge of God's ownership, carries with it very serious responsibility on our part, especially when we consider the price that was paid for us.

The Bible teaches that we have sold ourselves for nothing. All the money in the world could never redeem a single one of us —the offense is against God, and all the wealth of this world rightfully belongs to Him already. "For thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for nought! and ye shall be redeemed without money." [Isa 52:2](#).

The redemption price is the precious blood of Christ. The shedding of blood requires suffering,

and as in the type, so in the anti-type, the offering was slain. So in order to redeem us Christ was made to suffer and die. Our sins inflicted pain on the very Son of God, and since Christ declared Himself to be one with the Father, I think we can say they inflicted pain upon God Himself. I believe that nothing short of the blood of Christ was sufficient; when we consider the price of our redemption we can see something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and also of our value in God's sight.

If we ever feel ourselves useless, or of little value, let us consider our redemption price; and if we are fearful that the Lord will forsake us and cast us away entirely, let us again consider our redemption price. Does it seem reasonable that God will cast away such a valuable possession, or one which has been purchased with so great a price?

Now the knowledge of these things should inspire in us a burning desire to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called," and of our redemption price.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE (Article 02)

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

Article Two — October 1968

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." [1Co 6:20](#).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but by the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and with-out spot." [1Pe 1:18-19](#).

Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. [1Co 7:23](#).

I think there is nothing so well designed to encourage the Lord's people to faith and faithfulness than the knowledge of the great redemption price, and of what it cost the Father and the Son to purchase them that they might be delivered from the power of sin and Satan. Having been bought by God, and with a price so costly, they are not their own, but belong to God. God, being their owner, has placed His seal upon them: the seal of His own divine nature. This is the work of God's Spirit to give them a new life and a capacity to receive spiritual things. God has begun a good work in them that shall be successfully carried out, and completed in a glorious resurrection. All of those for whom the price has been paid shall finally stand before God, fully justified and cleansed from all iniquity; and in their glorified bodies, shall be free from all sin and sinning. Knowing these things, what manner of men ought we to be?

Our lives should be entirely devoted to God and godliness. With all our earthly cares and responsibilities, we owe our first responsibility to Him. Responsibility toward our families is a very real duty and material things are necessary; but our Divine Owner knows all this and has assured us that when we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first, all these things shall be provided. We must ever bear in mind the fact that, although God is our owner and we his servants, He is also our Father.

It was customary among the ancient Hebrews, that when a man assumed lifetime ownership of a slave, the servant's ear would be placed against the door post and pierced through with an awl. This was sometimes done with the full consent of the servant involved. We are truly the property of our heavenly Master as though our own ear had been this pierced.

No doubt, many of those individuals who were submitted to this treatment were doing so to their own advantage — its is always so with the Lord's servants, for we serve a good master. Christ's

disciples are not only His servants, but also the Lord's free men; yet not free to do as they please, except as they please to do right. God has not only delivered His people from the bondage of sin and made them to be servants of righteousness, but has made them His own children. But even children can be disobedient, and sometimes are. God's children are no exception, and "Whom the Father loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." [Heb 12:6](#).

May we be quick to do the bidding of the Lord, humble in prosperity, patient in affliction, and may we ever be thankful that we have such a Master. Father, and Friend.

BRIDLING THE TONGUE

BRIDLING THE TONGUE

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlenth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." ([Jas 1:26](#))

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." ([Jas 3:2](#))

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." ([Jas 3:5-6](#))

The importance of this subject is so very great that I am faced with a real problem to know how may best write about it. I pray God that I may be able to comment upon the above texts in as clear and forcible a manner as possible. I know that if I may be able to write in this way, and if my writing be accompanied by the convicting power of God's Spirit, this article will be of great value to God's people and His church.

I know of no better way to begin, than to simply insist that our readers get their Bibles, at this moment, and read the entire epistle of James. It is a wonderful sermon on works, and has been timely in every age of the Church's history. The language is so very plain, and the instruction so clearly practical that it would seem that little comment should be necessary..

Many articles have been written on the subject of controlling the tongue, and all too often the reader will agree with the article and then simply go on in his or her own undisturbed way, allowing his tongue to ramble on as usual. A great many people make a practice of carrying a pitchfork along with them anyway, with which to pitch what they hear or read, by way of correction, over on the other fellow. Perhaps all of us are guilty of that to some extent. It is certain that all of us are guilty, to some extent, of sinning with our tongues, so we had better carry a rake along and pull some of this in to ourselves.

I am sure we all know something of the danger, and destructiveness of loose conversation and gossip. That is an ugly word, gossip, and even "Old Baptists" are sometimes guilty of indulging in it: "I heard," and "so and so told me" can be very injurious, and these expressions are, quite generally, unbecoming in Christian people. It is sometimes needful or even necessary to pass on some uncomplimentary information about someone, but we should always be very sure that our source of information is reliable, and that the need of passing it to another truly exists. In most cases, even if the information is true, it is best to forget it. There is almost nothing so unkind as malicious gossip, because it grows and grows, and becomes distorted out of all proportions. The following little poem expresses very well what I mean:

If you were tempted to reveal
A tale someone to you has told

About another, make it pass,
Before you speak, three gates of gold.
Three narrow gates. First, "Is it true?"
Then, "Is it needful?" in your mind
Give truthful answer, and the next is last and narrowest.
"Is it kind?"

And if it reach your lips at last,
It passes through these gateways three,
Then you may tell, nor fear
What the results of speech may be.

So much for the careless tongue. The sharp tongue is also evil. "I sure told them" and "I sure gave him a piece of my mind" are familiar expressions, but these should never be used by Christian people. It is sometimes necessary to be plain, but I am convinced that sharp criticism seldom ever accomplishes anything except to hurt people's feelings and cause resentment. Christ has set the example for all of His followers and when He was reviled against He reviled not again, and when He was smitten He refused to strike back. His instruction to us is, "If one smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Striking back over trivial matters is always wrong, and this includes striking back with the tongue. This lesson will apply especially to ministers and deacons, and their wives; as they are in a position to do more harm, as well as good, than the other church people. We should always be conscious of this fact, and guard our conversation very closely.

I believe there is always some danger in "idle chatter," and it is certainly possible for one to be "too big a talker." Perhaps we have all heard the expressions, "An empty wagon always makes the most noise" and "still water runs deep." The Bible has a better expression, "For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words."

[\(Ec 5:3\)](#)

There is another matter I wish to mention while writing on this subject: In the 18th chapter of Matthew we find a rule for settling differences between brethren and dealing with offenders. The instruction is, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him ALONE." Only as a last resort is the matter to be brought before the church. The offense is not to be mentioned to anyone until every effort has been made to bring about a reconciliation. I feel that this rule is neglected more frequently than it is observed. All too often, the one who feels offended immediately begins complaining to others, and says nothing to the one whom he feels has offended. Perhaps the offending party does not even know he has offended, and just possibly he has not trespassed against the other at all. When the Lord's people wilfully disregard this important rule, their action can only result in injury to themselves and others. When people begin talking about their grievances, others begin taking sides and the matter may result in a full-scale battle; with serious injury or even destruction to the church. "Behold what a great matter a little fire kindle-th." I remember a slogan that I learned in school with regard to the prevention of forest fires — "One tree can make a million matches ... One match can destroy a million trees."

Our first text says that if any man seem to be religious and bridled not his tongue, he deceiveth his own heart. It ends with the conclusion that this man's religion IS VAIN. My friends, this is a serious matter. May God grant us the grace to meditate profitably upon this subject, and to apply the apostle's wise instruction to our lives.

BY DEGREES

BY DEGREES

But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. — [Isa 28:13](#).

Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. [Joh 11:44](#).

I wrote in a former article (the one on pride) that I believed the whole 28th chapter of Isaiah deals with the subject of the Lord's people's condition in nature, their condition in grace, and their transition from nature to grace"; and that it is highly experimental. I am still of that opinion. While I believe the giving of life (both natural and spiritual) is instantaneous, I do not believe the transition from nature to grace is instantaneous, but by degrees. I think that is where the "Christian experience" comes in. What we call the "Christian experience" is nothing more nor less than the Lord's spiritual dealings with his people. In order to bring them to the place where they will see and recognize the truth, and be willing to walk in it, He deals with them both providentially and spiritually.

The Lord does not deal with all of his children exactly alike however. Indeed, there is a vast difference in the Christian experience of some of his children and that of others. Our first text deals, very graphically, with the experience of vast numbers of His children; those who, at first, are violently opposed to God's truth and His way, and who must be taught by bitter experience to humbly obey. I can best explain what I understand this text to teach, by using a specific example. I have heard a certain brother tell, many times, of his experience. It seems that this brother was religiously inclined from his earliest recollection, but, like a great many others, his religion was a religion of "works"; and when he first united with a church, it was one that held to a "works system". When he first came in contact with the Primitive Baptists, he found their doctrine especially obnoxious. It was not only foolishness to him, but was something to be despised. He was obsessed with the idea that he must and could win heaven and immortal glory by obeying the commandments of God. He came to know something of the stern nature of God's law, and that the law demanded perfection, so he set about to improved his life so as to "measure up" to the demands of the law. But it wasn't long before he learned, by experience, that he was attempting the impossible; and it was not until after he had given up in despair that he was wiling to acknowledge that eternal salvation is purely and altogether, and alone, by sovereign grace and mercy of God. This is what one would call "pride humbled." But he had learned that "the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." — [Isa 28:20](#).

"But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept etc." The brother I mentioned learned the ways of the Lord by degrees, and much that he believed was in error. But he was learning all the while, "here a little, and there a little." And the purpose of it all was "that they might go" — and this brother went. He went about trying to "work out" his eternal salvation. "—and fall backward: he failed in keeping the wards: he failed in keeping the law, again and again. "—and be broken". This brother was broken: his resolves were broken and his heart was broken. "—and snared". This brother found that the law, which he had trusted in, had now become a snare to him. "and taken." This brother found that there was no escape except through the sovereign grace of God; so he was finally taken in this snare—and found it to have been God's snare all along. And that, I think, is the great overall teaching of the text.

Our second text is in connection with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus was physically and corporally dead, and, in a state of nature, all men are dead spiritually. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead without human assistance, and he does so in the case of the spiritually dead. After Lazarus had been restored to life, and had come forth from the tomb, Jesus commanded his disciples to "loose him" by unwrapping the grave-clothes; and so Jesus commands his ministers to preach the true gospel; not to give spiritual life, but to loose his children from the fetters which bind them. They must be freed from the fetters (grave-clothes) of freshly pride-, with its mistaken ideas and false practices. Such is growth in grace and knowledge.

CHARIOT OF FIRE (Article 01)

CHARIOT OF FIRE Article 01

"And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire." [Eze 1:4](#).

I have in mind to attempt writing a series of articles on the first chapter of Ezekiel, and have decided to give it the above title. My reason for this choice of titles will appear, I hope, before the series is ended.

Ezekiel was a priest, and the Lord appeared to him in a wonderful vision, when he was among the captives of Israel, by the river of Chebar, in Chaldea. The glory of the Lord is represented in the whirlwind, the cloud, the fire, the four living creatures, the wheels, the firmament, the rainbow and the glorious throne. Deep and mysterious lessons are involved here, and I cannot hope to do the subject anything like complete justice, but shall make this Attempt with the aid of the commentators, Gill and Matthew Henry —consulting also the opinions of others.

The first verse says, "the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." In this respect, as in others, it was with Ezekiel as it was with John, on the Isle of Patmos, as recorded in Revelation. The heavens were opened as they were at our Lord's baptism, and at the stoning of Stephen.

"And I looked, etc."—being under the power of the Spirit. Reader, please get your Bible, immediately, and read the entire chapter. Notice, God spoke to Ezekiel from out the midst of the whirlwind, as he did with Job; and out of the midst of the fire, as he did with the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. God appears in the darkness of a cloud, for "none can look upon His face and live." See [Ex 33:20](#).

This is a fair representation of God, for in [Ps 50:3](#) we read, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestous round about him." Again, in [Heb 12:29](#), we read "For our God is a consuming fire." At the time of the dedication of the temple, the house was filled with a cloud, and we read that "the priests could not see to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. Then said Solomon, The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness." [2Ch 5:14; 6:1](#). So, in spite of the brightness, Ezekiel could not see with perfect vision, because of the cloud. We cannot understand the wondrous works of God, nor comprehend his greatness; either in his works, or his glorious person. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of

God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." [Ro 11:33](#). In this life, we see only "through a glass darkly."

God is a fire, enveloped in a cloud; yet Ezekiel saw "a brightness about it" and I think that brightness exceeded the brightness of fire. There is a brightness about the infinite perfections of God, that no earthly figure can describe. God is not only a fire, but he is also infinite wisdom, power and holiness. In Ezekiel's vision, forms begin to take shape : bright forms, "as the color of amber.:" As we peer into the cloud which envelops the dread personage of God, by the light of Christian experience and the written word of God, forms take shape and we are made to see something of the glory and majesty of our Heavenly Father.

Notice, the fire was "infolding itself." It was not leaping up in what we call flames, but appeared as an orb, or globe, or wheel of fire. It was concentrated within itself. I shall quote from Matthew Henry — "The fire of God's glory shines forth, but it presently catcheth itself for he lets us know but parts of his ways; the fire of God's wrath breaks forth, but presently catch-eth itself, and the divine patience suffers not all of his wrath to be stirred up. If it were not a fire thus infolding itself, O Lord ! Who could stand?" End quote. What a mercy that the fire infoldeth itself : "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

CHARIOT OF FIRE (Article 02)

CHARIOT OF FIRE

Article 02

Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. [Eze 1:5-6](#).

Some of the prophetic portions of the Bible are highly figurative and abound with imagery. The book of Ezekiel is an outstanding example of this. This vision of Ezekiel, which we find recorded in the first chapter, is composed entirely of images and is altogether figurative. It is deep, mysterious, awesome – and yet, very beautiful in its application.

Out of the midst of the whirlwind, the cloud, the fire, and the brightness; came the likeness of four living creatures. The word likeness means resemblance – of four living creatures. I think it best to tell our readers, without further delay, that I believe the "living creatures" represent the gospel ministry. We, as Primitive Baptist, believe in a "called ministry". We believe that every true gospel minister has been called of God, to this work. So, as a minister, he has come forth from God — who is a Fire, "dwelling in thick darkness", and "it is very tempestuous round about Him." The minister receives his authority from God, and must be "endued with power from on high", before he can go forth with success. They are called "living creatures" because they must have life, spiritual life, as distinguished from the dead in sins. They must also be full of spiritual vitality, as distinguished from some of God's children who are spiritually sick or asleep. I suspect, also, that Ezekiel called them "living creatures" because he didn't know just what else to call them. He couldn't call them men, or lions, nor eagles, nor oxen — although they bore the resemblance of all four.

There were four "living creatures" — perhaps signifying how our Lord's apostles were to go out into all the world, ie. the four quarters of the earth. "And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man." Not merely the likeness of mankind in general, but the likeness of a particular man — I like to think, of the man Christ Jesus. Ezekiel could well say, "the likeness of a man", because they are men — with like passions as other men — but, more especially, of this particular man. Upon one occasion, it was said of two of our Lord's apostles, "and they marvelled ; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." [Ac 4:13](#). This is what distinguishes the true minister and servant of the Lord, Jesus Christ, from other men: a close acquaintance-ship with Jesus. He has revealed himself to them in a special way, they have studied of him out of his written word, they have gone to him often in prayer, they have meditated on the things of God.

"And every one had four faces—." We have heard of people being "two-faced", but these "living creatures" are four-faced". These are not deceitful faces, however, for their faces—although being different — are in harmony with each other; and are all necessary, in order for them to perform the work that God has enjoined upon them. We have here, four representations of the true gospel minister. Each of the four faces represents a quality that he must possess, in order for him to perform his work properly. God calls his servants, I think, with regard to certain natural and certainly spiritual qualifications, and, under the influence of his Spirit, these qualifications are quickened and improved upon. God has certain fields of labor for his ministers, and imparts to them the qualifications needed for the place that they should occupy.

"And every one had four wings." The purpose for which they have four wings is explained, farther on in the chapter, but we now need to notice, especially, that they each have wings. The primary lesson, to me, is that they are swift to do the bidding of the Lord. According to the Lord's commandment, when he said' "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, etc.", the apostles did go forth, and swiftly. Very swiftly, the gospel was spread throughout the Roman empire. Churches were established, and many thousands embraced. the teachings of Christianity. I have read that, in the short span of fifty years following the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, there was a church reared to his memory in every principal city of the Roman Empire. 'Such was the zeal and fortitude of the apostles, and such was the determination and faithfulness of the churches; that, in spite of persecutions, the gospel of Christ was carried the length and breadth of the empire—in a very short time. One might say that the glad tidings of the Kingdom flew, on the wings of the wind; but, in reality, it was primarily upon the wings of the "living creatures" — the apostles.

The true and faithful minister of Christianity still has wings: wings with which to fly, and wings with which to cover his body. As we study further, we will discover that two of the wings of the "living creatures" were used for flying and two were used to cover their bodies. The faithful minister must be swift to do the Lord's work, yet humble and willing to hide himself behind the cross of Christ. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." [1Co 2](#) :2. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." [2Co 4](#) :5. Faithfulness and humility are the outstanding characteristics of the true servants of the Lord.

CHARIOT OF FIRE (Article 03)

CHARIOT OF FIRE

Article 03

As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also in the face of an eagle. [Eze 1:10](#)

We have here four representations of the true gospel ministry. Ezekiel saw the combined ministry of our Lord as four living creatures, each having four faces as described above. Every true minister of the word has the various characteristics suggested by the four faces of the living creatures. It is important to notice that the description of each of the four is exactly the same, and also that their wings were joined one to another —denoting unity of action. God calls, and qualifies his ministers, and, while there is a difference in their various gifts and abilities, they possess certain characteristics which are common to all ; and are bound together by a common faith and by a mutual love for the Lord and his service. This is the fellowship which exists between them. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." [1Jo 1:3](#). We have here a lesson as to the relationship which should always exist between the servants of God, and did certainly exist between the apostles.

These each had the face of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. Let us consider each of these representations in turn. First, the face of a man. Man, of all earthly creatures, possesses a high degree of intelligence ; being able to reason, from cause to effect and from effect back to cause. Man, alone, is able to discern good and evil. The true and useful minister must possess these qualities to a high degree, but I believe that even more is suggested in this figure, "the face of a man." In spite of his high calling, the gospel minister is yet but a man, and not some superior sort of being. He has like passions as other men, and is subject to temptations. He must have the supporting grace of God. and stands greatly in need of prayer. He needs the cooperation and encouragement of his brethren — both of the ministry and of the laity. The people must realize this, in order to give the support to their ministers that is required of them.

Second, "the face of a lion". The lion is noted for boldness and strength, and is called "the king of beasts"; and the gospel minister must be bold as a lion, and travel in the strength of the Almighty. The lion is also fierce, and while the servant of the Lord must be gentle and patient with all men, there are times when he must display fierceness against sin and wickedness; as our Lord did when he drove the money changers from the temple. These "men of God" are given authority to act as ambassadors for Christ, and. to "reprove, , rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

Third, "the face of an ox." —The ox represents patience and strength. The minister must be patient. My dictionary gives four definitions of the word, patience. — a Uncomplaining endurance of wrongs or misfortunes. b Forbearance; leniency. c Act or power of calmly waiting for something. d Perseverance. We are told that a team of oxen, when moving a heavy load, will hang their heads low and put forth every ounce of their strength, when necessary. They have even been known to go to their knees under extremely heavy loads, pulling with all their might and moaning heavily. The ox is slow of motion, deliberate and the very opposite of impulsiveness; and, when well broke, becomes thoroughly dependable.

Fourth, "the face of an eagle." — Just as the lion is called the "king of beasts" so the eagle is known as "the king of birds." The eagle is also noted for great strength and keenness of vision.

She is also noted for speed. The gospel minister, especially the pastor of churches, must possess a keen eye ; for he is a watchman to the city. He must be able to note the approach of the enemy from a great distance away. He also must be able to soar higher in knowledge and experience than those of his care. "They that wait upon (trust in and serve) the Lord, shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." [Isa 40:31](#). The true minister must be swift to do the bidding of the Lord. No minister can be fully useful, in the Lord's service, until he possesses all of the qualities suggested by the four faces of our text, and in a high degree. This provides a challenge to every man who "desireth the office of a bishop", because the gifts the Lord imparts can be developed and improved upon; hence the admonition, "study to show thyself approved unto God etc." Solemn responsibility rests upon every one who is called to this sacred office, to make full use of his God-given ability, and to heed the Lord's admonitions to acquire knowledge and to gain strength by exercise. Contrary to the idea of some folks, the life of a faithful minister is not an easy one, but it is extremely rewarding — in things which matter more than the wealth of this world.

CHARIOT OF FIRE (Article 04)

CHARIOT OF FIRE Article 04

And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. – [Eze 1:12](#)

The key to a proper understanding of the above text is found in the expression "whither the spirit was to go, they went." I believe the spirit, under consideration, is the spirit of God – or the Holy Spirit; and the true gospel minister is one who follows the leading of that Spirit. This does not mean that every truly God-called and faithful minister is always found "walking after the Spirit" – nor does it mean that any of them follow the leading of the Spirit perfectly. But whenever the Lord's servant departs from the good way in which God's Spirit directs, he is no longer true to his profession, and, at that particular time, can no longer qualify as a true and faithful minister. The picture presented in this first chapter of Ezekiel is that of the true and faithful gospel minister. Some think that the spirit mentioned here is their spirit (the spirit of the "living creatures") but, if so, it is their spirit as directed by God's spirit. It is only as their spirit is directed by God's spirit that their work is profitable in his service.

In the book of Proverbs, we find this text. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." [Pr 4:25-27](#). If it is important for every one of God's children to heed the admonition of that text, how much more important is it for the gospel minister to give heed? The minister is

to be an "example to the flock". We are also exhorted to "try the spirits whether they are of God". "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." [1Jo 4:1](#). The way to try the spirits is by the written word of God.

Paul said, "— forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." [Php 3:13-14](#). And again, in Hebrews, "— let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, LOOKING UNTO JESUS the author and finisher of our faith." [Heb 12:1-2](#). When we are "looking unto Jesus" and seeking to do his will, we are moving "straight forward". It is not easy to run the Christian race successfully, for the allurements of the flesh and the devil are quite severe at times. It is especially hard to avoid extremes of one kind or another. All of us, and ministers especially, have this to guard against. I am convinced that most trouble in churches, and between churches, is the result of extreme positions — on the part of some, especially ministers.

When two or more influential ministers are at opposite poles, so to speak, each occupying positive positions—yet opposite; you have an explosive mixture. When even one well loved and able minister is an extremist, much harm may be the result. But if we are all moving "straight forward" and with our wings fastened together, as in the case of the "living creatures" that Ezekiel saw, and each traveling in the spirit and power of the Almighty; peace and prosperity will rest' upon Zion.

Let us, unitedly, pray that God will show us the way: that he will humble our hearts, and give us the strength and courage to forsake every false way: that he will lead us his steps.

CHARIOT OF FIRE (Article 05)

CHARIOT OF FIRE Article Five

Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. [Eze 1:15-16](#).

Just as Ezekiel saw four living creatures, he saw also four wheels — one by each of the living creatures. Now, if the living creatures represent the gospel ministry, and I think they do; then, surely, the wheels represent the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The churches are found by, or near, the ministers. As the living creatures bear the same resemblance, so do the wheels. As the living creatures travel, with their wings fastened one to the other, so the wheels move in

unison. This last is explained by the 20th verse, "Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." This is a picture of the divine arrangement: the ministers and the churches being motivated and led by the Holy Spirit of God. It is only in this way that Christianity has been made to prosper in an enemy land — for this world is Satan's dominion. How thankful we should be that God has set certain bounds beyond which the great adversary cannot go, and someday our enemy will be destroyed. He possesses great power, as of yet; and ministers and churches are not always found following the Spirit, but are sometimes found "walking after the flesh."

"The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl." A beryl is a precious stone, and the church is very precious and beautiful in the sight of God. This is true of each separate organized body, that goes to make up the one true church of the Lord, Jesus Christ; despite the fact that all are composed of very imperfect creatures of time. The great beauty of the church is the imputed righteousness of Christ, which belongs to every heaven born soul. This, together with the fact that the spiritual life of every one of God's children is the very life of God Himself. When we consider the church from a spiritual standpoint, we, also, can see something of its great beauty; and it becomes very precious to us also. We can know something of the exceeding preciousness of the church, in God's sight, when we consider the great redemption price. The church was purchased by no lesser price than the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus. I feel convinced, that if we could see the church as God sees it, we would not be so quick to criticize and complain — nor become so easily offended. We would simply be better citizens of the Kingdom than we often are.

"—and they four had one likeness etc." Every gospel church has the "same likeness" with every other gospel church, for they all bear a marked resemblance to their Lord. This does not mean, however, that they are exactly alike, or that they all possess, to the same degree, those Christian graces that are so commendable in professed followers of Christ. A gospel church can be guilty of very grave errors, and still be recognized as one of Christ's churches; as we may discover by reading the letters to the "seven churches of Asia". It certainly behooves every church, and each individual member of the church, to labor faithfully to "live up" to the gospel standard set forth in the Bible. When we fail to do this, we may reasonably expect to reap the consequences, for, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." [Re 3:19](#). There is nothing more clearly taught, in the Bible, than the fact that the Lord blesses His children in obedience and chastises them in disobedience.

Our text next speaks of the appearance of the wheels and of their work. There is work for the churches to do: the church is not simply for the comfort and enjoyment of the members. Wheels are for the purpose of movement, and the church is designed to "move forward". The gospel is to bourn to God's elect people wherever the Spirit may lead, and Bible teaching is to become the rule of life for more and more of God's people. Their appearance and their work is that of "a wheel in the middle of a wheel". Gill has this to say of the wheels — "—the work or make of them was in a transverse way, or cross way ; just as two hoops may be put together crossways, and so form four semicircles, and these a globe or sphere — and it was upon those four semicircles that the four faces of the ox, the man, the lion, and the eagle, were engraven; the reason for their being wrought in this form was, for the motion of them; as follows: "When they

went, they went upon their four sides etc." On either of their crossing rings, as they were directed by the living creatures, at whose side they stood: "and they returned not when they went"; they had no need to turn about when they were to go east, west, north, or south, as wheels usually do; but they turned on the crossing ring, which was toward either of the four points. This denotes the perseverance of the churches, and the true members thereof, in faith and practice; they don't turn back, nor look back, but go right on, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in all his ways and ordinances." How wonderful if the Lord's people, and his churches, would always be found traveling in this honest, upright, and normal way. Then, peace and prosperity would rest upon Zion.

CHARIOT OF FIRE (Article 06)

CHARIOT OF FIRE Article Six

"And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies. And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings."

[Eze 1:23-24](#)

Webster gives this definition of the word, firmament — "The vault or arch of the sky; the heavens." So the text could read, "The sky over the heads of the living creatures was the color of the terrible crystal." Crystal is very white, transparent, precious stone, resembling ice, from whence it has its name. By reading this entire chapter again, our readers will notice that, above this firmament is a throne, with a glorious personage seated thereon. Ezekiel could not get a clear view of what was above the firmament, however, because .of the color of the firmament, like frosted glass. So mortal, finite, men cannot look clearly into the glory-world nor understand the workings of the Eternal Mind. We can only see the dim outline, for, "now we see through a glass darkly." We can see enough, however, to know that there is a God, that He is a glorious personage, and that He occupies a throne. Christ is seated upon the throne of his Father. I am sure that the crystal firmament is no obstacle to His vision: Christ is able to see all that goes on among the living creatures, the wheels, and everything on the earth; and his saints also see him by faith, and through the glass of the gospel.

Just as the feet of the living creatures were straight feet, so also were their wings. Gill says that two of their wings were constantly pointing straight upward and were fastened together. If his position is correct, this will represent how the true gospel minister is continually pointing to Christ. We would call attention, also, to the fact that Ezekiel saw them having wings which covered their bodies. This represents humility, for the true minister knows something of his weakness and sinfulness, and that what he has of good has been received from God. He can join with Paul in saying "By the grace of God, I am what I am."

And when they went," preaching the gospel, and administering ordinances: "I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters:" so the voice of Christ, which is no other than his Gospel preached by his ministers, is said to be as the sound of many waters, [Re 1:15](#) "As the voice of the Almighty;" the gospel being the word of God, and not of man; which is quick and powerful, and full of majesty, and works effectually in them that believe. "The voice is speech;" an articulate voice, pronounced by men, whom God employs to deliver out his mind and will. "As the noise of an host;" for the servants of God are many, and the church gives assent to the preached gospel and joins in sounding out the truths declared in God's word. We see here a beautiful picture of how the light of the gospel was first bourn forth by the apostles of our Lord, then how others caught the torch, and yet others; until the light of Christianity became a great orb, dimming the light of this earthly sun for countless thousands, perhaps millions, of the Lord's children. So Christian influence shall continue to spread throughout the earth, and, by the grace of God, shall become an ever greater, and more militant, force for good in the world. Christianity has its seeming, though temporary, setbacks in the world; but we have the blessed promise that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." [Isa 9:7](#).

"When they stood, they let down their wings." This denotes the fact that, after they have delivered the message and the work is done, they are willing to rest in the knowledge that the outcome, and final result of their labors, is in the hands of the Lord: "Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." They are willing to cover their own bodies with their wings and allow God to receive the glory. They are willing to wait for further instructions, and, while waiting, rest in the promises of God. Quiet meditation is necessary for the recharging of one's spiritual battery, and is as necessary for spiritual growth and development as required activity. This is true of the minister as well as others. There must be time for the simply drinking in of God's love.

CHARIOT OF FIRE (Article 07)

CHARIOT OF FIRE Article Seven

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about it. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the brightness of the Lord. And when I saw it I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. [Eze 1:26-28](#).

We have now arrived at the place that, in order for the reader to get the most out of this series of articles on [Eze 1](#), it will be necessary to review the six articles which have preceded this. I therefore make this request of each of our readers. – Please read, again, the preceding articles in this series. The series started with our March issue. As you do this, please compare the vision which Ezekiel saw, with John's vision as recorded in [Re 4](#). Here Ezekiel's "living creatures"

appear again – as the “four beasts” of John’s vision. The church is also represented in John’s vision, only not in the figure of wheels, but now in the figure of the “four and twenty elders.” But the same glorious throne appears in both of these visions, and the same glorious personage is seated upon it. Only, in John’s vision, Christ appears also as “the lion of the tribe of Judah” and “a lamb as it had been slain”. But we would call attention to the same “rainbow” about the throne.

The rainbow is given as a sign of the covenant. It was so in Noah’s day, when God first placed the bow in the cloud, as a token of God’s promise that the earth would never again be destroyed by water; and, it is so with regard to the vision of Ezekiel and of John – only, now, it represents the glorious attributes of God, which are the seal of God’s faithfulness in all the covenants which he has made; including the “everlasting covenant” which is “ordered in all things, and sure.” Our hope, for time and eternity, depends upon all of God’s glorious attributes: upon all that God is. God is perfect: infinitely pure, in all his attributes. This is represented in the brightness which is “round about him.” Nothing is brighter than “white light”; but, when light is broken down into its different elements, it appears in all the colors of the rainbow. The gospel is the prism which separates the “brightness” of God, and presents the various attributes, or elements, of that brightness. Perhaps most of us, at some time or other, have held a glass prism up to the sunlight and have seen it reflect the colors of the rainbow. Science explains, that what actually takes place is, that the elements of ordinary white light are separated by the filtering action of the glass prism. That being true, white light is made up of a combination of all the colors of the rainbow. Just so, the “brightness” of God is made up of the combination of all his attributes; — Love, Justice; Mercy, Wisdom, Omnipotence, Omnipresence etc. Our hope rests upon these, plus the complete unchangeableness of God.

Now, notice, that in Ezekiel, the church is represented by wheels—four in number. Wheels are for motion, and the number mentioned is the exact number required for a chariot. Webster says that a chariot is a four wheeled pleasure or state carriage. He also mentions the two wheeled "war chariot", but the "Chariot of Fire" in our study, is a royal vehicle — used in the business of a King. Wheels alone will not comprise a chariot, but, when combined with the "living creatures" and with the firmament "over their heads" becomes a carriage fit for the business and "calls of state" of the greatest monarch of all ages; indeed, the great God of all the earth. This does not mean that the ministry and the church is to further the eternal aspects of Christ's kingdom, such as to impart life to dead sinners or anything of that nature; but, there is a sense in which Christ is bourne throughout the earth by the combined work of the church and ministry. Paul said, "according to the grace which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation etc". He goes on to tell what the foundation is: it is none other than Christ. Now, he did not mean that he was, in any way, responsible for Christ being the foundation; but that he had laid that foundation in Zion, for their consideration and enlightenment, and as one for them to build upon. From this standpoint, Christ is bourne to the four quarters of the earth and the gospel exerts its influence upon men and nations.

This is, indeed, a chariot of fire. Before the day of Pente-cost, Christ had called his apostles, and had gathered a nucleus of disciples about him. He had spent much time and labor preparing them for the work which lay before them. He had told them what to do, but cautioned them to wait yet a while. "Tarry ye, in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with POWER FROM ON HIGH."

He departed from them, then, and appeared to them, in the person of his Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began, to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." [Ac 2:3-4](#). Then immediately the church began to move forward. The preached word, attested and proven by mighty works wrought by the Spirit, began "turning the world upside down." The truth of the matter was, the world was already upside down and the word of truth began turning individuals right-side-up.

The doctrines of Christianity began spreading with incredible speed, until countless thousands embraced the religion of Christ. Persecutions arose, but, instead of hampering the growth of this new religion, worked to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. It has been ably and truly said that "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church." The early Christians proved that here was something worth living and dying for. It was on the day of Pentecost that the "church and ministry combination" became a Chariot of Fire, and began rumbling through the earth. This work has continued to this day, and shall continue on, until Christ's reigning work is finished and he hath "put all enemies under his feet". The gospel has never given spiritual life to those who are "dead in sins", but has otherwise transformed the lives of millions. I believe that, despite obstacles and temporary setbacks, the general tendency of Christian teaching and influence has been upward and onward.

CHARITY — GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

CHARITY — GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. [1Co 13:13](#).

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [Ro 5:8](#).

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath given you. [Eph 4:31-32](#).

Let brotherly love continue. [Heb 13:1](#).

Charity - Love in its highest form__ spiritual love. This is a love which is always manifested: one which is always active. It is spiritual love in action. Charity is the greatest of the three grand theological graces, and consists of loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as our self. It is the greatest thing in the world, and its importance is stressed by the Bible declaration that "God is love."

The Bible plainly teaches that if we are without charity, we are nothing; and that without this most important thing, extraordinary gifts and works will profit us nothing.

I believe that love can be divided into two kinds or types: natural love, and spiritual love. The difference between these two kinds of love stems from the fact that they have an entirely different basis. Natural love is prompted by certain natural causes - we have love for certain individuals because of similarity of disposition, common interests, and human relationships.

It has been ably said that "birds of a feather flock together." People are drawn to each other because they are interested in the same things, and enjoy the same things. This is natural or human love.

Spiritual love is different, for it is based upon the greater love of God. It is prompted by the knowledge that God has loved all of His people alike, and has paid the same price for their redemption. This knowledge causes us to love all whom we believe to be born of God's Spirit and especially those of like precious faith.

It forbids that we should hate anyone, or that we should seek revenge: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord". Natural love is right, and necessary, but spiritual love is infinitely superior. "We love God because he first loved us." We love God's people because he has loved them and given his Son to die for them.

With natural love, we love some people more than others; but with spiritual love, we love all of our brethren just alike. We often get these two kinds of love confused. Spiritual love should always take precedence over all human passions, but we frequently allow it to be crowded into the background. This ought not to be.

Spiritual love is what enabled Christ to hate sin, and at the same time, to love sinners. It should also enable us to love our brethren although we may utterly despise some of their ways. When Christ said, "love your enemies, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you," I think he primarily meant by "your enemies", brethren who are turned to be our enemies.

The duty to love our enemies, and to do good unto them, is enforced by the expression "for while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Sinners are those who make sinning their business, and are therefore, enemies of God and righteousness.

With these remarks in mind, please turn to the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, and see if you don't think that charity spoken of there is spiritual love.

Notice the description of charity - "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, believe all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Now the above quotation might give someone the idea that, if we have charity, we will allow almost anything in the church, will never exclude anyone from the fellowship, and will continue to give encouragement to those who persistently continue to evil doing.

The Bible does not teach that kind of doctrine anywhere, for such a position would destroy all church discipline and order, hence the church itself. The Bible teaches plainly that the honor of God's house must be upheld and defended. Let us never forget the example of the meek and lowly Jesus. When he saw God's house being profaned he platted a whip of cords and, in anger, drove the money-changers from the temple.

If charity was allowed to have its way, there would be no profaning of the temple.

So charity is the greatest thing of all. We need to let it reign supreme, for when we do, Zion shall prosper, and so shall we.

"Let brotherly love continue."

CHRISTIANITY OR EVOLUTION? IT CANNOT BE BOTH

CHRISTIANITY OR EVOLUTION? IT CANNOT BE BOTH

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred from the faith." [1Ti 6:20-21](#).

The teachings of evolution, as they pertain to the "origin of the species", are popular but unproven theory. The Bible speaks forth in no uncertain terms, when it says, "In the beginning God created, etc." and "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And again, "God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good." I hope the reader will notice the repeated expression, "After his kind, and after their kind". This is a law that has never been violated.

No person, who is at all familiar with the teachings of evolution, can read the first two chapters of Genesis without seeing, immediately, that there is no harmony, whatever, between Genesis and the Evolution Theory. Yet, some, in an effort to accept what they believe to be the findings of science, and at the same time hold on to their religious faith, concerning God and the Bible, have endeavored to find a harmony between the two. These people, in hopeful thinking and in ignorance, have declared that the teachings of evolution do not deny either God or the Bible. But these can never be harmonized, and are in direct opposition to each other.

One writer says that those who try to cling to both the Bible and the Evolution Theory remind

him of a trick rider who rides two horses at the same time. He remarks that he has seen this done, but, in every case, both horses were going in the same direction. The teachings of the Bible and the teachings of evolution are horses going in opposite directions. Evolution teaches that all life originated from a single small beginning, and that the various forms "evolved", the higher from the lower, until the eventual result of the process became the intelligent and reasoning creature known as man. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that man was created in the image of God, but that through transgression he fell; and that nothing but the grace of God, and the operation of His, Spirit, can restore this fallen creature to anything like his former estate. Evolution says, "Just look how far man has come: how far he has risen. Just think how far he may yet develop under this process of improvement." But the Bible says, "Just look how far man has fallen! There is no hope for him, apart from the sovereign love and grace of God! The unproven and false theory tends to exalt man, and to excuse or even deny what the Bible calls sin. What the theologians call "sin" is but the natural product of this process of evolving from the lower to the higher, don't you see? But the truth of the Bible exalts God, although man is debased, and it promises great and glorious things, by which God and his people shall finally be glorified together. Evolution teaches that man has been in process of development for thousands and millions of years, and, if that theory was correct, it might yet take thousands and millions of years for man to reach a state of perfection; but the Bible teaches that shortly the Lord Jesus Christ shall come, and, in a glorious resurrection, every heir of glory shall stand perfected in His presence. So let's never become guilty of trying to excuse or defend this false theory, "oppositions of science falsely so called", which is the invention of corrupt and fallen man, and one of the instruments of Satan — who "is a liar from the beginning."

I wonder how many of our readers realize how widely these false and perverse things are being taught in our modern schools and colleges, and to what extent it has permeated even religious institutions. I wonder how many realize anything of the terrible toll they have taken among our young people — in robbing them of one of their most priceless possessions, the "faith of their fathers". If the reality of God and Godly principles cannot be taught in our schools, then certainly the theory of Godless evolution should not be taught there. If it is right to teach "about religion", then it may be right to teach about evolution, but it should always be made clear that this is only theory, the opinions of some individuals, and not proven facts.

There is no true evidence that new species have or can evolve from other distinct species, and certainly there is no evidence that any is now in the process of evolving.

If any of our readers have a son or daughter whose faith is now wavering, or one who is soon to be exposed to what is called "higher learning", I can recommend a book that may prove priceless to them and their parents. It is entitled "Modern Science and the Genesis Record" and may be obtained from the Zondervan Book Store, 25 Division Ave. So., Grand Rapids, Michigan. The author, Harry Rimmer, speaks as both a scientist and a Bible teacher. He makes the evolutionists look positively silly. "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God."

CLOUD OF WITNESSES

CLOUD OF WITNESSES

I have in mind to try writing a number of articles on the book of Hebrews, which has long been a favorite division of Scripture with me. Paul's letter is directed to the followers of Christ among the Hebrews: those who were most intimately acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, and with the ceremonial law.

I have entitled this article, "Cloud of Witnesses;" because Paul, in the eleventh chapter, deals quite extensively with this subject. The expression itself is not found, however, until we arrive at the twelfth chapter; where we read, "Wherefore seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses - - " but that text itself remains for a future article. My purpose now is to review some of the Lord's dealings with his Old Testament saints, and with His church in those days.

It is well for us, I believe, to begin an article of this kind by calling attention to the fact that the Hebrew Nation was, in those days, as truly the church of God as the church of Jesus Christ is His church today. The word 'church' means called out by a proper authority, and for a specific purpose. The church of God is that people whom God has called out for the purpose of testifying or bearing witness. From out all the nations of the earth, God called out one small nation that they might be his own representative people. Of course, the people of this nation were not the only people in that day whom God loved, nor were they the only ones who were saved with an eternal salvation; for God's work of regenerating souls and preparing them for heaven and immortal glory has been going on in all ages and, we believe, among all people. So those who comprise the church today are, by no means, the only ones who possess eternal life, but are simply those who bear witness.

God spoke to Abraham and promised that He would make of him a great nation, and that his descendants should possess the land that God showed him. This promise was renewed to Isaac and to Jacob. We are familiar with the story of Joseph, and how he(through jealousy, was sold into Egypt where he found favor with the king, and became a man of great power and authority. We also know how that Jacob, together with his sons, became inhabitants of the land of Egypt. Now the Scriptures declare that the Lord multiplied the descendants of Jacob in the land of Egypt until they became such a great multitude that the Egyptians began to fear them, and placed heavy burdens upon them and persecuted them. For four hundred years the children of Israel dwelt among the Egyptians and served them, then came the time for their deliverance. So God raised up Moses, a type of Christ, to lead them out from under the yoke.

We know how that the power of God was demonstrated in His people's behalf by sending the plagues upon the Egyptians, and the dividing of the sea before His people, Israel. We remember how they saw their enemies destroyed behind them. But God led them forth into a wilderness, and through it, by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. The Scriptures declare that God was in the cloud and in the fire. When they thirsted, God caused a river of water to flow out of a rock, and when they hungered He caused bread to fall from heaven; and in all their wanderings, their shoes never wore out and their garments never became threadbare. When they arrived at Mt. Sinai the cloud settled upon the mount, and God spoke to the people from out the fire and smoke and the whole congregation heard the voice and understood the words that were spoken. When Moses was commanded to approach unto God in the mount, the people heard the command; and when God delivered the Ten Commandments to Moses, the people heard the voice of God and the words that were spoken.

Moses was with God in the mountain for forty days and nights, and there delivered to him the ceremonies, to govern their worship. The nature of this law was such as to keep the people

constantly reminded of God and their obligations toward him. Instructions were given to construct a tabernacle, a tent for a place of worship, and the furniture there of; with the instruction "See that thou fashion all things like unto the pattern shown thee in the mount".

Instructions were given to ordain the priests, and their duties were laid out for them.

After these things were accomplished, the cloud lifted from the mount and rested upon the tabernacle: and while the cloud remained upon the tabernacle, Is-rael remained encamped; and when the cloud lifted, they broke up camp and the cloud moved before them. But when the cloud stopped, Israel stopped: and when the cloud moved forward, Israel moved forward. When they made camp, the tabernacle was the first to be set up, and then the tents of the people; and when they prepared to journey onward, the tabernacle was the first to be taken down. When they moved forward, the priests went first, bearing the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle: and when they encamped, the tents of the people were pitched in such a way that all streets led directly to the tabernacle. My impression is that each man, while standing in the door of his tent, could see the tabernacle and the cloud which rested upon it.

The longer I write, the more "keyed up" I become: Oh, this is a powerful thing, when we believe it! Blessed are those who do believe it.

We know something of the murmuring and complainings of Israel, and of these transgressions against Moses and against God. We know, also, of how God chastised them severely, again and again. When they could have entered into the land that God had promised to them, they refused; and were compelled to remain in the wilderness for forty years. But finally they came to the river Jordan, which separated them from the promised land. At that time, the river was at flood stage; but God again divided the waters, and they passed over. The Scriptures state that the very day that they entered into Canaan, the manna ceased and they ate of the old corn of the land.

We have here, a type of how God delivers His people from the bondage of sin, leads them by the Christian experience through the dangers and toils involved with Christian growth, through the waters of baptism and into his church here in the world. I think this is also a type of how God delivers his church from the bondage of the law, leads them through the wilderness of this life, protects and deals with them as his own children, and finally delivers them through the river of death and safely into the heavenly Canaan. But more especially, I think that Canaan is a type of the militant church where, like the national Israel, we are confronted by enemies which must be overcome before ever we can fully possess the land: we must defeat the enemies of doubt, jealousy, hate, and perverse thinking and living, before we can fully possess the blessings that God has in store for His obedient children in this world, and in His spiritual kingdom, the church. Israel was forced to do battle, both while in the wilderness and after entering into the promised land. When they met their enemies in the name of the Lord and in faithfulness to Him, the Lord went with them into battle and they were victorious. But when they forsook the Lord, He forsook them, and they were defeated by their enemies. So it is today with regard to this present life. We need to ever bear in mind the fact that while the covenant which the Lord made with Israel in those days was a conditional one, the promises and threatenings of God were pertaining to this life only; God did not promise Israel that if they would keep his commandments He would give them eternal life and an eternal inheritance, neither did He threaten to banish them forever from His presence because of their disobedience. God's promise to the spiritual Israel, both in that day and in this, is "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes, nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer by faithfulness to fail." [Ps 89:30-33](#).

Great things have been accomplished by the power of God through men and women of faith. These are spoken of in the 11th chapter of Hebrews as being accomplished "through faith." We must remember, however, that faith is "the gift of God and not of works, lest any man should boast." But since faith is something which can be strengthened by exercise, this is something for us to work at. Since God gives an increase of faith to those who request it, this is something to pray for. We must not forget, however, that "it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his pleasure."

In this eleventh chapter, Paul reminds the people of their past history and names many outstanding characters, speaking of the great things which God did for them and for Israel. Then in the next chapter he speaks of these as being a great cloud of witnesses encompassing God's people in those days and of their being a part of the great cloud of witnesses which encompass his people in this gospel age. I invite our readers to turn and read this eleventh chapter of Hebrews, noticing especially the language beginning with the 32nd verse and to the end of the chapter, including the last two verses: "And these all, having received a good report thorough faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect".

CONCERNING "OVERSEERS"

CONCERNING "OVERSEERS"

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

[Ac 20:28](#)

The above text is one which, in my opinion, has been frequently misapplied. The way to misapply a text is to take it out of its original context and make it teach something that the inspired writer and the Holy Ghost never intended. Even if the thing we are trying to prove is correct, I believe it is still a mistake for us to take texts out of context and misuse them in this way. I am convinced this has been done many times, often unknowingly but sometimes knowingly, by ministers and others.

The above text is frequently applied as though it read, "the flocks over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers", or like this; "the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer". But the text doesn't read that way: it is flock (singular) and overseers (plural). We can understand this when we study the context.

When we turn to the Bible account where this text is found, we discover that the Apostle Paul was returning from a missionary journey and was anxious to arrive in Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost. So he determined not to stop for a visit to the church at Ephesus, but to sail on by. As Ephesus was a considerable distance inland, Paul sent word to the elders of the church; what church? Why, certainly, the elders of the church at Ephesus. These elders were to come and meet with Paul and, when they arrived, our text became part of Paul's message to them. Very clearly, the flock mentioned here was the church at Ephesus, and these men (The Bible doesn't say how many) were made (by the Holy Ghost) to be overseers of this particular church. I might mention that some have taken the position that the Lord never called more than one man to pastor the same church at the same time. Now, the Bible doesn't refer to these men as pastors, but Paul did refer to them as overseers, and that is what pastors are. These men had been given the responsibility of jointly serving this particular church as overseers. One (or more) of them may

have carried more influence than the others, but they were all overseers. I invite our readers to turn to the Book of Acts, the 20th chapter, and find out if I am correct in this. I have often told my congregations that I don't want them to take what I say simply upon "face value" or because I am their pastor. I want them to investigate and study for themselves.

I remember a certain minister, whom I loved and respected very highly, expressing the opinion (many years ago) that, if the Lord has made a man overseer over a particular flock (church), and if he properly applies himself, no other man can supply those people with anything that the pastor can't supply them with. I noticed also that the churches served by this particular minister had but few visiting ministers to come and preach for them. With all respects to this dear man, I did not then agree with his views in this respect and I still don't. I do **not** believe I can supply my churches with everything they need in the way of preaching. Every "called" minister has his own gifts and abilities, and they are not the same. We cannot develop that which we do not possess. But I say this is a result of reading something into a text that is not actually there.

A pastor might take the position (and no doubt some have) that, since the Holy Ghost has made him overseer (pastor) of a certain church, no other minister has any business expressing views from his pulpit or to his congregation that are contrary to the views of that pastor. And this minister might oppose having an otherwise able minister to preach to that church, because something might be said that this pastor would not agree with. Now if some visiting minister would say something to my congregation that I thought was wrong and contrary to the Bible, I feel that I would have plenty of time (later on) to refute what he said. Or, if it was of serious enough nature to justify it, I could contradict him publicly and in his presence. Surely one or two sermons aren't going to ruin a church anyway. Certainly not if the pastor has been there for considerable time and has been doing his duty toward that church.

I believe I am correct when I say, Although the Holy Spirit does impress the minds of his servants and directs them into a proper field of labor, and although He does impress the minds of a congregation toward a particular minister, He does **not** make a certain man overseer of a particular flock to the extent that that man is the only minister that could pastor that church successfully. I do believe that, if a church takes proper care in choosing a pastor, and if they pray earnestly for proper guidance, and then all express their honest feelings in the matter, the Lord will direct them to a proper choice. But the fact remains, that churches don't always take this proper approach. Mistakes are made in this matter, and the church suffers. I have long been of the opinion that, in calling a pastor, a secret ballot should be used. This is because many things can enter into the selection, other than careful judgment and prayer.

CONDEMNED ALREADY

CONDEMNED ALREADY

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is con-demned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. — [Joh 3:18](#).

I think it well, in the very beginning of this article, to point out that the above text is just two texts removed from that old favorite of the religious world: [Joh 3:16](#). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever be-lieveth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is also in the same chapter where Jesus said. "Ye must be born

again." Indeed, it is a part of the sermon Christ preached to Nicodemus, and our text was addressed to him. The text must be studied, then, in connection with all of the other texts which go to make up this particular sermon.

I also think it well to point out the application which is made by the present religious world.

They say that God loves all of humanity, and that he sent his Son into the world to suffer and die for all, and that Christ's atonement is sufficient for all, but that the atonement is effectual only to those who believe. They say that, in order to become born again, the sinner must believe on the name of the Son of God (accept Christ). They say that, by the gospel, God is making an offer of eternal salvation. Some even go so far as to say that God, in sending his Son into the world and making this offer of salvation, is performing his "greatest and last experiment".

Now, Primitive Baptists do not believe that God is experimenting, neither do we believe that he is making an offer of eternal salvation. For the great God of heaven to need to experiment is beyond the understanding of Primitive Baptists. But [Joh 3:16](#) does say "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish etc.", and our text does say "he that believeth not is condemned already". How, then, shall we explain these things, and how shall we apply our text?

First, I have long been of the opinion that [Joh 3:16](#) has a companion text in [Ac 13:48](#) "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Although the texts are widely separated, this last text does tell us who it is that believes. Webster says that ordain means to establish, decree, appoint. So the ones who believe are those who have been appointed to believe, and the scriptures abundantly teach that it is God who does the appointing.

Second, Christ spoke of his people as his sheep. He described them by saying, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." [Joh 10:27](#) And in the verse just before that he says, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." Now, if the reason unbelievers do not believe is that they are not his people, does it not immediately follow that the reason believers do believe is that they are already his sheep? Then, they do not believe in order to become his, do they? It is the subject of salvation that is under consideration here, because Jesus said of his sheep "and they shall never perish". This being recorded in God's infallible word, and coming from the lips of Jesus himself, what then becomes of the popular doctrine of believing (accepting Christ) first, before being born again? The truth of the Bible is that God makes dead, alien, sinners to become his own sheep (people) and makes them willing, by his own sovereign Spirit, to believe in his Son. The fact that they do believe is evidence, and positive proof, that they have been born again and, therefore, are now able to "receive the things of the Spirit." Before that, they are "dead in trespasses and sins."

Third, Jesus was teaching Nicodemus the necessity of the new birth, and he said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Why, we might ask, is it that he cannot see the spiritual kingdom? We read in [1Co 2:14](#) "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." He that is not born again is yet a natural man and is interested only in those things pertaining to his natural life. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." In order to receive the things of the Spirit one must be made spiritual. I notice, especially, that Jesus nowhere exhorted Nicodemus — or anyone else — to get themselves born again. He is simply stating facts — "Ye must be born again" and "whosoever believeth in him should not perish." Believing is everywhere, in the New Testament, set forth as evidence of eternal life, and that one has been born again. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Why certainly! — If he were not born again he would not, and could not, believe.

And finally, — Nothing is said about those who have never heard the gospel. Jesus is speaking of those who have not only heard his teaching, but have seen him, and many of them have actually been eye-witnesses of his miracles. The reason why these do not believe is declared in the 19th verse of this same chapter. — "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Elsewhere, he speaks of them as being "dead in trespasses and sins." They are not only in trespasses and sins, but are also declared to be dead. I think he means spiritually dead, for we read where it says "You hath he quickened".

But the objection is raised that they could come to Jesus and believe if they wanted to. No doubt that is true, but they do not want to, and they will not come, because they are in love with their own selves and with their sins. They will remain so until God, by his sovereign Spirit, shows them their sinfulness and their need. Before that, the preaching of the gospel is nothing but foolishness to them, and will run off them "like water off the back of a duck".

Now for a more specific application of our text. — "He that believeth on him is not condemned" because he has been born into the family of God and is Christ's spiritual seed. "but he that believeth not is condemned already" because of his own sinful nature. "because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." He has not believed in spite of all the abundant proof which has been presented, because he is still in love with sin. He thus has proven that he has not yet been quickened into spiritual life: he has not been born again. If he continues in this condition, until death, he will be eternally condemned. Nothing but the grace of God can make the difference.

I can hear someone say, "Oh that old doctrine of Election and Predestination. That makes God unfair!" Why does that make God unfair? His election has not worsened the condition of any son of Adam. All are justly condemned by God's righteous law while in a state of nature. If God has seen fit to remove some from under this condemnation, by imputing their sins to Christ and his righteousness to them, isn't that God's own business, and doesn't he have a perfect right to do it? But then they say, "That rules out too many, and doesn't give the sinner a chance." Is that what you want, a chance? And is that the kind of God you believe in, a God of chance?

Which will take in the greatest number, the doctrine which teaches that God has a people in -very nation, of every tribe, and in all the earth; who shall be with him in all eternity — or the doctrine that teaches the sinner must hear the gospel, believe the gospel, and obey the gospel in order to be saved? I will grant that many believe a much broader doctrine than the last we mentioned, and simply believe in eternal salvation through faith—claiming that we have but to believe and God will do the rest. Some come very close to the position that has been taken by Primitive Baptists, but cannot bring themselves to come all the way, and acknowledge that the business of salvation (in the eternal sense) is altogether God's business, and that faith and good works are the evidence and not the cause. God is able to accomplish his work.

CONSUMING FIRE

CONSUMING FIRE

"For our God is a consuming fire." ([Heb 12:29](#))

We read in the Bible of the various attributes of God — love, goodness, mercy, justice, wisdom, power, majesty, omnipresence. God is a Spirit, a Creator, a King, a Father, and many other things which we might mention. Our text assures us that He is also a consuming fire. We all

know the powerful destructive nature of fire; we know it as both a blessing and a curse. We may be sure that this attribute of God, as spoken of in the above text is, to the Lord's people, a blessing and yet it may appear to them sometimes to be a curse. I am sure that the text refers to the chastising, correcting and refining work of God in regard to His people. This is clearly seen when we read the verses which immediately precede the text, beginning with the 25th verse, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." We read, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," ([Ro 14:10](#)), and, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," ([Heb 10:31](#)), and, "The Lord shall judge His people." ([Heb 10:30](#)) The Bible abounds with accounts where God has visited His disobedient people with fire and sword, famine and pestilence. God has not changed: we may still expect Him to judge His people and, when they are disobedient, visit them with spiritual or temporal judgments, or both. This is not to say that every affliction which comes upon the Lord's people is a direct result of some transgression of their own, but there is no denying that all of these things are either the direct or indirect result of sin. We may justly conclude that many of our afflictions are judgments of God visited upon us for chastisement and correction.

When the Lord chastises His children, however, we may be assured that it is for their good, and is evidence that the Father loves them'. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." ([Heb 12:6](#)) When we experience the chastisement of the Lord, we may regard this as evidence that we are children of God. "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." ([Heb 12:7-8](#)). The purpose of chastisement is correction, and while no chastisement is pleasant it IS profitable to the one who is so dealt with. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." ([Heb 12:11](#))

Our God is a consuming fire—the interpretation of that text is found in the words of a hymn which we frequently sing: "Though through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply. The flame shall not hurt thee: I only design thy dross to consume, thy gold to refine." We read in Malachi, the third chapter: "Behold, I will send my messenger (John the Baptist), and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant (Jesus Christ), whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi (the children of God. (See [Re 1:6](#)), and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." ([Mal 3:1-3](#))

"The refiners's art was essential to the working of the precious metals. It consisted in the separation of the dross from the pure ore, which was affected by reducing the ore to a fluid state by the application of heat, and by the aid of solvents, such as alkali. The instruments required by the refiner were a crucible or furnace and a bellows or a blow pipe. The workman sat at his work, he was thus better able to watch the process, and let the metal run off at the proper moment." (Smith's Bible Dictionary). Here is the beautiful thing about the work of a refiner, where our text is concerned: we are the precious metal, our afflictions are the furnace, and God is both the refiner and the fire. The refiner sits with his eye on the crucible, ever mindful that the fire shall

be hot enough that all the dross shall be removed, and not too hot lest some of the precious metal be lost: God knows just how hot to make the furnace.

In the third chapter of 1 Corinthians we read, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." ([1Co 3:10-11](#)) I gather, from these expressions, that, by the gospel; a foundation has been laid upon which we, every one of us who believe, are to build. I think the building which we are to erect is our own character, and that this building should be erected in such a way as to withstand fire. "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, hay, wood, stubble. Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." ([1Co 3:12-13](#)) We may be sure that, in this life, afflictions will come, and these trials shall serve to reveal the nature of that building which we have erected: it will serve to prove whether we have built our house on the rock or whether we have builded upon the sand. See [Mt 7:24-26](#) "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.." ([1Co 3:14-15](#)) Now it doesn't say that the reward for faithful building shall be eternal life, and we know that is not what is under consideration. Neither does it say that he who fails to build as directed shall suffer loss of God's eternal love and favor. We know this last cannot be for the expression, "Yet he himself SHALL BE SAVED." I think the teaching of the text is clear, that he who builds of enduring substance shall weather the storm and pass through the fire successfully, and shall yet rejoice in his building. He shall enjoy the comforts of the knowledge that he has builded well, and the smile and approbation of Almighty God. By his trial he shall find himself made stronger and better. In the case of the other, he shall suffer the loss of his building and all of the comforts of it. How very many of the Lord's children have made a good profession and for a while have made a goodly show of their religious walk, but when affliction came they turned back and "walked no more with Him (Christ)." In so doing they lose the fellowship and companionship of Christ and also the fellowship of the brethren. This does not mean, however, that God has utterly forsaken them or that they have lost their eternal inheritance. But their loss is very great as revealed by the words, "yet so as by fire."

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." [Heb 10:26-27](#) I would say that the adversaries here are the corruptions of our natures: the dross which must be removed.

May the Lord help us to properly evaluate His dealings with us even though those dealings may sometimes be grievous and we may not understand why: "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God: to them who are the called, according to His purpose." ([Ro 8:28](#)).

The all things here are not all things which come to pass, but all things which God brings to pass. All of the mighty works of God are in behalf of His elect people: the called according to His purpose.

DAVID'S SIN

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In [2Sa 11](#), we find an account given of a terrible sin being committed by David: prophet, king, and sweet singer of Israel, This is followed by an account of the visit of the prophet, Nathan, to point out to David the extreme seriousness of his transgression; and to reveal the consequences of David's sin, These accounts may be summarized in a very few words. David had become guilty of adultery, and, not being able to hide his sin, had arranged for the woman's husband to be killed in battle, David then took this woman, Bathsheba, to be his own wife, The chapter does not close, however, without these words, "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord," The Lord then sent to David the prophet, Nathan, I have long marveled at the way Nathan approached the "Lord's Anointed," "And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor, The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter, And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him." The verse that follows, declares, "And David's anger was greatly kindled against this man; and he said to Nathan, as the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: etc. And Nathan said unto David, THOU ART THE MAN." When we read the entire message of the prophet, on this occasion, it will appear that David's sin is one of selfishness, of covetousness, of ungratefulness for what the Lord had done for him, and of lack of love for his fellow man. It was committed in disregard for the rights of another, and of the law of God. When viewed in the light of all this, David's sin assumes tremendous magnitude. I am convinced there are great and important lessons contained in this scripture for us, as individuals and as churches.

Someone might conclude that surely none of God's children could become guilty of such wickedness as this, but David WAS, undoubtedly, a child of God. Not only was he a child of God, but he was also a chosen vessel of the Lord, for a very special purpose. David occupied no ordinary place among the Lord's people, nor in the plan and purpose of God. He is referred to, in the Bible, as a man after God's own heart; and is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, David departed this far from the ways of the Lord. So lesson number one would be. God's children are capable of departing very far from the ways of truth and righteousness. It, therefore, behooves every one of us to be constantly on our guard, against the temptations of Satan; and we should be constantly trusting the Lord for strength and guidance. If, in the story told by Nathan, David is the rich man, Uriah the poor man, Bathsheba the ewe lamb, then the wayfaring man must be Satan. Remember, Satan seeks the friendship of the Lord's children, and will become our guest — if we will permit him to come in. That is why Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

The penalty for David's sin, under the Mosaic law, was death by stoning; but God had mercy on David. He was compelled to suffer, very severely, for his transgression; and, because of his exalted position, others were compelled to suffer with him. The child of this unlawful relationship was taken away by death, and the Lord included the penalty that the sword should never depart from David's house; but we have also these words, "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou SHALT NOT DIE." So lesson number two would be, The Lord has put away the sin of his people and THEY shall not die.

Surely none of God's children shall die eternally. But we can carry the lesson even further.

David did die, to the joy of his salvation, for we hear him praying earnestly to the Lord, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." [Ps 51:12](#) The 51st. Psalm is declared to be a psalm of David, after his transgression with Bathsheba. Reader, please read this psalm. One cannot read this psalm without knowing, beyond question, that David repented of his sin — deeply and sincerely. God heard his prayers and saw his tears. God also had mercy on him, and his prayers were answered. We have every reason to believe that the Lord did restore to David the joy of His salvation. Also, David did not lose his place in the Kingdom of Israel, but was permitted to continue in his position as king. By studying the history of David and of Israel, we can see that David was greatly blessed of the Lord, even after his transgression. So lesson number three must be, God does not deprive his children of the joy of His presence, or the fellowship of his humble followers — as long as they repent, from the heart, and turn away from their evil ways. God had mercy on David, and it remained for the Saviour of sinners, himself, to say to one found guilty of adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

There yet remains lesson number four. God's word teaches that, in order to be Christ's disciples, we must follow his steps; and, since Christ is merciful, we must be merciful also. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is also merciful." [Lu 7:36](#). "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." [Mt 5:7](#).

This is not to argue that the church should forego discipline over her members, or that transgressors should never be excluded from the church's fellowship. The Bible gives instruction how to deal with erring members, and the church that fails to heed this instruction must surely reap the consequences. But the question, with the church, would be that of who and when and how long? Here is something to be decided by the individual church — with prayer, and by a careful investigation of the scriptures. So, I will conclude this article with two questions, to be answered by the reader; and then, by a simple statement of personal opinion, by the writer. HOW MERCIFUL IS GOD, to those who sincerely repent, and bring forth "fruits mete for repentance?" HOW MERCIFUL OUGHT CHRIST'S CHURCH TO BE, to these same characters? It is my honest opinion that God is much more merciful than Christ's brethren are often found to be. The reader may "weigh" this last expression, in the light of his own experience and observation — and in the light of God's own inspired and written Word.

DEATH — A SEPARATION

DEATH — A SEPARATION

There are, at least four kinds of death mentioned in the Bible, and in every case we find that death means a separation. Let us discuss these "deaths" and what is involved in every case.

1st. Moral death. God said to our first parents, "The day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." We know that, upon eating the forbidden fruit they did not, immediately, die in a physical sense. We believe, however, that God knew what He was talking about when He said they should die that very day. The death under consideration here is a death in sins: a moral death.

Upon transgressing God's law Adam and Eve became separated from their own state of innocence, and from the joys of their earthly paradise: they were driven that very day from the garden and the curse was pronounced upon them, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

2nd. Legal death. Paul spoke of those who were dead to the law. In one place he speaks thus, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. 3. These are the same kind of characters who were addressed in this language, "You hath he quickened who were dead, in

trespasses and sins." [Eph 2:1](#). These people were dead in sin, but now they are dead to sin. They were under the condemnation of God's law, but they are now separated from that condemnation. This is due to the fact that Christ has fulfilled the law in their behalf.

3rd. A death to the joys of God's presence. "She who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." [1Ti 5:6](#). "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." [Ro 8:6](#). Disobedience to God's commandments invariably produces this kind of death —a separation from spiritual blessings. I think that was what the Savior had reference to when he said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." [Mt 7:13-14](#).

4th. Physical or corporal death. This is the kind of death which we most commonly associate with the word, but it is no more real than any of the other kinds of death which we have mentioned. True, in this form of death we are completely separated from our earthly environment but in other "deaths" we are as completely separated from our spiritual and heavenly environment. In this death we are completely separated from all things earthly: our homes, our families, our friends but more important than this, the soul and body are separated. The soul which has been regenerated and fitted for heaven goes, immediately, into God's very presence; and the body which is sinful and unregenerated goes to the dust from whence it came. Then, in the resurrection the body is born again and thus fitted for heaven: soul and body are reunited. .

DELAYED SENTENCE

DELAYED SENTENCE

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. [Ec 8:11](#).

The above is a text surely worth considering in this day of the soft attitude toward the criminal, and when the wheels of justice are so mired down in the quicksands of "liberal" religious, education, and political philosophy.

I am convinced that the Bible contains the answer to every human problem, and that these problems will continue to "build up" until, somehow, men are "brought to their knees" and made to recognize something of the value of this Book that so very many have so little use for today. Of course most of the blame lies at the door of the "theologians"; those religious leaders who profess to be men of God, and yet deny the very fundamentals of Christian faith and principle. False religious philosophy is at the basis of all false doctrine - educational and political. I contend that it is "high time" that people (the Lord's people, especially) were "waking up" to the dangers which confront us, and waging battle against false teachings and corrupting influences around us. "For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunk-en in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love: and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 2 Thess. 5:7, 8.

DESPISED AND REJECTED

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And he beheld them and said, "What is this then that is written, 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?' Whosoever shall fall on that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." [Lu 20:17-18](#) He is despised and rejected of men — [Isa 53:3](#)

Christ is referred to, many times, in the Bible, as a rock or stone. He is spoken of as the corner stone, the rock of offense, and the sure foundation. He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He IS a stone, from the standpoint of strength, durability and position. He is pictured in the rock of Horeb, smitten by Moses' rod; and direct reference is made to him in [Ex 33:21-23](#) "And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen." Christ is the eternal Rock Of Ages, and the Keystone of God's building — both of creation and redemption. But he was, and is, despised and rejected of men.

To despise means to condemn; scorn; disdain; slight; undervalue. It also means to hate. The Jewish leaders did hate Jesus, but the mass of the Jewish people simply disdained, slighted and under-valued him. Men, in general, still take this same attitude. This is even true of many professing Christians. Professing the name of Jesus, many deny him in their own hearts and lives. When we deny his deity and disregard his teachings we are, in fact, despising him. When we insist that we are capable of solving our problems ourselves and in our own way, we are despising the Savior, and rejecting this stone, elect-precious, of the Heavenly Father. Such is the attitude, and such is the guilt, of men and nations; for there is no place for him in the council-halls of men, even as there was no room for him in the inn of Bethlehem.

"The stone which the builders rejected" — there is a legend, or possibly a tradition, concerning the time when Solomon's temple was being built. As the story goes, a stone was sent up from the quarry that the builders could find no place for: try as they might, they could see no place where it would fit. So finally, in despair, they completely rejected it, and, thinking it had been sent up by mistake, they cast it down over the hill to take its place with the rubble of the building. Finally, at the last, they discovered that the keystone of the building was missing. So they sent word to the quarry that they were now ready for the key-stone. The reply came that it had been sent up long previous to this. So, finally, a workman remembered the stone that had been rejected, and, with much labor, they succeeded in hauling this huge stone to the building site — and, lo, it fit exactly in the place designed for it, and served to tie all the other stones together: it was indeed the keystone of the building. There may or may not be truth in this story, but it does serve to illustrate what we understand the text to mean. Christ IS the keystone of God's building, and He has been, and is now being rejected by the builders. The builders, those who seek to work out their own salvation, by good works or by "methods" of any sort, and those who seek to promote a human society of nobleness, apart from Christ, are continually rejecting this stone. Of course there is a reason for this, because Christ has said, "I am the light of the world" and John said, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light — because their deeds were evil."

We have noticed many times, as we have traveled on our highways, the sign boards with the message "Christ Is The Answer". Christ IS the answer to every human problem. The natural resources are here. and science has demonstrated the possibility of victory over poverty, sickness and all human adversity — except for one thing: the depravity of the human heart. Men will use every means in an attempt to excuse their weakness, by philosophic means, but will not "face

up" to it for what it really is —that ugly three-letter word, SIN. So they continue to reject the key-stone of the building. They may desire his name, but have no use for his teachings and his methods.

Now, Primitive Baptists have always known that the unregenerate, "dead in sins", of this world cannot do anything to regenerate themselves or bring themselves "into Christ". But we need to recognize the fact that Christ is being rejected by many of his own people. The Jews were a nation of God's people. They were under covenant relationship with him. They had a "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge", and they rejected Him. I believe that we are completely surrounded by people with a Godly zeal, who sincerely want to worship and serve God, but who are looking to the wrong source for salvation. Christ is not only the author of eternal salvation but also the author of "time salvation" to all who will trust and obey him. Christ is the answer. We live in a day when unbelievers, clothed in garments of religion and bearing the name Christian, are denying the very fundamental and vital doctrines of Christ's teaching — and they are seeking to destroy the faith of our population, especially our children, in the truths of the Bible. Their tools are the teachings of godless evolution and other vain philosophies of men— and they are being increasingly successful. We live in a day when education and especially science has become a god, and who would dare argue against modern education and against science? I WOULD! And I am not alone. Apart from human companionship, I have God's Word as my guide and my authority. And I have not forgotten that the inspired apostles of our Lord taught that the wisdom of this world is FOOLISHNESS with God. Any teaching which serves to deny the truths taught in the Bible is not true nor scientific, and the Bible warns against the "oppositions of science falsely so called." Much that is taught in our schools today, in the name of "science", is only unproven theory and was born in the warped brains of wishful thinkers who seek to destroy the faith of our fathers. Their brains are warped by sin, and the Bible teaches it. Please do not misunderstand me — I am not opposed to education nor to true science, but the Bible is the proven book of the ages: it is the yardstick by which all philosophy and science is to be measured. The Bible is truly scientific, but the same cannot be said for much that is called science. True science is composed of a body of proven facts, not merely theories. The evolutionists have rejected Christ, the proponents of "one world government" have rejected him, and many of the religious leaders of "Christiandom" have done the same. The United Nations has been called a modern Tower of Babel, and I believe that it is — simply because it is attempting to establish world peace apart from the Prince of Peace. His is the voice which is not heard. Men are quick to listen to the voice of the evil one, who is declared to be the god of this world, who has been a deceiver from the beginning.

There is a stranger in the council hall
Where nations meet to plan the peace — again.
He sits unnoticed by the farther wall,
His eyes upon the leaders among men.
His ears attend their clearly laid designs
For living in tomorrow's homes and marts,
As though beneath their spoken words and lives
He hears the inner voices of their hearts.
But when the delegates of all the world
Have cried their million wants, and lists are long—
And after blueprints, charts, and plans are hurled
In varied protest at the core of wrong,

He is our hope: He is the peace we seek.

O, listen, world, and let the Stranger speak!

There is no peace apart from the Prince of Peace. There is no salvation apart from the Savior. "and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace."

In conclusion, let us bring this still "closer home". Can it be possible that we, who have prided ourselves in having the "true gospel" and have rather boasted that the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice, have become guilty, at least in some measure, of rejecting Him who is the keystone of the whole structure? To the extent that we have substituted the traditions of men for the teachings of Christ, and to the extent that we have neglected or refused to walk in His ways, — to that extent, we have rejected him. Let us take stock of ourselves in the light of his written Word, let us mend our ways insofar as we have come short, and may we remember His promise that "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." [2Co 7:14](#).

DIETY OF CHRIST

DIETY OF CHRIST

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. [1Ti 3:16](#).

Now, when the doctrine of Christ's deity is being so widely assailed, and even openly denied by pastors of large congregations of professing Christians, across the face of this broad land and of the world, I feel more than ever impressed to defend that which I know to be altogether vital to true Christian faith. I can boldly assert that anyone, whoever that individual might be and of whatever his (or her) standing in Christendom, who denies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, equal with God and even "God manifest in the flesh; is nothing short of an infidel. Of all the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, here is the one that is most fundamental of all — "God was manifest in the flesh."

I use the word deity, and speak of the deity of Christ — not the divinity of Christ. Although the two words are often used interchangeably, the word divinity is used in many ways, other than the way pertaining to our text; while the word deity always pertains to none other than God himself. So, I think, when we are speaking of Christ and his relationship with the Father, the only right word to use is the word DEITY. Certainly Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and repeatedly referred to God as "my Father." He claimed equality with the Father, and declared "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father: I and my Father are one." So we have the doctrine of the "triune (three in one) God — or of the "Holy Trinity." God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This teaching is vital to all the other fundamental doctrines of Sovereign Grace. It is vital to Election, Predestination, Effectual Calling, Justification, and final Glorification. I shall quote from a book at my disposal. "It is an overstatement to say that our hope of redemption from sin is dependent upon the fact of the deity of Jesus. Protestant Christendom at least is united upon one basic premise: namely, no man can save men from sin. The forgiveness of iniquity, and salvation from the consequence of sins lie solely and exclusively within the power of God Himself. With the single exception of Jesus Christ, the earth had never known a man who was completely and

utterly sinless. From the fall of Adam to the present hour, every natural human being has required and does require a saviour for himself. How then can one who needs a saviour be the Saviour of others?

All sin is an offense against God. Therefore, forgiveness lies exclusively with Him. All that man could never do in accomplishing the redemption of a lost race, lies easily within the power of God to accomplish. Therefore, we say that if Jesus Christ were only human, we are yet dead in our sins, cut off from God, without hope in this world or help in the age to come; for no mere man could be the saviour of men." — Harry Rimmer.

Our text plainly declares that what is here called "the mystery of godliness" consists of six indisputable truths, and in regard to this there is no room for reasonable controversy. A mystery is something beyond human comprehension and beyond the power of men to accomplish.

This matter of redemption from sin and its consequences is of God and none other; godliness is of God alone. So, in each of these six points here set forth, it is God who is under consideration. Now to briefly consider each of these six vital truths in their natural and proper order.

"God was manifest in the flesh." — The word "manifest" means revealed. God was re-vealed in the flesh. That means that God was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." [Col 2:9](#). Christ possessed all the attributes of God: Christ was and is God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." [Joh 1:1-3](#). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." [Joh 1:14](#). Can any language be plainer than this? Do we believe the Bible? If we do, we are compelled to believe this; that God was manifest in the flesh. Christ asked his disciples, "but whom do ye say that I am?" Then it was that Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

I have a book in my possession, the title of which is "The Day God Invaded History.?" That, my friends, was the day Christ was born. Although God, that great eternal Spirit, has been here all along; the truth yet remains that He came to earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; and then was when God really revealed Himself to men. I am convinced that here is the strongest proof we have that God actually lives, and that the teachings of "Organic Evolution" are utterly false. Those who have declared that God is dead didn't believe in the true and living God in the first place. To them, God was only an idea or principle in the minds of men (Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Clause!). He who created the universe cannot die.

"Justified in the Spirit." — Justify is a legal term, and means declare or pronounce an individual to be righteous under law. In the minds of the generality of the Jewish people Jesus was not a righteous individual: no, he was a deceiver and a blasphemer; declaring himself to be something which he was not. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." [Mt 16:13-14](#). So multitudes yet today, say "He was a good man, He was a great teacher, but that's all that he was." But to his disciples of both that day and this: to every truly Christian individual, he is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is heaven." So Christ is "justified in the Spirit": to those to whom the Spirit reveals him he is God.

"Seen of angels". — An angel appeared to Joseph, with the good news that "she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." At the close of Jesus' trial in the wilderness, we read "and angels came and ministered unto him." Then in the

garden of Gethsemane, "where he sweat as it were great drops of blood." and where, he prayed so earnestly "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, that I may not drink it: nevertheless not my will but thine be done" we read this language, "And, Lo, there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him." Then when the women went to the tomb, to further anoint his body. they saw angels and received their message "He has risen. Go tell his disciples." Then, finally, as he blessed them there on the Mount of Olives, and they saw him taken up, they received the message of angels, "He is coming again!" But we must not forget the angel's message the night he was born (when God invaded history) "Behold. I bring you tidings of great joy; for there is born unto you this night a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." "And there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host, and they heard them saying; Glory to God in the highest. and on earth peace: good will toward men." The very angels of heaven are vitally interested in God's plan of redemption, and the welfare of God's people.

"Preached unto the Gentiles". — It is a mystery how Christ is even "preached." We know that God "calls" and, in a measure, qualifies men to preach his everlasting gospel. But the text says "unto the Gentiles." To those who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, without hope and without God in the world." Preached to worshippers of "strange gods" and in places "entirely given over to idolatry." And he was preached with success in these places, for God "saw to it" that the preached word was accompanied by signs and wonders. The apostles were given extraordinary gifts, and power to perform miracles. It was a miracle that these men were given ability and courage to go forth and preach this doctrine so foreign to all that was believed among the Gentiles: in the face of an unbelieving world.

"Believed on in the world" — This was indeed a mystery and it is a mystery, how Christ is "believed on". If we take the Lord out of it, it is an impossibility for anyone to believe the gospel. The carnal mind is opposed to it. It is contrary to "the flesh: to fleshly pride, for it condemns human works and convinces of sin. The "dead in sins" will not have it at all, and only those who have been "born again" in God's own sovereign miraculous way will ever believe and rejoice in it. True Christianity is a "revealed religion."

"Received up into glory" — The Father placed his own seal upon the work of His Son by receiving him into glory. "This man (Christ) after he had made one offering for sin, forever, sat down at the hand of God; from henceforth expecting, "till his enemies be made his footstool. The man, Christ Jesus, is now in the heavens, seated on the throne of his glory. He is reigning, he is interceding; and finally he will return to receive his own unto himself. May we with patience wait. But all depends upon his divine nature: upon the deity of Christ. "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?"

DRAW NEAR — HOLD FAST

DRAW NEAR — HOLD FAST

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 veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a 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 good works: not forsaking

the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. [Heb 10:19-25](#).

There is a holy boldness which rightfully belongs to men of faith. Theirs is a faith well founded, and built upon a firm foundation. God has revealed himself to men, first of all, in his creative work. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." [Ro 1:20](#). "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." [Ps 19:1-3](#).

God has spoken to men with an audible voice, as He did to Adam, to Cain, to Noah, to Moses, to Elijah, to John the Baptist, and to Christ. The whole congregation of Israel heard Him speak at Mt. Sinai, and a great multitude heard Him speak where John was baptizing. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

God has revealed Himself through the medium of angels. The Bible abounds with accounts of how angels have appeared to men, bearing messages directly from the throne of God. These have appeared in human form, although we know that is not their natural form; because the Bible declares them to be spirits, and we know they possess the property of being invisible.

He has revealed Himself through the prophets, and inspired them to accurately foretell future events. One of the great proofs we have that the Bible is true is the accuracy with which prophecy has been fulfilled. God has spoken to men through the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, and through His marvelous dealings with His people, Israel.

Finally, he has spoken to us by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and revealed himself through Him. Jesus displayed such marvelous traits of character, and such miraculous power, that there can be no doubt that His claims were fully justified. Moreover, the prophets foretold His coming and many of the events connected with His life, death, resurrection, and ascension unto the Father. These prophecies were fulfilled in Him.

God's people have felt the moving of His Spirit in their hearts and lives, and His hand upon them. He has revealed himself as a God of miracles, in all ages, and still displays that power in His work of regenerating the hearts and lives of men, and in His preservation of the church. Now the subject of this article is "Draw Near - Hold Fast". The text at the heading of this article is to that end. We are encouraged to do just that, having been given the knowledge that Jesus Christ is our great and eternal high priest ("having a high priest over the house of God".) The house of God spoken of is the family of God. Christ is a high priest over God's family, and over His brethren: He is our advocate with the Father, and pleads His own blood and righteousness in behalf of his people. When Satan accuses, He defends, for He is not only our high priest, but also our King. We are assured that He exercises all authority and power in heaven and earth. He has promised to never leave nor forsake His people, and asks, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." [Isa 49:15](#). We have a right to come boldly, yet humbly into the service of God.

The Christian way is a new way, and a living way. When Paul wrote this Hebrew letter he had trouble convincing folks that the Old Testament way was now an old and outdated way, and that those sacrifices which they offered then could not take away sin - they could only point to the great sacrifice that could and did. He had trouble convincing them that the sacrifices that God now requires are spiritual sacrifices, and the old letter of the law has passed away. The new way

is a much much better way, and it is a way of life. There is joy to be found in this way, and it is the way of true holiness.

It has its effect upon the hearts and lives of men, so much so that we read; "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." [2Co 5:17](#).

We should always consider one another, for we are brethren. We are members of God's family, and have been purchased with a price, even the suffering and very life blood of the Lord Jesus. We have a common interest in an eternal inheritance, and should therefore "provoke to love and good works". The society of those of like precious faith has a way of comforting us and of giving us courage. It helps us to to walk more closely in the way of truth and righteousness. So we should not neglect the assembling of ourselves together. It is both a duty and a privilege. The importance of this is emphasized by the words "and so much the more as ye see the day approaching".

The apostle had warned of that day when the Lord would appear in judgment upon the Jewish people and nation, and our Lord had warned of that event. It came to pass not long after Paul wrote these words. But this has a special significance to us also, for the day is coming when God shall visit terrible judgments upon this ungodly world. It may be in our day. We know, moreover, that the day of our departure from this earth is coming, and the time of death for every one of us (unless we should be among those who are alive at his coming). As we live in these perilous times, and as we come closer to the end of our earthly way, we should be all the more anxious to assemble ourselves together with the saints of our Lord. It is a blessed thing to do, for it furthers our communion and fellowship with God.

ECUMENISM

ECUMENISM

As a title for this article, I have used a word that many of our readers are no doubt, not familiar with. It has reference to the present "ecumenical movement" in the religious world, the movement toward greater "Christian" unity. To promote this effort, churches are holding joint meetings and uniting in joint efforts of various kinds; to promote "better understanding" and to make their efforts "more effective". Even the different faiths are doing this. - Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. Who do you think will win out in this effort? Surely not the Lord's people.

I have a strong idea that the Lord "confused their tongues" long ago, for the purpose of protecting his own church and people: of protecting them from corruptions within, and from persecutions from without. I believe this is a thought which our readers should carefully consider. There is now a strong effort on foot to form a great world church, composed of the various religious organizations of the day; and this poses a very great threat to certain small minority groups, and to all truly Spirit filled, God worshipping and God honoring Christians.

I am writing this because I am fearful that some of our own ministers and churches might become "caught up" (to some degree) by this movement; and I am convinced that we cannot afford to have our identity blurred, and our true witness hampered, by undue association with

those of other religious persuasions. Primitive Baptists have always been a separate and distinct people. We are not Protestants, as so many suppose, but ours is a separate and distinct religious faith. We were here long before the Protestants came into existence, and there is a gulf between them and us that is wide and deep. Many of these churches can perhaps profit by joining their efforts, for there is little difference between them anyway. The doctrine of these various groups is essentially the same: the "gospel" they all preach tends to place emphasis upon fear and selfish interest. Their basic effort seems to be devoted toward frightening folks into "accepting Christ" and joining the church, by warning of Hell if they don't or of buying them for supposed christian service, by promising them Heaven if they do. But the true Gospel, and the gospel we preach, places the emphasis on love and service through love. And it teaches that all who worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth. And it gives the honor to God, where it belongs. I, for one, don't want people to look upon our church as being just another Protestant denomination. I am sure that would distort our image and weaken our testimony.

Now I don't want our people to be disrespectful and snobbish, but I do want them to "stand out" and be effective in letting their light shine. I am sure the Bible does teach "separateness" for the Lord's people. If we believe we have the truth, we should be willing to contend for it in the most effective manner possible; and we should be willing to face criticism, and even outright persecution if necessary.

But the question will be asked, "How can we help people to know the truth if we hold ourselves aloof from them? I am not suggesting that we "hold ourselves aloof" from other people, but I am recommending that we remain separate and let that fact be known. I also am far from suggesting that we should be different for the sake of being different. But it is the Lord who has made the distinction, and it is ours to preserve that distinction. **Primitive Baptists cannot afford to be ecumenical.**

ETERNAL CHOICE

ETERNAL CHOICE

Today, a friend and brother in the church called me on the telephone and confronted me with this question, "Bro. Floy, where do you find where it says that our names were written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world?" My reply, "I can't tell you at the moment, but its there. It reads like this, 'Whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world'." After the brother had "hung up", I began to search for the expression that I was so sure was contained in the Bible. But Strong's Exhaustive Concordance failed to list such a text. I consulted another authoritative book in my library, and still could not find it. I -.vas by this time forced to conclude that the text was nowhere in the Bible. I now remember having searched before with the same results. This was quite disturbing and a disappointing experience, wouldn't you think? But it is not the only time I have had a similar experience.

Now, before someone gets the idea that I am incriminating myself and the Primitive Baptists, I had better make it clear that I am fully convinced that the Bible does teach that God's people's names WERE written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world, even though

there is no single, plain and simple statement in the Bible to that effect. And that is mainly what this article is "all about".

In my research I found three texts, which, when studied and compared, will prove most emphatically that the doctrine that God did know His people as individuals, and did make choice of them before the world was, is a Bible doctrine.

The nearest expression I could find to the one I thought the Bible contained is found in [Re 13:8](#) — "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the beast) whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This may be somewhat of a negative approach, but the text very clearly infers that there are some whose names ARE written in the Lamb's book of life. Since those whose names are not written there are those who shall worship the beast, and whom we read shall finally be cast into the lake of fire, those whose names ARE written there are the ones who shall be spared this fate. These undoubtedly must be those who will be saved with an eternal salvation. Now notice, the expression is "are not written", not "shall not be written", or "were not found written"; which indicates that their names were already there when the language of the text was first penned down, although it was concerning a prophecy of the future. But that text does not say when God's people's names WERE written there. It simply states that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. It does not say that the book was from the foundation of the world. So we need another text.

In [Re 17:8](#), we find this expression — " - and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD etc." Here we find that the book of life was from the foundation of the world, and it clearly infers that some names were written at that time: FROM the foundation of the world. But it still does not say BEFORE the foundation of the world. So we need yet another text.

Now let us turn to [Eph 1:4](#) — "According as he has chosen us in him BEFORE the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love etc." This tells us when the names were written: it was undoubtedly when God's people were chosen in Christ, and, according to the text, it was BEFORE the foundation of the world.

So, by these three texts, is proven the Bible doctrine that God's people's name WERE written in the Lamb's book of life BEFORE the foundation of the world. And is not this in perfect harmony with what the Bible declares concerning the nature of our God? Surely a God of infinite wisdom, power and holiness would not "settle" for anything short of this.

ETERNAL REDEMPTION

ETERNAL REDEMPTION

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. [Heb 9:12](#)

Here is a text that I have often thought might be the strongest in the Bible, with which to defend the doctrine of sovereign grace. Its teaching is very plain when we study it in the light of its natural setting or context. When we do this, and then carefully analyze the text itself; I think it must appear to every unbiased mind that here is a text that there is simply no way under, over or around. This teaches, absolutely, the doctrines of election, predestination and final glorification; and sets forth a doctrine that is completely unanswerable.

If we will bother to investigate, we will discover that Paul has been referring to the ceremonial law and what took place, annually, on what was called the "day of atonement". The high priest

would enter into that part of the tabernacle called "the most holy place" or the holy of holies. He would there offer sacrifices. first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. This practice was repeated year after year. and Paul explains that the high priest, under the law, represented Christ and that the holy place represented heaven itself. Declaring that Christ is "made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec", he explains that Christ has an unchangeable priesthood and ever liveth to make intercession for his people. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." [Heb 9:24](#).

Now to analyze our text. — "Neither by the blood of goats and calves" — these were only the type, and could never actually take away sin — "but by his own blood" which was fully effectual: Christ was both the priest and the sacrifice — "He entered once into the holy place" into heaven itself, and once was fully sufficient — "having obtained eternal redemption for us. Notice the expression "having obtained" — past tense: something already accomplished. This means that when he ascended into heaven, "there to appear before God for us", eternal redemption had already been obtained for every heir of glory. When, then, was eternal redemption obtained? — When Jesus paid the price for his people's sins, upon the cross of Calvary. Now many will say "We believe all that. Eternal redemption is the free gift of God, but we have to accept it." But if that position was true. it wouldn't be eternal redemption at all: it would only be an opportunity: only a chance; but our text speaks of the actual thing: eternal redemption itself. If there is any meaning to words and to sentence structure, this text teaches that title to eternal inheritance was obtained by our Lord, for every heir of glory, when he offered up himself to satisfy divine justice; and in our case, it was before we had a being — and before we had committed a single sin. But God knew we would be sinners and in need of a saviour, and provided the atonement. This eliminates every element of chance in the matter of eternal salvation. Later, when we had a being, God sent his Spirit into our hearts; thus beginning a work in us that will be most surely completed in a glorious resurrection.

This is a most precious text to me, and I hope it will be to our readers. I therefore submit it for your careful consideration.

ETERNAL SECURITY

ETERNAL SECURITY

One of the most glorious aspects of the true gospel is that outstanding Bible doctrine of eternal security, often referred to as "the final perseverance of the saints, through grace to glory." One of the elders Oliphant wrote a book on the subject, bearing the title "Final Perseverance of the Saints." I have that book in my library. The Bible certainly teaches that "once in grace always in grace" so far as eternal inheritance beyond death is concerned. We are mindful of the fact, however, that it is entirely possible for one of God's children to fall from grace in the sense of falling "from that grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This has to do with this life only, and not with the life which awaits us beyond death.

The truth of the eternal security of God's people hinges upon how we obtain eternal life and a home with God beyond this earthly existence. We receive eternal life as a gift from God, and a home with him in the "great hereafter" is purely a matter of inheritance. Now, if this was

something we had earned, it would appear reasonable that it would continue to depend upon our faith and faithfulness, and very possibly we might sin it away somehow or other. But since "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" we could reasonably assume that God would keep both us and the inheritance. But we don't have to assume, for the Bible teaches that it is that way. Jesus said, "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish." Then, in the 8th chapter of Romans, we read, "For whom he did foreknow, them he did also predestinate to be conformed unto 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." Notice that it is the same "whom" at the last, and all along the way, as at the first; and the work is all attributed to God.

We have said that a home in heaven and immortal glory is a matter of inheritance. That is why it does not depend on our acceptance in order for us to come into possession of it. An inheritance is a gift, in a sense, but not such a gift as though someone would reach out their hand and say, "Here, I want to give you this." We all know that it is possible for one to come into an inheritance without his or her knowledge or consent, and an inheritance is usually conveyed through a relationship between the original owner and the individual who now comes into possession of it. It is usually determined by the will of the original owner. In this which we have under consideration, the inheritance is conveyed according to the will of the heavenly Father to his own heaven-born children. We might say, according to the last will and testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has declared "All power is given unto me, both in heaven and earth." None of us, who are now living in this world, has yet come into possession of the full inheritance. We only have the "earnest" of that inheritance now, but are given positive assurance that the inheritance is sure to us." — unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; ready to be revealed in the last time." [1Pe 1:4-5](#) This is God's work.

In conclusion, let me say that what we get — through our own efforts — we can lose the same way we got it; but what God gives, through his own eternal perfections, is his own prerogative, and, in this instance, is forever. The final end, for all of those for whom Christ died, is to come into full possession of that eternal inheritance. If we have received the "earnest" of it here, we know we shall finally come into full possession. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." [Eph 1:13-14](#). God's children serve him because they love him, and if we do not love God, no service can be acceptable to him anyway.

EVERLASTING LOVE

EVERLASTING LOVE

I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. [Jer 31:3](#).

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. [Joh 6:44](#).

God has loved His people with a love which shall never fail, but shall continue to all eternity. This love is everlasting because of the unchangeable nature of God. He knew what would be

accomplished by that love, because He is God, and knows all things. To deny this would be to deny the wisdom of God and His unchanging purpose.

It is because of this love that God's people are drawn to Him. This being true I think we can rightly conclude that all who have been drawn to God are partakers of His love which is everlasting, hence the text, "We love Him because he first loved us." [1Jo 4:19](#).

We believe in Christ, then because God has drawn us to Him by His sovereign grace, and we shall have part in a glorious resurrection. We did not come to Him of our own free will and under our own power; we were drawn by God's power. All who have been or shall be so drawn, will be with Christ in His eternal kingdom, and no others shall be.

We understand the Bible to teach that all those whom God has so loved have been, or shall be finally drawn to Him, and none of them shall be eternally lost. Some of them may never hear the name of Christ in this life but they shall be drawn to God by His Spirit, and shall dwell with Christ forever.

EXHORTATION TO BOLDNESS

EXHORTATION TO BOLDNESS

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." [Heb 4:1-14; 6](#)

There is a certain boldness which rightly belongs to the people of God, and the above text explains why this is so: Christ, our great and eternal high priest is feelingly concerned with our welfare—He knows, by experience, the things we suffer and the trials that are ours. He suffered, being tempted; and knowing all about us, and knowing our weaknesses, he is able and willing to "succor them that are likewise tempted." A songwriter has penned a hymn—"Jesus knows all the way my feet must go." Another has written, "Jesus cares, I know he cares; His heart is touched with my grief." True it is that Jesus both knows and cares, and more than that, He is able. Under the Mosaic Law, the priest's work consisted of two things; offering up sacrifices and making intercession. Christ has already offered up the one all-necessary and altogether effectual sacrifice, when he offered up himself "without spot to God": He was both the priest and the offering. And, having done this; and God having accepted the offering, He (Christ) "ever liveth, and maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." Christ is now occupied with the work of making intercession. Satan accuses, but Christ intercedes in our behalf: He is pleading his own blood and righteousness in behalf of his people, and before the throne of God's eternal justice.

But it is the subject of Christ's temptation that I wish to deal with mainly in this article. "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." It is not sin to be tempted, but only when we give in to it. Christ successfully resisted the temptation: he did not give in to it.

It was necessary that Christ be tempted; necessary in order to fulfill the scriptures, necessary in order to set an example for us, and necessary for our comfort and consolation. I now invite our readers to get your Bibles and turn to [Mt 4:1-11](#), where we find Jesus being "led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Notice it was the devil, not God, who did the tempting. But He was led (another of the gospel writers says driven) by the Spirit (God) for the

express purpose of being tempted. And he was there subjected to three different forms of temptation. First, was the temptation to put material things and material needs first. We know that Jesus taught that we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, but Satan would have it otherwise. He said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." This was a great temptation to Jesus because he was very hungry at the time, and because he did have the power to do as Satan advised. But notice his reply, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Next, is the temptation to tempt God. We may become guilty of tempting God. We do this if and when we willfully subject ourselves to temptation, or when we willfully violate the laws of nature and expect God to protect us from the danger. Satan said to our Lord, "Cast thyself down: for it is written etc." But Jesus answered, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

And finally, the temptation to become a servant of Satan, by his promise of worldly gain and the acclaim of men. "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But Jesus replied, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Now notice how Jesus answered Satan on each of these three occasions: with the words, "It is written." Thus Jesus gave his own testimony as to the truth and utter reliability of the Holy Scriptures, and also presented a lesson to us as to how we can successfully withstand temptation. Satan, also, can quote scripture; but he is very adept to taking verses out of context. We are not to do that, but are to study to show ourselves approved of God, workmen not to be ashamed but "rightly dividing the Word of Truth." So, when we come to the dividing of the ways, or the fork in the road; and know not which way to turn; as we do sometimes, and as we shall; we are to pause long enough to ask ourselves the question, What would Jesus do if he were in my place? And, in order to know what Jesus would do, we have but to study God's written Word and find out what Jesus did and taught; and we know he taught not only in word, but also by example. When we do this, and when we follow the instructions given, it will be with us as it was with Jesus; for we read, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." I am sure the Bible teaches the doctrine of angels; ministering angels and guardian angels. So we are invited, yes commanded, to "come boldly to the throne of grace." With the assurance that he who loved us and paid the price of our redemption still enters feelingly into our lives, is aware of our problems and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We should never hesitate to go to Him in prayer.

FALSE CORNERS

FALSE CORNERS

I think of one who endeavors to rightly understand the teachings of the Bible much as a surveyor who goes about measuring a piece of ground. We know the surveyor's first consideration is to find the true cornerstone, then he proceeds to measure from that point. Should he become careless or presumptive, and start measuring from some other point, we know he would be sure to arrive at the wrong measurement; and this regardless of how accurate he might be otherwise.

I have thought about certain "false corners" from which so very many persons begin to measure

when they proceed to study the written word of God. I am sure that each of these is a pre-supposed idea — an idea that the wouldbe Bible-student already has in mind before he begins his investigation. The false corners I have considered are as follows —

1. The idea that the Bible is God's message to all mankind. This is an idea that the Bible itself will not support. When we bother to investigate, we find that every part of the Bible is a special message to a special people. None of it is directed to the dead alien sinner, but to God's own heaven-born children.
2. The idea that the most important thing to every human being should be his own eternal soul-salvation. This also is untrue from a Bible standpoint, for the Bible teaches that the most important thing is the honor and glory of God. All things were created by Him and for Him.
3. The idea that it depends on the individual, at least in great measure, as to his or her eternal destiny. The Bible will not support this idea either, but teaches that eternal salvation is entirely by the sovereign grace of God.

These are ideas (false corners) that seem to be inherant in human nature, and did not find their origin in the Bible.

So with these pre-supposed ideas in mind, the average person proceeds to read and endeavors to study the Bible. And the result is that everything he reads tends to fall into a pattern determined by the beliefs he had before he began. So he procedes to take texts out of their natural setting (out of context) and fitting them into the pattern already formed in his or her mind.

I think this will account for the fact that so many well-meaning persons so badly misinterpret the Scriptures, and yet sincerely believe the Bible is their only rule of faith and practice.

I now have in mind a religious denomination that makes the same claim as Primitive Baptists — "When the Bible speaks, we speak. When the Bible is silent, we are silent." And yet I know of no people who misapply more scripture than those folks do. And they do it by "measuring" from the false corners I have mentioned.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." — [2Ti 2:15](#).

FLYING WORMS

FLYING WORMS

I have in my possession a little book bearing the above title. It is written by one of my favorite authors of books on religious subjects and on the Bible itself, and is written in a very wonderful way. He deals with the Subject of Regeneration and compares this wonderful miraculous work to that which takes place when the lowly caterpillar becomes a beautiful, gorgeous butterfly. The unregenerate sinner is likened to the caterpillar (a worm) and the heaven-born soul to the butterfly. The human individual, now transformed by the miracu lous power of God has assumed

a wondrous beauty and has been taught to fly. As I read the book, I became fascinated with the wonderful, accurate way of presentation, and the glory which was ascribed to God, only to be disappointed with the final conclusion. For, as is usually the case, the author brought his discussion to a close by urging his unsaved readers to "accept Christ" and have this wonderful power to be exerted in their own lives.

I wonder, "How could such a wonderful Bible student and able writer, come so very close to pure Bible truth, and yet miss it so far." Then I was sure that I could place my finger upon the very passage where he "jumped the track", so to speak. He was doing wonderfully well, and I think accurate . in every detail, until the passage where he had the caterpillar, yet a worm, wanting to be like the butterflies and to flit about in the sunlight. Now, no one can convince me that a worm has any desire to be like a butterfly, until it is transformed and actually becomes one. Then, and not until then, it discovers that it has wings and has a desire to use them. With this fact in mind, it is very easy to see that an individual, dead in trespasses and sins — a worm if you please — is perfectly satisfied with his condition. But, when God performs the miracle of the "new birth" he then, and not until then, delights in his new environment and glorifies God in the miracle which has been performed without h i s knowledge or consent.

But this fact opens the way for the terribly unpopular doctrine of predestination, — a doctrine that has been so nearly "ruled out" of the religious world that the vast majority of God's children give it no place in their thinking at all. Perhaps they have vaguely heard that there is such a doctrine, believed in by a few strange people who are sometimes referred to as "Old Fogies". But, why is it such an unpopular and seldom believed doctrine?

One of our young ladies, a member of a church where I serve as pastor, was caught in a discussion where the subject of predestination came up. A classmate remarked, "You are the first person I ever met who believed in that. It seems to me that predestination takes away all of man's dignity." Our young lady replied, "Well, who ever said that man has any dignity before God anyway?" And that, my friends, is why the doctrine of predestination is unpopular with the religious world today. It takes away all of man's dignity. There is enough of fleshly pride in the hearts of almost all of God's children that they find this most fundamental of all Bible doctrines very distasteful. It is only after they are made to see the corruption of their own carnal natures and the harmony of the scriptures that they can find beauty in it, and true cause for rejoicing. No one is fully prepared to receive the pure, unadulterated truth of the Bible until he can accept the doctrine of Total Depravity — and it often requires a powerful "Christian Experience" to show that to an individual.

I do not intend to be harsh or unduly critical of those who believe and preach the doctrines so widely accepted by the religious world, so long as they deny the teachings of "modernism", which to my mind, is another name for infidelity, but I do consider it my duty to at least try to expose their error.

I have read much from the writings of such men as Billy Graham, and have listened to them on radio and television. I agree with much that they say, and, in some cases with most that they say. I respect them as servants of God, but cannot accept their idea of universal atonement and free will in "accepting Christ". I know there is such a thing as accepting Christ as our personal savior, but not in order to be born again or to be brought into the position where God can save us eternally. I believe these men simply "get the cart before the horse" when they say that acceptance comes first, and then regeneration. And the doctrine that Christ atoned for the sins of all humanity, but it is effectual only to those who believe, simply does not make sense to me, and I am totally unable to harmonize it with various texts of the Bible. It seems very clear to me that

if Christ died for all humanity, then all humanity will be saved. If he died for no one in particular, and is only experimenting — and if it depends upon the will of the creature to be successful, no one will be saved. I am unable to see how us knowing about it can possibly make it so.

I have followed Billy Graham's column in our daily newspaper for a number of years, and I think I am familiar with his doctrine. I think he comes as close to the whole truth as any minister of his faith has ever come. I listen to another minister, on the radio, almost every morning, and love to listen to him. He believes as Mr. Graham does. I have gained knowledge from such men. They speak a great deal of truth, and, I believe, are accomplishing much good. I can read a book, or listen to a sermon and rejoice in the good things which are written or said. — but I don't have to accept it all. I can eat an apple with a rotten place in it or with certain blemishes. It might even have a worm in it, but I don't intend to eat the worm! I trust that none of us would throw an apple away, just because of a few bad places in it. We would just simply cut out the undesirable places or eat around them. The Bible says we should "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good."

So I would encourage our readers to study the ideas of men, but to compare those ideas, and to prove them by the light of God's word. We must do it prayerfully, for it is only in this way that we "grow in grace and truth".

P.S. — I think we sometimes do an injustice to those who claim that the sinner must first accept Christ, by charging them with believing in a weak God. Some have said "that doctrine makes man more powerful than God." But these folks do not teach that God is unable to save sinners without their will and consent. They simply teach that He will not — that that is not His way. We believe, and understand the Bible to teach that it IS God's way — and we try to prove the consistency of it.

The man who wrote on "flying worms" did glorify God in the fact that he declared regeneration to be a miracle which only God can perform. So let us give credit where credit is due.

FOLLOW ME

FOLLOW ME

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.

[Mt 16:24](#)

First. some direct comments with regard to the above text: Jesus said, "if any man will (if any man desires) to come after me (follow me: be my disciple), let him deny himself." The Christian life is truly a life of self denial. In order to follow Jesus it is necessary for one to deny one's self certain things (sinful pleasures etc. and whatever may stand in the way of Christian service), but I notice that the text says, "let him deny **himself**." I would emphasize that expression, "Let him deny himself." It is self that must be denied. I think it means that he must deny his own strength, his own wisdom, his own righteousness. Until this is done, one can not fully trust in Jesus, and without complete trust in Him, one cannot completely follow Him.

Next he says, "take up his cross". The Christian life entails the bearing of the cross. As the song

writer has put it, "Must Jesus bear the cross alone, And all the world go free? No! there's a cross for everyone, And there's a cross for me." As Jesus was crucified, so must our flesh be crucified: our fleshly desires and evil dispositions. The bearing of the cross also signifies the bearing of burdens, just as in that other text where He says "Take my yoke upon you, and follow me"; and that, of course, refers to the Christian walk, or the Christian race. A Christian is one who trusts in Jesus and follows Him.

It is both a duty and a privilege to follow Christ, and every heaven-born soul who has heard the gospel call **should** follow him. Another point I would emphasize is this, it is absolutely impossible for one to be a full fledged disciple of our Lord without becoming a member of his visible church. Jesus' first public example was that of baptism, and He answered John's objections with the words. "Suffer it to be so now, for so it becommeth us to fulfill all righteousness". I conclude, from this, that it is impossible to fulfill all righteousness without baptism. God's children should be baptized, if they have been gospelly taught. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." [Jas 4:17](#).

It is a duty to follow Jesus because He is worthy, and has prior claim to our service and devotion. Jesus Christ is God, and whatever we have of blessing, or shall ever have, we owe to Him: We possess nothing of our own, but what, first of all, belongs to God. It is a privilege to follow Him because the Christian life is . the more abundant life: Christ has the answer to every human problem. There is no problem confronting mankind but what Christ has the answer for it. Christianity has the answer to all the problems confronting men and nations: world peace, happiness, and prosperity are just that simple to attain — let men everywhere put into practice the principles of Christianity. Of course, we do not expect the dead in sins to follow Jesus, but simply point out that if all men everywhere would and could follow Him, all our problems would be solved. Satan has very successfully convinced the great mass of the world's population that it does not pay to follow Jesus, but Christian men and women know better.

Despite the terrible world conditions which confront us, we are sure that Christ reigns and will continue to so reign, until "all enemies shall be put under His feet". In His own good way and time, He will gain complete victory; and some sweet day He will return "without sin unto salvation". In that day He will take vengeance upon his enemies, and receive His children unto Himself. Then, shall Christian principles be practiced to all eternity.

So we join with the beloved John the Revelator in saying, "Even so, come Lord Jesus", and, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will with you all."

FOLLOWING JESUS

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After longer and more careful consideration, I have come to realize that to truly be a follower of Jesus, one must do three things. One must **feel like Jesus felt, think like Jesus thought, and do like Jesus did**. Of course, all three of these are impossible requirements if we would follow Jesus perfectly. But, as we said in a previous article, the degree to which we "measure up" to these requirements will determine the degree to which we are Christians or followers (disciples)

of the Lord Jesus Christ. None of us measure up perfectly, nor can we measure up perfectly (meaning without flaw) while we are in these tabernacles of clay. When the Apostle Paul said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me", he was expressing the experience of every child of God. He also said, "For now we see through a glass darkly" and "Now I know only in part". Our knowledge is very limited, and also is our ability. But the time is coming when we shall "know as we are known", and "see Him as he is." Then, in our resurrected and glorified bodies, we shall follow our Lord as we would desire to follow him now. I would like for us to consider briefly, each of the above requirements.

1st.—To feel like Jesus felt. Our Lord manifested his deep compassion and his love, when, looking out upon the city of Jerusalem (a type of the gospel church), he wept bitter tears, and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how oft would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" True, it doesn't say that he wept upon that occasion, but I think it altogether reasonable to believe that he did. We know that he wept by the grave of a departed friend, even though he knew what he would do, and that the sorrow of these bereaved relatives would soon be turned to joy. Jesus loved, and Jesus wept. He even loved and prayed for his enemies; and he taught us to do likewise. He said, But I say unto you; Pray for your enemies, and do good unto them that hate you, and despitefully use you." And he also said, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

2.—To think like Jesus thought. Jesus thought very differently from the way that men naturally think, and this was manifested in all that he did and taught. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" [1Co 1:20](#). If Jesus had not thought differently than man's natural way of thinking, he would not have taught "If one smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also", and he would not have been willing to humble himself and become obedient unto death, "even unto the death of the cross." Perhaps the way that Jesus thought is best revealed in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, the Sermon in the Mount. We need not wonder at the great superiority of Jesus' teaching over that of men, when we consider that this was verily "God manifest in the flesh." "As the heavens are higher than the earth; so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts, saith the Lord."

3.—To do like Jesus did. Jesus was quick to do the will of his Father. He said, "I do always those things that please my Father."

At the tender age of twelve years when he was discovered in the temple of God, and sitting in the midst of the doctors, discussing those things contained in the Scriptures; when his mother rebuked him, he answered, "Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business? Jesus kept all of the commandments of God, and he taught others to do likewise. His life was entirely above reproach. This greatest of all teachers, taught not only by word but by example: Jesus lived the things that he taught. It was said of Jesus that "he went about doing good." This was true of his life all the way — from the cradle to the grave. His is the only right example for us to follow. That is why the study of his Word is so very important. But study is not within itself sufficient: we learn by doing. That is why Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me." "Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for every one, and there's a cross for me."

We said in the beginning of this article, that it is impossible for us to follow Jesus perfectly here, but, surely, **every one of us can learn to follow more closely than we do.**

FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?

FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." [1Ti 2:5-6](#).

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." [1Jo 2:2](#).

Shall we conclude from the above texts that Christ died for all men as individuals, and that His atonement was made for all mankind? If we do we shall immediately run into very grave difficulties, for we must also admit one of two things; either all mankind shall be saved or Christ's blood was in a measure shed in vain.

The first is contrary to the plain teaching of the Bible, and the second is not only contrary to the Scriptures, but is a reflection on both the wisdom and the justice of God. How could a God of perfect wisdom send His only begotten Son to suffer and die to redeem those whom God knew would not be eternally saved? How could God be perfectly just and still condemn any for whom such a price was paid? What then, do the above Scriptures teach?

If each reader will turn his or her Bible to 1st Timothy we will study together the language of the apostle Paul to that young minister. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings,—For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, etc."

Then comes the language of our text. Here the apostle uses the phrase "all men". If he means every individual when he says "all men", then we believe every individual shall be saved, for we read concerning God, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." [Isa 46:10](#).

So we conclude that he doesn't mean all men as individuals, but all classes of men; (king and pauper) rich and poor, bond and free, and all degrees of sinners. God has an elect people out of every nation and from every class and every station in life.

The Jews had not believed it their duty to pray for the Gentiles nor for any who were not Jews, believing that there was no salvation for them. But the New Testament teaches that "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." [Ac 10:34-35](#). So the apostle says that we should pray for all men, and the reason for this is that God has willed that some of every class and of every nation should be "saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth".

But someone will say "The apostle Paul says all, and all means every one". Does it mean every

one everywhere, or does it mean everyone who is under consideration? When a teacher says to his class, "All shall bring their text-books tomorrow", does he mean all who are in the school, or all who are in the world, or does he mean all who are in his class?

Now let's consider another text; "For as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive." [1Co 15:22](#). We find two all's mentioned here; are these all's co-extensive? I answer "No". As I understand it, it means simply this; all who are in Adam, that is, all of Adam's posterity die in Adam; and all who are in Christ, that is, Christ's posterity (God's elect), shall be made alive in Christ and shall live with Him.

The first all has Adam's posterity under consideration, the second, Christ's. All of the human race die in Adam; all of God's elect shall live in Christ.

Now for the second passage at the head of this article. [1Jo 2:2](#). Notice John does not say "for the whole race" but "for the whole world." A phrase which is used many times in the Bible and is almost always used in a limited sense. The phrase sometimes means the whole Roman Empire, sometimes the churches of Christ in the world, or believers, or the present inhabitants of the world, or a part of them only. See [Lu 2:1](#); Rom. 1-18, and [Ro 3:19](#); [Col 1:6](#); [Re 3:10](#); [12:9](#); [13:3](#).

We might cite you to two more texts where the phrase "whole world" is used; "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness". [1Jo 5:19](#). Here we can see quite plainly that the "whole world" under consideration does not include all the inhabitants of the earth, and is so used in a limited sense.

"There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed". [Lu 2:1](#). Here the Roman Empire is clearly intended.

For whom did Christ die? Let us allow Him to answer that question in His own words. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

GOD'S MERCY

GOD'S MERCY

—his mercy endureth forever. [Ps 136](#)

The blessings of God are bestowed upon his people because of his mercy. Because of transgression, man has forfeited all natural claim to divine favor. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." [Ro 3:23](#). God is not, in any way, the cause of sin; for man was made morally upright, but was given freedom of choice. We may find difficulty in understanding how our first parents could be morally good and yet choose evil, but however we might attempt to explain it we would not charge God with it. We know God hates sin, and because of sin our first parents, together with all their posterity, were plunged into a state of moral death and came under

the just condemnation of God's holy and righteous law. This is a state and condition from which man is entirely unable to extricate himself, by his own volition; because the will of the natural man is altogether biased toward evil. We are sure the Bible teaches that there is no hope for a single son of Adam, aside from the grace and mercy of God. We are altogether unworthy of the least of God's blessings, so far as any inherent righteousness of our own is concerned.

This does not mean, however, that from the standpoint of God's justice, His people are unworthy — for Jesus bore our sins, and has provided us a robe of perfect righteousness. By virtue of Jesus' blood and his perfect obedience, his righteousness has now become ours. This is called imputed righteousness. I will insist that Jesus bore not only the penalty for our sins, but the sin itself and the guilt of it — in short, Jesus became as guilty before the Father as though he had committed those sins himself. This was because he assumed obligation for his people before there was any of them — before we even had a being. God created man with this fact in mind — that Christ had already assumed obligation for every member of God's elect family. This made Christ responsible, don't you see; and that is why the text is written "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." [2Co 5:21](#). Our God is a God of mercy, and the definition of mercy is forbearance from inflicting harm — especially in punishment. God is no more a God of love and mercy than he is a God of justice: all of these attributes reside in God to infinite perfection, and God cannot extend mercy at the expense of his justice. So we have the text, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and **that will by no means clear the guilty** etc." [Ex 34:6-7](#). In extending mercy to sinners, God does not clear the guilty, in the sense of the text, but removes the guilt. You see, God is able to do something no earthly judge can possibly do — He can Make the guilty to be not guilty. That is what has been accomplished through Christ.

So we see that every blessing we have received, or shall ever receive, has come to us, and shall come to us, by and through the merits of God's Son; and is the result of God's mercy. The 136th Psalm is a very remarkable and outstanding bit of scripture, dealing with the subject of God's mercy. Here the inspired writer enumerates some of the high points in Israel's past history, calling to mind the great deliverances of the Lord. As he mentions these great blessings, one by one, he follows with the statement "for His mercy endureth forever". Upon first reading, it might appear that the great repetition would be unnecessary and only serves to detract from the beauty of the reading, but such is not the case. The repetition is needful, and is placed there for emphasis; and when the psalm is read with proper expression it becomes beautifully poetic and meaningful. The great lesson is that every one of the blessings named is the result of the fact that God's mercies endure forever. Upon this blessed truth our hope, for time and eternity, depends. Our's is an unchangeable God, whose mercies endure forever.

The knowledge of how very gracious and merciful the Lord has been to us should prompt us to be merciful and forgiving toward those whom we feel have, injured us in some way, or whom we feel may be pursuing a wrong course. If we would be followers of God, we must study His word and try to conform our thinking to His. May the Lord help us to do this.

GOLDEN CHAIN OF REDEMPTION

GOLDEN CHAIN OF REDEMPTION

[\(Ro 8:28-30\)](#)

This scripture starts out by referring to a people who have been called according to God's purpose, and they are declared to be "them that love God." It doesn't say them that are afraid of God, but them that love God. Wherever then, we find an individual who loves God; we may know that the individual is one of the "called" of God—called according to his purpose. What is God's purpose for that individual? The answer to that question is found in verse 29: in the words "to be conformed to the image of his son." Now we are not instructed to "conform ourselves", for this is something we cannot do, but this is a work that must be performed upon us, as the following verses plainly declare. But God's work upon us will not be complete until he has "raised our vile bodies and fashioned them like unto his glorious body. This is what shall take place in the resurrection, and then we shall be like Jesus—pure and sinless—conformed unto his image.

In the 29th and 30th verses of this chapter, we find, set forth, the five cardinal principles of Christian faith, or of Bible doctrine, that make up (or compose) what I prefer to call God's Golden Chain of Redemption. The links of this chain are called Election, Predestination, Effectual Calling, Justification, and Final Glorification; and either end of this chain is securely anchored in the Rock of Ages. This chain is held securely in the hands of all-wise, all-powerful, and sovereign God. He is also a God of infinite holiness. We have all doubtless heard the saying, "No chain is stronger than its weakest link"—but we are sure there are NO weak links in God's golden chain.

"For whom he did foreknow"—That, my friends, is election. Upon this point, I would like to quote from Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary. "Whom he did foreknow", that is, whom he designed for his friends and favorites. Not, whom he did foreknow to be holy them he predestined to be so. The counsels and decrees of God do not truckle to the frail and fickle will of men; no, God's foreknowledge of his saints is the same as that everlasting love wherewith he is said to have loved them. God's knowing his people is the same with his owning of them. Words of knowledge in the Bible often note affection; so here: Elect according to the foreknowledge of God. And the word is also rendered foreordained." End quote.

Them he did also predestinate. To predestinate means to fix or determine destiny beforehand. Only God can do this, for men have not the wisdom and power to do this. Now notice, the word is whom, not what: whom he did predestinate. Here certain individuals have their destiny fixed beforehand by God. What is their destiny? the text says, "to be conformed to the image of his Son, meaning Jesus Christ. There is nothing said here about God predestinating some to be eternally lost, for God has not done such. Without God's electing choice and predestinating power, all mankind **would be** eternally lost; for all have sinned and have come short of God's glory. So the doctrine of predestination, as taught in the Bible and as believed on by the main body of Primitive Baptists, has to do with eternal salvation—and that alone. It is not a doctrine of fatalism as many folks suppose.

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called"—This is the effectual work of the Holy Spirit, in what we call the new birth. Jesus said, Ye must be born again. Reason will tell us that no person or thing can "born itself". This, then, is God's work and his alone. The dead, alien sinner does not choose to be born again, as so many would have us believe.

-them he also justified - - To justify means to pronounce or declare an individual to be righteous under law. Earthly judges doubtless make mistakes and may pronounce a guilty person to be innocent, but not so with God; for our God never makes mistakes. He judges the heart and not by outward appearances; and God sees his people as cleansed and purified by the atoning blood of his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ assumed obligation for God's elect people before the world was:

before they had a being. He promised the Father that he would be responsible for them; and I shall insist THAT made him actually responsible. Christ then became our federal head, and our substitute. When we sinned, our sins were charged to his account; and I shall insist that all of God's People's sins were charged to Christ's account, and that he kept the law of God in every respect, and met the demands of divine justice when he suffered and died on Calvary's cross. It was a matter of substitution, and a transfer of righteousness and guilt. Our sins were charged to him, and his righteousness was credited to us. Only God could do a thing like this, but we must remember Christ IS God. Consider the infinite quality of the sufferer—God manifest in the flesh. **Them he also glorified.** They shall be saved with an eternal salvation.

They shall be delivered from sin and all its consequences. I trust that you, our readers can see how these Bible doctrines are connected together: how each of them serves to strengthen and support the rest. I hope you can understand why I have referred to them as God's golden chain of redemption.

The Apostle follows up with the very reasonable question, If God be for us, who CAN be against us? The answer to that question is very apparent; no power in heaven or earth CAN thwart the eternal purpose of God—or rob him of his own.

GREATEST FORCES

GREATEST FORCES

I am about to make a statement that may, at first, seem to be quite odd to many of our readers. The two greatest forces in the universe are **truth** and **love**. These two things, which we perhaps have not considered as forces at all, are more powerful than atomic energy, the hydrogen bomb, and all physical forces combined. To the spiritually minded, I think that I shall have no difficulty at all in proving my position; but to the natural mind, it can never be proved until that day when the Lord shall reveal Himself in judgment upon Satan and his angels: then "to Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess."

But someone, seeking to contradict my statement, may say *God is the greatest force or power in the universe; and, of course, that one would be correct, This, then, is my way of proving my position: GOD IS TRUTH, and GOD IS LOVE. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." [Joh 14:6](#). And in [1Jo 4:8](#) we read : "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."

God is not only the author of truth and love as it is found in the hearts of men, but He is both truth and love, the author of good wherever we may find it. It naturally follows that there is no good, separate and apart from truth and love.

I am not sure that we can positively regard Satan as being falsehood and hatred in the same sense as God is truth and love, but we can positively state that Satan is the author of falsehood and hatred. Satan, therefore, is the enemy of God, for he is opposed to those things which God is.

An age old battle is still going on between God and the devil, and all men know that this battle is between truth and falsehood; between love and hatred. What all men do not know is that Satan has no power at all except what God permits him to have, and that some day, in God's own good

way, and in His own good time, Satan's power shall be completely broken. The Bible being true, that is how it shall be. Truth, then, is more powerful than falsehood, and love is more powerful than hate.

"Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." [1Jo 4:4](#). God is declared to be in His people, and Satan is declared to be in the world. We are able to recognize the people of God as truth and love is manifested in their lives. Neither truth nor spiritual love is found in the hearts of the unregenerate : they are all under the great deception that there is profit in following Satan, and that worldly gain is all that matters. This great deception has ruled the destinies of men and nations. When truth triumphs, the folly of mankind will be revealed.

"The wicked shall be cast into hell, and that nation that forgets God." Much of the hell which belongs to those who follow Satan is received in this present world. Men and nations who use hatred and falsehood to further their ends, eventually are destroyed by their own methods. No nation that has set itself against God has survived for long. If Godless Russia would consider the reality of this, perhaps she would not be so foolhardy in the use of Satan's tools.

There is a very practical lesson in this for the Lord's children, because we cannot be followers of Him without being followers of truth and love: we cannot walk in His footsteps without walking in truth and love, and practicing these virtues in our lives. Our spiritual well-being and in great measure, our natural well-being depends upon how closely we follow His example.

May we walk ever more closely in the footsteps of our blessed Lord, not only in outward conformity but in spiritual obedience.

HOPE – WHAT IS IT?

HOPE—WHAT IS IT?

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." [1Co 15:19](#). The word, hope, is so often used in the Bible — in both the old and new testaments, that it certainly behooves us to be sure that we have a proper understanding of its meaning. This is especially important when we consider that the word is used in connection with the subject of salvation and our deliverance from sin and all its consequences. This becomes even more important when we become aware of the fact that the same writers who speak of having hope in Christ, also use the word, know, in connection with the same things which they declare to hope for and to have a hope in. All who have a Bible Concordance, and are familiar with its use, can, very easily and in a few minutes, discover that this last statement is true; simply by looking up, in the New Testament, those texts where the two words appear, and by comparing them with each other. Webster's Dictionary is all that we need in order to determine the meaning of the word hope, and I am sure that the dictionary definition which applies to such expressions as the text with which we have headed up this article, may be clearly stated in the following expression, — hope is desire coupled with expectation: in other words, we desire something and we expect to obtain it. In the light of this definition, we can hope for something which we have every reason to believe shall some day come to pass — even things which we have been given certain knowledge of.

We live in a day when the word, hope, is often used rather loosely. We sometimes say "I hope so and so" when, actually, we have little or no hope that it will come to pass. What we really mean is that we desire this or that, and wish that it would be so. The point that I am trying to make is this — In studying the scriptures, we should confine our thinking to the true meaning of words, and, where more than one definition is given, we should be willing to accept the definition that will bring out the harmony between the various texts. Those texts which declare that we know and those that refer to our hope of eternal life must harmonize—otherwise, the inspired writers would be at variance with themselves and with each other. We know this cannot be. I feel sure that the word, hope, when used as pertaining to eternal salvation, is not intended to express doubt or any degree of uncertainty. I say to each of our readers, Please give this your careful consideration. — You may find it to your comfort and joy.

HOSPITALITY

HOSPITALITY

" – distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." [Ro 12:13](#)

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not 'soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a **lover of hospitality** etc." [Tit 1:7-8](#).

Use hospitality one to another without grudging." [1Pe 4:9](#).

Hospitality is defined by Webster as "kind and generous reception of strangers or guests." It is the duty enjoined upon all followers of Christ, and is to be considered not only a duty but also a privilege. One of the qualifications of a bishop (minister) is that he should be "given to hospitality." This also applies to the deacon, as the only difference in qualifications of the minister and deacon is that, in the case of the minister, he must be "apt to teach." Since the minister is to be an "ensample to the flock", hospitality should always be a mark of Christianity manifested in lives of all professed followers of Christ. Jesus himself emphasized this when, girding himself with a towel, he began to wash the disciples feet. Washing guest's feet was one of the first and most important acts of hospitality in that day. Jesus said, "If I your Lord and Master wash your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet." To me it means, among other things, that Christian people ought to be forward in showing hospitality to others — especially those of "like precious faith."

I am happy to be able to say that Primitive Baptists, the country over, have been noted for their friendliness and hospitality. I trust that it will always be so with our people, but this is something we must put forth effort to preserve. We must not allow the coldness, indifference and formality of our day to so influence us that we would grow neglectful of this important part of Christian service. The homes of our people should always be open to their brethren, unless some unusual condition should exist — such as sickness etc., and, when we have visitors at our churches, the brethren should "see to it" that they are invited somewhere for lunch or to spend the night. This is usually the case, but there have been exceptions.

I remember hearing a minister tell of his first visit to a church in another state, and, at the close of the service on Saturday, the people departed from the church without inviting this minister to go home with them. But one brother, who was still on the grounds, inquired if the minister had anywhere to spend the night; and, when informed to the contrary, said "You can go with me, if

you can put up with what I have to offer." This was a very poor man, in the things of this world, but he was willing to share what little he had with the Lord's servant. Of course the minister accepted the invitation. Sometimes, when a church has visitors, it is taken for granted that they expect to return to their home immediately after the service, even when they are compelled to drive considerable distance. Very probably they would enjoy an invitation from some of the members to take lunch with them and have opportunity to do some visiting with the brethren. If it is a warm active church, such opportunity will be provided, and visitors will be made to feel welcome in this way. I am convinced that no church can fully prosper unless such is the case, and no individual can fully prosper in his or her church life without they be "given to hospitality." Another thing, I have noticed that often it is those most able to show hospitality who are the most backward in doing so. No doubt this is sometimes due to natural timidity or to a sense of unworthiness, but can also be the result of indifference or even selfishness. In either case, it is something one should labor to overcome. It grieves a pastor's heart to see any of his church people coming short in this respect as in other ways. Certainly there are many ways in which all of us can improve, and we can't do it without paying careful attention to the teaching of God's word.

I shall close with the following quotation. "Like many other virtues, hospitality is practiced, in its perfection, by the poor, if the rich did their share, how the woes of this world would be lightened!"

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

How shall we escape, if we neglect this so great salvation? [Heb 2:3](#). For our God is a consuming fire. [Heb 12:29](#)

Paul begins his letter to the Hebrew brethren by declaring, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son." He proceeds to describe Christ's glory and to prove the authority by which he spoke, by declaring Him to be none other than the great God of heaven. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power etc." He declares this man to be greater than Moses, and superior to angels. To Him is attributed the work of creation. — "And, Thou, Lord, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands." [Heb 1:10](#).

Now he asks the very reasonable question, "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, **how shall we escape**, if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" The answer to the question is quite evident. We cannot escape under these conditions, because it is certain that under the laws of Moses every transgression and disobedience **did** receive a just recompence of reward. Now the question will arise, escape what? — Why, surely the chastisement of the Lord, as is clearly presented in the twelfth chapter of this wonderful division of Scripture.

The apostle is not warning against the fires of hell in this Scripture, as many would have us believe. Eternal punishment is not under consideration here, because this language is addressed to the church of Christ among the Hebrews. These people, then, were believers in the Lord Jesus,

and the Scriptures teach that "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." They had been born again, and were God's children. But God's children often grow neglectful and transgress, and so receive the chastisement of the Lord. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." [Heb 12:6](#).

Chastisement is for correction, and is a result of the Father's love for the child. It is a fearful thing, however, to fall into the hands of the living God. When the Lord judges His people it is something to be feared, "For our God is a consuming fire." We know that fire is a purifying agent, and is necessary to remove the dross that only the precious metal may remain, yet, when visited upon the flesh, it is very painful indeed. So Paul reasons in this way.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip". [Heb 2:1](#).

If we let these things slip, we are certain not only to receive the chastisement of the Lord, but also to lose, at least in part, the joys of our salvation: that peace and joy which belongs only to God's faithful and obedient children. Paul knew that was easy to allow these great and vital truths to slip out of mind, and to become entangled with false doctrines and corrupt practices.

Therefore he exhorts to carefulness. Of course, the degree to which we lose our joy in spiritual things, and the degree to which we receive the chastisement of the Lord, is determined quite largely by the degree to which we go into error.

The last chapter of Hebrews is devoted to an exhortation to love and good works.

This concludes our series of articles on the Book of Hebrews, and my advice to the reader would be for he or she to look up the last six issues of this paper, and read all six articles in their consecutive order, with the Bible as guide and reference. In this way only, can the greatest good be derived from my little effort.

I BELIEVE

I BELIEVE

I believe the church that has no desire to spread the gospel and share it with others is more than half dead already, and has committed itself to eventual self extermination.

I believe that one of the most practical and effective ways of spreading the gospel is by means of radio. Many of God's children can be reached in that way, that we could not possibly reach in any other way. I would like to see our Primitive Baptist people more liberal in support of the endeavors that are being made, and to the extent of making possible that more radio time may be employed in proclaiming the truth as we see it.

I believe our churches should meet more often and hold more services. What has become of the week-long services that we used to have? Gone the way of the night services I suppose. It has been a long time since most of the churches of our area have had either.

I believe the church members (most of them) should be much more faithful in church attendance. Most of the reasons given for staying away from the service are not reasons at all, but only excuses. When we asked for a home in the church, we placed ourselves under solemn obligation to attend her services and to support the church financially and otherwise.

I believe we should work for unity among our churches and not allow differences of comparatively minor importance divide us. We should unitedly work together in opposition to false doctrines and corrupt practices by laboring together in defense of Bible principles. Of course, we will not agree perfectly upon everything.

It has been said that Primitive Baptists know how to subtract and divide, but are poor in addition and multiplication. I believe that to be true. Perhaps if we would consult our Text Book more carefully and more frequently, this situation would improve. Of course no manner of knowledge will help, except as we put that knowledge into effect, and make practical use of it. May God help us to do just that.

I CREATE EVIL

"I CREATE EVIL"

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. [Isa 45:7](#).

The above text is one that perhaps many of our readers have wondered about, and perhaps a few have misunderstood and misapplied the text to teach something that is not intended.

I am sure that the EVIL which God creates is in the form of storms, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and other things over which man has no control. The Bible teaches that He also does sometimes influence the minds of men to do things which, within themselves, are not good; but this is in order to chastise and correct his disobedient children, and others, for their wickedness. I say "others" also because God "rules among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth." He deals with the unregenerate and ungodly of earth, with the good of his own people in mind, and for the furtherance of his own purpose — to destroy and do away with sin. Now notice, God does NOT say "I create sin." God hates sin, and has commanded his people to avoid it. And that is why the Bible is so largely devoted to condemning sin and warning against it. Such expressions as this, " — and God hardened Pharaoh's heart", and "the evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul", have been a very great problem to some folks; and others have used it, or misused it in an effort to prove that God has predestinated all things that came to pass. That, my friends, is the doctrine of "fatalism"; and certainly is not taught in the Bible. Pharaoh's heart was already hard, and God hardened it further — for a purpose. Saul had disobeyed God has had proven himself unworthy to rule over the Lord's people. Both Saul and the people had sinned against God, through disobedience; so, in the course of events, God sent an evil spirit upon Saul; for the correction of the people and for his own eventful destruction.

Now, for the benefit of some who may be inclined toward "absolutism", I have another text. I offer this in order to counterbalance the first. "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in my house, which is called by my name, and say, we are delivered to do all these abominations?" [Jer 9:9-10](#). And, just for good measure, here is another — "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin." [Jer 32:35](#). God said, "NEITHER CAME IT INTO MY MIND."

May we ever bear in mind this fact — God hates sin, stands eternally opposed to it, and he has commanded against it. He still blesses his children in obedience and chastises them in disobedience. Let us ever strive to be faithful and obedient, and thus receive the blessings that God has in store for His obedient children. That is what we call "conditional time salvation."

II CORINTHIANS 6:14, 15

[2Co 6:14-15](#)

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

I have been asked to give my views on the above scripture, and will do so, briefly and without any great amount of detail. I think that, quite probably, some of the members of the church at Corinth had become guilty of engaging in heathen rites and ceremonies. Perhaps they had close friends among the unbelievers, and this personal friendship had led them to visit places of idolatrous worship, and to take part in same. In any case, Paul knew the danger of becoming entangled in these things, and of becoming too intimate with these kind of people. We should not choose unbelievers to be our intimate friends. Associating closely with such is more apt to pull us down, than it is to raise them up. We should not allow ourselves to be led into false religious beliefs or practices. The church of Jesus Christ is to be kept separate from the world and from the religious institutions of men.

I do not believe this scripture means that it is wrong for Christian people to join together with non-Christians in united efforts for community or civic betterment — as long as Christian principles are not violated. Many such organizations are good, and serve a very good purpose. It is through the united effort of believers and unbelievers that slums are cleared, jobs are found for the handicapped and the under-privileged, and many other worthy things are accomplished. Christians should not, however, be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, religiously or social-

I believe this scripture should be considered by Christian young people, in choosing a life mate, but it clearly does not apply to those who have, already, been "yoked together unequally" in this way. The marriage relationship is sacred — even between believers and unbelievers; and Paul speaks clearly, in regard to this matter, Please see 1 Cor, 7:14-16. I have consulted Gill's Commentary, on this subject, and shall quote from this eminent Baptist commentator, "—nor is it (this scripture) to be understood as dehorting from entering into marriage contracts with such persons (unbelievers); for such marriages Paul had declared to be lawful, and what ought to be abode by; though believers would do well carefully to avoid such an unequal yoke, since oftentimes they are hereby exposed to many snares, temptations, distresses, and sorrows, which generally follow more or less hereon,"

This scripture is surely worthy of our very careful study and application.

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. [Joh 14:1-3](#)

I am aware of the fact that our ministry are by no means fully agreed on the interpretation of the above text. So the comments which I offer are merely an expression of my own sincere opinion as to the teaching of this most beautiful language, and are offered for your consideration; with no intention that what I say should be received as authority.

I think it is of extreme importance that we consider the time and the conditions under which these words were spoken. Jesus as can be plainly seen by the language which precedes this, had been telling His disciples that He would be betrayed by one of their number, and that He was going away from them; and that where He was going they could not then follow. Of course, He was preparing them for His suffering and death. Peter wanted to go with Him and declared that he would die for the Master's sake. Jesus then declared that Peter would deny Him.

Now, in order to comfort and strengthen those who so deeply loved Him, and to leave on record something of comfort and assurance for all who should follow, Jesus launches forth into the language of our text, "Let not your heart be troubled, etc." and concluding with this precious promise. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." This is surely the Christian's hope that finally they shall be with Jesus eternally.

When He says, "My Father's house", I feel very deeply impressed that this is the same house of which Paul spoke when he said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." [2Co 5:1](#). I think then, that Jesus speaks here of the eternal abode of the saints. In this are many mansions; many dwelling places, or places for many. I find in my dictionary that a mansion is any place of residence, a house, a habitation. I know that the usage of the word has changed somewhat, and we usually take it to mean a large and stately residence; and we often associate the word with a picture image in our minds of a large and magnificent house away by itself on a hill perhaps, and surrounded by a high stone fence accompanied by a "No Trespassing" sign; but the original meaning is not so. I take the Savior's language simply to mean that in this heavenly house there are mansions (dwelling places) for many. If there be many rooms in this house or if there be only one room, the lesson will still hold true; heaven will be occupied by many.

Then He spoke more personally to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." But someone will say, "Heaven has been prepared from the foundation of the world." Perhaps so in at least one sense of the word, but one definition of the word prepare is to take the necessary previous measures. I think that when Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you," He meant that He was going to fulfill all the necessary conditions whereby they might be brought into that place.

What were the necessary conditions whereby heaven should be secured to every child of God? First Jesus must suffer and die for our sins, and next He must be resurrected and ascend unto the Father. Is the work of preparation now finished? No! Jesus must reign until God has put all enemies under His feet. He is now reigning as an almighty king, and as our eternal high priest. Until the last enemy is put under His feet, and until He has put down all authority and rule and has delivered the kingdom unto the Father, His work will not be finished. But when that work **is**

finished and those mansions **are** prepared, so to speak, all of the children of God shall come unto everlasting possession of their eternal inheritance.

I love this text and regard it as one of the most beautiful and precious in the entire Bible, and surely it is one of our very best funeral texts. I am fully willing to acknowledge that different applications can be made of this text, and important lessons be taught which are valuable to the Lord's people, but when we do this we rob the text of much of its beauty where many are concerned that this is a favorite text of many, perhaps thousands, of God's people who have believed it to pertain to heaven, and when they hear it applied differently they are disappointed. Why disappoint them? The truths concerning the church and our life of service here can be taught by using other texts: any number of texts. Surely this text does apply to the Christian's ultimate hope.

If one should be able to hear all of the applications which are given by intelligent, God sent ministers to many texts, and should lay aside all which are given an application pertaining to this life, I very sadly fear that little would be left upon which to pin our hopes of heaven. It is entirely possible for a preacher to deliver an otherwise very able sermon, yet using the wrong text. I am sure that we should be very careful in regard to our applications.

May the Lord bless these remarks to the good of His people.

INCREASE OUR FAITH

INCREASE OUR FAITH

"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." [Mr 9:24](#).

"Wherefore seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." etc. [Heb 12:1-2](#).

Unbelief is the sin "which doth so easily beset us," and our constant prayer should be, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief."

I have heard it said that faith is that which enables us to believe, but according to a definition found in Buck's Theological Dictionary, "Faith is belief which is based upon the authority and integrity of another. While it is true that instinctive faith is a distinct property of spiritual life, and all of God's children have it, the truth remains that faith is something that grows and increases with use, and according to the evidence presented to us that God not only exists, but is also faithful and true.

Our faith is often tried, and sometimes very severely, but perhaps never so much as when a loved one is removed from us by death. I can speak from experience in that respect, and trust that my own experience and quest for renewed faith has placed me in a better position to comfort and strengthen others I have doubted many times the soul's immortality and even the very existence

of God, but I hardly think that I have entirely ceased to believe. I feel now that I can never again doubt the existence of God, or that the Bible is His inspired word. Possibly I am mistaken, and will again doubt at times, because the flesh is weak; but for the present, I am thoroughly convinced that to doubt God is entirely unreasonable. God has revealed things to us in His written word that we never could have discovered for ourselves, but once we have understood them we find them to be entirely reasonable. The more we study that precious volume, the more clearly evident this becomes.

In times of sudden bereavement, the questions often uppermost in the minds of the bereaved are these: "Is there really a God, and is my loved one in heaven?"

I know there is a God because He is manifested upon every hand: He is revealed in His creative work — in all nature and in our own hearts and lives: we have felt His hand upon us. Moreover, He has been revealed through His Son Jesus Christ. I know that God is, because of the Bible and Christian faith. Reason tells me that the Bible and Christian faith could never have come into being without God revealing Himself to men in miraculous ways. The miracles which the Bible records were necessary in order for men to believe. When Christ and His apostles preached, they did not ask men to believe without proof, and the miracles which were then performed could have been accomplished by none other than God Himself. It is recorded that Christ healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, enabled the deaf to hear, stilled the tempest and even raised the dead. His crucifixion was witnessed by a great multitude of people, and after His resurrection He revealed Himself to His disciples upon several occasions and, according to the Bible, was seen by more than five hundred brethren at one time. I know that these things actually took place because the Christian religion could not have gotten its start in any other way. I have often said there is no greater miracle than Christianity itself. Both Christ and the apostles repeatedly quoted from the Old Testament scriptures, proving that they believed the things that are there written. So I feel to know that God lives and that the Bible is his book, and His inspired word. Being His book, all that it teaches is true and as reliable as God Himself

The Bible teaches in no uncertain terms, the doctrines of immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body: that although the body dies, the soul lives on; and that the body shall finally be resurrected and caused to live again. It teaches that all of God's born-again children shall live with Him in glory, and it doesn't leave us to doubt as to the evidences and proofs of spiritual and eternal life. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." - [Joh 5:1](#). "Everyone that loveth is born of God." [1Jo 4:7](#). "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." [1Jo 3:14](#). It is recorded that John the Baptist "leaped for joy" at news of the Savior's conception while yet unborn, so God operates, by His Spirit, in the hearts of little babies the same as He does in the hearts of adults: and did in the case of this one even prior to His actual birth. Primitive Baptists believe that all adults who have given evidence of being born again, and all little babies who die in infancy are saved eternally through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. We believe we have clear Bible proof of these things.

When tribulations and sorrows come, there is absolutely nothing that can take the place of religious faith. Here is where the benefits of Bible study comes in. The Bible exhortation is for us to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." In order for us

to have what we need when sorrow comes, it is necessary for us to have lived with the things of God, and to have spent years in His service.

INTO THE UNKNOWN

INTO THE UNKNOWN

Dear Readers:

By the time this issue of our paper reaches your homes, the year 1964 will have slipped into the eternal past, and a new year will have taken its place. We have now arrived at that season of the year when we quite customarily pause to take stock of ourselves, the conditions which surround us, and the problems that confront us. This is, therefore, a most ideal time for us to consider the fact that we cannot look very far into the future, except as God has seen fit to reveal certain things to us, as recorded in his Holy Written Word. We should be very quick to confess that our knowledge is very limited and our eyesight very dim. We cannot foretell, with any certainty whatever, what may await us over the next hill or around the next turn of the road; and we are reminded that this is, very possibly, one of the greatest blessings we have — as long as we are creatures of time and subject to vanity.

We live in a fast changing world, and especially so in this nineteenth century since the birth of our Lord in Bethlehem of Judea. I think it may be safely said that there has been more change, in our world, during the last fifty years, than there has been during the previous combined generations of mankind. When we consider this fact, we are led to wonder if we are not now rapidly approaching some great and momentous event, fully known to no one except God himself. The prophecies of Revelation are very weighty, yet dark and mysterious. I would like, very much, to understand more about them; but must confess my great limitations, in this respect. They are a fascinating study and, beyond doubt, are there for the purpose of being understood — at least at the proper time. Perhaps the time has not yet arrived for many of these prophecies to be understood, and yet that time may be close at hand.. So I find my mind being drawn more and more to the Book of Revelation.

I do not wish to become a prophet of doom, but am convinced of this — that, with all our advancement in science and technology, and with all our economic and material progress, the world is getting no better. Quite the contrary is the case. It seems that, with the advancement in material ways, the problems have multiplied. The problems of government have become greater, the problems of society in general have been increased, and greater strain has been placed upon civilization itself. I am also convinced of something else — With all our advancement, in these many ways, human nature has not changed; but is still exactly what it has always been. Here rests the danger for human society, and I believe this fact spells the doom of all purely human endeavor. This thing called civilization is but a comparatively thin coat of veneering and, like veneer on furniture, peels easily. We all know that when veneered furniture begins to peel, this deterioration is quite rapid — exposing the raw wood underneath. I fear this may now be taking place, in the world and even here in America.

With this rapid change, which has taken place (and is taking place), the strain upon the individual has been increased; and we often hear the expression "We are just living too fast." This strain is largely due to the fact that the average individual just doesn't know what to depend on any more. From a scientific standpoint, things which had always been considered impossible have been proven possible. Old methods have been cast aside, old theories have become obsolete. The time

has come when we hesitate to declare a thing to be impossible. As a natural result of this rapid change, in ways and means, many of our younger generation and, no doubt, many of their elders have come to question the old time - honored principles which have governed society, and have been responsible for what we have known as our "western civilization." Man's success, in many fields, has gone to his head — and he is now ready to vaunt his own sufficiency and declare he has no need for God. This very thing is now taking place on a scale perhaps never equaled since the Tower of Babel episode. It now seems to be a part of "higher education" to berate the "superstitious ignorance" of those who believe in God.

All is not dark, however. Above the darkness of a world in rebellion against God is this great light of God's truth, that "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" and "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou." [Da 4:35](#) God still holds the reigns of government. His eternal plan and purpose shall be carried out, and every enemy of God and righteousness shall finally be put under the feet of the Lord Jesus. We dread, however, the great calamities that may befall the inhabitants of the earth, before this takes place. We know that the Lord's people cannot reasonably expect to entirely escape these calamities.

But, as we move surely and certainly into the unknown, we have the comforting assurance that our Lord knows "all the way our feet must go". We can place our hand safely in his, and we know that we have his precious written word to serve as a light with which to pierce the darkness, and the warmth of that light to protect us against the cold winds of adversity, as we travel along. So we wish for all of our readers a blessed New Year.

IT IS FINISHED

IT IS FINISHED

The last words of our dying Savior, spoken from a Roman cross. A cry of victory, He having accomplished that work for which He came into the world; for Jesus came not only to live, but also to die. "He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." He both lived and died for His people: as their substitute. And as their substitute, He lived a perfect life for them, and died for them a substitutional death. He both kept the law for them, and paid the supreme penalty for their sins. By so doing, He obtained eternal redemption for them. Now this part of His work is finished.

But was all of Jesus' work finished when He spoke these words? No, for He must come forth from the tomb; a victor over death, hell and the grave. He must also appear to His disciples and give them final instructions concerning Himself and the work which should be theirs. Then He was to ascend unto the Father where He should ever live and make intercession for His people. He was to reign over His own spiritual kingdom in the world, and some day return to earth again "without sin unto salvation."

So His work is not even yet finished, "for He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet;" He must continue to be our eternal High Priest. and return to gather His jewels. In a glorious resurrection He shall recover the bodies of His saints from the bosom of the earth, and raise them up to dwell eternally with Him. Then soul and body reunited, cleansed, perfected, and made immortal; all of God's children shall see Him as He is, know as they are known, worship

and serve Him perfectly, world without end. Then and then only shall Jesus' work be fully accomplished.

IT IS SIN

IT IS SIN

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." [Jas 4:17](#).

"Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?' Then shall he answer them, saying, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not to me'." [Mt 25:44-45](#).

Sins may be classified under two different headings — sins of commission and sins of omission. When we commit sins of commission we do things that we ought not to do, and when we commit sins of omission we neglect or refuse to do the things that we should. When we knowingly fail to do good to someone or to some worthy cause, without justifiable reason, we become guilty of sin, just as surely as when we covet or steal, or commit any other wrong deed. The above texts deal with sins of omission.

It seems to me that great emphasis is put, by so called Christian people, upon sins of commission, while comparatively little attention is paid to sins of omission. The idea of many people seems to be, "Just as long as I obey the laws and injure no one, I am a pretty good fellow". The question might be asked, "Good for what?" If we are not good for something, just what are we good for? The attitude of a great many highly respected citizens, and professing Christians seems to be "Just as long as I injure no one and make an honest living, I have done about all that is required of me". The Bible refutes that idea in no uncertain terms. Our first duty is not to ourselves, but to God and our fellow man — especially to those of the household of faith. In this world, those who do good by themselves and accumulate much of this world's goods are looked up to, admired, and respected — by the world. This is, in a great measure, true, regardless of whether or not those goods are used for the benefit of others and the furtherance of God's kingdom. Now the question would be, are we ever guilty of this vanity? Our text says that if we know to do good, and fail to do it, our failure to do that thing is sin.

True Christianity is not just a "don't" religion, but also a "Do" religion. Christ's admonition to his disciples was to do certain things. To his apostles, his admonition was to "Go preach", and the admonition to the church, at large, was to testify. "Let your light shine, before men, that they, seeing your **good works**, may glorify your Father in heaven." Christ's church is an army and is to be engaged in warfare against the forces of evil within and without. The business of the church is to minister, and the business of God's people is, first of all, to serve and not to be served. It is my conviction that we need to be about our business, as we have never been about our business before.

We have been blessed to live in a land of plenty, and have known unprecedented prosperity, but we have, in a great measure, forgotten the source of our blessings and neglected our avowed Christian duty. We have lived selfishly, often self-righteously, and sometimes have "strained at gnats and swallowed camels". We have been critical, perhaps, of some who have stooped to go down into the very gutters, so to speak, to reclaim those who have gone astray, — but we need to remember that our Lord did precisely that. He was severely criticized by the self-righteous Pharisees for eating with publicans and sinners. Christ justified his action, however, with the

memorable statement that "the righteous have no need of a physician, but them that are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance". The gospel of Christ is the medicine that God has ordained for the cure of spiritual disease. We, as ministers, are to use that medicine wherever it may be most needed and effectual. This should be done with prayer and seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit.

I do believe that the greatest sin of Christian people is selfish living, while a poor, blind, sinful, torn and bleeding world cries out in pain. Opportunities for doing good are upon every hand, but we so often lend a deaf ear. Our greatest need is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus, who voluntarily "became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich". Of course, if we all did this there would be fewer bright shiny new automobiles on our streets and highways, fewer vacation trips, less money spent on entertainment and luxurious living, — there would be less trying to keep up with the Joneses, but more of following after Jesus. Homeless and neglected children would be fed, clothed and properly educated, the widow's needs would be met, and the worthy under-privileged would be given opportunity to move ahead. Many national and world problems would be largely solved, and I am convinced that our own churches would prosper to a degree that they have never prospered before.

I strongly recommend that each of our readers study, carefully, the 25th chapter of Matt., beginning with the 31st verse and reading to the end of the chapter.

JEALOUSY

JEALOUSY

"Jealousy is cruel as the grave." [Song 8:6](#).

The terms jealousy and envy are very often regarded as being interchangeable, and when we refer to a jealous person we immediately think of one whose heart is filled with envy. The word jealousy, however, has more than one definition. Cruden's Concordance says, "In addition to its modern meaning, this word used to mean zeal, solicitude." So when we read where God declares himself to be a jealous God, we must understand that zeal and solicitude is intended. God is not jealous in the way we commonly think when the word is used today, nor in the sense of our text. As the above text would seem to indicate, it is envy that we wish to warn against, and condemn, in this little article.

Webster says that envy is a feeling of discontent and ill will at another's excellence or good fortune, and to envy is to be discontented at another's possessing what one would like for one's self. He says that the synonyms of the word, envy, are covet and grudge. If this is true, then, we are at liberty to quote the tenth commandment in connection with our text — "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." [Ex 20:17](#). You see, that text ties right in with what Jesus said about loving our neighbor. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

That jealousy is a very great sin becomes evident in the fact that it is a combination of great sins, and often leads to yet other great sins. It is a combination of ungratefulness, selfishness and lack of love (which is the first and second commandments, according to Jesus, who said "love to God is the first commandment and that the second is love to one's neighbor) and this sin can lead to almost anything. Once jealousy is aroused, the jealous person will begin to look for something in the object of jealousy with which to find fault. It is seldom hard to find something in another

with which to find fault — if we are looking for it, and, under the critical eye of jealousy, the fault is soon magnified and perhaps exaggerated out of all proportion. If this actual fault is not sufficient, jealousy can arrange to imagine one. As a result, good friends, good brethren, and sometimes the best of comrades are often divided. When this takes place, both parties suffer and others with them. I feel convinced that perhaps in every trouble, or division, that has ever plagued the church, the difficulty has been either caused or greatly helped along by jealousy on the part of some. I know there have been serious departures, both in faith and in practice, all along the way; but, many times the difference between brethren has been very slight and jealousy has found a way to enlarge upon it. Perhaps some minister has been accused of advocating false doctrine and the actual difference has been mostly in terminology, with little actual difference. Or perhaps brethren have disagreed upon some point of practice or what is called church order, and, although the difference may be far from vital; fleshly pride, ambition and jealousy may cause the eyes of some to go out of focus — and things are seen entirely out of their true proportion. When this takes place, of course others become effected through that -confidence which they have in their leaders.

I do not intend to imply that men, and women, of pure motives are never falsely accused of jealousy. I know that they often are. Nor do I intend to convey the idea that it is unnecessary for true followers of the Lord to ever withdraw from those who would advocate error. I know that the identity of the church has been preserved by faithful and courageous persons who have dared to stand alone, if necessary, to avoid the loss of their priceless heritage. I am not writing this way in order to accuse certain individuals, but to warn against something that has always been a menace to the peace and prosperity of families, communities, churches, and nations. May we each examine ourselves, asking "what are our motives", and being slow to condemn others. I am sure that the best and noblest of people often differ in opinion, and none of us should take the position that unless the other fellow agrees with us, and lives by our conscience, he isn't worth having our society.

JESUS SAVES

JESUS SAVES

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." [Mt 1:21](#).

When the angels of the Lord spoke these words to Joseph, he included the specific command: "thou shalt call his name Jesus;" and the reason for this is given in these words; for he shall save his people from their sins." The name Jesus signifies savior, so the thought might well be expressed in these words; "Thou shalt call his name Savior, for he shall save." This brings us to our central thought, Jesus saves. We see these words written on billboards along our highways, and we have seen them written in bold type across the front of churches.

Our effort in this little article will be to prove conclusively, by the Bible, that Jesus does save; and that He finally shall save, with an eternal salvation, all of His people from their sins. We shall endeavor to prove that Jesus did not come simply to offer salvation, or just to make salvation possible, but to actually save. He came not to save all mankind, as many would have us believe, but as in the language of our text; His people: i. e. all who were given Him in the eternal covenant.

Jesus' own words concerning His work are recorded in [Joh 6:38-39](#); "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

Now we are reminded of the words of Jesus when he hanged on the cross; "It is finished". What was finished, his suffering? Yes, but also the work of justification, for he spoke these words concerning His death. With the death of Jesus the supreme offering had been made. Now we refer you to [Heb 10:14](#) "For by one offering he hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified." To sanctify means. to set apart, or dedicate to holy service. Who is it that sanctifies God's people? None other than God by his Holy Spirit. "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". [Joh 6:44](#).

"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." [1Co 2:15](#), "Marvel not what I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, etc. [Joh 3:7-8](#). It is God who sanctifies His people: as in [Ro 8:29-30](#) "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be confirmed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." All the chosen of the Father have been perfected forever, by the one offering, when God offered only begotten Son a sacrifice for sin.

Many people believe that Jesus saves, if the sinner will only open his heart and believe, and then continue steadfast in believing and following the Master. It is very true that the bible connects faith and good works with eternal life but nowhere do we read in the Bible that these are, in any way, the cause of one having eternal life. On the other hand, faith and good works are everywhere set forth as the evidence that one is a child of God: i. e. has eternal life.

It is the belief of many people that even the believer can neglect his salvation, and be finally lost; but Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life." [Joh 6:47](#). Now if it could be taken away or destroyed it would not be everlasting. Jesus said, "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, etc." [Joh 6:27-28](#). Are Christ's people His sheep because they hear His voice and follow him, or do they hear and follow because they are his sheep? Jesus answered this question when he said, "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." [Joh 10:26](#).

In support of our position we invite the reader to read the entire 6th chapter of John's gospel, the first two chapters of Ephesians, and the 9th and 10th chapters of Hebrews. The latter part of the 10th chapter of Hebrews deals with the judgments of God against His people when they transgress, but does not threaten eternal destruction. The Lord deals with His people as children: He blesses them in obedience and chastises them in disobedience. "If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." [Ps 89:31,33](#). "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." [1Co 3:15](#).

Yes, Jesus saves: His work as a sin-bearer is finished and the work of sanctification continues on. Finally all of God's elect people shall be raised in the likeness of the Lord Jesus, and shall reach the home which Christ has prepared for them. None of them shall be left out. This is the saving work of Jesus Christ, who is the "Author and finisher of our faith." [Heb 12:2](#).

JOHN 3:16

[Joh 3:16](#)

Those who are familiar with the Primitive Baptists, and with what we believe and teach, know that we do NOT believe the gospel is a means of eternal salvation, and we do NOT believe it is an offer of eternal salvation, or for the purpose of getting folks "born again" or in a position where Christ can save them. But we believe the Gospel is the "good news" of how God has loved a people from before the foundation of the world, has given them to Christ; and the Christ put away their sins by his one offering upon the cross. And that God, by his Holy Spirit, enters into their hearts, imparts to them a new nature and causes them to love God and righteousness. We believe this is a sovereign, mysterious and miraculous work of God — and the direct work of God's Spirit, without human assistance. We Believe the Gospel is for the comfort and joy, and for the encouragement and guidance of those who have already been "born again".

With these facts in mind, let us turn to [Joh 3:16](#). Perhaps no scripture is more familiar to our readers than this.

"For God so loved the world" 8 to this extent God loved the world — that He gave his only begotten Son, etc." Now what world is under consideration here? When the Bible uses the word "world", it does not always mean all the inhabitants of the earth. Sometimes it means the Jewish world, sometimes the Gentile world; sometimes it means the believing world, and sometimes the world of unbelievers. Sometimes it means the non-elect world, and sometimes the elect world of God's people. Here, I am quite sure it means the elect world of God's people, those whom God has loved and determined to save with an everlasting salvation. But, you say, the text uses the word "whosoever" — that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, it does. But who is the "whosoever" that believeth? In [Ac 13:48](#), we read, "as many as were ORDAINED to eternal life believed." Now Webster says the word "ordain means" to establish; decree; appoint; esp., of the Deity, destine; predestine. The Bible uses the word "predestinate" — which means to fix destiny beforehand. Believing is an evidence, not the cause, of being born again.

Believing something is true, never did make it so. We believe because of evidence, but evidence is only the result, not the cause, of an established fact. But many, no doubt, will immediately think of [Joh 3:18](#) — "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Certainly he is condemned already! This is true of ALL men in the state of nature, and, were it not for Christ, all would remain eternally condemned. But, you say, "this is talking about the heathen — those who have not heard the gospel". There is no mention of the heathen here. These words were spoken to Nicodemus, a man who knew about Jesus and his wondrous works, and was, at that moment, looking upon Jesus. The words "hath not believed" do not mean that failure to believe is the reason for condemnation, but evidence that the condemnation remains. I might say, at one of my church meetings. So and so is here today, because I see he or she in the congregation. Now everyone would know that my seeing that individual was not the reason for them being there, but only the evidence that they were sitting in the congregation. And still I

used the word "because" in that way. In interpreting scripture, we must distinguish between cause and effect. Many folks fail to do this.

Now let us turn more especially to the subject of the new birth, which is so extensively dealt with in the first part of the chapter. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Now when Jesus said this to Nicodemus, I feel sure he did not mean that Nicodemus, personally, must be born again. He was simply setting forth a positive law of the Kingdom. "Ye (all men) must be born again." I believe Nicodemus was already born again; already a Child of God. Why do I believe this? Because the evidence was there. This man was an honest God-fearing man: he had a very honest desire to become better acquainted with Jesus. His heart was "in the right place" so to speak. He just needed to know the ways of God more perfectly. He came to Jesus for instruction. Naturally he did not understand Jesus at first: it was necessary for Jesus to further explain. And, when he did explain, he declared this second birth to be the sovereign, mysterious and miraculous work of God himself. He likened the quickening Spirit to the wind. No man can see the wind, nor control it, nor direct its course: it "bloweth where it listeth."

Now, let us turn our Bibles to [Joh 1:12-13](#).

"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: (We hear this quoted very frequently, and usually the minister, or whoever, will stop right there, as though the sentence was finished. But there is no period there but a colon.) The sentence continues in the 13th verse — "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And that, my friends, is exactly what Primitive Baptists have been teaching all along.

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOB

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOB

The Book of Job, believed to be the oldest book of the Bible, deals with a very perplexing question; one that has puzzled the minds of men of all ages: Why do the righteous suffer? In this book we are given only partial answers, and are brought to the conclusion that, since God's ways are infinitely higher than ours, we are not to question his wisdom and goodness, but can safely trust in him.

Job was indeed a righteous man, a good man; one who, to use the Bible expression, "was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed (avoided) evil." Yet, Job was caused to suffer exceedingly. Indeed, he is perhaps the most extreme example of the righteous being brought to suffer that we have any record of. Job did not understand it. His three friends thought they did, but very clearly they did not; and the fourth (Elihu) although the younger of the four, came closer to the answer than them all. Elihu pointed out the fact that secret things belong to God, that his ways are much-much higher than the ways of men, and that no one should doubt Him or complain against God. And Job had done a great deal of complaining against God, even so much as to curse the day he (Job) was born.

Although the Bible speaks of Job being a perfect man and upright, it does not mean that Job was perfect in the sense that the Lord Jesus was perfect: it does not mean that he was without fault. Job had his faults no doubt, but from a human standpoint he was a very good man, and one for

whom God had a very high regard. So God chose to teach Job a lesson and put him to a very severe test. But the lesson was not for Job's benefit alone, but for the benefit of all of God's children who would read and profit from Job's experience. Of course the great overall purpose was that it might serve to God's ultimate glory. And we must not forget that it was for the purpose of proving Satan a liar, for that is precisely what the Bible declares him to be. Satan had said that Job would curse God to his face, but Job never did. Satan had insinuated that Job was serving God for selfish advantage, but this was not true. A truly good man will serve God from the pure principle of love and from a sense of gratitude, and Job proved himself to be a truly good man, although he did think and act somewhat foolishly under trial.

In the beginning of the story, we find Job a man of great possessions and high honor. He was the father of ten children to whom he was very devoted, and he had great flocks and herds: he was a very rich and famous man. But before long, at the instigation of Satan, we find him being bereft (deprived) of all of his possessions and also of his sons and daughters. It seems that only his wife remained, and she became a great source of temptation to him; for she was the one who advised him to "curse God and die." But Job rebuked her with the words, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" During the time of his affliction Job did very much complaining, but, after all, if ever man had much to complain about, surely Job did. He was not only deprived of his family and his possessions, but was bowed down with bodily affliction; so much so that the Bible declares that his body was sorely afflicted with boils "from the sole of his foot unto his crown." To add to his affliction, most of his friends and acquaintances forsook him; and even his three very close friends, who had come to mourn with him and to comfort him, accused him of having committed some grievous sin, and declared that his afflictions were but curses of a righteous God. Although Job repeatedly declared his innocence, these friends would not believe him nor cease from their accusations. Job knew their accusations were false for the main part, for he had information that they did not have, and was correct when he declared them to be "miserable comforters."

The younger man, Elihu, stood by and listened to the various arguments pro and con between Job and his friends, and finally could contain himself no longer; and although they were his elders, Elihu spoke out in rebuke of both Job and his three friends. The Bible says, [Job 32:1-3](#)—"So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job." It is both interesting and instructive to study what this man had to say, for he occupies much the same place as a minister of God; justifying God and defending his right to do what he will with his own: declaring the wisdom of God and His righteousness.

Finally, God himself speaks to Job "out of the whirlwind", putting Job to a verbal test. God asks numerous questions of Job which Job cannot answer, but must remain dumb except to answer that God alone can do these things. After God has finished speaking, Job answers, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understand not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes." [Job 42:2-6](#). The Lord approved of the attitude of his servant Job, but disapproved of that of Job's three friends. "And it was so, that after the

Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said unto Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath." Nevertheless, the Lord commanded these men to provide sacrifice for their error and to have Job to pray for them. "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he had prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." [Job 42:10](#).

"So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters." —[Job 42:12](#).

I shall conclude this article with a quotation from Matthew Henry, the noted commentator.
Quote—

Solomon says, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof", [Ec 7:8](#). It was so here in the story of Job; at evening-time it was light. Three things we have met with in this book which, I confess, have troubled me very much; but we find all the three grievances redressed, in this chapter, everything set to rights. I. It has been a great trouble to us to see such a holy man as Job so fretful, and especially to hear him quarrel with God. Here he recovers his temper, is sorry for what he has said amiss, un-says it, and humbles himself before God. It has likewise been a great trouble to us to see Job and his friends so much at variance, though they were all very wise and good men; but here we have this grievance redressed likewise, the differences between them happily adjusted, and all joining in sacrifices and prayers, mutually accepted of God. It has troubled us to see a man of such eminent piety and usefulness as Job so grievously afflicted, so poor, so slighted, and made the very center of all the calamities of human life; but here we have this grievance redressed too, Job healed of all his ailments, more honored and beloved than ever, enriched with an estate double to what he had before, surrounded with all the comforts of life, and as great an instance of prosperity as ever he had been of affliction and patience. All this is written, that we, under these and like discouragements that we meet, through patience and comfort of this scripture may have hope. End quote.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

LET THERE BE LIGHT

"God said, Let there be light; and there was light." - [Ge 1:3](#).

God is sovereign, eternal, unchangeable; He speaks and it is done.

There are two kinds of light, natural and spiritual. Natural light we think of as coming from the sun, and spiritual light from God, the Sun of righteousness. The sun is the source of all energy.

Certainly God is the first cause, for He it was who commanded light to shine in the beginning.

There are at least two natural kingdoms, animal and vegetable. The vegetable comes first for without it there could be no animal life. The sun causes clouds to form and rain to fall, and rain is essential to life. All things pertaining to life and energy form a continuous chain of factors with

the sun as the first link. Small wonder that the ancients worshipped the sun.

We group the two kingdoms we have named into one and call it the natural kingdom. There is also another, the spiritual kingdom. God is the sun in the spiritual kingdom, the source of all spiritual energy - all things revolve around Him.

We take the things of the natural kingdom to illustrate the spiritual, for what exists in one, except sin, exists in the other; and what is true of one is largely true of the other also. It is upon God, the spiritual sun, that spiritual life and light depend. Only He has it to give.

He alone can say to the soul that is without form and void and in darkness, "Let there be light:" and He does say it, and there is light. Spiritual light nourishes and encourages spiritual children, and they are those for whom Christ died.

The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit because he does not belong to the spiritual kingdom. "Ye must be born again," said Jesus to Nicodemus, and we read that it is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God." Also that it is "not of works, lest any man should boast."

God's Spirit goes forth as the lightning and calls His people from the four corners of the earth "out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." It can reach the most ignorant heathen in darkest Africa as easily as the most educated person here in America.

Perhaps it does not to the same degree of enlightenment, but where there is only one spark of life a child of God exists. Although he may never hear the name of Christ he can look to God as his Savior.

God will never cast away one of His children.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

LIMITED ATONEMENT

LIMITED ATONEMENT

Primitive Baptists believe in what has been called "the strict doctrine of limited atonement" or election. And although the atonement is limited, the doctrine is very broad. It includes God's elect people of every race, nation, and station in life. It includes His people from among the heathen, the feeble minded, and all children who die in infancy.

Please compare this with the doctrine which teaches that men must hear the gospel, believe the gospel, and obey the gospel — in order to be eternally saved. I offer this in reply to those who believe that Primitive Baptists have a narrow doctrine.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

Wherefore seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. — [Heb 12:1-2](#).

This is our second article on the book of Hebrews. In the article before this, we spoke of how our Old Testament brethren were compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses as God demonstrated His miraculous power in behalf of His church, the national Israel. In His dealings with them He was preparing the way for our Savior's entrance into the world, and the establishment of His church. Now the apostle insists that not only the Old Testament church, but we also are compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses. The truth of the matter is that the New Testament church is compassed about (surrounded) by a much greater cloud of witnesses than those brethren were.

Especially could this be spoken to those living in that day when Paul wrote. Those people not only were acquainted with the Lord's dealings with their fathers, but they had seen and heard those who had seen and heard God's own Son as He spoke and taught the precious truths of God, and testified of His Father. They had heard these men testify of the miracles He performed, and of the Lord's dealings with them personally. They were eyewitnesses of great miracles which were performed by God through His apostles, as they called on the name of Jesus. As we find recorded in the second chapter, where he speaks of the great salvation "which first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will".

The Old Testament saints are said to have received a good report through faith: the Lord's dealings with His people in those days were types and shadows of Christ's coming and of the blessings of His spiritual kingdom and the deliverance from sin which was wrought out by and through Him. But these people did not receive the promise: they did not actually see the Lord Jesus, nor hear the gospel preached in its purity. Now Paul reasons that "God has provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (complete). Then he proceeds to exhort these brethren that they be faithful to keep the Lord's commandments, and to successfully run the Christian race.

God has set a race before us. Let us run that race with patience. Patience is steadfastness or perseverance — just continually keeping at a thing until it is finished. But in order to do this, we must lay aside every weight. The would-be Christian is saddled by many weights, at first. When one comes forth from a dead state in nature, he or she comes forth bound with grave clothes, so to speak: bound by traditions and doctrines of men; these must be removed - cast off. We are hampered by the corruptions of the flesh and oftentimes by earthly ties. We must crucify and mortify the deeds of the flesh, and be willing to forsake all to follow Jesus.

And we must lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us: we must by all means do this. Now notice he does not say sins but sin. There must be some particular sin which so easily besets the Lord's people. I feel sure that this particular sin is that of unbelief. The trouble with so many in that day was that they did not believe. We know that it was because of unbelief that they crucified the Lord of glory. It is very true that the dead in sins cannot believe, but somehow I cannot escape the idea that their inability rests in their unwillingness and the enmity which they feel against God and righteousness. They would not believe even in the face of the positive proof which God provided: they deliberately shut their eyes and stopped their ears. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." [Joh 3:19](#).

But we ought not to be like them, seeing that we are compassed about by so many witnesses: God has provided for us the proof that He lives and that He cares and provides for His people. We have abundant proof that Jesus Christ is His Son, that He conquered death, is the Savior of His people, and shall return to earth to claim His own. God demonstrated His wisdom and power to national Israel in all His righteous and miraculous dealings with them: He has demonstrated it in His dealings with the spiritual Israel in all ages, He has demonstrated it in His care for His church and its preservation, and he has demonstrated and proven it in the miracles which Jesus performed; for none other but God could have done these mighty works. Jesus could have been none other than the Son of God.

Let us run the Christian race with patience, looking unto Him: He is our perfect and heavenly example. More than this, He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the yardstick that God has given: we should measure our lives by His, and seek to pattern after Him. We should ever be able and willing to answer our great adversary as Jesus answered him — with the words "it is written". The Word of God and not simply the traditions of men should always be our guide. We should study His written Word to determine just what has been written and how it applies to us, then we should apply it to our daily lives. In this way only, can we receive the full blessing of the Lord. For in this way His people serve Him. More later, if the Lord wills.

LOVE — FEAR — CHRISTIANITY — RELIGION

LOVE — FEAR — CHRISTIANITY — RELIGION

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." [1Jo 4:18](#).

There are only two principles which serve as motives for human conduct: these are love and fear. One of these is the motivating principle behind Christianity; the other is the motivating principle behind religion in the broader sense. By placing Christianity separate from religion, I do not mean to convey the idea that it is not religion; I do so, simply because I believe the religion of Christ to be at great contrast with what men commonly regard as religion. Christianity is the very highest form of religion: indeed, it is the only true religion.

But the term, religion, can mean almost anything. I have heard it said, and I believe rightly so, that man is naturally a religious creature. It has also been said that "if man did not have a God to worship, he would invent one." I think the truth of that has been proven many times; for men, being without the true God, have invented gods of their own. I suppose there has never been a

nation or race of men upon earth that has not had some form of religion, and many of the most terrible crimes that have ever been committed have been done religiously.

As we view religion in general, we find that fear is the great motivating principle behind it. All of the false religions of the world are based mainly, if not entirely, upon fear; and, according to our text, "fear hath torment"; there is very little comfort to be found in a religion of fear; and a great deal of torment. In fear, men have cast their own children to the flames, and they have done it to appease the wrath of their god. In fear, men have tortured themselves to atone for their sins. In fear, they have made aggressive war on their neighbors, who were often much better than they, and they have done it in a blind zeal for their false religion. And even in, so called, Christian lands, men have made a virtual "hell on earth" for themselves, in an effort to escape the fires of an eternal hell and gain comfort in the world to come; and they have done it through fear. But a religion of fear is not Christianity.

Love, not fear, is the motivating principle behind Christianity. It was love which prompted Christ to establish His religion, and love was demonstrated in all that He did; and to be a Christian one must follow His example. Christ wants His followers to be happy, and "fear hath torment." All men are under moral law, and Christ taught that the whole law consists of love to God and love to one's neighbor. When asked to designate the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets." [Mt 22:37-40](#). I would also call your attention to the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians where we read that without charity (love in action) we are nothing. God judges the hearts of men, and the thing required is pure love to Him.

I shall quote from Eld. J. H. Oliphant in his "Principles and Practices of the Regular Baptists." "God sets no value upon any action of men except that which arises from pure love to Him, and has His glory for its object. Hence, if we knew what men would do if all civil law were abolished and every sense of danger of future punishment was removed, then we might see man as God sees him." Again quoting from Eld. Oliphant, "I confidently believe that there is not a solitary human being on the face of the earth that has any goodness about him save those who have been born of God. 'He that loveth is born of God.' "

"Perfect love casteth out fear." It may be true that fear has a part in the Christian experience, and it is certainly true that Christians have their doubts and fears, but that is because their love is not yet perfect. As one grows in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus, fear is pushed farther and farther into the background, and love is brought to shine forth ever more brightly. If our love was perfect, our only concern would be that God's will be done, and we would love righteousness purely for righteousness' sake, and for the sake of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us."

A true Christian is a free man—not a slave. True, he is a prisoner of Christ; but a prisoner of love is not a slave. Service of love is willing service and, for the most part, it is joyous service. True Christians should be, and I think for the most part are, happy people. They have their problems, their troubles and sorrows, but they have an eternal Friend; and they know it. They are not working to obtain heaven—they believe they already have title to it, and will shortly come into possession of it. They don't worry about the eternal destiny of others—they are willing to leave that matter in the hands of God. They are interested, terribly interested, in serving God; and they know that the best way to serve Him is to serve His people. They believe in performing good works; and yet, they do not believe in good works in the same way that others do. I think we can sum it all up by saying that they have faith in God—not in themselves or others; but in God.

True Christianity is a joyous religion —intended to enrich our lives. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Christ's message is a joyous message—that is what makes it gospel. The Bible teaches that Jesus came, not simply to offer salvation or to make salvation possible, but to actually "save His people from their sins." Strange so many good people not only fail to believe this doctrine, but don't want to believe it. Professing a love for the heathen, they seemingly don't want to believe a doctrine which brings hope for the heathen. Being anxious for the salvation of souls, they cling to a system that limits salvation to those who hear the gospel. They thus accept a faith which condemns the vast majority of the human family to eternal misery; all because of human failure.

To many people religion has become a burden. Law service is slave service. The Christian church is designed to be a happy, peaceful, and highly spiritual organization. One of the main evils of a religion of fear is that it tends to tear down the church by bringing into it unregenerate men and women.

How very thankful we should be that it isn't necessary for people to be Christians in order to inhabit the glory world, because, if that were necessary, but a comparatively few of the world's population would be there. With all the millions of Mohammedans, Buddhists, Confucianists, etc., plus the many thousands of Jews and nominal Christians, there are but few real Christians in the world. There are lots of good people: children of God, and heaven bound; but few real Christians. The business of the gospel is to make Christians out of those who have already been born of God.

May God help us all to lean more heavily upon His Almighty Arm, and to walk more closely in the footsteps of the Master.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

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. —. [1Jo 2:15](#).

We know that when the Bible uses the word "world" it does not always mean the earth or all the inhabitants thereof, i.e. the whole human family. Sometimes it means the Jewish world, sometimes the Gentile world; sometimes it means the believing world, sometimes the world of unbelievers; sometimes it means the non-elect world, and sometimes the elect world of God's people. The word "world" sometimes is understood to mean "age". In fact, when I turn to Webster's Dictionary, I find six definitions of this one word. Such is the nature of the English language, and this is one of the things that makes it difficult.

But, in the above text, I think it means the earth and all its inhabitants; and surely all the works of men are included. But, as we think upon this text, there are other texts that must be considered. The Bible teaches that husbands are to love their wives, parents are to love their children etc. — and that the people of God are to love one another. Jesus even said, "Love your enemies. Now all of these are **in** the world.

The Bible also teaches that we are to provide for our families and serve one another. We read where it says, "He that provideth not for his own, especially for them of his own household, hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Now all of the material things, so necessary to our natural lives, are things which are in the world. Yet, our text teaches that we are not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world. The verses which follow say, "For 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 forever." So what are we going to do with these scriptures? How are we going to apply them?

I now wish to call attention to two passages of scripture that I think are needed at this point.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." —

[Eph 5:25](#). "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." — [Lu 14:26](#).

Here we have two seeming contradictions. In fact, we have dealt with nothing but seeming contradictions thus far in this article. And yet we know there are no actual contradictions in the Bible.

I am now about to make a statement that I hope will not be misunderstood. Here it is — All things are relative. By that statement I do not mean what is sometimes meant when the statement is used. We know that the moral laws of God are fixed and definite, for otherwise the Bible would contain no safe rule of conduct. But I am not talking about that when I make the statement that all things are relevant. Let me illustrate what I mean.

We sometimes make the statement that "butter is soft," and that "steel is hard". Now the thought that occurs to me is this, — Do we think of butter as being soft because steel is extremely hard, or do we think of steel as being hard because butter is so extremely soft? Which is it, and who can tell? We say "A bird flies swiftly", and "The tortoise moves slowly". But, **as we** draw this comparison, is it true that the bird is swift in its flight, or is it because the tortoise is so extremely slow? Or is it just the other way round: is the tortoise really slow, or is it because the bird is so extremely swift? You see, the only way we have of judging is by comparison. So all things are judged in comparison with other things, and that is what I mean when I say all things are relative. After Solomon's temple was destroyed, another temple was later built in its place. Upon the dedication of this second temple, the younger people rejoiced: to them it was beautiful and very wonderful. But the older people, those who remembered the first temple in all its splendor, wept; because it was so far inferior to the first.

On a bright sunny day here in Missouri, I might make the statement, "I just love this beautiful weather" (although it might be in the midst of winter and quite chilly). But a visitor from Florida might reply, "I hate this Missouri climate". Now we both would be glad to be alive, and we both would appreciate the sunshine, but my friend from the sunny southland might use the word "hate" where I would use the word "love". Now why? Simply because I am contrasting this particular day with other winter days here in Missouri, and my friend has his affections centered upon the even sunnier days of a milder climate. We all love the sunshine, yet the degree of affection we have for it may be expressed in different ways, even to the point of using the word "hate". But the point I am trying to make is this — The word, when used in this way means to "love less". So it is with the text found in Luke (14:26) about a man hating his wife, mother, children etc. It simply teaches that a true disciple of Christ must love all natural things and relationships less than he or she loves the Lord and his spiritual kingdom. In other words, the things of God must come first.

So with our text at the heading of this article: I am sure it means that although we do have an affection for things of this world (and it is only natural and right that we should) our hatred for the evil that is in the world, and our love of God and righteousness, and our desire for a better world should cause us to love the things of this world less, until (by comparison) we can say that our affection for these (natural and worldly things) even ceases to be love. And this is true of

even those human relationships with those near and dear to us, and even of our own lives. I hope our readers will understand what I am trying to say.

It all boils down to this,— We are not to allow our affection for the world, and the things that are in the world, to take the pre-eminence in our lives; but to center our affections primarily upon the "Kingdom of God and His righteousness" and to seek to serve in Spirit and in truth. Anything short of this is idolatry.

We must remember however, that it is not wrong for us to enjoy the natural blessings of this life, so long as they do not interfere with our service to God and his people.

MATT. 18:15-17

[Mt 18:15-17](#)

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

I think that the above language is so plain that it requires but little explanation or comment. I am convinced that it presents a rule which if faithfully followed, would prevent many and perhaps most troubles between brethren, as well as to effect a cure where differences exist. It is a splendid and safe rule for all church members to follow and much of it can be extended to all human relations; I refer especially to the first part "tell him his fault between thee and him alone". This should be observed not only in the church, but in the home and the community. Notice the instruction is, "between thee and him ALONE". How often is this rule disregarded? That would be difficult to answer, but we know it is disregarded much-much too often because the first thought of almost everyone is to tell "his fault" to someone else first. Gossip often begins with, "so and so did me wrong, but don't you tell" but the friend does tell to some other special one who repeats the story as, "so and so told me" or "I heard". I am sure that church members do sometimes gossip, and it is certain that they positively do take sides. I think the Bible teaches that the most common and prevailing sin is failure to bridle the tongue. Only as a last resort should these matters be taken to the church for settlement, but this is sometimes necessary. Then if the brother be judged at fault by the church, and if he will not listen to them and rectify his error, he must be dealt with by the church. The instruction is clear; he shall be regarded as a heathen man and a publican. When a church fails to do it's duty in such matters, it not only violates the commandment of our Lord, but lowers it's dignity and lays itself open for more serious trouble.

I hope that our readers will study this scripture and meditate upon it very carefully and prayerfully. We know not what time something may come up and we ourselves may be caught off guard and speak without thinking, in plain violation of these gospel steps unless we condition ourselves by careful consideration and review. May the Lord help us to conduct ourselves and

keep His house as He has commanded. One of the prevailing sins of humanity is loose and unguarded conversation.

When difficulties arise between individuals it is only natural for others, when they hear about it, to allow their human emotions, sympathies and prejudices to become involved. These human emotions should never be allowed to hinder our better judgment, and every case should stand on its own merits, but this is often not the case. Therefore, when two individuals can settle their difficulties quietly between themselves, others need never know that trouble ever existed, or at least not until after it is all settled and good feeling is restored.

Only as a last resort should the matter be presented to the church, after all else has been done as commanded.

MEEKNESS

MEEKNESS

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. [Mt 5:5](#)

Meekness is one of the distinguishing marks of God's children and I am persuaded that they are the only people of earth who are truly meek. To be meek is to be mild of temper; patient; humble. It is that quality by which people are willing to accept the inevitable: make the best of things as they are, and especially it is that quality by which God's people are made to be resigned to His will. The terms meekness and humility are very largely synonymous: they mean very much the same thing.

"Blessed are the meek" — not at some future time, although that is certainly taught, but the Savior speaks in the present tense; the meek are already blessed: they are already in a blessed condition. Why?—"For they shall inherit the earth." That is just another way of saying that the choicest blessings of earth belong, and shall belong, to those who are meek. This great truth was, at least in a measure, recognized by a Chinese philosopher, who lived thousands of years ago, when he said, "He who treads softly goes far".

Meekness is one of the most important of those graces which go to make up a Christian character. To be a Christian, one must be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one cannot follow Him without being like Him in this respect; for Jesus was meek. Christ was giving a very gracious invitation when He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." [Mt 11:28-30](#). "Learn of me" He said. "for I AM MEEK": we cannot learn of Him, without learning of His meekness; for "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously". [1Pe 2:23](#).

It is recorded that one time the disciples were disputing among themselves as to which among them should be the greatest. It was then that Jesus called a little child and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven". [Mt 18:3-4](#).

I am sure that Jesus was not pointing to any purity in the child when he spoke those words, but was simply teaching that if we would enter into the joys of His kingdom, we must look to our heavenly Father for our every need in the same way that an earthly child looks to its earthly

parents. And if we would be useful citizens of the kingdom, we must humble ourselves as a little child is humble.

Another lesson in meekness is given in [Mt 5:39](#), where the Savior said, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Someone will say, "Surely Christ didn't mean those words to be taken literally", but I believe that He did. Of course, by a blow on the cheek, He means any number of things which may serve to wound our pride, and arouse our anger: harsh words spoken, slighting remarks made, little acts of unkindness of one sort or another.

Jesus was not teaching that it is wrong for us to defend ourselves and loved ones from actual danger, but let us consider a slap in the face — does it endanger our lives- Is it liable to result in permanent injury, or is it simply an insult to our pride? The lesson is not that we should deliberately dare another to strike us again, but that we, ourselves, should not strike back.

What if we do strike back? The answer to that question is quite simple — we are liable to start a battle, and gain an enemy and the trouble may involve others. But if, on the other hand, we "turn the other cheek" we are quite liable to gain a friend eventually — and we can never have too many of those. So we see that this is a very practical lesson, and should be followed, not altogether because it is the right thing to do from a moral standpoint, but because it is the profitable thing as well.

We are positive that if all of God's people would follow the teachings of Christ in regard to meekness, our churches would prosper as they have never prospered before. It is well to remind ourselves however, that although Christ was our perfect example of meekness, He did not hesitate to make the whip of cords and, with it, drive the money changers from the temple. So we should not be so "meek" that we will refuse to stand up in defence of the Lord's house and of his precious gospel., and we should be willing to fight for these things if and when the need actually arises. .

MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE

MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE

The definition of the word, miracle, which fits the title of this article is as follows; "An event or effect contrary to the established course of things, or a deviation from the known laws of laws of nature." Webster. I think we might say that, in order for something to be a genuine miracle in the bible-sense of the word, it must be an act of the supernatural.

It seems to me, that in order for a true miracle to take place, one of two things must come to pass: Either 1. Natural law must momentarily be suspended (to an extent or to a degree) or 2. - A higher law than the known natural law must take over. God is able to do it either way, for he is the author of all natural and spiritual law, and all things are possible with him. Our God is a God of miracles, and the Bible abounds with accounts of these being performed. If we don't believe in miracles, then we don't believe the Bible.

There are those who say the Bible only contains the word of God, but Primitive Baptists believe the Bible is the word of God. So we believe in miracles. It is very important that we do believe in

miracles, for without them Christianity could never have come into being. Christianity is itself a miracle, and it is the result of the many miracles we find recorded in the Bible. At the time Christianity came into being, Rome ruled the world; and the Roman Empire was entirely given over to idolatry - except for that little Jewish tributary. And yet, Christianity succeeded in overthrowing the gods of Rome in a comparatively short time. How? Not by purely natural means I am sure. Common sense tells me that Christianity could have never gotten started, much less survived, without the miraculous workings of the Eternal Spirit in Providence and in Grace. Take God out of it, and there is no explanation for Christianity: for either its foundation or its survival.

The first great miracle I wish to mention is the Creation itself. To create is to bring something into being which did not formerly exist. God did this when he "created the heaven and the earth." Only unlimited wisdom and power could do a thing like this. This is the greatest miracle of all, unless we should include that other miracle (which is also an act of creation) when God breathes eternal life into the darkened soul of one said to be "dead in trespasses and sins" and causes that soul to live in His sight I speak of what we call the "new birth". Jesus said, "You must be born again", and this a creative work of God's Spirit.

But the Bible abounds with accounts of other miracles, which could not have been without the miraculous workings of God himself. I would like to mention a few of those miracles.

First, there is the great flood of Noah's day. This was indeed a miracle and must have been the result of some supernatural occurrence. The Bible says that the rain came down from above and "the fountains of the great deep were broken up." In any case, the waters covered the earth until the tops of the mountains were covered, and all flesh was destroyed except for that which was preserved in the ark.

Then we have the account of the total destruction which came upon the wicked cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. It seems that this destruction was accomplished by strange and unusual means, actually known only to God and perhaps his heavenly emissaries.

Next, we should mention the plagues of Egypt. There were ten of these, and each was intended to prove and demonstrate the power of God, and to discredit the gods of Egypt. They were not so much for the purpose of proving this to the Egyptians, but of proving it to the Israelites: they were for the purpose of weaning God's people away from the idolatrous worship of the Egyptians.

Then the crossing of the Red Sea and of the river Jordan. In each instance the water were divided, and the people passed over dry-shod. The waters of the sea were deep enough to drown the Egyptians, and the river was at flood-stage. Many other miracles are recorded in connection with the wilderness journey: the manna, the water which flowed out of the rock, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the voice which thundered from Mt. Sinai etc.

There is also the account of Daniel in the lion's den, the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace,

Jonah and the whale, Elijah's demonstration against the prophets of Baal. These false prophets were invited to test their god by fire to consume their sacrifice. Elijah had told them that the true God would be the one who would send fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice. These prophets built their altar and prepared their sacrifice. Then they began to pray to their god, but to no avail. The prophet of the Lord mocked them by saying, "Cry out louder: perhaps your god is asleep, or perhaps he has gone on a journey." So they cried ever louder, and in a frenzy they cut themselves with knives until the blood ran down. But Baal did not answer. Then Elijah built an altar and prepared a sacrifice. A ditch was dug around the altar, and water was poured upon the sacrifice and upon the wood, until the ditch was filled to overflowing. Then Elijah prayed to the God of Israel, and fire came from heaven and not only consumed the sacrifice, but licked up the water from the altar and from the ditch.

So much for miracles of the Old Testament. We all are familiar with the miracles performed by Jesus: how he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; how he stilled the tempest, cast out devils and raised the dead. A most wonderful miracle was performed when Jesus, himself, gained victory over death and ascended unto the Father.

But these miracles were not confined to Jesus alone, but the power of God was demonstrated in the case of not only the apostles, but also in the case of those early converts to Christianity. Jesus had commanded his apostles to "go into the world and preach the gospel", baptizing and teaching. But he also told them to tarry at Jerusalem, "until you be endued with power from on high." So, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and He conferred upon them special and extraordinary gifts: the ability to speak with other tongues, and to perform miracles of healing etc. This was to prepare them for the work that Jesus had appointed them to. How could these "ignorant and unlearned men" preach the gospel to all nations, unless they be able to speak in the languages of those nations? How could those heathen people be expected to believe them, and to receive the gospel message, without those miracles which were a sign from heaven that these men were God's men, and that the message they brought was God's message? Here was the proof that was necessary for the establishing of the church among the Gentiles. Of course these miracles were not in themselves sufficient, but they were necessary. But this brings us again to a consideration of that other miracle mentioned before, the "new birth." The hearts of God's elect people must be prepared by the direct operation of God's Holy Spirit.

So I have a question for the skeptics and the unbelievers who would deny the reality of these miracles. "If these bible-accounts of miracles are not true, how then do you account for Christianity: How did it gain foothold in the world?" Here is proof that there is a God in heaven, that the Bible is his own inspired words, and that the Christian religion is the only true religion. True miracles can be performed only by the power of God, which proves that **there is a God.**

MOON-DAY SPECIAL

MOON-DAY SPECIAL

It's tremendous! It's stupendous! It's colossal! For the first time in history, man has set foot on the moon. Last evening, millions of us, with our eyes "glued" to our television screen, saw American astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin as they walked about on the surface of the moon. We saw the American flag planted there, and, a short while later, heard the message of the president and their reply. Naomi and I watched the moon, hanging low in the western sky, and, at the same time, heard the voices of those men as they were doing research work on the "Sea of Tranquility." It is indeed wonderful, and a tribute to the Creator, that the minds of men would be able to think and plan, and calculate with such accuracy that this thing should be accomplished.

But is it really as great an accomplishment as it might appear to be? Now perhaps would be the best of all times for us to be reminded that man has always sought to "go beyond" the bounds that God has set for him, and that there is always that tendency to worship the creature more than the Creator. I think that is what prompted Solomon to write, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity." He has been an ambitious king, and the glories of his kingdom had exceeded these of all the kings of the earth. He had lived richly, and had withheld from himself no pleasure that is lawful and considered honorable among men. But he had "gone beyond" what God had commanded, and had "made affinity" with the "kings of the earth" by marrying their daughters, and had "centered his eyes" upon earthly power and glory and upon material things, and had lost sight of the fact that spiritual blessings and true riches do not come that way. After sad experience, he penned the lessons found in the book of Ecclesiastes — and concluded with the statement "Fear God: and keep his commandments. for this is the WHOLE duty of man."

When I was a very young man, I, like a great many people today, was a very firm believer in the ability of man to "work out" and solve his problems, in his own way, by the intellect and physical powers by which he had been endowed by his Creator. I believed in God, but had a vastly different conception of both God and man, from what I now have; and what I now believe the Bible teaches. I then believed that man had advanced so far, and was continuing to advance, and would keep on advancing; until finally he would overcome all his enemies, and all opposition, and would provide for himself a virtual heaven — right here on earth. Then, when I became interested in a serious study of the Bible, my attention was drawn to the book of Ecclesiastes; and I found that here was something that contradicted almost my whole philosophy of life. After careful study, I came to the conclusion that human nature does not change, and that what is called "civilization" is like a coat of veneer on a piece of furniture — it just covers up the imperfections which are in the basic wood. There is no lasting human advancement, but the solving of problems creates others, and eventually there is a sliding backward. Civilizations have arisen, prospered for a season, and have declined. Nations have been established, have passed through successive stages, and have gone down. This is because man has never been able to get at the root-cause of all his troubles, corrupt and fallen human nature. Only the grace of the God can do this, and although sovereign Spirit of God has operated in the hearts and lives of countless numbers of individuals of the human family, even they are still possessed with the corruptions of the Adam nature. Paul put it this way, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Only God can deliver, and God will deliver in his own way and time. This is why man cannot "go it alone" Man's works, since the first dawn of history, have been very much of a failure. That is what

Soloman meant when he said "vanity of vanities", and that is what he meant when he said, "This only have I found : that God created man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." I think, by inventions, he means that man has gone beyond what God has commanded and designed for him.

Man has always had his own ideas of grandeur. God express-his plan for our first parents, when he commanded them to dress and keep the garden. He gave them permission to eat of all the trees of the garden, with one exception; "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is in the midst of the garden, thou shalt not eat." God told them if they ate of that tree they would surely die. But Satan came along and told them that "God knowest that the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt NOT surely die ; but shall be as GODS, knowing both good and evil." Our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit and died a moral death. So the whole stream of human life became corrupted. They were driven from the garden, and God cursed the earth for man's sake. Soon the first murder was committed, and things continued from bad to worse. Wickedness increased so the old world with a flood; and on the earth, that God destroyed only Noah and those men and animals that were with him in the ark were saved.

After the flood, and when mankind had again multiplied on the earth, they got big ideas of their own, and set about to build a city and a tower "Whose top would reach to heaven." To emphasize their extreme foolishness, the Bible states, that the building materials they used were brick and slime. "And they had brick for stone. and slime had they for mortar." Ever since that time, all through the ages, men have been trying to build towers, using the brick of human works and the slime of fallen and corrupt human nature. And they have been doing it for the same reason that those people did back then, for they said, "Go to, now; Let us build us a city and a tower — that we may establish a name for ourselves etc." Human, fleshly pride has always had its part in causing men to do things contrary to the ways of God. God is not pleased with men's "tower building." In this particular instance, God "confused their tongues, so they could not understand each others speech; so they left off building the city." We have a type here, of how God has and does confuse the tongues of men yet today. Many misunderstandings, I am convinced, are for a purpose: God's purpose. This lesson will apply both religiously and politically.

So, there is a serious question in my mind as to how far God will permit men to go in this present venture, before he "confuses their tongues." Some temporary good may come of space travel. Perhaps it has its place in God's sceme of things, but one thing seems very plain to me: God will not permit men to glory in their own accomplishments too much or too long : there always comes a time when God asserts himself by upsetting their plans and their timetables. Men, and God's people especially, must learn their lessons of humility; and it seems they have always had to learn these lessons by hard and painful experience.

So I refuse to get "too excited" on this Moon-Day, July 21, 1969, because I consider this to be, on the main, another episode in the age old business of "tower building." I believe in "a bright new world of tomorrow, as many others refer to it, but I do not expect it to be brought about in the way most folks expect.

Christ is coming again, and, whether in Spirit or in person, he will "see to it" that even his

enemies are brought to acknowledge his Kingship. "For to Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess." See [Isa 45:23](#); [Ro 14:11](#); [Php 2 :10](#).

If I was not so confident that God is "still in control of things", I would be very dis-couraged — perhaps almost despondent; but I think I know that our God is too great: too wise, too good, and too powerful to allow the forces of evil to triumph. He is certain of victory, for Christ and his church.

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

"I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." [Ac 20:35](#).

As I look at the expression, "More blessed to give than to receive", I am sure it is not to be restricted to money or material substance; but refers to the giving of one's self: of one's labor and of one's talent. It is a matter of one's whole attitude of life; is it a matter of **giving** or of getting, of **servicing** or of being served? The Lord knows, and the Bible teaches, that we must provide for our own needs and the needs of our families. The Bible also teaches liberality in material things. We are required to labor, and to plan for the future. A certain accumulation of goods is necessary: we cannot, and should not give it all away. It would **not** be more blessed to give to this extent. But the Bible does teach the blessedness of giving, and assures us that the greater blessing comes through service to others, and not through a life of self-seeking advantage to ourselves. I feel sure the whole course of our lives should be an effort toward seeking the greater good. This has been defined as "the greatest good to the greatest number". There is no place for selfishness in the truly christian life. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." [Php 2:5-8](#). The christian life is a life of service: - service to God and men. Our life's work then, should be that activity which will best serve this end. We may not always know what that will be, so there is need for earnest meditation and prayer. May the Lord bless us, and young people especially, with faith and wisdom, and with the guidance of his Holy Spirit. May these have strength, and determination and courage.

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." [1Pe 1:7](#).

"My brethren, count it all joy men ye shall fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." [Jas 1:2-3](#).

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patients, experience; and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [Ro 5:3-5](#).

We see by the above, two outstanding things: first, that temptation and tribulation of every sort serves as a trial of faith to the Lord's people: and second, that trial of faith is precious, more precious than gold. Faith itself is a priceless possession, for it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." [Heb 11:1](#). The reason our trial of faith is precious lies in this fact, that by reason of trial our faith is strengthened: now anything which serves to strengthen and increase faith is precious to the Lord and should be to us.

As the swimmer who battles against the stream becomes a stronger swimmer, and as the tree which is exposed, within reason, to the elements becomes a sturdier tree, so faith that is tried becomes a stronger faith. God does not try our faith beyond reason but has promised needed strength: "As thy days so shall thy strength be." [De 33:25](#). I think it is also true that as thy strength so shall thy days be. He who sits as a refiner and purifier of silver ([Mal 3:3](#)) knows just how hot to make the fire. Faith is tried even as gold and silver is tried, i. e., by fire.

Faith must be based upon evidence, so God must manifest Himself to the individual and that is why faith is said to be "the gift of God." [Eph 2:8](#). God, however, manifests Himself to His people many times over in this life, so when He appears to us by His Spirit during our trials of faith and fulfills His promises of strength and comfort this, quite naturally, increases our faith. So with all this in view we should not complain when our faith is sometimes tried, but instead we should rejoice that we have faith for God to try, and we should be encouraged in this; that we have a God who has promised grace sufficient, for we know that, as God is faithful, the clouds will pass over us and the sun will shine again.

May God increase our faith even though it be by fire.

MOUNTAINS — A VALLEY, AND A WAY

MOUNTAINS — A VALLEY, AND A WAY

Jesus said unto them, — If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." [Mt 17:20](#)

There was a time in my life when I felt sure that when Jesus spoke the above words, he had reference to some particular physical mountain — and perhaps he did, but if he did, I am sure of one thing — He was using that particular mountain as a type of other mountains: mountains of doubt, discouragement, affliction, sorrow, and obstacle — in our lives. If he spoke of some particular mountain, such as the Mount of Olives, we must bear in mind the fact that those were the days when God conferred extraordinary gifts upon men — gifts which very evidently ended with the close of the apostolic age. Jesus told them that they would be given power to perform

miracles, wondrous works, in his name. After instructing them to "go into all the world and preach the gospel", he gave direction that they should "tarry at Jerusalem" until these special and extraordinary gifts should be given. Then, on the day of Pentecost, the power was bestowed upon them. They were not only given power to "speak with tongues" (foreign languages) but also to perform miracles of healing, etc. It was necessary that the preaching of the gospel, in those days, should be accompanied by visible signs — in order that the people might know that these men were of God, and that the gospel they preached was truly of God. It was in this way that Christianity became established in the world. After those first teachers had gone the way of all the earth, and the doctrines of Christianity had gained a firm foothold in the world, God evidently no longer deemed it necessary for these visible signs to continue - for we have no record where such power was bestowed upon men after that time. God evidently saw fit to withdraw this visible evidence, that his people might "walk by faith and not by sight". This does not mean, however, that God has ceased from being a God of miracles or that he no longer answers prayer in an affirmative way. He is still all powerful, and the "prayer of faith" is still heard. The miracles now performed are more of a spiritual nature than physical, however, of which those miracles, back then, serve as a type. It is the spiritual application that we wish mainly to consider in this article.

The mountains in our life, may be in the form of problems confronting us in our personal lives, or confronting our churches and people in general. Our problems may be health problems, financial problems, spiritual or moral problems; or problems of the church, the community, or the nation. The vicissitudes of our lives may be compared to the plains, the mountains, the valleys, the deserts, and the high plateaus. We have a wide variety of changes: life is made up of sunshine and of shadow. Our sun is often obscured by clouds, but we know that the clouds must eventually make way again for the sun. The rains must come — likewise, the heat of summer and the cold of winter. Even the storms have their place in the wise providence of God. I am convinced that were there no opposition, no sorrows, afflictions, nor trials of any sort; there could be but little, if any, real spiritual growth in our lives. We may think of our lives as a journey — beginning with the prairies of childhood and youth, and ending with the ocean of eternity.

My wife and I have been deeply concerned, like many others, with problems confronting our churches and people, both here and elsewhere. We have been deeply concerned with problems confronting the nation and the world. Indeed, we have not been at all unaffected by the personal problems of ourselves and others. I mention this, simply to lead up to something that I wish to relate — and to better present the lesson intended in this article. We have only recently returned from a trip to the west coast, in which we had opportunity to view much of God's handiwork and to marvel at the fortitude with which the early pioneers forged their way westward. After returning from that journey of over 5500 miles, my wife, Naomi, dreamed about driving in mountains almost every night for perhaps two weeks. She made mention of this, and finally remarked "I believe there is a purpose in these dreams." She had never believed much in dreams, as having a special meaning, and had evidenced no fear while actually passing over the mountains, but now she was repeatedly dreaming about them. As a result of this, she began an investigation of what the Bible has to say about mountains and of what my reference books have to say about them. She even made the remark she thought I should try to preach about the

mountains. I didn't feel impressed to do so, until some remarks she made one Sunday morning of our regular meeting at the church of our membership.

This particular morning after an important subject had been discussed in our business meeting the day before — and we were much concerned about it — Naomi made the remark, at the breakfast table, "You know, I believe there is a way through these mountains", and then she added, "God is still able to remove mountains". Later, she brought me a piece of sheet music, and said, "This song has also been on my mind of late". The song title was "Suddenly there is a valley". I replied, "Why certainly there IS a way through these mountains, and God IS still able to remove mountains, and who knows but what suddenly there MAY be a valley." And I thought of how we had traveled across the wide plains of Kansas, through the mountains of Colorado, across the deserts and high plateaus of western Colorado and eastern Utah — until we came to another range of mountains, designated as the Alps of America." We saw these mountains in the distance — rugged, snowcapped and formidable; and we wondered, "Do we have to pass through those?" Anyone who has driven in mountains knows how the road, which once stretched far into the distance, apparently comes to an end -- and it seems there is no way through those mountains. Yet, when one arrives at where the road seems to end, with a sheer cliff or a deep precipice, he finds himself simply making a sharp turn — with the road still stretching before him. Ordinarily the road reaches up and up, until with many turns and steep grades the summit is reached. From there it is downhill all the way - but down-hill can also be very dangerous. Mountain driving always requires caution. This time, rather than going up — and then down — as we had supposed, the road led down and down. At the beginning of the long grade, we saw a sign which said, "Downgrade, for the next 12 miles. Use low gear." So down we went —winding this way and that — for either twelve or fourteen miles. Of course we were going down a steep canyon, with mountains on either side. Twelve miles in low gear is a long way, but finally we crossed a bridge and SUDDENLY THERE WAS A VALLEY. It was a broad beautiful valley, and there was a great city and a lake. Of course the city was Salt Lake City and the lake was the Great Salt Lake. One does not see much of the lake, at this point, but the scene is very beautiful. Imagine a broad valley almost filled with city, and almost surrounded with mountains — the ones to the south-east snow capped and reaching for the sky. I can understand why some people consider that one of the most beautiful spots on this earth.

When we started out, we had never been to California - never-the-less we believed there was such a place — and we believed it was worth the effort to go and see for ourselves. When a child starts out on the journey of life, he or she has never "passed this way before," — but with the exuberance of childhood and the enthusiasm of youth, the journey is begun. Even when the going gets tough, strength and encouragement is gained with the thought "It is better farther on". We knew our trip would not be all pleasure. We knew of the mountains and the desert. We also knew that some have failed to reach their destination, but this did not deter us from starting out and continuing on — for we knew that millions of others had made the journey successfully. We were not disappointed: California IS a wonderful state — and we saw many interesting things along the way. There was much to compensate for the long and sometimes weary miles.

We were very much impressed with one of the features of Knott's Berry Farm, near Los Angeles. It was advertised as a free covered wagon show every three minutes — "The old timer tells a story of the old west." We sat down, and on the opposite wall of the room was a large mural,

depicting a scene of unusual beauty. A wagon train was pictured as traveling up a dry, barren valley — with low mountains on either side. The lead team showed signs of almost complete exhaustion, and the narrator began his tale of how the pioneers had traveled through the mountains and across the desert -- and now their supply of water was exhausted. Night came on, and they had sent their scouts out to search for water. With the words, "and night came on" the room lights slowly dimmed and the picture was gradually transformed into a night scene. The stars began to appear and a full harvest moon began to flood the scene with its magic light. A child's voice was heard from the wagon, "Mama, I'm thirsty". Then the voice of the mother, speaking in soft southern accents — seeking to comfort the child — "Try to go to sleep darling, they will find water before morning. Besides, just look at the poor horses — they are having a much harder time than we are." The "old timer" ended his story by reminding us of the great debt that we owe to those hardy pioneers, who braved the dangers of the wilderness to push their way westward "in order to make our great state possible." When we went out from that place, my eyes were misty — for we do owe a great debt of gratitude to those rugged individuals, who were willing to follow their dream — though it meant great dangers, toils and sacrifices. The church, too, has had her pioneers — and the things we hold dear were purchased and preserved at the price of blood, sweat and tears. I have read, or been told, that there was a time, in England, when a man would give a load of hay for the privilege of only reading a relatively small portion of the holy scriptures. —The word of the Lord was indeed precious in those days. Those old pioneers found a way through the mountains — and there IS a way through. May their example inspire us to also press on, and to fight the good fight of faith.

We may rest assured that there IS a way through these mountains, and if we should ever come to a mountain where there is no way to pass over or tunnel through, God is able to remove the mountain; and if the mountain needs to be removed, for God's glory and for the good of his people, God will perform this miracle. "My grace is sufficient for thee" was not a vain or idle promise.

MY SHEPHERD

MY SHEPHERD

I always think of David as being a representative child of God; and of the book of Psalms as being, for the most part, an account of David's own Christian experience. God referred to David as being a man after his (God's) own heart. Now David was a sinner like other men; and he made many mistakes and committed many sins for which the Lord rebuked him severely, but David's life was characterized by this — when he transgressed God's law and was made to see his error, we find him returning to the Lord with tears of repentance, and begging forgiveness.

David's experience, as is generally true of the Lord's people was one of alternate periods of sunshine and gloom; but in all of this his faith in the Lord stands out. Oh, if we all had the faith and the humility that David had!

David here says, "The Lord is my shepherd." He had reason to speak in this way as he was quite familiar with sheep and the work of a shepherd. He had been a shepherd in his early life, you remember. That was his occupation up to the time he fought with Goliath, and entered the courts of Saul. It is well, at this point, for us to remember that our Lord referred to Himself as a

shepherd. He said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Again, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." What a wonderful thing to have the Lord for our shepherd: to be conscious of that fact and to trust in God, which enables us to say with David, "I shall not want."

The expression, "I shall not want" does not mean that we shall have everything we may desire. No doubt David desired many things, in his life, which he did not receive; and so it is with every one of us, but there is a great difference between the definitions of the words desire and want. Webster says that the word want means: 1, State or fact of being without anything; lack, dearth; 2: Absence or lack of necessities; destitution; poverty. So David believed, and all the Lord's children have cause to believe, that we shall not lack any necessary thing: anything that the Lord knows is good for us, and practical, and necessary.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Sheep do not do this until after their hunger has been satisfied, so this is just another way of saying, "I have been fed." This also carries with it the thought that "I am surrounded by food whereby I may have assurance for tomorrow and many days to come." Of course, the "green pastures" represent, primarily, the spiritual food that God provides for His children: the doctrines of the Bible serve as food for the Lord's children and the promises of God causes them to lie down, or rest.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters." Sheep love to drink from still waters, which is agreeable to the peaceful nature of sheep; they will not gain refreshment from troublous waters. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High." [Ps 46:4](#). "The covenant of grace is the river, the promises of which are the streams; or the Spirit of grace is the river, the comforts of which are the streams, that make glad the city of our God. God Himself is to His church a place of 'broad rivers and streams' [Isa 33:21](#). The streams that make glad the city of God are not rapid, but gentle, like those of Siloam. Note, the spiritual comforts which are conveyed to the saints by soft and silent whispers, and which 'come not by observation' are sufficient to balance the most loud and noisy threatenings of an angry and malicious world." Matthew Henry.

"He restoreth my soul." David, like all of the Lord's people, sometimes went into by and forbidden paths; and in disobedience was deprived of the felt presence of the Lord. Perhaps of all animals a sheep can go astray easier than any other, and when lost has the hardest time finding its way back. Were it not for the fact that we have a good shepherd who leaves the "ninety and nine" and goes in search of the sheep that is lost, we would surely be destroyed. We have need again and again of having our souls restored. David prayed, "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation." He had not lost his eternal salvation, for none of Christ's sheep can do that, but he had lost the joys of it.

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." The Lord leads in paths of righteousness; in profitable paths: in right paths. And it is for His name's sake: His eternal covenant, and the promises He has made.

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Notice, he does not say, "Through I shall walk" but "Though I walk" (present tense) though I now walk. There is a sense in which we, everyone of us, is now walking in the valley of the shadow of death. We have the sentence of death in operation within us, and dangers lurk all around. David said in another place, "There is but a step between me and death." I think there is no time when this becomes more apparent than when we are on the highways—"There is but a step between me and death." But this being the case: death lurking all around, "I fear no evil." It is well to remember that for God's people to die is not evil. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is

the death of his saints." Why shall we not fear? Because "thou art with me." The Lord is able to protect from every danger, but if it becomes His will for us to pass through the portals of death it is yet a blessing to sleep in Jesus. Much better to sleep in Jesus than to live without Him.

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The rod and the staff were tools of the shepherd's trade. We are told that the rod was used in the counting of the sheep. In that country where the shepherd knew his sheep by name, and the sheep knew the shepherd's voice; where the shepherd went before the sheep, and they followed him; he would hold out the rod, and would count them as they passed under single file — hence the expression, "passing under the rod." "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." He knows their number, because He has counted them. The staff was used in driving away the enemies, and in recovering the sheep from treacherous places: Christ is His people's protection from danger. So the rod represents Christ's knowledge of His people, and the staff represents His providential care over them. The rod and the staff together represent those things which pertain to the "final perseverance of the saints, through grace, to glory": His foreknowledge and love for them, and His final bringing of them into His own glorious presence.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." Although we live in an unfriendly world, God has provided a spiritual feast for us of which the world cannot partake. "He has brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me is love." This table is prepared before me — where I can have easy access to it. It is prepared before me in the sense that these blessings were here before I had an existence in the world: this table was here waiting for me.

"Thou anointest my head with oil." In Old Testament times, before a king ascended the throne and before a priest took up the duties of the priesthood, they were anointed. If I understand correctly, this anointing consisted of the pouring of oil upon the head and was to signify that the one anointed had been chosen by God to this work. I think the oil was representative of the grace of God. The anointing, as practiced in Old Testament times, is a type of that spiritual anointing whereby God's people are made to be kings and priests. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, etc." [Re 1:5-6](#).

"My cup runneth over." The cup of blessing. The Lord has given good measure, "pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." Or David may refer to his cup of gratitude: "Words cannot express my gratitude for what the Lord has done for me."

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Here David is basing his confidence in the Lord upon past experience: "The Lord having blessed me in the past, and He being an unchangeable God; surely He will continue to bless me in the future."

"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." In the 27th Psalm David says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." So believe, when he wrote the 23rd Psalm, he confidently believed that his prayer would be answered; but I believe he also meant more than that: I believe he meant that surely he would dwell forever in that house not made with hands "eternal in the heavens."

So, in concluding this beautiful Psalm, I believe that David so much as says, "with the things which I have received of the Lord I am much pleased; with the prospect of those which I expect to receive, much more: the blessing of the Lord here in this present life, and a home with him in eternity." This is the blessing and the prospect of the servants of the Lord. With this fact in mind, is it not true, my friends, that **we serve a good Master?**

NEGLECT NOT!

NEGLECT NOT!

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provide unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." [Heb 10:23-25](#).

As the above text indicates; There is much for us to do, as Christian men and women, boys and girls. There are solemn obligations and privileges, which, if we would be faithful, must not be neglected. Our own spiritual welfare, and the welfare of our churches depends upon this. The glorification of our Lord's name demands it. We must not neglect to "hold fast the profession of our faith." What about the profession of our faith? When we united with the church, we professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and acknowledged our dependence upon him and our obligation to him. We are to continue in this and endeavor to live up to it; and we are to do it "without wavering." We are not to be as "children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine", but are to remain steadfast. Since we have professed a love for the Lord Jesus and for his people (His church), we are to "consider one another (one another's welfare), and provoke (urge and encourage) to love and to good works."

Then he says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." This means in church capacity. We must not neglect our church services. But many did (in that day) and many do (today). This has been one of the great failings of God's people, perhaps in all ages; but especially today, when we have so much to interfere and detract. I fully believe that outward prosperity and modern invention has been a great hindrance to our attendance upon the more important things of God, and our churches have suffered greatly. The "mass media", especially radio and television has served to take our minds away from the more important things, and tended to force the people into a common mold of mediocrity: away from the finer things of life, and certainly away from the service of God. The automobile must also come in for its share of responsibility, for it has served to take the people physically away from the home and the church, and has served to direct the people's interest elsewhere. It has become increasingly difficult to heed the admonition, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." [Ro 12:2](#). I mention these things that we might be reminded to "hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering, despite the great opposition that is brought against us. And, if we have already been carried away by the interests, and loves, and ways of the world; that we may return to that good way prescribed by our Lord and his Apostles." Then he says, "Exhorting one another." I wonder how many of our church people spend time exhorting one another? I am sure we have noticed, that when our church people get together; in a private home, in the church house, or upon any other occasion; how little of the conversation is upon spiritual and heavenly things. Have we noticed, after a good song-service, prayer, and a good sermon; after the dismissal, how quickly the conversation turns to ordinary and worldly concerns? Please don't misunderstand me: the social part of the church service is important: we should be interested in each other's health and general welfare, and worldly concerns must have their part in our conversations, but the truth yet remains that spiritual interests and spiritual affairs should be given first consideration; and we should be able to converse intelligently upon the Bible and upon things of a spiritual and religious nature. The apostle concludes with these words, "and so

much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The day under consideration, I am sure, is that day spoken of in the Bible as "the day of the Lord." There is coming a day when the Lord will visit this earth with his own righteous judgments. That day is to be heralded by certain signs, and a certain "falling away" (from the truth, and from righteousness) is certainly one of those signs. The present decline in christian profession and christian living should be all the more reason for us to awake to our own responsibilities, and to encourage others to do likewise. "Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." [1Th 5:5-6](#).

NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES

NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES

Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say. Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. [Pr 30:8-9](#).

We who have neither poverty nor riches might well pause to consider this prayer of a very wise man who knew the burden of riches, who had observed the dire results of poverty, and was conscious of the evils of both. Solomon well knew the depravity and weakness of human nature. Here is a lesson for all: the rich and the poor; and the in between. This is designed to make the rich and the very poor cautious, and it is designed to make the "in between" thankful and more contented.

Riches tend to promote vanity: to nourish pride, and to make one forgetful of the Giver of all good, and of Christian virtues. Poverty likewise is degrading, and is likely to bring one to mean practices such as to lie and to steal.

Our carnal nature inclines us to desire that which is not good for us, but the spiritual nature, under proper instruction, brings us to pray, "Feed me with food convenient for me". The flesh cries, "I want this or that"; the Spirit says, "O Lord thou knowest best, give me that".

Another wise man and, like Solomon, inspired of God, penned these words to a young man who was also a servant of God, "For godliness with contentment is great gain For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." [1Ti 6:6-10](#).

So we need no great portion of this world's goods, but may God keep us from poverty too, so that we may not be so burdened with labor and care that we will have no time, nor energy, nor courage to devote to his service. We would study his word, rejoice in his promises, and walk in his steps. We would enjoy his sunshine and his rain, the bloom of flowers, the song of birds, the love and companionship of friends and families: these simple things; and if God may see fit to

give us a reasonable portion of the comforts of life we would not forget him, the Giver of all good.

NO OTHER FOUNDATION

NO OTHER FOUNDATION

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it [Mt 16:18](#).

Now ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. [Eph 2:19-20](#).

For other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [1Co 3:11](#).

Upon first consideration, the first text at the heading of this article might appear to teach that the Apostle Peter is the rock or foundation upon which the church is founded. A more careful investigation, however, will reveal that such is not the case. This is but another example of how a little knowledge of the Bible, or anything else, can be a dangerous thing.

We find no reference in the Bible of Peter being given any preference over the other apostles except perhaps a certain seniority which would serve only to make him more humble, and to realize more forcibly what Jesus taught when he said, "The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that excuse authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve". [Lu 22:25-26](#). It is true that Peter was a leader and often spokesman of the twelve, and the first stones of the new testament church were laid by him; but they were laid upon the true foundation which is Christ. Peter did not go preaching himself, but Christ and him crucified

Christ is referred to, many times in the Bible, as a rock or stone. He is spoken of as both a cornerstone and a foundation. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." [Isa 28:16](#) "As it is written, 'Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed.'" [Ro 9:33](#).

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." [1Co 10:1-4](#).

Why then does Christ refer to Simon Barjona as Peter, meaning a rock; and why does He, in the same connection, declare "upon this rock I will build my church? Well, why did He by the same token, refer to His own body as 'this temple' when He and the disciples were gathered at the great temple in Jerusalem? Upon that occasion, He was misunderstood to be speaking of that great temple, when He was really speaking of the "temple of his body". [Joh 2:21](#). On this occasion now under consideration, I can imagine Jesus saying to Peter, "Thou art a rock Simon; thou art a substantial and faithful disciple, a lively stone, and one qualified to be fitted in- to this spiritual building; thou hast made a good confession, Simon, thou are indeed a rock; and upon this rock (pointing to Himself or perhaps laying His hand on His own breast) I will build my church."

Why should any Bible student sooner believe that Jesus pointed to Peter when he spoke those words than to Himself, when we consider how that Christ is repeatedly referred to as the rock?

I think however, to properly understand this Scripture, we must consider the type confession that Peter made. Jesus had asked His disciples, "Whom do ye say that I am", and Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Now everyone who can make that kind of confession is a blessed individual, because he has been born again and is a child of God. The Bible teaches that "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God". [1Jo 5:1](#). So Jesus said to Peter, "Blessed are thou Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." Thou art a rock, and upon this rock (tills vital truth: that I am the anointed and the Son of God) I will build my church. The church is built upon the revelation to men, that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of sinners. The church is composed of individuals who, like Peter, have received this revelation and(like him, are declared to be lively stones. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." [1Pe 2:4-5](#). It is worthy of notice that it was Peter who penned those words—this doesn't sound at all like the first Pope.

Now for our second text — " are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, etc." This simply means that the militant church is built upon truth which was testified by all the apostles and prophets of God. There is a sense in which the church is builded upon the apostles and prophets, for without their labors the church would never have been built. Oh certainly, if those had proved unfaithful, God would have been able to raise up others, but it is by the testimony of faithful men that these living stones are assembled and builded into this organization. But the apostles and prophets are not the foundation of the church in the sense that Christ is: for when these men laid the foundation for God's people's faith, the foundation they laid was Christ.

If Peter is the rock upon which Christ has built his church, why are the apostles and prophets referred to as the foundation? It is easy for people to pick out one text which will serve their particular purpose, to the exclusion of all others.

Christ certainly warned against any presumption on the part of Peter or any other of the disciples, for he taught "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, [Mt 18:3](#). The mother of James and John at one time, came to Jesus with a special request: she wanted her two sons to have the preeminence; and Jesus said to her "Ye know not what ye ask". He went on to teach the disciples, "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all." [Mr 10:43-44](#).

OASES IN THE DESERT: SPRINGS IN THE WILDERNESS

OASES IN THE DESERT: SPRINGS IN THE WILDERNESS

"For the Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." [De 32:9-10](#).

"They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." [Isa 49:10](#).

The Lord led his people out of a land and state of bondage, and into a wilderness. He led and provided for them there; and in their journey, along the way, they would come to springs of water, where was found verdant vegetation: food for their flocks and herds, and a refreshing for they themselves. This wilderness was not altogether uninhabited, but there were wild, nomadic tribes; and even cities. There were battles to be fought, before ever they crossed over Jordan. The inhabitants of this wilderness were worshippers of false gods, and were (for the most part) unfriendly to Israel and Israel's God.

So it is with the Lord's people today. We, also, are traveling in a wilderness. A song-writer has said, "This world is not my home, I'm only travelin through." Another has said, "This world 's a wilderness of woe: this world is not my home." This world is indeed a dark, evil and unfriendly world—to those things the Lord's people value most highly. There is much of pain and discouragement, but the refreshing springs and their accompanying oases help much to compensate for the rigors of the way, and there is considerable beauty even out in the wilderness (world) along with the sordidness.

Our little churches scattered throughout the land, serve as oases in the desert of this world. These are places of refreshing, of comfort and joy. There the pure gospel is preached, and the service is carried on with much the same simplicity as that of the early (original) church. The service consists of singing, praying and preaching. There are none of the trappings so generally a part of modern religious service, and none of the idolatry so often a part of popular religion.

We visited one of these oases just yesterday. And when we came within sight of the place, I remarked, "There is another of those little Oases in the desert: springs in the wilderness."

We are made to wonder why there are not more of these pleasant places, and why there is so much distance in between. And we wonder why so comparatively few of the Lord's people frequent these places of refreshment. It is a weary road we travel here, and the way is so often uphill. So very much of our time, spent traversing this desert, is spent chasing mirages anyway. We are sure we can see some of the reasons for this, and for the decline in interest and attendance. Some of these are surely our fault. I think we should try earnestly to find the answers, and then, "May God give us the courage to change the things we can (those that need changing), the serenity to accept what we cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference."

OUR SPECIAL FRIEND

OUR SPECIAL FRIEND

"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." [Pr 18:24](#).

We know that there are some friends that stick closer than some brothers, and, no doubt there are a few friends who stick closer and are more faithful in their devotion than the average brother or sister; but I am inclined to believe that the friend spoken of in our text primarily, is our great and eternal Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course there is a sense in which He is our brother, but he is also our friend. Jesus said, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends etc." [Joh 15:15](#). Just before that he said, "You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I

command you." Now I want us to consider that friend: the friend that "sticketh closer than a brother."

Jesus has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." [Heb 13:5](#). Again we read, "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." [Isa 49:15-16](#). Jesus proved his love for the Father and for all those whom the Father had given him, when he suffered hunger and cold, labor and opposition, humility and death in behalf of his people. He condescended to leave his home in Glory, and the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and to come down into this sin-cursed world; to live, suffer and die to redeem us from the awful curse of sin. Jesus' death was not a tragedy, as many would have us believe; but an achievement. It was by this means that Divine Justice was satisfied and eternal redemption was obtained. "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." [Joh 6:38-39](#). That was Jesus speaking. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." [Ro 5:8](#). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." [Joh 15:13](#). This is the kind of love that Jesus had for his people. His love is an everlasting love. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." [Jer 31:3](#).

Our text says, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" and Jesus has done that. His love has been fully proven. Now, what about our love for him? Have we shown ourselves friendly to the Lord Jesus, by doing whatsoever he has commanded us to do? Do we know what the will of the Lord is concerning us? Have we investigated to find out? Have we studied his written word? Have we consulted with the Lord in Prayer? Have we asked, as did the Apostle Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It is not only a duty, but also the greatest of all privileges to be a friend of Jesus. Surely, it would be the height of ingratitude to forsake him or neglect him: this friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

OUR WARFARE

OUR WARFARE

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." -[Eph 6:12](#).

This text suggests that it is not carnal warfare that the church is to be engaged in, but a warfare that is spiritual. The true church of God has never taken up arms against her enemies, nor sought to destroy them bodily. Her enemies have used these devices however, and Church History shows that the faithful followers of Christ (very many of them) have been persecuted even unto death. Jesus warned of this, for he said to his own disciples (the twelve), "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." [Joh 16:2-3](#). History shows that thousands of Christian individuals have been slain because

of their testimony, and because of their defence of the true Christian Faith. During the Dark Ages, these faithful ones were compelled to worship in secret: they fled to the dens and caves of the earth, and found lodgement in the wilderness and in remote mountain fastnesses. But, even there, their enemies sought them out. Natural, worldly religion is the religion of Satan, who is at war against God. Satan (the devil) is a great deceiver and a counterfeiter, and much of his evil work is done under the name of Christianity. Many have been deceived.

Satan's followers have often used carnal weapons, and still do; for theirs is a natural (fleshly) religion. But the Apostle Paul declared to the true church, "The weapons of **our** warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ etc." [2Co 10:4-5](#).

So the true church of God is indeed engaged in warfare. That is why she is referred to as "the church militant" (engaged in warfare). So, in the Ephe-sian Letter (6th chapter) the Apostle speaks of the Christian's armor, calling it the "whole armor of God." We see that God's armor is not carnal, but spiritual. The same is true of the weapon that is to be used: it is the sword of the Spirit, "which is the word of God" (the Bible). Our warfare is an ideological warfare: a warfare of opposing ideas: and the Bible is to be our tool and our defence.

Now, no one should get the idea that the full extent of our warfare is to overcome the flesh and the devil in our own individual lives, because our text speaks of "spiritual wickedness in high places." This world, and the governments of this world, are in league with the devil. This may appear like a strong statement (some, perhaps will think too strong), but I am sure the Bible will bear this out. Satan is declared to be the "god of this world", and the world is spoken of as "this present **evil** world." I know that some will say that Jesus was only speaking of the time in which he was then living, and that the same was true with the apostles; but every honest student of the Bible must confess that there has never been a time in the history of the world, when this world was not evil and when Satan was not the god of it. It is very easy for the Christian to see today, who it is that this world worships. America is not a Christian nation, I doubt if it ever has been actually. In its early conception, America (the U.S.) came closer to the Christian ideal than had been before or has been since, but I think she still fell short of that ideal. Christianity has been given "lip service", for the most part, and the principles of Christianity have remained largely united. I fully believe that Satan has been deceiving the nations all through the Christian era, and continues to do so.

We, as the people of God, have the responsibility of preaching the true gospel of the Son of God, and not only to preach it, **but to live it**. But much that is in the Bible is not gospel (good news) and we are to preach that also. "For all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness etc." [2Ti 3:16](#). Fighting a war is serious business; and when an army is engaged in warfare, it is considered high treason for a soldier to be found sleeping at his post. In order to be a good soldier, a period of rigorous training is neces and sary; and, when on the battlefield, extreme caution and alertness is required. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." [2Ti 2:14](#). The sword of the Spirit must be used correctly, in order to be effective. We know this applies especially to the gospel minister, but it also applies to everyone who uses the sword.

The Bible is not a book that can be properly understood and properly used without effort. This requires much study and careful meditation; and in order to use it effectively, one must have great determination and much courage. Of cour is an they will se much prayer is required, for,

without the enlightening and guiding influence of the Holy Spirit, this sword of the Spirit will prove to no avail. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." [Jas 1:5](#).

May God grant us the determination, the energy, the wisdom and the courage to successfully fight this "good fight of faith." The Apostle Paul put it this way, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." May we all do likewise.

OWNERSHIP AND SERVICE

OWNERSHIP AND SERVICE

"For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve etc." – [Ac 27:23](#)

What?" Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which we have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." – [1Co 5:13,13](#).

I would recommend that the reader immediately get his or her Bible and read the 27th chapter of Acts of the Apostles.

The Apostle Paul was, under the wise providence of God, aboard ship on his way to Rome; there to appear before the Roman Emperor, Caesar. The Lord had already informed Paul that he must preach the gospel in the Roman Capitol. "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." [Ac 23:11](#). These words were spoken when the apostle was in the custody of the Roman soldiers, and after there had been a great uprising of the Jews against him.

Paul had been taken into custody for his own safety, but was compelled to appear before the Roman governor and finally King Agrippa, having been falsely accused by his enemies among the Jews. After a lengthy stay in prison (more than two years), rather than go up to Jerusalem to be judged, he appealed unto Caesar. So now he was on his way.

It was a long, tedious and difficult journey by sea; and this voyage may well remind us of our own life pilgrimage through the seas of this world. Our lives are often likened to a sea voyage, and we speak of the troublous waters and storms through which we pass.

It seems that the first part of Paul's voyage was through seas that were comparatively calm, then the voyage became slow and tedious, since the winds had become "contrary". Finally, after much difficulty sailing, they arrived at a port called The Fair Havens. This evidently being a pleasant place, they spent much time there; so long in fact, that the season for safe sailing was almost past. Oftentimes pleasure is given an unrightful place before duty, and delay exacts a penalty. Nevertheless, they decided to continue the voyage against the advice of Paul who had said, "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." Note. — It is a costly and dangerous thing to disregard the counsel of the Lord's servants when they have communication with heaven. But the people of God, as well as

others, often disregard the advice and teachings of their faithful ministers; and the result is sometimes disastrous.

In this instance, a very terrible storm arose; and they were no longer able to guide the ship. Moreover, they could not see either the sun or the stars; and had no way to determine their position. In an effort to save the ship, they cast part of the cargo overboard — and finally the tackling of the ship (equipment; gear). After they had given up all hope, and had despaired even of their lives, Paul spoke to his companions in these words, "Sirs' ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." - [Ac 27:22-25](#). By reading the chapter and the one that follows, one may get the story in detail, and the conclusion of it. They did lose the ship, but escaped with their lives; to later continue their journey on another ship, and finally reached their "desired haven", and the city of Rome itself.

Now let us look at our texts at the heading of this article. Our first text is the one that impresses me most. The other is used to explain and impress the teaching of the first: it plainly declares this matter of ownership and service. We are God's property and therefore our lives should be devoted to serving Him. Therefore I would take delight in joining with the apostle Paul in saying " — whose I am. and whom I serve." Paul did not mean that he belonged to the angel, but to God: both he and the angel were God's property. The same is true of every one of God's heaven-born children. Indeed, we were his property even before we were born into his family — by virtue of the eternal covenant; but in God's own time were actually purchased with the price of Christ's own blood and righteousness. This is most emphatically declared by the words "Ye are not your own", and "Ye are bought with a price." If we would know our value to our Heavenly Owner, we must consider the great Redemption Price.

Paul often referred to himself as the "servant of Christ" and the "prisoner of the Lord." He said "Woe is me if I preach not Christ." Here he says "Whom I serve." All who belong to Him are under the most solemn obligation to serve the Lord, and, in the words of our second text, to "glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are God's. "Present your bodies, a living sacrifice", said Paul ([Ro 12:1](#)); but we are to present not only your bodies, but our affections: our hearts: our spirits, also. It is willing service that God requires of us. We are His servants right enough, but must we willing servants. We are His prisoners right enough, but we are also "prisoners of hope."

There is much that could be mentioned with regard to Paul's voyage to Rome, but space will not here permit more than a few remarks in conclusion.

No doubt there were a goodly number aboard that ship who were God's children — perhaps even among the prisoners. We are led to believe some of his friends were along with him, especially Luke who is believed to have been the penman of Acts. But I think how fortunate it was for the rest that Paul was along, for his life was of greater value perhaps than the lives of them all. Even the ungodly and profane among them benefited by Paul's presence. The eyes of God were especially upon him, and He had given his angels charge concerning Paul. So it is with a people yet today: God favors the many because of the Godly few, for they are all in the same ship (so to speak). I believe we have a lesson here, too, of how God will preserve the lives of His servants, if He has a very special work for them to do, until that work is accomplished.

Please notice that the lives of all aboard the ship were saved, but at the loss of earthly possessions and with much discomfort to themselves. When men go contrary to God's revealed will, they are made to suffer the consequences; but, if they are in deed God's people, they will escape with their lives (eternally speaking). With the man who built his house upon the sand ([Mt 7:26](#)), it was his house he lost, and with the one who builds of hay, wood, stubble ([1Co 3:12](#)) it is the building that is destroyed by the fire: in this instance it was the ship that was lost. In all three cases the individuals themselves were saved. But it pays to serve the Lord. .

PATH OF THE JUST (Article 01)

PATH OF THE JUST

Article One — September 1964

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." [Pr 4:18](#).

We all know what is required to constitute a path and also how a such is made. A path differs from a road or a highway in that it is not a broad way nor a paved way, but a narrow way and one that has been beaten out by the feet of those who have traveled successively along. The "path of the just" was first mapped out by our Lord as he traveled that way and left instructions for his followers. It is a way that has been beaten out by the feet of his disciples as they have followed in his steps. These are declared to be "just" persons, since they have been justified by faith, by works, and by the blood of Jesus. They have been cleansed by the "washing or regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost." We also may regard it as the path belonging to Jesus, who is indeed the just and holy one of God.

The "path of the just" is the narrow way spoken of by Jesus in his sermon in the mount. In order to walk in this way, one must enter at the strait gate. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." [Mt 7:14](#). The word strait signifies a narrow, difficult passage; and I feel sure that the gate under consideration represents self denial. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." [Mt 16:24](#). So I would say that the strait gate is self denial, or the denying of self —of ones own righteousness — and the narrow way is the way of gospel obedience.

The path of the just is 1st. the way of love. Love may be regarded as the very first law of the kingdom. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." [Joh 13:35](#). Notice, it says one TO another — not one for another. Someone asks, "Isn't it all the same?" No, there is a difference. One of our ministers has expressed it very well when he used this illustration. He said, "Some time ago, I bought some paint for my garage. I haven't gotten around to applying the paint yet, but some of these days I hope to get around to putting it on the garage. It is now paint for the garage, but when I get it applied it will then be paint TO the garage." Love that is active, applied and manifested is called charity, in that wonderful thirteenth chapter of 1st. Corinthians. It is also spiritual love that is under consideration. Love must be, classified as natural love and spiritual love. The love of parents for their children, children for their parents, the love of husbands and wives for each other, and the love of children for each other, in the home, is natural love. There is also a fraternal love that is purely a natural love — this is often expressed by the familiar saying, "Birds of a feather flock together." Natural love is based upon purely natural causes: for instance; family relationship, likeness of disposition, similarity of interests, and close association. Spiritual love is something different: it is based

upon something entirely different. Spiritual love is based upon the knowledge that God has loved this or that individual with the same love with which he has loved me. He 'has paid the same price for this one's redemption that he has paid for mine. God HAS loved all of His children just the same, and has paid the same price for their redemption. That is the reason for the text, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." [Ro 13:8](#). To love one another is a debt that we owe. We owe it to one another, because we owe it to Christ. "We love him, because he first loved us." If it were not for him, we would have no hope — either in time or eternity.

Charity, spiritual love in action, is of such importance that the inspired writer has declared that without it we are nothing—our religious profession is but a mockery and a sham.

Natural love is right, even vital, to our lives in this natural world. Spiritual love is of equal importance to our spiritual lives in God's spiritual world. We are taught to place the things of the "Kingdom" first in our lives, with the assurance that, when we do, all necessary things will be added. Our duty to God comes first, and before our duty to Ceasar: therefore, spiritual love should always have the preeminence over natural love. Spiritual love is what holds the church together, despite the imperfections of the members and in spite of their many differences. Now let me say in passing, and quoting from another, "It isn't keeping all the furniture in place, and keeping every speck of dirt off the floor, that makes a home for the children — IT'S LOVE."

2nd. — It is the way of humility. We have said that, without humility, it is impossible to get into the narrow way. Jesus said, "Let him deny himself". He did not say, "let him deny himself certain things" but "Let him deny HIMSELF." To further emphacize this, "Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." They wanted to know how to be great in the kingdom. He told them that, without humility, they could not even enter the kingdom; and "whosoever shall HUMBLE HIMSELF as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Then, it is not necessarily the one who stands the straightest and who performs the noblest works that is most useful in the church, but the one who practices humility and is willing to serve in whatever capacity may be required. True Christian humility is the attitude expressed by Paul, when he said, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." It is the attitude demonstrated by Christ, himself, when, although he was the Lord of Glory, he "made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant etc."

3rd. — It is the way of service. Service to God, yes, but how do we serve God? — By serving His people. "If any man give but a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Christianity is a very practical religion: it is a religion of action, and when we think of following Jesus, we need to be reminded of that text which declares "and Jesus went about doing good ..." A religious profession is not enough. A faithful attendance at the church services is not enough. Lengthy prayers are not enough. A moral life is not enough. All of these things, put together, is not enough. "For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took ne not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minster unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, YE DID IT NOT TO ME." [Mt 25:42-45](#).

4th. — It is the way of forbearance and forgiveness. Patience is a wonderful virtue. God is patient and longsuffering to usward, the Bible teaches. Were it not for this fact, we would have long since been cast away. "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." [2Pe 3:9](#). Were it not for the fact that God is willing to forgive, we would be without hope, in this world. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Again he said, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." [Mt 6:15](#). And again we read, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." [Eph 4:32](#).

5. — It is the way of moderation. The Bible teaches that we should be temperate in all things. Moderation is to avoid extremes. As we travel down the road, we need to remember that there is a ditch on either side. It is our business to avoid the ditches and keep in the road. A note of warning here — There is a tendency for us to avoid one extreme only to go too far in the opposite direction. We all understand how we can be intemperate in food and drink, in the clothes we wear etc. We can also be intemperate in religious things. The Bible teaches that we can even be "overmuch righteous." If and when this takes place, our righteousness becomes unrighteousness. Perhaps we have all heard it said that we can stand so straight that we may start leaning over backward. That is something we are warned to avoid.

6. — It is the way of gospel obedience. Jesus has traveled in this way, before us, thus leaving us his example — that we should follow in his steps. This reminds us of the text, "Laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, etc." [Heb 12:1-2](#). We would emphasize the words, "Looking unto Jesus." He is our perfect example. Jesus knows "all the way our feet must go", and he knows the answer to all our problems and the remedy for all our ills.

It is utterly impossible for you and me to steer a perfectly straight course through this life: we cannot follow Jesus perfectly nor live completely above sin: we are bound to make mistakes. There is a way, however, that we can steer a comparatively straight course. That is by keeping the example of our Lord ever before us, and our eyes fixed upon him.

When I was a boy, on the farm, one of my duties was to sometimes plant the corn, and I had a problem — I never could make straight rows. It was not until after I had grown up and left the farm that I came to realize what my trouble was — I had been looking too close in front of me, and concentrating too much upon the mark made by the planter the last time across the field. What I needed to have done, was to fix my eye upon some immovable object on the opposite side of the field and use that as a guide, together with the planter mark. In looking back, I can see the reason for the rows getting more crooked each successive trip across the field: In trying so hard to follow every little deviation, I was allowing the mistakes to accumulate. In other words, I was adding the present errors to the ones that had been made in the past, and the mistakes were adding up. There were times that the rows became so crooked, I would disregard the mark entirely, in order to straighten them up. Of course that would leave an ugly place in the field. I believe this will serve as an almost perfect illustration of what can take place in our individual lives and also in our conduct of the churches. In seeking the "old paths" and the "good way" we can concentrate too closely on the mark made by Mother and Father, or Grandfather and Grandmother. Some have been known to take the attitude that "It was good enough for our immediate forefathers, and it's good enough for me." Some will object to any deviation from the way that Father and Mother believed and did. What! Were Father and Mother perfect? Did they make no mistakes? Surely we can see that, if this attitude was allowed to prevail, from generation to generation, the professed followers of Jesus would get entirely out of the way: the rows would become so crooked that no one would be able to follow them. It is not enough to say

"we have believed this way" or "we have done this or that for fifty or a hundred years." The fact that a thing has been believed or practiced for a hundred years, or five hundred years, or a thousand, will be no positive proof that the thing is right. In order to prove its correctness, it is necessary to go back almost two thousand years. There we find the pattern as recorded in God's holy and written word, the Bible. Of course, in order to understand its true teachings, it is necessary to "rightly divide; but this can be done, by careful and prayerful study of its sacred contents. Christ is immovable: unchanged-able — His word can be depended upon, and his example is perfect. It is only by keeping our eyes fixed upon Him that we can walk in the "path of the just."

7th. — It is the way of life. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it." Our readers must understand that it is not "eternal life" or eternal inheritance that is under consideration here. Jesus is not speaking to the world at large, here, but to his own disciples. These were those who believed in him and who were willing to forsake all to follow him. They were already in possession of eternal life. What, then, does he mean? This would be a splendid time for us to point out that it is one thing for one to simply exist, but quite another thing for one to actually live. I am convinced that it is entirely possible for individuals to exist as children of God, in this world, and yet to never actually live — in the sense of this text. Jesus said. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The "more abundant life" is the Christian life, and only those who walk in the "path of the just" can live that life.

Now, let us notice the last part of our text — "which leadeth more and more unto the perfect day." This deals with the subject of spiritual growth. God, in regeneration, imparts spiritual life to his elect people. Spiritual life includes with it the potential of spiritual growth, and under proper cultivation, that life will grow and develop and produce fruit. God has designed that his children should finally be "conformed unto the image of his Son." This will not fully take place in this world — far from it —, but spiritual growth is such that one tends to become more and more like Jesus, and to enter more fully into the blessings of his spiritual kingdom. A perfect day is coming, beyond this vale of tears, and the "path of the just" leads more and more toward that blessed state and condition. The hope of the Christian will be fully realized in the resurrection.

PATH OF THE JUST (Article 02)

PATH OF THE JUST

Article Two — December 1968

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

[Pr 4: 18](#)

As we approach the study of the above text, we notice that three things are under consideration — a path, a shining light, and a perfect day. But we notice, more particularly, that the text reads, THE path, THE light, and THE perfect day; thus signifying that there is one particular path, shining light, and perfect clay under consideration.

A path is a way which has been beaten out by constant use of many feet as they have traveled along, and which leads to some destination. This particular path is called "the path of the just" and must, therefore, have been beaten out by the feet of a people who are declared to be just.

In order for a person to be just, one must be justified; and the only people in the world who have been justified are those whom God has justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ. And

not only this, but a just person is a righteous person — one who is righteous not only from a legal standpoint, but from a practical standpoint also. The term righteous, is often substituted for the term just.

In order to be righteous from a practical standpoint, one must trust in Christ and obey him; and that is what a Christian is—one who trusts and obeys Christ. Then the "just" under consideration in our text must be Christian people, and the path must be one which has been beaten out by Christian feet as they have traveled in the way of faith and practical godliness.

Christ traveled that way first, and the path has been beaten out by those many feet which have followed in his steps. "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents." [Song 1: 8](#). This way is a strait and narrow way — "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." It is also a highway—"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein." [Isa 35:8](#).

Although a comparative few travel that way, still a great multitude is found there, and it is a pleasant way. Although it is a way of sacrifice and self denial, it is still a pleasant way: for Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

This path is not only pleasant but becomes increasingly more so; and is very profitable: it is like "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The shining light is Christ himself: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." "I am the light of the world", said Jesus; and again we read, "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". [2Co 4:6](#).

Light, as referred to in the Bible, represents righteousness, comfort, and truth. Christ is the shining light, and the path of the just is like unto Him; it also leads more and more unto the perfect day. This deals with the subject of spiritual growth and development. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The way to really know Jesus is to travel in the same path He trod.

The perfect day spoken of here, is the day of perfect peace, understanding, and obedience, which cannot be attained in this present life. We are traveling toward the perfect day, however, and shall finally arrive there. "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." [1Co 13:12](#).

The only one who has ever walked perfectly in that way is Christ Himself. In this world we are imperfect creatures, but we shall not always be so. God has begun a glorious work in His people that shall be successfully carried out until that day when they shall finally "be conformed unto the image of His Son."

In regeneration we are given spiritual life. Capacity for growth is a distinct property of that life, and as we walk in the "paths of the just" we get better acquainted with Jesus, and tend to become more like Him. As we walk there we also receive peace, comfort, and joy; for this is that "more abundant life" that Jesus spoke of. What a blessed thing it is to travel in this way. It is the way of duty; but even from a selfish standpoint, it pays to be a Christian.

PERFECTED FOREVER

PERFECTED FOREVER

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. [Heb 9:12](#).

For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. [Heb 10:14](#).

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. [Heb 10:10](#).

The book of Hebrews is of such nature that, in order to really understand it, it is very needful to study it in its entirety. It is impossible, in an article of this kind, or in a series of such articles, to cover the territory in detail as the Apostle Paul has done. In order to do that, we would have to indulge in too much quotation to be practical. I therefore strongly recommend that, in connection with this article, the reader get his or her Bible and very carefully read the fifth to the tenth chapter inclusive. Please concentrate very closely upon the ninth and tenth chapters.

Here the apostle is reviewing the priesthood as under the laws of Moses, and the tabernacle service. When we consider who the people are whom he is primarily addressing, we immediately understand his method of presentation. He is writing to people who were, at least should be, quite familiar with the Old Testament service. You and I should be more familiar with those forms and ceremonies than we are, because they serve to provide a key to the understanding of those doctrinal principles upon which the church is founded and upon which our faith depends. The Old Testament provides a key to the understanding of the New. In these chapters under consideration the apostle quotes extensively from the Old Testament, and refers constantly to these things pertaining to the ceremonial law; and he does this to show that Christ is our great eternal high priest, and the fulfillment of the law.

Paul refers to the Tabernacle, and as to how it was divided into two parts — the sanctuary and the Holiest of all. He tells how the priests went always into the first tabernacle doing the service of God, but into the Holiest of all or the Holy of Holies the high priest went alone, once each year to offer sacrifice; first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He speaks of the furnishings of the two tabernacles — in the first was the candlestick, the table, and the shew-bread, and in the second was the golden sensor and the ark of the covenant. There may have been other items but these were the principle ones and the ones Paul mentioned.

The ark of the covenant was a wooden chest overlaid with gold, which contained the tablets of stone upon which the Ten Commandments were written, the vessel which contained manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The manna and the rod were both emblems of Christ, and we are taught that he came to fulfill the law which was represented in the tables of stone. On the top of this ark were the two figures of Cherubs, heavenly spirit beings, placed. These had their wings outstretched and their eyes cast downward, which reminds us that the angels of God are His servants to minister to the heirs of salvation, and that they are vitally interested in the work of redemption. The apostle declares plainly that the Most Holy Place represented heaven itself, and that the high priest was representative of one yet higher: of Christ who was made a high priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.

This brings us to our first text — "But Christ being come a 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." That text declares that Christ is both the priest and the offering, and that when he entered into heaven, eternal redemption had already been

obtained. Indeed, eternal redemption was obtained by Christ upon the cross, and when he declared "It is finished" the work of atonement was finished, and title to an eternal inheritance was obtained. I am aware of the fact that many will agree that eternal redemption was purchased there, but will also tell us that the sinner must accept it, in order for it to be effectual to him. It seems that these people fail to realize that if their position were correct, it would not be eternal redemption at all, but only an opportunity. Notice the language closely, and discover that it plainly states that it is redemption that is under consideration and not merely a chance or opportunity, and that this was obtained by Christ prior to his entering "into the holy place". I consider this to be one of the strongest texts in the Bible to support the doctrines of election, and atonement by the blood of Jesus. I believe that there is no way to logically escape the conclusion that Christ's work of atonement is a finished work, and that eternal redemption has been purchased, and is sure to every heir of glory. Our second text, I have chosen because of its vital relationship to the first. -"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Of course, this text speaks in a legal sense. I wish to comment upon the expression "them that are sanctified". The word sanctify means to set apart or separate to holy service, and I have chosen the third text to show that it is not by the free will or choice of the sinner that he is so separated. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." When we study the context we discover that the will under consideration is God's will and not our own. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." [Joh 1:13](#).

No wonder the enemies of truth have sought to discredit the book of Hebrews. But even if they were able to succeed, they still would be far from able to overthrow those fundamental doctrines which do not conform to their thinking, and which they so much detest. The Bible is one great harmonious whole, and the truths of God will stand; devils and men notwithstanding.

Of course, we shall not come fully into possession of this eternal redemption until the resurrection; but we are in the process of receiving it, and shall surely come into full possession of it. God quickens His elect people by His own sovereign Spirit, guides them by that same Spirit, and by His Spirit shall quicken their mortal bodies in the resurrection.

His providential care is over them, and His loving arms are round about them. Jesus has declared, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth". He is now reigning from his Father's throne in the heavens, by His Holy Spirit, and by the ministrations of angels. We have His promise that He will return to this earth again "without sin- unto salvation." He cannot fail, "For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death". [1Co 15:25](#).

Christ assumed obligation for His people before the world was, and became responsible for them. He bore their sins in His own body, and suffered for them. He bore not only the penalty for sin. but the sin itself and the guilt of it. He suffered justly — the just for the unjust. He put away the sins of all His elect family as far as the east is from the west. He sends His Spirit into their hearts and lives, to cleanse them; thus beginning a work upon them that shall be completed in a glorious resurrection. He will come again. He can not fail. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

This is our third article in the series on the book of Hebrews. More later, the Lord willing.

PERFECTION OF BEAUTY

PERFECTION OF BEAUTY

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." [Ps 50:2](#).

The gospel church, of which Zion or Jerusalem was the type, is indeed the perfection of beauty. Not only is she beautiful, but exceedingly so: she is beauty perfected. Many of the things which men commonly deem beautiful are repulsive to God, for He judges the secret motive, and knows the true values; but here is something which the Lord's people find exceedingly beautiful, and God agrees as he has witnessed in the above text.

The church is especially beautiful in God's sight, for He sees her as cleansed by the atoning blood of Christ: a heavenly organization made up of spiritually minded individuals. The church has been washed in Christ's blood, and born of His Spirit; which makes her a glorious church. "The king's daughter is all the glory within: her clothing is of wrought gold." [Ps 45:13](#). The church is clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness.

No matter how beautiful a thing may appear to men, it is not really beautiful unless it appears so to God. But because of God's plan for the church, He has chosen to take up His abode there; and His presence there has made her beautiful to His people; "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."

God is not only the author of light, but He **is** light. "God is light. and in Him is no darkness at all." I John 1 :5. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." II Cor. 4 :6. God first shines in the hearts of His people, and then shines forth out of Zion; by and through them. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." [Mt 5:16](#).

John saw the church as a candlestick — "and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks." [Re 1:12](#). Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world," and again, 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." [Mt 5:14-15](#). So the light which shines forth from the church is a combination of that produced by many little individual lights, and it is God shining forth. "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do. of his good pleasure." [Php 2:12](#)

The church, as an organization, is made up of imperfect human beings; and we don't always do the will of God. Often we displease God, and bring chastisement upon ourselves; but all that we have of good, we have received of God. Good graces virtues. abilities — we have received them all from God; now it is up to us as to how well we use them. God gives, and we exercise and develop. Without God, in creation, we would have no existence in the first place, and without Him, in regeneration, we would have no light to let shine; and neither the will nor the ability to serve Him.

The organized church is a militant organization, and the term means "engaged in warfare" —its

influence is to be felt not only in the lives of its members; but in the community, and in the world.

May God bless us to appreciate the church more, and to serve Him better. The church does not prepare souls for heaven, but it does help them to live better and more happily in this present world; for life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel.

PREACH THE WORD

PREACH THE WORD

"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." [1Co 1:21](#).

"Preach the word; be instant in season; out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." [2Ti 4:2](#).

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." [2Co 10:4-5](#).

I want us to examine the above texts carefully and in their proper order. The first text declares the utility of the gospel and the reason for preaching it. The second text is an exhortation to preach the gospel. And the third text expresses the power of the gospel, and assures success to those who preach it. So these texts are very closely related to each other. We can very clearly see that the purpose of the gospel is to "save them that believe." That is why we preach it. I believe also that it is the souls of God's people that are saved by and through the gospel. But I also notice that the Bible does **not** say that they are saved **eternally** as a result of preaching, or through the gospel. Primitive Baptists certainly **do not** believe that preaching the gospel is for the purpose of getting folks saved eternally or giving them spiritual and eternal life. And we believe that those who **do** believe the gospel is for that purpose have added something that the Bible does not teach. The word, salvation, simply means deliverance from evil; and that's all that it means. But it is very clear that the gospel does save from something. We are sure it saves God's children from **ignorance, superstition and fear**. We are equally sure that it does **not** save those who are not God's children from anything. It has no effect upon them at all, unless it would be to repel them and make them angry. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." [1Co 1:18](#). So gospel preaching is foolishness to those who are not God's children, i.e. have not been "born again". No use then to preach to them something that to them is foolishness. The Gospel then, is not for them; but for **them that believe**. Is that not exactly what our text says? - "it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"? God reveals himself to his own born-again children, by giving them an experimental knowledge of himself. And He does this work sovereignly, by his own Spirit, and without any help on the part of the preacher or anyone else. And the Gospel is for the purpose of saving these, "Them that believe"; those who are already believers in God. Jesus said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." [Mt 16:17](#). And again he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." [Mt 11:25](#).

So the Gospel is not for the purpose of getting folks in the position where God can save them eternally. And those who are attempting to do this are attempting an impossibility.

The word, Gospel, means "good news"; and it is referred to as "the gospel of your salvation." Now it isn't your salvation until you have it. So the good news is to them who are already saved in the sense of that text. Again Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every- one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." So the Gospel has the power of saving, from ignorance, superstition and fear, those who already believe in God - i.e. are already in possession of eternal life and already have title to eternal inheritance.

Believing a thing has never yet made it so, neither has unbelief in something ever yet made it false. Belief and unbelief however, has always had a profound influence upon the individual who believes or disbelieves; and his own happiness, well-being and life of service most certainly does depend on his belief or disbelief. So it does make a very great difference how and what one believes. God's own heaven-born children want to know the truth, and it is our business to teach them. That my friends, is the work of the gospel ministry. So the great Apostle Paul says, "Preach the word", and we are to do it "in season and out of season" - whether we really feel like it or not. We are to be "instant" in this matter, and to preach it at every reasonable opportunity. And we are given assurance that the "weapons of our warfare" are mighty and effectual. This is because they are not carnal (material) weapons, but spiritual. We don't need carnal weapons, because the warfare in which we are engaged is not carnal warfare. Our's is an ideological warfare, or a warfare of opposing ideas; and it is spiritual weapons that are needed. God has provided these in his written word (the Bible), which is called "the sword of the Spirit". See [Eph 6:17](#).

Although the "weapons of our warfare" are mighty and effectual, it requires much preaching ordinarily, to convert someone to the truth who has been brought up to believe something else. It is perfectly natural for folks to believe that their eternal destiny depends somehow upon them, their works or their faith or both. So, before they can be taught the true gospel, they must be "untaught" many things that are not in accord with the teachings of the Bible. This must be done with boldness, but also with much kindness and with much patience. The Bible teaches that "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." [Ps 126:6](#). And also, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." [Ga 6:9](#). Brethren, (and I speak primarily to Primitive Baptists now) we should be very zealous for this business of spreading the Gospel. The Bible teaches that we should. I have made the statement, and will make it again; The church that has no missionary zeal (no desire to share what they have with others) is more than half dead already, and has committed itself to a slow but certain death. So let us publish the name of the Lord from the pulpit, by the printed page, and by means of radio. Let's do it in our conversation and by our every-day conduct. People should be able to tell by our daily lives that **we have been with Jesus**.

PREDESTINATION (Article 01)

PREDESTINATION Article One—June 1969

As I see it, there are two extreme views taken on the doctrine of predestination. One is this — that God didn't predestinate anything, and the other is that He predestinated everything. Primitive Baptist people, in general, cannot accept either of these positions, for we understand the Bible to teach that God did predestinate the eternal destiny of His people, and those events which are necessary to bring this about. But we do not believe or understand the Bible to teach that God has predestinated (or fixed) all of those things and conditions concerning their faith, obedience, and spiritual happiness in this present life; because the Bible is very plain in its warnings and exhortations to avoid false doctrines and to walk in obedience to God's commandments.

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It seems very plain to me that God permits things and events which He is, in no way, the cause of; and where the Bible speaks of God "hardening" Pharaoh's heart, and of the "evil spirit from the Lord" coming upon Saul, we must remember that both of these men were already in a state of rebellion against God (their hearts were already hard) and God further hardened their hearts to their destruction and to His glory.

In order to make this just as plain as I know how, and in few words as possible, I shall say that we believe the "good" that is in God's people is the result of His Spirit working in their hearts and lives; but that it is possible for us to "quench the Spirit" and go contrary to the way the Spirit directs, and to even rebel against God. When we do this, we suffer the consequences. God doesn't "cast us away forever", but He does chasten us for our disobedience. Now, we are sure God has the power to keep us from sinning, but has somehow permitted us to do so, for some good purpose of His own.

In the "new birth" God gives us spiritual life, and the ability to know spiritual things. He gives us the "capacity" for growth in spiritual understanding and in obedience; but does not entirely remove the matter of choice from us. It is yet possible for us to resist, to our own injury and to His displeasure.

If it is impossible for us to resist God's will, why did Paul command that we should not quench the Spirit? "Quench not the Spirit." 1st Thess. And again, "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." [Eph 4:30](#).

So we believe in what has been called "conditional time salvation" — that God takes care of the eternal part of our salvation, and there can be no failure there; but has left the part which pertains to this life only, largely "up to us". Of course we cannot do it without His guidance and assistance. Jesus said "without me ye can do nothing." May He be found faithful.

PREDESTINATION (Article 02)

PREDESTINATION

Article Two — August 1971

Many years ago, I asked a young minister of another faith, "What do you folks believe concerning the doctrine of Predestination?" He very quickly replied, "We don't believe it!" He then went on to say, "I don't believe that God knows who will be saved next month or next year." Then he concluded, "But, I haven't been to the Seminary yet." I thought, "Young fellow, when you go to the Seminary, you will find that you can't dodge the issue by simply saying, "I don't believe it." You will have to find some other answer."

I have in my possession a very wonderful book entitled "Nave's Topical Bible." It is a book once belonging to Eld. Fred Elmore, and was presented to me by his daughter. In this Book the various texts are grouped under their appropriate headings and listed alphabetically. Under the heading, Predestination, I find sixty-four texts listed; and I don't doubt for a moment but that there are many others. Indeed, I am convinced this doctrine is taught from Genesis to Revelation. I notice also, that, in this topical Bible, under the heading of Election, six texts are listed. Then it says, "See Predestination." The doctrines of Election and Predestination are so closely related that they must always be considered together, almost as one and the same subject; for they are inseparable.

The words, "predestination", "election", and "elect", themselves appear only a few times in the Bible, and always pertaining to individuals; not to things or events. God chose (elected) his people (as individuals) and predestinated them (fixed their destiny) to be saved with an eternal salvation. Nothing can thwart His purpose in this, for the power of the Godhead is involved in it. Satan shall never be able to rob God of his own.

Now, I think it only fair that I should conclude with some proof-texts. Please see [Joh 15:16](#); [Eph 2:10](#); [Lu 8:10](#); [18:7](#); [Joh 6:37,39](#). And perhaps most important of all, [Ro 8:28-33](#) inclusive.

PRIDE

PRIDE

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom. — [Pr 11:2](#).

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. — [Pr 13:10](#).

A man's pride shall bring him low: but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit. — [Pr 29:23](#).

Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. — [Pr 16:18](#).

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand in hand, he shall not be unpunished. — [Pr 16:5](#).

The above texts, from the book of Proverbs, are but a few of the many texts contained in Bible, dealing with the subject of pride; and it is easy to see that it is purely natural "fleshly" pride that

is under consideration here. This kind of pride is heartily condemned in both the Old . and New Testament scriptures.

The word "pride" has more than one definition, and is sometimes used as synonymous with the word "dignity", and also sometimes with the word "vanity". We sometimes speak of such and such an individual taking "pride" in his or her personal appearance. This is not the pride that is under consideration here. It is not wrong for a person to have the kind of pride that will cause them to be careful about their personal appearance, their good reputation, their personal integrity etc. —for these things are highly commendable in the sight of God.

In order to make my position plain, I would like to quote from Buck's Theological Dictionary on this subject. "Pride is inordinate and unreasonable self-esteem, attended with insolence, and rude treatment of others. `It is sometimes', says a good writer, 'confounded with vanity, and sometimes with dignity; but to the former passion it has no resemblance, and in many circumstances it differs from the latter. Vanity is the parent of loquacious boasting; and the person subject to it, if his pretenses be admitted, has no inclination to insult the company. The proud man, on the other hand, is naturally silent, and wrapped up in his own importance, seldom speaks but to make his audience feel their inferiority." Pride is the high opinion that a poor little contracted soul entertains of itself. Dignity consists in just, great and uniform actions, and is opposite to meanness. Pride manifests itself by praising ourselves, adorning our persons, attempting to appear before others in a superior light to what we are; contempt and slander of others; envy at the excellencies others possess; anxiety to gain applause; distress and rage when slighted; impatience of contradiction, and opposition to God himself. The evil effects of pride are beyond computation." End quote.

Now, in the light of the above definition, let us proceed to study the subject of pride — its source, its nature, and its effect.

I shall begin by saying, human "fleshly" pride is utterly contemptible in God's sight; as it is the direct opposite of "true religion and undefiled." Its source is corrupt and fallen human nature, and it has resulted in all sorts of wicked thoughts and deeds. It delights in falsehood, and sets human wisdom and understanding up, in opposition to God and godliness. It results in envy, jealousy, contentions and strife. It runs rampant in the world, and even gets inside churches. It violates the sanctity of homes, churches, governments and every noble human and spiritual relationship. I am convinced it is at the basis of all evil; for, it is self-love, and therefore, idolatry.

If any of our readers doubt the truth of what I say, I ask you to please think about it: please consider what the Bible has to say on the subject. Why does the Bible condemn pride so vehemently? Why does it have so much to say in favor of humility; which is the very opposite of pride? You "Old Baptists", why do you suppose that the religious world, at large, has so little "use" for the doctrines of "Sovereign Grace", and no "use" at all for the doctrines of "total depravity?" It is certainly because of this "pride" which we have under consideration. Why do you suppose men will attempt to solve national and world problems, in their own way, without consulting the written word of God? And I ask, will these problems ever be fully solved in that way? Or will they simply "mount up" and eventually add to the "sum-total" of human failure? I think I know the answer.

In the 28th chapter of Isaiah, we find a lesson concerning pride, which I hope our readers will bother to look up and study. To go into detail in discussing it would not be practical for us at this time, but it is worthy of our quick consideration. It starts out like this, "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!" I think Ephraim, here, represents

the ten tribes of Israel (not Judah) and, while they may have been outstandingly guilty of literal drunkenness on wine, the "drunkenness" mainly under consideration here is a "drunkenness" on pride. The world at large is drunken with pride, and all their "tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." — 8th verse. It says, "the crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet etc." But it also says, "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue (remainder) of his people." Ephraim provides a picture of the non-Christian world of which great multitudes of God's heaven-born children are a part. (To be a child of God, by spiritual birth, is one thing; and to be a Christian is quite another. Primitive Baptists should know what I mean by this). The business of gospel preaching is to make Christians out of those who are already heaven-born. But the great obstacle to Christian faith is this fleshly pride: this is the principle item of "grave-clothes" that must be removed. So he says, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little: for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people." Verses 9 and 10.

I think this refers not only to learning through preaching, but to learning through Christian experience in general. It is a "coming forth" by degrees. "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backwards, and be broken, and snared, and taken." I think the whole chapter deals with the condition of the Lord's people in nature, their condition in grace, and their transition from "nature to grace." It is highly experimental.

As our own "Dad Pettus" used to say, "I cannot hope to do the subject justice"; but perhaps I have written enough to cause our readers to think, and study; and to seek to overcome this natural tendency (which we all have) toward this pride, which is so strongly condemned.

REALITY

REALITY

We must all realize there are some who do not believe in God and the Bible. Perhaps there are very-very few persons who do not believe in a supreme power and do not have some kind of religious faith, but there must undoubtedly be some of these, for the Bible states plainly, "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God." But be that as it may, we know there are great multitudes of individuals who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ except as a character in history; a good man perhaps and a great teacher, but no more than that. These do not believe what the Bible says concerning Him, for they do not believe that the Bible is Divinely inspired. It will be my purpose at this time to defend the reality of God, the divine inspiration of the Bible and the deity of Christ. Of course I will not be able at this time, to present more than some of the "highlights" of this subject. The apostle Paul expressed it this way, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." [Ro](#)

[1:18-20](#). So, all creation testifies to the existence of God. And the harmony presented in God's creative work testifies to the fact that there is only one Supreme Being. This will forever rule out, to the minds of logical thinking men, the idea that these things simply "evolved" or happened. We might as well suppose that the intricate parts of a clock or of an automobile accidentally fell in place as to suppose that creation was just happenstance. Reason will tell us that in a trillion million years this would be no nearer taking place than in the beginning. There is very little that we can understand about God, but his eternal power and godhead is clearly seen. All creation is a revelation from God.

But the Bible is a further revelation from God, and the Bible further collaborates and points out what God has already revealed in his creative work. The very nature of the Bible itself is testimony and proof of the reality of God. In all human literature there is no book to compare with it. The Bible contains the best of everything upon which other books excel, plus much more; including the ability of foretelling events in the far distant future with complete accuracy. It was written by at least 44 different authors, writing over a period of something like 1,500 years, of various stations in life, living oftentimes widely separated from each other from a geographic standpoint, and yet writing in perfect harmony with each other. Surely such a book is indeed inspired of God. The informed and honest investigator must conclude that these human writers were but pens held in the hand of Divine Inspiration, and that **God himself was the real author of this book**. These internal evidences of inspiration are proof of the reality of God. The Bible reveals how that God actually invaded history by sending, his own Son into the world, in the form of a perfect individual called Jesus of Nazareth; and it tells us of how Jesus bore his people's sins in his own body, and put them away forever by the sacrifice of himself. It tells of how Jesus proved his claims of deity by performing mighty works which had hitherto been unknown among men, even to the stilling of the tempest and the raising of the dead. Both the Old and New Testaments give accounts of miracles, which none other but God could bring about. Some no doubt will insist that these events did not actually take place, but are purely fictional. If this is true, then how can one account for the Christian Religion? How did it get started, in the first place, and how has it been able to continue unto this day? **Christianity itself is the greatest of miracles**, and must be the culmination of many miracles. I can think of no possible way that Christianity could have ever gained foothold in the world, except in the way that the Bible relates. When we consider the conditions prevailing in the world at the time Christ set up his church in the world, we can see that nothing short of a miracle (indeed many miracles) could have given this new religion even "a ghost of a chance" for survival: this had to be accomplished by signs and wonders and miracles by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. **So the Bible and Christianity are proof-positive of the existence and ruling power of God**. There is a true and living God, and Jesus Christ is his Son. Jesus is the God-Man and the Man-God. The Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and of Christ. These three make up the Holy Trinity or Godhead, and the three are perfect and complete in all their glorious attributes. Three persons, yet so perfectly joined together as to be one God; all-powerful, all-wise, loving, compassionate, merciful, yet perfectly holy and just in every respect. The Bible unfolds a marvelous plan of human redemption through Christ. This plan is not at all in harmony with purely human reasoning or desire, but God's ways are infinitely higher than ours.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform:
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
and rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines of
never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
and works His sovereign will."

All of God's blood-bought children shall finally be delivered from this sin-cursed world, and shall be with their Heavenly Father and enjoy him forever. "Faithful is He that promised, who also will do it."

REDEMPTION OBTAINED

REDEMPTION OBTAINED

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. — [Heb 9:12](#).

To my mind, here is a text that is "super" and extraordinary, and surely one of the strongest in the Bible, with which to defend the doctrine of Sovereign Grace.

Notice, Christ is both the priest and the offering. Under the Mosaic law, the high priest would enter once each year (on the Day of Atonement) into that part of the tabernacle which was called the Holy Place, there presenting an offering for his own sins and for the sins of the people. Paul teaches, in the Hebrew Letter, that these offerings "could never take away sins etc". For this reason, they were repeated year after year. This ceremonial cleansing only pointed forward to that actual cleansing which was accomplished by our great and eternal High Priest, which is our Lord Jesus Christ. Those offerings had to be repeated, but this true offering was made once for all. Under the ceremonial law, the high priest represented our Lord, and the ceremonial lamb was also representative of Him. The holy place represented heaven of immortal glory. The Ark of the Covenant, together with the Mercy Seat, represented God's throne. Now, notice the wording of the text. "He entered in ONCE into the holy place (heaven), having obtained (already obtained) eternal redemption for us (for every heir of glory)."

My friends, can you see the implications of this? If the doctrine of universal atonement, so popularly preached, is correct; Christ did not actually obtain eternal redemption upon the cross, but only an opportunity. But our text teaches that when Christ ascended into heaven, eternal redemption had already been obtained. Now if it was obtained for the Apostle Paul and for those to whom he was writing, it was also obtained for all of God's elect people — without their knowledge or consent.

RELIGION — GOD CENTERED, MAN CENTERED

RELIGION — GOD CENTERED, MAN CENTERED

I think religion can be divided into two classes or categories: God-centered and man-centered. The one seeks to magnify God, in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others; while the other seeks to exalt man, and God is only regarded as an accessory, or, at best, practically helpless without man's consent and co- of humanity. The fact that it conveys blessings with which the vanities and carnal pleasures of this world cannot compare, does not change the fact that corrupt human nature stands opposed to real and genuine improvement. It condemns sin, and unrenewed human nature is in love with sin. Jesus himself said, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." [Joh 3:19](#). Man-centered religion is idolatry, and idolatry is sin. Idolatry is self-worship. This was true with ancient idol worship, and it is also true of modern idolatry. Whether one fashions an image out of wood, stone or precious metal, and worships it; or whether one worships material wealth, fame or worldly position, human philosophy or modern science — he is still worshipping human achievement, and seeking to please self and laboring for selfish ends. This is idolatry. Having a desire for material blessings is not wrong, and laboring for those things is not wrong; but, when these things become an object of worship and an end in themselves, this is idolatry and this is sin. Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." He also said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." It is a matter of first things first, and the Bible teaches that the things of God do come first.

All false religion is based upon fear; and is in this way, self- centered. Christianity alone is God-centered. Not all that is called Christianity, however, is really such. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have 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." God judges the motive as well as the action, and that which stems from anything short of pure love to God is sin. This may be very difficult for many of God's heaven-born children to understand; and the "dead in sins" will never understand it — while in that condition.

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR

Remember now thy Creator in the day of thy youth, while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. [Ec 12:1](#).

The central thought in the above text, "Remember thy Creator", is a timely exhortation to one and all: both old and young, but the inspired writer says, "now" and then adds, "in the days of thy youth". The present is never too soon for us to remember our Creator whether we be young or old, but the best time to remember Him is in the days of our youth, and then keep on remembering Him all through life. Indeed, if we remember Him in the days of our youth we will likely keep on remembering Him, for "as the twig is bent, so grows the tree". This then, is the best of all advice to young people. I think this may well be regarded as a recipe for a successful life.

I think it is the duty of every human being to remember his Creator, but the people of God are under much greater obligation to remember Him than others are, because He is not only their Creator but also their Heavenly Father. To remember God means much more than to think of

Him casually, for I am sure it means to reverence Him. When we remember Him in that way, our lives and characters are sure to be molded accordingly. We cannot actually remember Him without feeling our obligation toward Him.

One reason why this "remembrance" should begin in the days of youth is expressed in this language, "while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them". The days of old age are called "evil days", although age does have its compensations. To those who have come down to old age without remembering their Creator, those days must be evil days indeed. But in the case of those who have lived in the remembrance of Him, and for Him, the passing of years have only mellowed them, and made them more beautiful. But to all of us will come the time, if we live long enough, that we shall say, "I have no pleasure in them" in what, the things of God? No! In the things of the world. With the passing of strength and vigor, and having weathered many storms of life and known many disappointments, we shall say, "I am tired and I have no pleasure in those things.

As those who have spent long years in the Master's service grow older, and physical health and strength fails, it seems that they grow stronger spiritually. They do not spend their time looking backward, and in vain regrets bemoaning the passing of lost youth, but with their hopes bright in a glorious future life we hear them say, "I want to go home and be with Jesus." The doubts and fears of early life have now almost vanished; faith is stronger, and the things of God are dearer to them than ever before. Old age can be, and sometimes is, beautiful.

We are indebted to God for every blessing we have ever received, whether natural or spiritual, so let us remember Him now, with thanksgiving; and let us spend our lives in His service. In gospel bonds.

REPENT

REPENT

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[Mt 4:17](#)

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. [Mt 18:3](#).

As Jesus began his public ministry, the overall burden of his preaching was expressed in these words, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was the same text that had been used by John the Baptist.

God had dealt with His people in a very gracious manner in all past ages, yet at the same time upholding His own honor and integrity. The work of regenerating the human heart and preparing for heaven had been going on every since the creation of man, but at the same time God's judgments for sin had been carried out. His love for righteousness and hatred for sin had been especially exemplified in his dealings with the national Israel; His dealings with men and nations were not confined to Israel however, but he had chosen Israel to be the type; and to present a lesson concerning His own sovereign work in election, predestination, etc., and also His judgments against sin.

Now the type was soon to pass away and God would no longer deal with His people according to the old covenant and the stern requirements of the Mosaic law, but according to a new covenant and a perfect law of liberty. Not that the ten commandments should pass away and no longer be observed, but that his people should no longer serve under a ceremonial law, as in the past, but

now in spirit and in truth. The law of God was now soon to be fulfilled by God's own Son; the old ceremonial sacrifices, washings, and offering of incense were soon to be supplanted by their spiritual counterparts.

God was now about to set up a spiritual kingdom which should be composed of his regenerated people; not only of the Jews, but of every nationality. God was now about to pour His Spirit upon His people in a very special way, and was about to reveal to them plainly, through preaching, what they, before this time, had seen through types and shadows and through the dark sayings of the prophets. Something new and different was about to take place, and something far better than they had ever known: the setting up of a new organization, and the proclaiming of a new covenant.

This new organization was to be the kingdom of heaven: the kingdom of God. This kingdom should be an everlasting kingdom, and should grow even as the grain of mustard seed - [Mt 13:31-32](#), and of the increase of Christ's government and peace there should be no end. [Isa 9:7](#): It should be builded on eternal principles, should be composed of people having eternal life, the Eternal God should be it's King, and the joys of it should be foretastes of heaven itself.

The first requirement to be met by the Lord's people in order to gain admittance into this kingdom is repentance. To repent means to be sorry for one's past belief and conduct. Gospel repentance is to be converted from trusting in the flesh and one's own righteousness to a trusting in God and His righteousness. True repentance is always followed, more or less, by a turning about or a change in conduct. So we might offer a definition of the word repent, which I am sure cannot be far wrong, that to repent means to turn about.

The people to whom both John and Christ were primarily preaching were the Jews; a people who were to a considerable degree at least, acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, but who were trusting in the law of Moses. We are led to believe that the vast majority of them were trusting in their ability to keep his law, and in the ordinances themselves to save them both in this world and in the hereafter: they were trusting in the type rather than in what the type represented.

They were acquainted with the letter of the Scriptures, but we are led to believe that few of them had any spiritual understanding of God's word at all. Although trusting in the law; they had, in great measure, perverted it's teachings and were following, instead, the commandments and traditions of men. They were, in short, trusting and walking in the flesh. To these people Jesus preached repentance, and this lesson is to all of God's children, both Jew and Gentile, who are trusting in their own ability and righteousness for salvation.

Jesus' commandment to repent is followed by this language, and a reason for repentance is given; "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Notice, Jesus did not say, "heaven is at hand", but "the kingdom of heaven". The kingdom of heaven is that kingdom which belongs to heaven, and is ruled by heaven: heaven is it's capitol, and Christ is it's king; but the kingdom of heaven is in this world. It is the church of Jesus Christ, and especially the invisible or spiritual side of the church. I say "invisible" because the real kingdom cannot be seen with the natural eye, neither can the things of the kingdom be understood or received by the natural man. To be a member of the kingdom, then, means much more than to simply have one's name on the church book.

Jesus has much to say about the kingdom: He describes it in parables; there is peace and joy to be found there, and a more abundant life to be enjoyed.

Repentance is absolutely essential to an entrance into the kingdom. This is true in regard to past violations of God's moral law, and also in regard to false ideas in regard to God and righteousness. Man, by nature, is vain, selfish, and proud. His fallen nature is opposed to God,

and God's way. Man prefers to believe and walk in his own way, rather than in the way that God has commanded. Therefore, God's word has stated that, "All have sinned and come short of God's glory." [Ro 3:23](#). Moreover, this is the reason that Christ taught, "ye must be born again." [Joh 3:7](#). By the new birth men are given a new nature, and one that is spiritual, which strives against the old nature, and is more powerful; so that men, by it, are qualified for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. None but those whom God has favored with the new birth can have part in the kingdom, but God has not promised that **all of these** shall have part in it: only those who repent, and are converted and become as little children.

Now, when Jesus said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children", I am sure he was not referring to a state of purity in the child or freedom from outward transgression of law, but to that spirit of humbleness which is manifested by a child. This is plainly revealed by the verse which follows, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The lesson is, that unless we recognize our dependence upon our heavenly Parent and trust in Him even as a little child recognizes its dependence upon and trusts in it's earthly parents, we shall not receive the joys of the kingdom. Just to the extent that we fail to humble ourselves, to that extent we shall be deprived of the blessings that God has in store for the children of the kingdom.

A little child is dependent upon it's parents for food, shelter, and clothing. God's children must depend on him for precisely these same things in a spiritual sense. God has given His children spiritual life, and He provides all that is essential for that life and for the growth, development, and comfort of His children. The gospel is their food, whether it may come through the written or preached word, or by some other means; God's providence is their shelter, and in a sense the church is a shelter for them; The righteousness of Christ is their clothing. True it is that God's children are to be clothed with good works, but even these are the product of God's indwelling Spirit. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." [Php 2:13](#). To be a follower of Jesus one must deny one's self: the strait gate spoken of by the Savior is a narrow, difficult passage, and so is the strait and narrow way; there is no room for self righteousness there. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." [Mt 11:28-30](#). If we would be like Jesus we also must be meek and lowly in heart.

To know and feel our need of the Savior is to be poor in Spirit, and Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." May the Lord keep us ever humble: at His feet and at the feet of our brethren. May he make us strong to serve.

REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED

REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." ([Ac 2:38](#)). This language was spoken in connection with Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. He had preached a powerful sermon, but one which would have been only a small part as convincing, had it not been for the miraculous demonstration of God's power on that day. The Holy Ghost had come upon the apostles in a powerful way, for we find this language recorded: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where

they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Notice, the Bible does not say they began to speak in an unknown tongue, but "with other tongues." They spoke in foreign tongues. It is not clear whether each of these men spoke in a different tongue, but it is certain that many tongues were spoken; because there were men, devout Jews, "out of every nation under heaven" present at that meeting. These men were astonished to hear the gospel preached in their own native tongue, and the astonishing thing about it all was they perceived that all these apostles were Galileans. They were also ignorant and unlearned men, so far as worldly education was concerned. What an impressive meeting this must have been!

At this point I would like to add, if we are ever inclined to doubt the reality of the miracles recorded in the Bible, we need to pause and ask ourselves, "How then can we account for Christianity?" If the Bible and the church are not of supernatural origin, then how can we account for them? How did Christianity ever gain a foothold in the world, if the Bible account of miracles is not true? If the infidel can answer this question to my satisfaction, then I might begin to give credit to his other arguments.

Peter, in his sermon that day, pointed out to those devout people that the prophets had foretold of Christ's coming and His work, and that these prophecies had been fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus. He proceeded to tell them that Jesus had risen from the dead, and that they (the apostles) were witnesses of that fact. "Let therefore the whole house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." When they heard and saw these things the people "were pricked in their hearts," and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then comes the language of our text. Let us consider that language carefully.

The text first says repent. To repent means to be sorry for past mistakes in belief and conduct, and to turn about. This was not spoken to dead and alien sinners but to devout men: very religious men, and worshipers of the true God. These men had been in the same condition as those for whom Paul prayed when he said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" ([Ro 10:14](#)). Paul wanted them to be saved from this error in belief and practice. So it is with Peter — he wants these devout Jews, present on the day of Pentecost, who were pricked in their hearts, to repent (turn away) from the law service and accept the doctrines of Christianity. Then he adds "and be baptized." Baptism is not only a public profession of religious faith, but also a seal of one's religious profession. I think it probable that baptism was no new thing among the Jews, but up to this time had carried a different significance and they were now to be baptized in a different name, and for a different purpose. The text says, "Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Now I want to be plain about this, and to declare emphatically that baptism is not in order to the remission of sins. There is a doctrine, abroad in the land, which teaches that water baptism is essential in order for sins to be remitted. We deny that doctrine. I believe the explanation of that part of the text is simple and can be presented in the following way. The name Jesus signifies savior, and the name Christ anointed. Now let us read the text as stated in the Bible with the exception that we shall translate the words Jesus and Christ. The text then reads, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Saviour Anointed for the

remission of sins." That is what the Savior was anointed for — He was anointed for the purpose of remitting sins. So we see that it is not baptism that is for the remissions of sins, but Christ; now these are commanded to be baptized in His name. They are not to be baptized in their own name, or in the name of an apostle or priest, but in His name. To be baptized in:iris name is to depend upon Him for salvation, for there is salvation in none other.

The exhortation is followed with a promise: "And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." He does not say salvation, but "the gift of the Holy Ghost." I think it also well to point out that it is not the Holy Ghost that is promised, but the gift of the Holy Ghost. I believe the gift under consideration is the power from on high which Christ had promised to His disciples: the power to perform miracles in His name.

The record says that about three thousand souls were added to the church that day, and I believe that they did receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and witnessed for Jesus. Such is the faithfulness of God.

RESIST NOT EVIL

RESIST NOT EVIL

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." ([Mt 5:38-39](#))

The above is the language of Jesus, and is, therefore to be observed and practiced. The lesson intended is that we should not render evil for evil, that is, should not seek revenge. The law of retaliation is here, in a measure, repealed. Christ, however, does not repeal the law of self-preservation. We are to try and avoid evil—the Bible teaches this, and we may even resist evil when it becomes necessary for our own security and that of our families, but we are not to "strike back" with the object of "getting even."

Notice the example which Jesus gives; a blow on the cheek, which does not endanger our lives nor result in any real physical injury, but is mainly an insult and injury to our pride. Human nature would say to strike back, but Jesus says that, for the sake of peace and to avoid further and worse trouble, we should "resist not." The expression; "turn to him the other also", does not mean to literally turn the other cheek so as to challenge a blow on that one also, but simply not to strike back, and thus leave the way open for another possible insult. This is, in effect, turning the other cheek.

Human reasoning would say that he who renders an unprovoked injury should receive "just as good" in return, he deserves it, and justice demands it; but God's word says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord." ([Ro 12:19](#))

The Lord Jesus, Himself, gave us the perfect example of meekness when He was brought before His accusers, mocked, scourged, smitten, spit upon, and finally nailed to a Roman cross; yet "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not His mouth." ([Isa 53:7](#)) "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." ([1Pe 2:23](#))

It certainly behooves all, who would walk in His footsteps, to give heed to all the words of Jesus, and not to neglect these: "resist not evil."

RIGHTLY DIVIDING

RIGHTLY DIVIDING

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." [2Ti 2:15](#).

The word of truth, of course is the Bible; and the Bible is of such nature that it is utterly impossible for one to read it casually, as one would a newspaper or magazine, and still arrive at a proper understanding of its teachings: its contents must be rightly divided. Now I trust that none of our readers will understand me to mean that, when we study the Bible, truth must be divided from error. I do not mean this at all; for there is nothing taught in the Bible that is not truth, and "all scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable —". But I have long ago decided that this business of Rightly Dividing the word of truth, consists mainly of dividing between what I call the two words and the two salvations. By the two words, I mean the two words of God; and by the two salvations, I mean the two salvations, or the two phrases of salvation which are taught in the Bible. But many perhaps will say, "I didn't know there was more than one word of God, and more than one salvation." Well, I feel sure that there is. As for the two words, there is the eternal and incarnate word of God which is Jesus Christ himself. This is the word of which John spoke, when he said, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God; and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made etc." A little farther down in the chapter, he says, "and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us etc." Surely the word here is Christ. Of course, the other word I refer to is the written word, which is the Holy Bible."

In order to divide between these two words, it is necessary for us to separate the texts which refer to the Living Word of God, which is Christ himself, and those which refer to the written word of God, which is the Bible, and to keep them separated in our thinking; for if we fail to do this, we are sure to become confused. So, when reference is made to the word of God, we must ask ourselves, "Which word of God?" - and study to find out.

So it is with the two salvations. The word, salvation, simply means deliverance from evil; and there are many evils which we need to be delivered or saved from, besides eternal destruction or eternal punishment for sin. And, in the vast majority of places in the Bible, reference is made to a "time salvation" or time deliverance from the evils of this present life, and not to eternal salvation or eternal inheritance at all. Yet, a great many people stumble at this, and think that when they see the words salvation and saved in the Bible, it refers to going to heaven when we die - when oftentimes it doesn't deal with that subject at all. Primitive Baptists understand the Bible to teach that our eternal salvation or eternal inheritance depends entirely upon God's Sovereign Grace, as displayed through the meritorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit; and not upon anything we do; that is, not upon our faith or our works. We believe that faith and good works are but the outward manifestation or evidence that God has placed his Spirit within us. We believe that faith in God and obedience to God are the result, and not

the cause, of being born again. We think the reason so many people believe otherwise is because of their failure to rightly divide between the two words and the two salvations. Certainly, our salvation from the results of wrong beliefs and practices, as we live here in this world, does depend very largely upon our faith and our obedience; but we reap the consequences of this while we live here. It is very important to the Lord's children that they have a right understanding of the teachings of the Bible: that we might determine what is the true gospel; for the gospel of Christ is indeed "the power of God unto salvation" to every true believer. The gospel saves from ignorance, superstition and fear; but does **not** save anyone eternally. The eternal aspects of salvation are wrought out by God -through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The living Word of God, that was "made flesh", obligated himself when he covenanted with the Father before the world was, that he would be responsible for God's elect people. His promise to the Father made him responsible. So, "in the time appointed by the Father, Christ was born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Since the righteous law of God demanded suffering and death to every violator, so Christ suffered and died: not for his own sins, for he had none; but it was for our sins that he suffered and died. In order to satisfy the demands of Divine justice. Since Christ was both perfect man and perfect God, he could perform this work. With men this would have been impossible, but not so with God. So I am very happy to embrace a faith that so upholds the honor and dignity of God's government, and to believe in a God who is able. I am happy to believe in a Jesus who saves, and not one who merely offers salvation or makes it possible. And I am very glad to be free from the anxiety experienced by so many others who believe that the eternal salvation of themselves and others may depend in some measure upon them. I do not fear for God's children among the heathen, for I am sure that God knows where they are and is able to reach them by his Spirit. They may be deprived of the blessing of knowing about their salvation, but can never be deprived of their eternal inheritance. Of course, none of us have earned this salvation. It is the free gift of God, it is by his own Sovereign Grace. "By grace are ye saved; through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Faith is a fruit of the Spirit, and is the gift of God.

'Tis Mercy

Give Him the glory that is His,
O Child of the living God:
'Twas mercy when He came to thee;
'Tis mercy e'en when thou art bowed
Beneath the chastening rod.
'Tis mercy when He blesses thee
And lifts thy feet above the clay;
'Tis mercy first and last with thee.
And mercy all the way.
'Tis love; Oh yes, I know 'tis love;
But love bound up in mercy.

ROMANS 13:8

[Ro 13:8](#)

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." While riding on a train more than a year ago, and reading my Bible, I came across the above text. I thought it a very unusual expression and almost peculiar at the time, and was deeply impressed with it. Now the more I think about it, the more I become convinced that it is a text extraordinary.

In the first four words of the text, Paul says very plainly "Pay your debts." But we are sure that he means much more than the paying of what we commonly consider our just and honest debts, by the words which follow. It is a more comprehensive matter than simply paying the grocer, the druggist, the mechanic, etc. for commodities purchased or services rendered.

The verse which immediately precedes this says, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Many people who would not think of cheating the neighbor next door or the merchant down the street, perhaps would not hesitate to cheat the government on their taxes or violate the traffic or game laws, if they thought they could get by with it. Also we hear a great deal of complaining and criticism against those "to whom honor is due."

In order to study this text to best advantage, I believe it is necessary to study the entire chapter, and I urge our readers to do that. The chapter deals very much with the allegiance and support, and cooperation which we owe our government. It shows that we should give honor to men of authority, and should be subject to those who have the rule over us.

We are to owe no man any, thing, but to love one another. Love, then, is a debt which we owe. We may pay our creditors the money we owe them, and do it grudgingly. If such is the case with us, we have come short of paying the debt. We may pay for services rendered by those whom we dislike, and we may think we have discharged the debt, but we haven't.

The Bible teaches that, first of all, we are to love the brotherhood: those of like precious faith, but it also exhorts us to do good unto all men. It even goes so far as to say we should love our enemies — Christ did. I do think that when Christ said, "love your enemies," He meant, primarily, God's children who have become our enemies. But I doubt seriously if that is all that He meant.

I once heard a minister say that he did not believe that God has required us to love those whom He Himself has not loved. I agreed with the expression at the time, and in a sense I still do. I do not believe that God has loved the whole human family, but the question that enters my mind is, what way have we of knowing that God has not loved such and such an individual? When we see the fruits of the Spirit produced in the life of an individual, we may know that he or she is a child of God, and is loved of God; but failure to produce such fruit is no proof that one is not embraced in the eternal love of God. It simply serves to prove that one has not yet been born of God, but may yet be born of the Spirit, and bear fruit.

If and when we feel hatred for someone, even though that one's life and personality may be contemptible in our sight, and in God's, we may be hating one whom, for all we know, God loves and has determined to have. That is why we should never render evil for evil or seek revenge. But someone will say, "so and so has done wrong, and deserves to be punished." That may be true, but it is beside the point: it is God's business to punish, not ours. "Vengeance is mine: a will repay, saith the Lord." [Ro 12:19](#).

Why should we love our brethren in the Lord? Because God has loved them. Why should we love our enemies? Because Christ loved His, and gave Himself for them. Our greatest incentive for this should be in the knowledge that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Love to one another is a debt which we owe to Christ, and we owe it to each other because of the imputed merits of Christ. The way to pay a debt to Christ is to pay it to His people; we serve God by serving His people.

Our text goes on to say, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law," which truth is explained in the 10th verse, "Love work-eth no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:7,8.

Song 1:7-8.

Tell me, O thou whom soul, loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? If thou know not. O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents.

Solomon's song is written as a dialogue between lovers; a wife and her husband who are by profession a shepherd and shepherdess. It typifies Christ and His church. The church is represented in the Bible as the bride of Christ. "Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Christ Himself is the good shepherd which giveth His life for the sheep. David said "The Lord is my shepherd".

In the above text the bride, that one who has been married to Christ by God's covenant plan of redemption, and through the blood of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, addresses Him as "O thou whom my soul loveth". "God is love", and likewise "he that loveth is born of God." and "We love Him because he first loved us". And why should we not love Christ? He has paid our debt, suffered and died for us, cleansed us from sin, bestowed on us His righteousness, and His almighty power is exerted in our behalf now in this world, and He will never leave us nor forsake us. "He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul."

When the love of God has been planted in the heart, that one desires communion with Him and to commune with Him is to feed upon spiritual things, upon Him who is the bread of life. The Christian experience also teaches us dependence on Him. We must be fed when and where He has designed that we shall be fed: where He feeds His flock. Hence the language, "Tell me where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon."

In the heat of the day the sheep need rest in the cool shade. We, as travelers through this desert of life, need rest, still waters, green pastures. We wish to know where He feeds His flock, where His people congregate. "For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" Why should we turn aside from Him and the service which He has prescribed? Why should we seek a substitute for the true worship? We can find satisfaction only in His presence and the presence of His flock, His people.

Now Christ answers, "If thou know not"; so much as to say "thou shouldst know". The true worship is prescribed in God's word; the true church is described there. "O thou fairest among women"; God's people are fair in His sight; born of His Spirit: clothed in His righteousness.

Notice the mutual love between Christ and His bride. church says, "O thou whom my soul loveth"; Christ answers, "O thou fairest among women". It should comfort the heart of every one

of God's people who feel themselves to be weak and poor and uncomely, to know that in the sight of God they are pure and clean and beautiful, or He has made them so.

Because of the tender love which He has for her He directs her to where she longs to be. "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock." Perhaps He means by the footprints of the flock. In any case He means the way that the flock has gone before. I think this is an exhortation to stay in the old paths, those which have been made in long years past by those who have followed after the footsteps of Jesus, good shepherd. We have the history of the church and the examples of our fathers before us.

Perhaps by the footsteps of the flock He refers to places in the rock which have been used by the flock in climbing up the mountain to reach the green highland pastures. The footsteps would be those practical teachings of the Bible, by the observance of which we climb to reach a higher plane in this life. It is only through effort that we "grow in grace and knowledge of truth". It is only through practicing the things which He has prescribed that we are enabled to rest in His promises and enjoy His sacred nearness.

If we follow the footsteps of the flock we must elevate ourselves because the flock feeds in pastures which are above the plane of this world. The church is a "city which is set upon a hill". She is spoken of as Mt. Zion.

"And feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents." The wife of the shepherd is represented as a shepherdess. To her, perhaps, was committed the care of the kids. Christ is a shepherd, our shepherd; His ministers are also shepherds, under-shepherds. The members of the laity are also shepherds. especially where their children are concerned.

When we follow the footsteps of the flock we find the shepherd's tents, for where the flock is there must be the shepherds. God has qualified them to care for the sheep. The words of Christ to the church are. "Feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents." The goat here is referred to, as both sheep and goats are cared for by the shepherd and both are used in the Bible as representatives of God's people.

The shepherd's tents represent the authority with which God clothes His ministry. In any case, to be beside the shepherd's tents would be to be near the shepherds and under their guidance and care. I think that one of the principle reasons for the decline of our churches is the laxity of parents, where their children and the church are concerned We should talk more about the beauties of the church and of spiritual things in their presence. We should encourage the reading of the Bible and good books pertaining to it. We should take our children to church with us. It may be easier to allow them to follow the inclination of their own minds but that is not the way to that more abundant life which Jesus spoke of, and which all parents should desire for their children. God's ministers are especially interested in the children because they know that the future of the church rests with them.

The purpose of the under shepherds is to lead the flock of God to those green pastures and to protect them as they feed. The purpose of the gospel ministry is to instruct and guide, that God's people may be transformed by the renewing of their minds that they may "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Those who are young in years are more easily taught and more pliable in mind and character than those in later years. "Train up a child in the way he should go: when he is old he will not depart from it."

"Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, etc." think that the greatest benefit of our following the footsteps of the flock is that we may "feed our kids beside the shepherd's tents". There is safety.

SOWING AND REAPING

SOWING AND REAPING

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. [Ga 6:7](#).

Whether we know it or not, we are all sowers and reapers; and there is a certain, positive and unchangeable law of nature which requires that every seed sown shall reproduce after its own kind. It is also a law of nature that seed which is sown should multiply: when we sow seed, we naturally expect to reap much more than we sow. That is what is meant in [Ho 8:7](#) where, speaking of God's disobedient people, it says "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." Seed reproduces after its own kind, seed multiplies, and we each exert an influence in our lives, whether for good or for evil. We may think we can live to ourselves and that what we do will effect no one but ourselves, but when we think in that way we are only deceiving ourselves. There was never an idea advanced that was more false than the idea that every man has a right to "do his own thing" and that it is nobody's business but his own. We not only exert an influence upon those who surround us, but also upon succeeding generations of people who shall inhabit the earth after us. No doubt, our greatest influence is upon our children and the children of those with whom we associate: toward those who shall live here — after we have gone "the way of all flesh."

"He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." [Ga 5:8](#). If we go contrary to the teachings of God's word, we are most surely "sowing to the flesh" — and we shall reap corruption. The Bible teaches that our flesh is corrupt, and by 'the flesh' is meant our carnal nature. It is the old law of like producing like. This law extends even into the moral and spiritual realms, and this is easy to understand — since God is the author of all law; natural, moral, spiritual.

"But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." [Ga 5:8](#). This text is not set forth as a condition by which the 'alien sinner' may come into possession of eternal life, or obtain eternal salvation; but is a simple statement of fact. An individual most certainly must possess the Spirit before he or she can "sow to the Spirit." They that sow to the Spirit shall not only come into eternal inheritance, but they shall "reap life everlasting" even here. They shall reap a crop of spiritual and eternal things: blessings (spiritual blessings) which God has promised only to his faithful and obedient children.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But some fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold " [Mt 8:3-8](#).

For the explanation of the above parable, please read verses 18 to 23 inclusive. This deals with the sowing of gospel seed, and the sower is, first of all, the Lord Jesus Christ; secondarily, the apostles; thirdly, every gospel minister; and fourthly, every truly Christian individual. We each have our influence for the advancement of truth and righteousness.

But even God's heaven-born children can be as "he that received seed by the way side." And, if we are like that, we shall surely be found 'sowing to the flesh' and 'reaping corruption.' I repeat, there is an unalterable law of God which decrees that every seed sown shall produce after its own kind. If it's corn we plant, we expect to reap corn. If we sow wheat, we expect to harvest wheat.

If we harvest something else in addition to the seed we have sown, we know it is because some other seed has, somehow, gotten into the field. We must remember that weeds will grow about everywhere, so we need to be careful that only the good seed is sown. Of course the weeds will get in, hence the need for proper cultivation. We only need to use our heads a little bit. to see the logic of this argument. which is taught throughout the Bible—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

SPIRIT AND TRUTH

SPIRIT AND TRUTH

" - the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. " - [Joh 4:23-24](#).

These are the words of Jesus, spoken to the woman at the well, in the country of Samaria. We believe their purpose was to "point up" the basic difference between true Christianity and that which is false and in name only. It was also intended to draw a sharp line of distinction between the New Testament service and that of the Old Testament. Both Jews and Samaritans had been serving under the laws of Moses, and in Old Testament times the prosperity of God's people did depend upon their observance of these laws; religious rites and ceremonies. But now the order of things was to be changed: no longer was the service to consist of such. No longer were God's people to worship him through these religious rites and ceremonies, which merely pointed forward to something better; but they were now to worship him through Christ, who declared himself to be the truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." [Joh 14:6](#). And the service now, was to be a service of love: not of fear, but of love. Love, and not fear, was to be the basis of all true Christian service. God has declared Himself to be love. No wonder then, that it is a spiritual service (a service of love) that God has required. I am of the impression that, even in Old Testament times, the true worshippers did worship in spirit, and no doubt some of the people, even then, were able to look beyond the types and shadows and see the great anti-type, Christ himself. The truth has never been, that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth." God has never changed: He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. To worship is to love. So to worship God is to love him. Therefore, true Christian service is that which places the emphasis upon love, and the doctrines of true Christianity are those which tend to promote love: love for God and for his people. Love and fear are incompatible. I think that is the reason for the text, "Perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. [1Jo 4:18](#). My friends, you may be able to scare folks into making a public confession, and into joining a church; but you can't scare them into loving God and righteousness. That is why Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Men are able to teach the minds of men, but only God can teach their hearts: only He can give them a nature to love Him, and to serve through the pure principle of love. This is of God, through the direct work of the Holy Spirit, and is not taught of men. Spiritual life must precede (go before) spiritual action.

I do not say that fear has no part in the experience of God's people: I am sure it does. But what I do say is this, As we grow spiritually in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, fear is pushed farther and farther into the background; and love is brought more and more into the forefront. The gospel of the Son of God is for the purpose of doing away with fear, and

promoting love and true Christian service. The word "gospel" means "good news". So preaching fear, is not preaching the gospel. I am sure that many professing Christians are in torment, through fear, and that much that is called Christianity today is a religion of fear. But it is not enough to merely worship in spirit: it must also be in truth. Here is where the gospel comes in my friends. There is a saving power in the gospel. But the gospel does not save, nor help to save, souls for eternity. It does save God's own heaven-born children from ignorance, superstition and fear while they live in this world. I am very glad that God's children do not have to be Christians in order to go to heaven when they die; because I believe great multitudes of them have never heard the gospel and, therefore, are not Christians. The difference between children of God (spiritually) and Christians is this; Children of God are born, while Christians are made. It is the work of the gospel to make Christians out of folks who are already Children of God (have been born again). Born again individuals are the only ones you can make Christians out of.

The Jews thought that when the Messiah came, he would set up a worldly kingdom: that he would rally the forces of this world about him, and set up an earthly kingdom. They confidently thought that his kingdom would cast off the cruel Roman yoke under which they had been so sorely afflicted, and that Jerusalem would become the capitol of the world. But Jesus taught, "My kingdom is not of this world", it's and again he said, "The kingdom of God is within you." But because they could not accept this truth, the Jews rejected the Lord of Glory and nailed him to a Roman cross; saying, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children." Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom: and he said, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is a militant organization, engaged in warfare, yet a peaceable kingdom. The true church of God has never taken up arms against its opposition, nor sought to destroy the lives of dissenters. Spiritual warfare is simply a warfare against opposing ideas and beliefs.

It is vital to Christianity that we have a "thus saith the Lord" for what we believe and do. We must realize that there is no other way to worship God but in spirit and in truth. It is a spiritual service that we must seek and cling to. This will explain the simplicity of the service found in our Primitive Baptist churches. We deliberately avoid that which will appeal purely to the fleshly nature of men, and we seek those things which will appeal to the renewed or spiritual nature. This will also largely explain why our churches are comparatively small and few in number. We could no doubt pack our meeting houses with people if we would use the "means" which are employed by so many churches of the day. If we were willing to use the various worldly entertainments which would attract the multitudes, including those who are dead in trespasses and sins, we could no doubt be popular with the masses of humanity. But we know this would not add to, but serve to hinder and destroy, the spirituality of the service. This we are not willing to do; for we know Jesus said, "It is written of all nations, My house shall be called a house of prayer. It is our earnest conviction that we should seek our worldly entertainment elsewhere.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Article 01)

SPIRITUAL GROWTH Article One—April 1977

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. [Pr 14:12](#).

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. [2Co 10:4-5](#).

I am sure the above texts deal with the subject of spiritual growth, and this is a very vital subject; for our spiritual well-being depends upon it. We are exhorted in God's word grow, in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." [2Pe 3:18](#).

Growth, of any kind, is dependent upon three things – food, exercise, and time. Of course we realize, for these elements to do any good, the subject under consideration must be, first of all, alive. So our lessons concerning spiritual growth and development are only for those individuals who have been ""born again", and not for the "dead in trespasses and sins". But many of God's children, although they are doubtless in possession of spiritual life, are "babies in Christ"; and this is true regardless of their ages, as measured in years. Some, who have been members of the church for many years, have not grown in "grace and knowledge" as they should have. Paul said to the Hebrew brethren, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who BY REASON OF USE have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." [Heb 5:12-14](#). I think that all who are babies in Christ (spiritually) suffer from at least one of three causes — they have not had proper food, or proper exercise, or sufficient time to grow and develop. But those whom Paul referred to in the above texts, had evidently had sufficient time, and the words of Paul seem to indicate that they were suffering purely from lack of exercise. A new born child of God is a baby in every instance, regardless of age, and this is perfectly normal. Nothing is expected of little babies but that they eat and sleep and kick and squirm and cry. But after they become a year old, if that is still all they do, we know something is wrong; and we begin to try to find out the cause for their lack of development. A little baby is to be looked at and rejoiced in, and carefully cared for, but if, after five years, he is still a baby, he is to be pitied, worried over, and a frantic search for special treatment is in order. There is nothing which causes greater concern on the part of parents, and others, than a retarded child. But do we feel the same concern over God's retarded children: these who are spiritually retarded? Some ARE spiritually retarded, and many are weakly and others are sick. Brethren, we need to be concerned. But I say we are not nearly so concerned as the people of the world are concerned about the physical and mental health of their children. Perhaps that is what Jesus meant when he said, "The children of darkness are wiser, in their generation, than the children of light".

God has provided, for his heaven-born children, spiritual food; and he has prescribed the exercise. The gospel is food for God's spiritual child, and He has commanded that we not only be hearers of the word, but also doers of it. Unless we put the teachings of the Bible "to work" in our lives, we will remain "spiritual babies" just as long as we live in this world. Spiritual food, exercise, and time are of equal importance in this matter of spiritual growth.

The pastor of churches always has those of varying degrees of spiritual growth, and of spiritual capacity, in his congregation, and should always be concerned with the question, "is this one or that one as far advanced in the things of the "kingdom" as should be? Is he or she developing

normally? Are any dwarfed, diseased or infirm?" And each member of the church should ask themselves, "Just where do I class, and how do I rate, on this scale of spiritual growth and development? Am I getting enough exercise, or am I sitting on the stool of do-nothing"? Christianity is a religion of doing, and not just a religion of feasting and sleeping.

The "way that seemeth right unto a man" is the way of the world: it is the way that is dictated by the carnal (freshly) mind; and "the end thereof are the ways of death." I would remind our readers that it is one thing for us to merely exist, and quite another thing for us to actually "live". If we want to be actually "alive" to the things of God, we must carefully avoid "the way that seemeth right unto a man". Trust in the Lord, and lean not upon thine own understanding." Proverbs. The "weapons of our warfare", spoken of in our second text, are the teachings of the Bible, when accompanied by the convicting power of God's Spirit, and are declared to be effectual to the pulling down of strongholds" — presupposed ideas, false teachings, and the influence of the flesh and the devil.

There is much - much more that could be written upon his subject, as the Bible abounds with this kind of teaching, but I hope this will be sufficient to cause our readers to branch out, in their own thinking, and enlarge upon this all important subject.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Article 02)

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Article Two—May 1968

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." [2Pe 3:18](#).

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." [2Ti 2:15](#).

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; etc." [Mt 11:29](#).

In writing upon this subject, I have chosen the above texts for a definite purpose. The first text is an admonition for us to grow, spiritually, and suggests that it is something the Lord's children are capable of doing. The second text admonishes us to study that we might rightly understand God's written word and be able to know how to apply it's teachings to our own lives, and to present its truths to others. The third text is an invitation to learn of Jesus by bearing his yoke. I am sure that all three of these texts deal with the subject of spiritual growth, and that the three, together, set forth those things which are necessary to this end: to grow in grace and knowledge.

There are three things necessary to growth in any living individual or thing. These are food and exercise. This is certainly true in natural growth, and must undoubtedly be also of spiritual growth. In the Bible, God has provided spiritual food for his heaven-born children, and has "prescribed" the exercise so vitally necessary to their spiritual growth. I would stress the fact that food and exercise are of equal importance to proper growth and development. Only a small amount of thought, on the part of the reader, will be sufficient to convince him (or her) that this

is true. Please bear this fact in mind — proper exercise is of just as much importance as good, wholesome food. It isn't enough, then, to simply rejoice in the truths of the gospel; we must also pay careful attention to the "practical teachings" of the Bible, and the commandments of God. And it isn't enough to just rightly understand the various teachings of the Bible: we must put those teachings to work in our own lives. If we fail to do this, we will be like a lazy child that insists upon eating all the time, and will not run and play. We know that such a child would become overweight and eventually weak and helpless, or perhaps even sick to the point of no longer being able to eat. There is an old saying, "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise"; but there is a perversion of that wise old saying that goes like this, "Early to bed, lie as long as you can; eat ham and eggs, and you'll soon be a man." That last may be amusing, in a way, for we all have sense enough to know that the advice given is utterly foolish — it simply won't work, and is given for the purpose of "pointing up" the wisdom contained in the first saying. This certainly has its bearing upon our spiritual lives.

In the church of God, we find children in various stages of spiritual development. Some are spiritual "infants"; while some are almost as nearly "full-grown" as it is possible for one to be, while in this life. Some are fat and lazy, with their spiritual muscles weak and flabby—and some are even sick — while others are active, healthy and energetic. What makes the difference? They are all equally alive. There may be many factors involved, but of this we are sure; some work at their religion and others do not. Some apply themselves to the study of the Bible, and some do not. Some put their knowledge of spiritual things to work in their own lives (are not only bearers but also doers of the word); while others are content to travel in the "broad way" and take the path of least resistance. Jesus had something to say about this latter class of individuals, "If any man heareth my words, and doeth them not; I will liken him unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand etc." Remember? So Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." There is no other way to really "get acquainted" with Jesus except to bear his yoke. Bearing the yoke requires labor and patience: it isn't easy, for it requires sacrifice; but it must be tremendously rewarding, for Jesus also said, "and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

The peace and prosperity of our churches depends upon the faith and faithfulness of the members. This last statement may be so simple and self-evident that it will appear, to some, that we are foolish to even mention it; but do we think of it as we should, and are we doing our own individual part in contributing to the welfare of the church? What is the cause of the present condition of many of our churches, and why so much of "strained relations" between churches and groups of churches? Is it not our ignorance in regard to the teachings of God's word, and our willingness to apply the things that we do know?

I believe that the answer to all our problems (church wise) is found in the Bible, and that hope for our churches may be found in an "educated" and faithful ministry and laity. When I say "educated" I mean educated in the truths of the Bible.

I am sure that our people should be taught to study and think for themselves, and that pastors of churches should insist upon this. I am positive that church troubles and divisions are largely

due to the fact that so many of our people are content to let someone else do their studying and thinking for them. It is so much easier to play "follow the leader" and sometimes we follow the wrong leader. I am not denying the fact that the church must have her leaders, but leaders are to be followed only insofar as they are followers of Christ. We all have Bibles. And the majority of our members are in possession of sound minds — we are capable of reading and studying for ourselves. It is true that we can't all be ministers, and we need the help of the ministry in our study; but the gospel minister is a teacher, sent from God, for the purpose of assisting God's people in their own private study. I believe an informed membership is the greatest safeguard the church has. But, when I say this. I am not excluding the fact that God is over all, and that the Holy Spirit is a faithful guide. We cannot study, with profit, without the enlightening influence of God's Spirit; and we cannot apply the teachings of the Bible to our lives without the grace of God — we know that, but it IS possible for us to "quench the Spirit" and it is possible for us to disregard the "means" that God has placed at our disposal, for our good and his glory — while we live in this world.

Now in regard to study, we know it is one thing to simply read, and quite another thing to actually study. To arrive at a proper understanding of any teaching, it is necessary to take into consideration various things. We must know who is speaking, who is being spoken to, what the subject is that is under consideration, and something of the conditions under which the teaching is given. We must learn to "rightly divide" the word of truth. It is an easy matter to "reach into" the Bible and bring out something which will appear (on the surface) to support some favorite belief or position of ours — almost no-matter what that belief or position may be. This has led to the saying, by some, that "you can prove anything by the Bible." I am convinced that the reason so many good people are misled religiously, is that, so frequently, quotations from the Bible are used — in support of some erroneous teaching or practice — which, to the uninformed seems to settle the matter: when in reality the Bible teaches no such thing. This very practice has divided churches, estranged brethren, and caused untold grief among the family of God.

So, I trust our readers will see why I am writing in this way. The future of our churches may largely depend upon your reaction to this and similar articles, which may appear or have appeared in our paper and others. Many sermons have been preached along the same line. We cannot have peace and prosperity, in our churches, our nation or the world, unless we trust in and obey God.

SPIRITUAL SINGING

SPIRITUAL SINGING

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.
[Ps 92:1.](#)

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. [Eph 5:19.](#)

Singing has been given a very important place in our church service, and rightly so, for nothing else we do can so well prepare the hearts and minds of the people for the preaching of the gospel. Many of the songs we sing are sermons within themselves: others are beautiful prayers.

Someone has ably said that "music hath charms," and this is especially true when beautiful melody is coupled with proper rhythm and true rich sentiment. We should be careful that the words of the songs we sing are true from a Bible standpoint, and certainly the melody and the 'time' should be in harmony with, the spirit of the gospel.

Many people wonder, and sometimes ask, why we do not use instrumental music in our church service. I believe that I can think of some very practical reasons why it is best for us to simply engage, as we do, in congregational singing without the use of a musical instrument.

First, we can find no record where musical instruments were used in the early Christian Church. They were used under the law service, truly enough, but the New Testament service is not under the law. The law service was an elaborate, complicated service; the gospel service is a simple but highly spiritual service.

Second, we have tried to avoid things mechanical in our church service as being more in harmony with the truth of the gospel. Third, there is no instrument so fitted to render praise unto God as God's own instrument, the human voice. There is nothing more -beautiful in this world than a congregation of God's people singing in all parts, and in unison, in proper time, and using the instruments which God Himself has given, without the aid (?) of musical instruments which are man-made.

Fourth, we are altogether too much inclined to place emphasis on the melody of the songs we sing, at the expense of the sentiment. This tendency would be much more pronounced if we used musical accompaniment.

Most of us have an organ or piano in our homes, and we enjoy using them in playing church music, and when our friends drop in we sometimes gather round and sing while someone plays the instrument. I can see nothing wrong in using an instrument at weddings or on funeral occasions, when special singing is desired. I think that when the singing is done by one or two persons, musical accompaniment is needed, but with congregational singing the instrument is neither necessary nor appropriate. Nothing can take the place of congregational singing in church service.

TELL HIM SO

TELL HIM SO

There is a basic need in the soul of every human individual to feel appreciated, and there is hardly ever an individual with whom we come in contact who does not possess some truly admirable qualities. While it is true that anyone who has normal functions "cannot help" but observe many things about other people that are not as they should be, any one who has normal "spiritual faculties" must be aware of the fact that they, themselves, come "far short" of being what God would have them to be; and traits that we must disapprove of in others, ought not be made us less aware of our own faults, nor prevent us from appreciating the good in others — and telling them so.

In any case, severe criticism of others is seldom justified; and usually does more harm than good. I am sure that the Bible teaches us that one of our most important tasks is to learn to "bridle our tongues" and to engage in good, wholesome conversation. It has been proven that practically all

troubles between neighbors, and between the members of families and in churches has been caused or greatly "helped along" by failure to do this. The distress, and even destruction, that has been caused or enhanced by "idle gossip", careless remarks, and unjust criticism cannot be measured. I believe we all know these things, but we need to think more about them and "start doing more about it".

Seeing as how the above remarks are true, it seems that it is "high time" that we pay more attention to the task of looking for good in others, finding things about them to honestly appreciate, and to tell them so. I have noticed that a common failure among people is a readiness to complain and criticize, and a great reluctance to express appreciation. It seems to be almost impossible for some people to "hand out" a compliment. This very thing has hampered "good relations" between employers and employees, parents and children, husbands and wives, and the members of churches more than perhaps anything else. How very much we need to "go out of our way" to express honest appreciation, and to leave the harsh, unkind and fruitless words unsaid. We may not have the satisfaction of "telling them off", but we will gain in the "long run" I am sure; and we shall receive blessing from the Author of peace. There is an Author of peace. There is another way of looking at it — It pleases the devil exceedingly, when people give vent to their passions and "make fools of themselves." He is especially pleased when we are searching for faults in our neighbors, or our brother in the church. He especially loves discord among brethren. And the devil is our adversary: our mortal enemy. He is the great enemy of the dearest friend we have or ever shall have, the Lord Jesus. Therefore when we are tempted to "lose our temper" and say or do things to "ease our own mind" and to give someone "just what is coming to them", we ought to stop and ask ourselves "Am I willing to give my ENEMY that much satisfaction?"

The Bible teaches that the happiest, most blessed people in the world are those who trust in God, simply take Him at his word, and go calmly on their way. They are willing to receive insult without reprisal, to render good for evil, and to speak a good word or do a good deed whenever opportunity affords. These individuals are spoken of as "the meek". "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Only the meek are truly Christian characters.

So let us look for good in those with whom we are associated, especially in our brethren in the church, and, when we have found it, let's not hesitate to tell them so.

"Does a neighbor help a little,
As along the way you go —
Help to make your burden lighter?
Then why not tell him so!
"Does a handclasp seem to lift you
From the depth of grief and woe,
When an old friend shares your sorrow?
Then why not tell him so
"Does your heavenly Father give you
Many blessings here below?
Then on bended knee before Him
Frankly, gladly, tell him so!"

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The word, Apostolic, means "according to the Apostles." So, when we speak of the Apostolic Church, we mean the original church as established by the apostles of our Lord. These Apostles had received their authority directly from the Divine Author of the church, Jesus Christ himself. Therefore, the church (in its original state) contained those characteristics (those beliefs and practices) that Christ intended for His Church, and we believe these were the marks that were to identify that church through all ages of the world's history, to the present time and beyond.

During that period of the world's history known as the "Dark Ages", the history of the church became often obscure and difficult to trace; but we are sure that, through all those terrible years (Appx. 1260 of them), there were groups of people (churches) that bore those certain identifying marks (or at least enough of those marks) to prove their identity with the original or Apostolic Church. These were those who worshipped largely in secret, often in dens and caves of the earth, or certainly in remote regions. They were without the printed page (the art of printing having not yet been invented), and possessing only parts of the Holy Writings (written laboriously by hand), so naturally there were some variations both in belief and practice. These churches bore various names during the various times and regions where they were found, but these were true churches of Jesus Christ, walking in that degree of light that they had: bearing those marks or characteristics which would identify them with the true church that Christ established upon earth.

Today, the true church is not identified by name, but by these same distinguishing marks. So, in identifying the church, one must look for these marks and ask one's self, "How does this or that organization 'measure up' to the Apostolic Church which is the true pattern?"

Hassell, in his Church History, lists twelve marks of the Apostolic Church which are as follows —

1. - A regenerated membership who were believers in Christ as Saviour and Lord. These had not only been born again by the sovereign and miraculous work of God's Spirit, but had also been gosselly taught and brought to rejoice in gospel truth.
2. - Baptism. These people had been immersed in water, "as the answer of a good conscience toward God", which was an expression of their faith in the finished work of Christ for salvation. The word "baptize" is taken from a Greek word which means to dip, to plunge, to bury; and most all church writers and historians will confess that the original mode of this ordinance was immersion. Surely nothing short of this can be a true picture of a burial and resurrection, and that is what baptism is to represent.
3. - Communion. The members of the Apostolic Church met frequently to eat the unleavened bread and to drink of the fermented wine as Christ had instructed, which emblems represented (were pictures of) His body and His blood. This act was an expression of their faith in what was accomplished by that great offering which was made on Calvary's cross, which alone could take

away sin.

4. - Strict Discipline. The early (or Apostolic) church exercised a strict discipline over her members, and without this practice would soon have been swallowed up by the world. This practice has always been absolutely essential to the perpetuity of the church. Without this she would have long since lost her identity. Of course there have been some, within the church, who have objected to excluding unworthy members, but this is certainly a true mark of the Apostolic Church.

5. - Independent Government. The church, in its original establishment, was given a congregational (not a preacher) form of government. We might say she was a democracy operating within a kingdom, and within the bounds of her constitution, — that which was given by King Jesus. She recognized no earthly head, being responsible only to her Lawgiver and King. She was a purely executive body, with no power to make or change laws. Her ministers were servants of Christ to the church, and were warned against "lording it over God's heritage."

6. - Religious Liberty. The Apostolic Church did not seek to deny religious liberty to any, and never did seek to enlist the power of civil government to compel others to join her ranks or to accept her beliefs or practices. She was a peaceable organization and highly spiritual, and recognized the rights of civil government but taught that one's first responsibility was toward God. She believed in complete separation of Church and State, and her members were taught to "render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's, but unto God the things that were God's."

7. - Membership generally poor, uneducated, obscure and despised. This has been generally characteristic of the church through all ages. Did not Jesus teach that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God"? And did not His servant John say, "Ye are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in wickedness"? Worldly advantages belong to worldly individuals, but spiritual riches belong to the children of God. It has always been so.

8. - Equality of members. There were no high sounding titles in the early church. Christ taught that those who would be great in the kingdom must humble themselves to the form of a servant, and he himself set the example. According to Bible teaching, He made them all kings and priests unto God. This is called the "Priesthood of Believers".

9. - A God-called ministry. God, by His Spirit, called and in great measure qualified the ministers of the Apostolic Church. It was not a matter, as today, of many simply making up their own minds that they will enter the ministry", as one would enter any other vocation, — by human choice and human preparation.

10. - Unsalariated Ministry. The ministers of the early (Apostolic) church did not receive a salary, although they were (in part) supported by the brethren. It is very evident that they worked at other occupations when they were not preaching. Christ had very evidently designed that, while the needs of his ministers were to be supplied, money and increase of goods were not to become a corrupting influence in their lives. Today, true servants of Christ and of the church do

not preach for selfish interest and selfish advantage.

11. - Ministers sent by the Holy Spirit. This means that the Holy Spirit (not the church) chose the fields in which the ministers were to labor, and directed the ministers into those fields. We believe He still does this. Of course the Holy Spirit works with the minds of the church people as well as the mind of the minister, and no true minister would try to impose himself upon the people. But, just as the minister must not become a "lord over God's heritage, so the church must not try to "lord it over" God's minister.

12. - Church Divinely Recognized. The church which Jesus Christ set up in the world, and of which he said "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it", was (and is) the only Divinely recognized religious body in the world. There was no alliance between the church and any worldly organization whatever, and for whatever religious purpose. Such alliances between believers and unbelievers was termed idolatry. I exhort you to think of this last point seriously.

The above twelve marks provide a true description of the Church as Christ set it up in the world. Now for the serious question. Just how close does the church of your membership (and mine) conform to this perfect pattern. Just to the extent that any church fails in this comparison, to exactly that extent it comes short of being what it should be: a truly one hundred per cent Christian organization.

THE BEAUTITUDES

THE BEAUTITUDES

Doubtless one of the greatest sermons that ever was preached was Christ's sermon on the mount. Jesus had been preaching and healing "all manner of diseases" among the people, and now great multitudes followed Him. Imagine the great multitudes following Him who was despised and rejected of men. Certainly this was not because His doctrine was so popular but because of the wonders which He performed in healing.

But now His purpose was to teach those, who being in possession of spiritual life and prompted by love to Him and sincere interest in His teaching, would be willing to follow Him, even though the following would entail the difficulty of climbing up the side of a mountain. As the mount was above the plain so the church of God is above the world. The things of that kingdom are not for the world but only for those who will come apart from the world and go up to "Mt. Zion, the city of our God." Those who go preaching on the street corners or with the sound of a trumpet, and all who seek to make the church attractive to the world, may well consider that this was not Jesus' way.

I think that on this occasion He sat down and His disciples gathered close around and that He spoke, not in a loud voice so as to be heard by the many in the valley, but perhaps in a conversational tone, expounding those vital principles which only the spiritually minded can

receive. Christ begins His sermon by enumerating those characteristics which are in some degree common to God's children, and calling all such characters blessed.

God's people are poor in spirit. To be poor is to be needy. To be poor in spirit is to know one's need and to feel one's dependence. By virtue of the new birth God's children are enabled to look within and see themselves to be sinners, and at the same time to look up and get a glimpse of the pure and holy God, and in the light of the perfect standard, and by contrast we see ourselves falling, Oh, so far short of that perfection which God has required of all who shall dwell in His presence.

Because of this poverty of spirit God's people mourn. But the promise is that they shall be comforted. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." The gospel is for the comfort of those who mourn, and God comforts His people with His felt presence, even in the still small hours of the night, saying, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Since these know themselves to be needy, and since they mourn, it follows that they hunger and thirst after righteousness. All such shall be filled—not with the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ which is imputed to His people.

"Blessed are the meek." The Holy Spirit teaches meekness, that quality by which God's people are enabled to be the quiet of the earth. Perfect meekness is to be resigned to the will of God; when reviled against to revile not; when smitten to strike not back; when persecuted to remain calm. The meek shall inherit the earth. The choicest blessings of earth belong to the meek.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." God Himself, shall be merciful to them, and He shall see that their fellow men shall also show mercy to those who are themselves merciful.

"Blessed art the pure in heart." God's people are not pure so far as the deeds of the body are concerned, but God's grace in regeneration has purified the heart. "They shall see God." Through an eye of faith they shall see Him in this life, in their brethren, in nature, and in His dealings with themselves; and when this life is over they shall see Him no longer 'as through a glass darkly', but face to face. Only the pure in heart can see God and no others could take pleasure in seeing Him.

These are not of the world, therefore the world is not friendly to them, and has in the past, does now, and shall continue to persecute them. Yet in persecution such characters are blessed. God is with them; His protecting watchcare is over them; His guiding hand shall lead them; they shall have the comfort of the gospel and shall be enabled to say "If God to be for us, who can be against"? Rom, 8:31. When they die a home in heaven awaits them, for they have been sanctified by God the Father, justified by God the Son, and called by God the Holy Spirit. They are even now "sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until redemption of the purchased possession." —

THE BODY OF CHRIST

THE BODY OF CHRIST

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Cor. 12:27.

"And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." [Col 1:18](#).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets! and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; etc." [Eph 4:11-12](#).

"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." [Mt 5:30](#).

There is a very great and important lesson taught in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, and especially as we read from the twelfth verse and include the twenty seventh. The overall lesson may be summed up in a few words, but many are the thoughts which are suggested.

The church is the body of Christ; made so by the quickening of the Spirit and by baptism, and the members of it bear the same relationship to Christ, who is the head, and to each other that the various parts of the human body do to each other. As the welfare and usefulness of the human body depends upon the health, vigor, and efficiency of each individual part, so it is with the church: for the body of Christ is "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part" [Eph 4:16](#). As the whole human body suffers with each individual part which suffers, just so, in great measure, does the church suffer in sympathy with each individual member who suffers.

The utter folly of the members of the church becoming dissatisfied with their own God-given place and function in the church, and becoming envious of the spiritual gifts of others is pointed out: it would be like the members of the human body complaining and becoming jealous of each other. For a member of Christ's body to say, "because I have not a better gift and a higher place, I am of no use; I therefore refuse to serve", would be like a member of the human body becoming rebellious and refusing to perform it's function.

As the human body must be trained and educated to perform it's work efficiently, it is even so with the body of Christ. In a very important sense, the church is a school and the gospel minister is a Bible teacher. The purpose of the gospel is to comfort, strengthen, and direct: it is to serve to the "edifying of the body of Christ".

When an organ of the human body becomes sick and diseased, it is the interest of every other organ that proper treatment be used in order to effect a cure. The same is true of the church, and the old saying, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" applies in both cases. God has prescribed the proper treatment for the cure of spiritual diseases, in his own Holy Book ; but if the treatment is neglected, what then?

A member of the human body may become hopelessly diseased, and in some cases it may have

been hopelessly deformed or paralyzed from birth: in such cases surgery is recommended.

Will not the same thing apply to the church ? If not, why the admonition, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off" ? The word offend means, to cause to stumble. If a member of Christ's body becomes a hindrance and a detriment to the body, and cannot be reclaimed by proper gospel treatment, the instruction is, "cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is better for thee that one of thy members perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." One definition of the word hell is, any place or state of misery or wickedness: this is the definition which applies here. We know he is not referring to a state after death.

Here the similarity between the natural and the spiritual ends, for we know that after an organ of the human body is amputated it dies and can never be restored to the body. Such is not always true in the case of a member excluded from the church, but always due care must be taken to determine as to whether a real cure has been effected; or the "last state of that man" may be worse than the first.

If a church member is what he or she ought to be, he or she loves every other member, and is interested in the welfare of every other member; but, at the same time, will know that the church is more important than any individual member, their-self included, and will prefer whatever is necessary for the good of the church.

THE CHURCH OF GOD (WHERE IS IT?)

THE CHURCH OF GOD (WHERE IS IT?)

“-Upon this rock I will Build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” – [Mt 16:18](#)

“My dove, my undefiled is one; she is only one of her mother, she is that she was one of her that bare her.” [Song 6:9](#).

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” – [Eph 4:5](#)

I am sure there are many earnest inquirers after truth, who are **naturally** confused by the many different doctrines proclaimed in the world today, and by the many divergent claims made by this or that religious group that they alone have the truth on this or that vital point, and that they are the church of God here in the world; or at least a part of it.

There is an idea quite prevalent, that all of the various religious groups bearing the name "Christian" (or claiming to be followers of Christ) are branches or parts of the true church that Christ established, and that all of them (put together) make up the true church of God. But I am absolutely positive that the Bible will **not support** this idea. Warning is given that there would be false teachers, and that these would advance false ideas, and that "disciples" would be drawn away after them. "For the time will come that they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away

their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." — [2Ti 4:3-4](#).

Now I say, to each of our readers, If you do not believe the Bible is God's own inspired, infallible and altogether dependable word; then this article will mean but little, if anything at all, to you. If you think that our God is such a one as would leave His children to stumble blindly, and without any certain and sure guide — at the mercy of poor, weak, ignorant and foolish men, and of every "wind of doctrine that blows" — some of it no doubt promulgated by men with wicked intent, then perhaps there is nothing I can say here, that will help you to find and identify the true church.

But I know I am writing to people who **do** believe the Bible to be the "word of truth" as revealed by God's Holy Spirit. So to you I can say this, — If you are willing to take God at His word, and to put forth real effort to find out what the Bible teaches, and to search diligently and to pray earnestly, you **can** find the true church of God here in the world — and you can **know** that you have found it. The great problem is that entirely too many of the Lord's children **are not** willing to do this, but are willing to "jump at conclusions" or to take someone else's opinion. It is much easier, you know, to believe someone else in whom we have confidence, than it is for us to investigate for ourselves. And it is much easier to read what men say about the Bible, than it is to actually find out what the Bible has to say for itself. All we have to do, oftentimes, is to simply **read** what men declare the Bible to teach; but we have to really **study** in order to understand the Bible's **own** teachings. And, **remember**; men have advanced all sorts of ideas with which to deceive, and certainly all of these ideas cannot be right — because they are in disagreement with each other. But **many** of the Lord's own heaven-born children **are** deceived and are deceiving others.

Now I don't want this article to be too long, and I want it to be complete in this one issue of our paper. So I can't go into detail in an effort to prove the identity of the church. The best that I can do will be to make a few statements that may prove helpful.

The church of Jesus Christ **is** the true church of God among men. And that church is the one Jesus himself established while he was on this earth. He instructed his own disciples as to its form and its government. He declared what its mission would be, and set forth the doctrines that it should proclaim to the world. He warned against false teachers and prophets. His apostles were Divinely inspired, as none since that time have been. Their words and instructions to the church are recorded for our instruction. We should listen to "thus saith the Lord." The church that Christ established back then, is still in the world; for Jesus said, "the gates of hell shall **not** prevail against it." Now, how are we to go about finding it?

Permit me to say that the true church is that religious organization that still contends for, and practices, the same things that were contended for and practiced in the apostle's day. The early church, back then, is the pattern for us to follow. So, when we find an organization that conforms to that pattern, we have found the church. The church cannot be identified by name: she has borne many different names thru the ages. She must be identified by faith and practice.

As we search for the true church, a knowledge of church history is very helpful; but we haven't space to go into that now. But both the Bible and any reliable Church History will indicate that,

when we find the church, we will find her to be very much in the minority among religious groups. We will find her doctrines to be unpopular among the religious world. Church history shows that the true followers of Christ have been a persecuted people in almost every age. It has always **cost** something to be a Christian. Another thing, when we find the church, she won't be an organization that has recently "sprung up"; she will have her roots firmly implanted in the past. Many organizations have sprung up during comparatively recent years, claiming to be the church. None of these can possibly be the church that Christ established. Some of these claim to be restoring original Christianity, but this cannot be, for Jesus assured his disciples that the powers of darkness would **not** "prevail".

I now have in my possession an issue of a paper, in which the editor declares himself to be "the president of the World-Wide Church of God." This same editor makes the statement that "for more than 1800 years the true gospel was not preached anywhere in the world." If that is correct, then "the gates of hell" certainly did prevail against Christ's church for a mighty long time, and Jesus plainly didn't know - what he was talking about. So this man simply has to be an impostor. If he is honest in it, he is simply deceiving himself and others. This same man conducts a radio program that may be heard (I think) every night in the week, over some of the most powerful stations in the land —and I suppose throughout the world. But his organization is one among many. We are being bombarded with almost everything of a religious nature; by radio, by television, and by the printed page. And people **are** gullible.

One more thing I wish to mention. True Christianity is a religion of love. Love, not fear, is its great motivating principle. The Bible teaches this very plainly. The opposite is true of all false religion — fear is their great motivating principle — that and selfish interest. So when we find the true church, we will find her to be an organization that stresses love and unselfish purpose above all else. I know of only one such organization. She may not be known by the same name in every instance, but she contends for the same principles. She must undoubtedly be the church we are seeking.

Think about it — pray about it — act upon it.

THE HAND OF GOD

THE HAND OF GOD

And I said to the man . . . who stood at the gate of the year: . . . "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." . . . And he replied: "Go out into the darkness . . . And put your hand . . . Into the hand of God . . . That shall be to you . . . Better than light . . . And safer than a known way." . . . So I went forth, and finding the hand of God, . . . Trod gladly into the night . . . And He led me toward the hills . . . And the breaking of day.

THE POTTER

THE POTTER

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. - [Jer 18:1-6](#).

Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. - [Ro 9:21-23](#).

As we study these texts, please notice it is the "house of Israel" that is under consideration, and not mankind in general. It is true that Israel is a type and figure of those whom God has separated to his own glory out of every nation, but, more especially, of his professing people in this, the gospel age. We must ever remember that God's work of regenerating the souls of men and preparing them for heaven and immortal glory has been going on in all ages of time, since the very creation; so we must conclude that the people of Israel were not the only people, who, at that time, were beloved of God and chosen to eternal salvation. Israel was however, God's church and his representative people. The very same is true of the church of Jesus Christ today: God has those who are his own heaven-born children both inside and outside of the church, and some, like his own among the Gentile nations back then, who are in the darkness of ignorance and without gospel privileges.

Notice something else, — The above texts do not apply to the original creation, when God formed man from the dust of the ground; for the vessel then formed was not marred in his hand: God looked and saw that man was "good and very good." This beautiful vessel did later become marred however, but we are sure it was through no fault of God's and was none of his doing. The Devil was there, and I'm not going to try and tell you where he originally came from. I just know that he is the enemy of God and righteousness, and I would much rather charge Satan with man's fall than to charge God with it, wouldn't you? We do know Satan had a hand in it; he was the tempter. I don't know why God allowed it to take place, but he must have had a wise and good reason for so allowing (or suffering) it to be. We know God was not the cause of it.

As a result of the "fall" of our first parents, into sin, all of their posterity fell with them. The stream of human life became corrupted, and the tendency of human nature has been ever downward as a result of that corruption. God has not given the beginning what he would do. He now stands as the potter, with "power over the clay", but the clay that he works with is the common clay of fallen and corrupt humanity. God works upon this clay to fashion vessels as pleases him, and as the potter, he shapes this clay upon the wheels, — in this case what has been referred to as the "wheels of providence." What I am trying to point out is that God did not design from eternity that some men should be eternally saved and others eternally lost, and then proceed to make them vessels unto honor and dishonor as many understand the doctrine of predestination to teach it. It is true that He did choose some (a fixed and definite number) and predestinated them to eternal life and salvation, but simply "passed by" those not so favored. God is not the cause of the eternal destruction of any of his creation (of men), except as his justice demands it. In fashioning vessels unto both honor and dishonor, in this world, God is

doing no injustice to any; for he is dealing with fallen and sinful creatures: he is working with common clay, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He owes salvation to none. He could have justly relegated all to the trash heap.

A while ago I looked up the word, predestination, in my Encyclopedia ; and here is what I found, — "One of the five points of Calvinism; the belief that God foreordains all men to everlasting happiness or misery, and that God has decreed all events from and unto all eternity."

We all know Primitive Baptists believe in Predestination, but, if I thought they believed as the Encyclopedia states, I think I would have to leave the Primitive Baptists. That may seem like a strong statement on my part, but I think I know the Bible does not teach such a thing. It does teach the doctrine of predestination however, the predestination of God's elect people through grace to eternal glory. But where the words, predestinate and predestinated, are used, there is no reference to any but the elect people of God: the rest are simply left out, or "passed by." In the final judgement, the non-elect" will be condemned by their wicked works and intent (which God is not responsible for); while the "elect" will be justified by the free gift of Christ's blood and righteousness.

Now, let us go back to our texts at the heading of this article. In our first text, the Lord's prophet is commanded to go down to the potter's house. What he saw there was to serve as a lesson to him. The potter was working with the clay, and turning out a vessel upon the wheels. The potter, here, represents God; and the vessel represents the house of Israel. Now here, the "house of Israel is represented not as vessels (plural) but as a vessel (singular). It is the Hebrew Nation that is under consideration. But the "house of Israel" is composed of individuals who are possessed with the fallen nature of Adam, so I say the clay that the Potter is working upon is the common clay of corrupt, fallen, humanity. Now the Divine Potter has a right to do with this clay as pleases him, as revealed in our second text. Jeremiah observed that the vessel "became marred in the potter's hand. Do you know why clay becomes marred in the hands of a potter? It is because of some impurity in the clay. So he sets about to remove the impurity (foreign substance or whatever). But in order to do this, he must destroy the vessel which has become marred, and unfit for the use for which it was intended. Then, using the same clay, he sets about to form the vessel anew. That is what God here threatens to do to the "house of Israel".

Israel had sinned against God, to the extent that it was no more suitable for God's purpose; so God asks the prophet, "Cannot I do with you as this potter?" Certainly He could, and, if we will study the history of that people, we will find that he did. And, if we will properly study Bible prophecy, we will discover that God again will make of Israel a new vessel. I believe he not only does it to the Spiritual Israel, but that he, in his own good time in way, will do it to the National Israel. I don't care to enlarge upon that, but was simply allow our readers to think about it.

I have included our second text in order that the two together, might "shed light" upon the general teaching of the 9th chapter of Romans. Here Paul is speaking of this same nation, what was left of it; for the ten tribes had been?? carried into captivity and scattered, long before this. But, referring to the nation of the Jews, he teaches that they are shortly to be disinherited (or disenfranchised) as the nation (church) of God, and the "kingdom" is to be given to the Gentiles. But he is careful to point out and declare that there is yet a "remnant" among the Jews. We know

there is still a remnant among them who are Christian. We know that God is also able to restore them, as a nation, to their former inheritance; but not to worship again under the ceremonial law.

God has a people, in all nations; both Jew and Gentile, who are his by right of covenant relationship and redeemed possession. Because of His regard for these, his people, God rules over men and nations — guiding, protecting, moulding. He operates, by his Spirit and through providence, in the hearts and lives of his own. As the "wheels of providence" turn, the Divine Potter shapes the vessels (both individuals and nations of individuals as pleases him; for he has a wise master plan, purpose of which is to destroy sin — which he hates with every power of his being. So He uses, oftentimes, ungodly men to serve as a scourge of His own people, because of their transgressions. War is an instrument, in God's hands, to correct and chasten. God raises up men to sit upon thrones (It says somewhere, "even the vilest of men"). He also causes thrones to topple and fall. "Whom will be hardeneth" — to serve his purpose in providence: to prove his power, to chastise his people — for their long-range good and for his ultimate glory. Yes, and to the eventual destruction of ungodly men.

"God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform:
He plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.

There is much, much more that can be said about this subject; but time and space will not permit. I am sure there is much that will never be said, or understood, this side of eternity.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" [Mt 19:16](#).

As we read and compare the different accounts given of the episode in the life of Jesus, as recorded by three of the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark and Luke, we find that this person who came to Jesus on this occasion was a rich young ruler. The question that he asked of the Master was a very natural question — "What good thing must I do, that I may have eternal life?" No doubt countless multitudes have asked, and are still asking, that question. I am convinced that Jesus could have answered the question with much fewer words than he did: he could have given a direct answer; but chose a better and more convincing way. He took advantage of this opportunity to teach a vitally important lesson, in a most convincing way. Now I feel sure that many of our readers will think that Jesus **did** give this young man a direct answer; but I feel sure that he did not.

The first thing that Jesus did was to strike a blow at this young man's confidence in the flesh by saying, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Jesus knew he was God (manifest in the flesh) and one with the Father, but evidently the young man did not know this. So what Jesus really meant was this, - "You think that I am but a man; then why do you call me good?" Jesus follows up with the statement, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the the

commandments." So much as to say, "If you would do something to get, or to earn, eternal life; this is what you must do: keep the commandments. After Jesus has recited the commandments to him, the young man declares that he has kept all of them - even from his youth to that present time. Now, I feel sure the young man was honest in it: I believe he actually thought he had kept all the commandments of God; and probably from a purely outward standpoint he had. But Jesus proceeded to prove to him that he had not actually kept the commandments.

My friends, if righteousness had come by the law, then Jesus would not have needed to die. If there was ever a truly righteous individual on earth: a single individual that had kept the of God to perfection; Jesus would not have needed to die for that individual. But the Bible teaches that "there is not a righteous person upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not." The law demands perfection. "If a man keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." We will concede that this young man had kept the commandments outwardly: He had not actually taken the life of another, or stolen the goods of another etc: but what about the spiritual aspects of the law? The law of God is spiritual.

Jesus taught, when asked, "What is the greatest commandment in the law?", "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy soul - [Mt 22:37](#). This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is my contention this morning that there has never been a man upon earth, with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who has actually kept the commandments.

So Jesus proceeded to prove to this young man that he was not as good as he thought he was: he did not measure up to what Jesus declared is the greatest commandments of all love for God and love for one's fellows: not just a casual love, but a most ardent love. His next step was to put this young man to the test; and it was his love that was on trial.

Since the young man had great possessions, Jesus said, "If thou wilt be perfect (and it is perfection that is required) sell that which you have, and give to the poor." And since this young man was a ruler, he said, "Come and follow me." We know the young man failed the examination, for the scripture says, "he went away sorrowful".

Jesus then proceeded to teach his disciples, the utter futility of human effort where obtaining eternal life is concerned. He said, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The disciples were astonished, and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Now, I am not prepared to tell you just what Jesus meant by "the eye of a needle", but am inclined to think he meant a sewing needle. But whatever he meant, it was something which was impossible from a purely human standpoint - for Jesus said so. "With men, this is impossible." "But with God all things are possible."

It is utterly impossible for a person to do something in order to obtain eternal life. Eternal life is a free gift. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Jesus said, "you must be born again." Just think of that, my friends, Who or what ever did anything in order to get born? In birth, the one being born is always entirely passive: he is not acting, but being acted upon. This is true in the natural birth and must be so in

the spiritual. We did not choose to be born of the flesh, neither does the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, choose to be born of the Spirit. The moment he feels himself to be a sinner and turns to Jesus, he is already in possession of eternal life, and is born again. If this were not the case, there would be no evidence of spiritual life at all; and there could be no repentance for sin or turning to the Lord for deliverance. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit, and an evidence of spiritual and eternal life - but not the cause of it. The cause is the sovereign grace of a sovereign and miracle working God.

So Jesus was not telling the rich young ruler what he must do in order to get eternal life. He was simply proving to him and to his own disciples that eternal life does not come in that way, but by the work of God alone. "With men this **is** impossible, but with God all things are possible." I am very thankful that our eternal destiny is not left in the hands of men, but in the all powerful hands of an all-wise and merciful God. Men often fail, but there can be no failure with Him. He is able to reach, by His Spirit, the savage in darkest Africa and the most hardened sinner here in America. God's people among the heathen may never have the joy of hearing the gospel (meaning good news) of their salvation, but having it and hearing about it is two entirely different things.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL FLOURISH

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL FLOURISH

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; To show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. [Ps 92:12-15](#).

This is a precious promise that the Lord has given, for the Psalmist, David, was not only a good and wise man, but also inspired of God. David wrote not only from his own experience as a man of God, but also as God gave him light to see and declare the truth. That which has found its place in the holy scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for God's people. Let us study the language of this wonderful text, and try to determine just how much beauty and instruction we can find in it.

This promise is to the righteous — who are they? Webster says that righteous is "doing, or according with, that which is right; just; upright; equitable." The synonyms of the words are Godly, holy, virtuous. The bible teaches that a righteous person is a religious person, and of course, a religious person, from a bible standpoint, is one who loves and serves God. No one can be truly righteous without being truly religious.

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree." To flourish is to grow; thrive; prosper. It is also to bear fruit. When the palm tree is mentioned, it is the date palm that is intended. My bible dictionary has this to say of the palm tree. "It frequently attains the height of eighty feet, but more commonly forty to fifty. It begins to bear fruit after it has been planted six or eight years, and continues to be productive for a century. its trunk is straight, tall and unbroken, terminating in a crown of emerald-green plumes, like a diadem of gigantic ostrich feathers; these leaves are frequently twenty feet in length, droop slightly at the ends, and whisper musically in the breeze. The palm is in truth, a beautiful and most useful tree. Its fruit is the daily food of millions; its sap furnishes an agreeable wine, the fibers of the base of its leaves are woven into rope and

rigging; it's tall stem provides a valuable timber; it's leaves are manufactured into brushes, mats, bags, couches, and baskets. This one tree supplies almost ail the wants of the Arab or Egyptian. There is in the [Ps 92; 12](#), the familiar comparison. "The righteous shall flourish as the palm tree.", which suggests a world of illustration, whether respect be had to the orderly and regular aspects of the tree, it's fruitfulness, the perpetual greenness of it's foliage, or the height from which the foliage grows, as far as possible from the earth and as near as possible to heaven. Perhaps no point is more worthy of mention, if we wish to pursue the comparison,, than the elasticity of the fibre of the palm, and it's determined growth upward even when loaded with weights."

I trust that our readers may be blessed to meditate profitably on the above comparisons. Space will forbid our taking each one separately and commenting upon it.

The Psalmist goes on to say "he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." The cedar grows tall, straight and exceedingly beautiful. The cedar is an evergreen, and has been used as the symbol of everlasting life. Lebanon is a mountain range in Palestine, where the cedars used to grow in great abundance.

Peter, at the conclusion of his second and last epistle, exhorts the people to "grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ", and Jesus said, "I have chosen you, and ordained you,, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: — [Joh 15:16](#). The question now arises, how can we best grow and bear fruit; and under what environment? The answer to that question is found in the following verse of our text — "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." God's children then, who may be regarded as plants capable of bearing fruit, are to be planted in the house of the Lord; and under this environment they shall flourish. Here where the "courts of our God" are mentioned, reference is made to this definition of the word court — "The residence of a sovereign or other dignitary; palace." Our God is King of heaven and earth, and although His throne is in heaven, He, in a very special sense, dwells in His church. In David's time the word court was used to designate the enclosures of the tabernacle and the temple.

The righteous who are planted in the house of the Lord "shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." This is the Lord's promise, "e'en down to old age all my people shall prove, my sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love. Although hoary hairs shall their temples adorn; like lambs that shall still in my bosom be bourne." Of course those are the words of the songwriter, but the sentiment is well bourne out by the Bible: indeed very similar language is found in the Bible.

Now for the objection — What about those who begin a good profession thru faith and then fall away? For such is some- times the case. The answer to that I think, is simply to state that the text says "those that be planted." It is one thing to be brought into the house of the Lord and even to become a member of the church; but another thing to be actually planted there. To plant something, the roots of the plant must be buried deeply into the soil and the plant must be properly watered. Gardeners have a practice of taking plants in a bunch and hurriedly covering their roots with dirt — this practice is called "heeling in." I think that sometimes folks are not planted in the church but merely heeled in. Many churches make it a common practice to gather converts in a bunch and merely heel them in, hoping to get them planted later. Our church has never practiced that. Indeed we have usually been very careful to make sure that those who come into our church are ready for planting,, But with all our care, we are sometimes mistaken. One may be a child of God and yet be very unsuitable for planting in the Lord's house. We do not set

every weakly diseased plant in our gardens, just because they are plants. Yet someone might think that just because one bears evidence of spiritual life that one is suitable for planting in the Lord's house. Such is not true. Let us notice that our text deals with the righteous, and they are the ones who shall flourish when planted in the house of the Lord. These are the same ones who shall bear fruit in their old age. But, after all, the righteous at heart are the only ones who can be really planted in gospel soil.

To be really "planted" one must have his or her roots buried deep in the soil of Christian experience, and here is where God comes in. In His own sovereign, mysterious way: His word must be applied to the hearts of His children by His own Holy Spirit. We may be sure that those thus "planted" shall "flourish in the courts of our God", for Paul has declared "I am persuaded that he who has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." [Php 1:6](#) I am well aware of the fact that Paul expressed fear that after he had preached to others, he himself might become a castaway; but none who are thus fearful will become castaways: a tree, after it has been planted, will not lift its roots out of the soil and leave its native element. We need ever to be on guard lest we depart into by and forbidden paths, but the righteous are those who are so at heart, and, therefore, will be watchful and diligent to avoid falling; for the righteous do sometimes fall. But we have this blessed assurance "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord up holdeth him with his hand." [Ps 37:23-24](#). Solomon is an outstanding example of a righteous man who did fall from his integrity, and suffered for it; but we find that he was not "utterly cast down" and we have reason to believe that the Lord restored him to the joy of his salvation, and that he was still "bringing forth fruit in old age."

THE SIN OF INDIFFERENCE

THE SIN OF INDIFFERENCE

One of the greatest enemies of the cause of Christ, in the world, is indifference. This sin is, today, in evidence upon every hand. We see it manifested in our national life, and it rests like a cloud upon the church of God. How to counteract this apathy, upon the part of the people, and upon the part of a portion of the ministry, is a very great problem to those who are awake to the true situation and to the dangers that confront us, from the standpoint of the church and the nation.

I mention the nation because it was founded upon godly principles, and, as a result of many contending for those principles, America has become great. America will remain great only as long as we contend for those principles, and, under a government like ours, the strength and well-being of the nation depends, most emphatically, upon the strength, the courage, the morality, the faith of the people, and their willingness to die, if need be, in defense of those high principles which we believe are right in the eyes of God. So the things which should concern the nation are, in great measure, the same things which must concern the church, if the church is to prosper. I think it well to point out, however, that the nation cannot truly prosper — and continue to do so — without the faith and faithfulness of Christian people. The church can exist

without the nation, as she has in times past; amid the fires of persecution, but a nation like ours cannot exist without the church. If the nation falls, by corruption within or by invasion from without, the people (including the Lord's people) suffer; but the church goes on. Perhaps suffering is what will be required, in order to wake us up, draw us together, correct our errors, and bring us back to the ways of God and godliness. Tribulation has served that purpose in the past: it has been so in the lives of individuals and in the experience of the church. Study the history of God's people in Old Testament days, and of the church of Christ — all through the ages. It seems a shame that people have to be prodded, beaten, and driven in order to learn their lessons. How much better it would be for them to simply take God's word for in, in the beginning.

In our January issue, we had an article from the late Morte H. Craig entitled "The Remedy for Laodiceans". In this article, Eld. Craig expresses his opinion that the church was then in somewhat the same condition as the church of the Laodiceans, spoken of in Revelation. If the church was then, over twenty years ago, in a state of Luke warmness (indifference), surely the condition has grown more pronounced since that time. There is a cure for this condition, as Eld. Craig points out. The cure is found in a knowledge and careful application of the teachings of God's word.

We often enquire as to the reason for this lack of interest in the things of God, and as to the reason why so few people are willing to take the time and effort to study the Bible, and religious books, and periodicals devoted to the interest of Christ's kingdom. Many answers may be given to this question, but I have come to conclude, personally, that the great overall reason may be spelled in one word, prosperity. And, by that, I mean outward or material prosperity. Eld. Clyde Johnson and myself, and our wives, were once riding along together, enroute to a meeting in a neighboring state. We were passing through very beautiful country, with fertile soil, well improved farms, and thriving cities; when I voiced the question as to why there were so few of our churches in that particular state. Eld. Johnson's reply was that "Old Baptists simply don't thrive on prosperity." I believe it! We are now passing through an era of unprecedented prosperity in this country, and I also believe we are passing through a Laodicean age, where the church is concerned. People take no more interest in spiritual things than they do, because their hearts are centered elsewhere. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life has crowded out the more excellent things. The kingdom of God has been allowed to languish and the people have been the losers. People, today, love the easy life; and the Christian life has never been the easy way. But the Christian life IS the good way, the truly satisfying way, and the TRULY prosperous way. Why does the Bible gather dust, on the shelf? Why are all our church papers having difficulty making ends meet? Why are our church services so poorly attended? The answer is simple: the brethren would rather watch television, go boating or picnicking, etc.; and some would rather hold down two jobs, in order to have the things that Jesus said we should put second in our lives — and not first. This is a serious indictment, but I hope our readers will understand that many of our church people are not at all guilty of being like this, many are only partly guilty; and I speak only in generalities. I am sure we need to each examine ourselves, in an effort to determine in what degree we are guilty.

Jesus' admonition to the church of the Laodiceans was "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." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." [Re 3:18-19](#). Jesus not only rebuked, but his ministers are exhorted to do likewise. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." [2Ti 4:2](#).

THE WAY OF SALVATION

THE WAY OF SALVATION

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." —[Joh 14:6](#).

Jesus is the way, the only way, of salvation, and I think that it is eternal salvation which is primarily under consideration in the above text. I suppose that all who profess to be Christians will declare that they believe that, but by far the majority will contend that since Jesus is the way we must first of all believe in him, and second we must walk in the way, in order to reach heaven and immortal glory.

On first notice, this may appear reasonable enough, but let us examine this position closely. This popular theology is based upon the assumption that man may, through believing in and following Jesus, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, deserve or earn salvation. Precisely this, is honestly and sincerely believed by millions, but the holy word teaches that "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord". [Ro 6:23](#). Eternal life, then, is a gift: it is something which we do not earn. The wages of sin is death, and we have all earned that, for we have all sinned, therefore "By grace ye are saved". [Eph 2:5](#). Grace is a free, unmerited favor: it is something which we do not deserve.

There were those in the Savior's time who believed that by following the teachings of the scriptures they might earn salvation and to these Jesus spoke when he said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." [Joh 5:39](#).

Jesus is the way, which means that heaven is obtained, not by what we believe and do, but by what Jesus has done, is now doing, and has promised to do. I repeat, Jesus did not come for the purpose of showing us the way that we may be saved, but he came declaring, "I AM THE WAY." It is very true that we are commanded to believe in Jesus and to walk in him; that is to keep his commandments, but not in order to obtain eternal life, or to reach heaven. Both faith and works are fruits of the Spirit, and evidences of spiritual life. As our text indicates, Jesus is that life; and he is very truth itself.

THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS

THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with

Jesus. [Ac 4:13](#).

This text is found in connection with the healing of the impotent man whom they had carried and laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called beautiful to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. When this man saw Peter and John about to enter the temple he asked them for money.

Then it was that Peter spoke those memorable words, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth **rise up and walk**." The man who had been lame all of his life did walk. Here was a miracle that none could deny, for this man was well known. Perhaps for years he had been found in his accustomed place by this gate of the temple.

Even the Sadducees, those stern contenders for the letter of the law, could not deny it, much as they would have liked to. Notice that Jesus, both while He was here, and soon after His departure, displayed His power in such a way that none could deny that great miracles had been wrought.

Only those who were dead in sins and completely blinded could fail to recognize these as being the work of God. Thus Jesus Christ proved His eternal power and Godhead. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth". [Mt 28:18](#).

But Peter and John were cast into prison, and brought forth to speak in their defense, then threatened, and commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus. The leaders knew that the influence of Christianity was a threat to the prevailing order of things. The priests knew that their influence and their livelihood were in jeopardy. They would rather serve themselves than God.

Peter, in his own defense and that of John, and more especially in defense of Jesus of Nazareth, said on that occasion, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." [Ac 4:10-12](#).

But as Peter spoke these words in power and demonstration of the Spirit, the rulers and the people marveled, for they saw that these were unlearned and ignorant men, yet they spoke with boldness and power.

Peter and John were unlearned and ignorant in the wisdom of this world — that is, they were what the world calls uneducated; but they were not ignorant nor unlearned in the wisdom of God

which the Holy Ghost teaches. These people knew enough however, about this Jesus of Nazareth and the wonders wrought by Him, to also know where Peter and John got their

boldness and their power—"They had been with Jesus."

Being with Jesus spiritually, does impart boldness and power to His disciples. It was so then, and it is yet. Not that His followers today have the power to say "take up thy bed and walk," and expect immediate healing, but there is healing power in the word. Jesus is still the great Physician and effects spiritual healing.

Eventually all of His people will find complete healing for soul, body, and mind. That work will be completed in the resurrection. Until that time we should attend faithfully to reading, meditation, and prayer, that it may be manifested in our lives that we also "have been with Jesus."

TIME OF TROUBLE

TIME OF TROUBLE

· For in the time of trouble, he will hide me in his pavilion. [Ps 27](#).

David, king and sweet singer of Israel, was spoken of, by God, as being a man after His own heart. David committed a very great sin, but the love of God was continually in his heart. David's character, and attitude toward God, is demonstrated in the 27th Psalm; where he says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; etc."

I feel sure that there were many things that David desired of the Lord. Just like every one of us, his desires were many; but I am sure that what he means is this — "One thing above all others: one most important thing, have I desired of the Lord." This being such an important thing to David, we hear him say, "I will seek after it!" I am sure that David was determined to sacrifice and labor for it. Well, David, what is it that you are determined to seek after? What is it that you want above everything else? And we hear him say, "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." Elsewhere we hear him say, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." But, David, why would you dwell there? And we hear him say, "To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." Isn't that why we go to church — to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire — to learn of him? The gospel first reveals the beauty of the Lord, and next it informs us as to our own responsibility toward him. We go to our church meetings to learn more about God, and more about his will concerning us. And that is why we should live in the church.

But, David, why is this so important to you? And the reply comes back, "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock." No doubt, the rock under consideration is Christ.

Jesus warned that "In the world ye shall have tribulation" but he also said, "but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." We know that trials and afflictions are sure to come. Sorrows will come. We also should realize something else.—That in times of prosperity we are

inclined to grow forgetful of the Lord and neglectful of his service, but when adversity comes, it is then that we truly discover the need of our religious faith and of the promises of our Lord. If we have been faithful in the service of God during the time of prosperity, we can be assured that he will not forsake us in the day of trouble. But if we have become neglectful, and disobedient, we have no right to expect this comfort — at least not the same degree of comfort. "How shall we escape, if we neglect this so great salvation." [Heb 2:3](#). We cannot escape the chastisement of the Lord if we grow neglectful.

TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME

TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME

There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock: the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid. [Pr 30:18-19](#).

I consider it very probable that the above text was not primarily intended to teach the lessons which I am now about to present. So I will have the reader to understand that this article is not an attempt to explain the text, but simply an effort to present some thoughts which are suggested by it. So far as this article is concerned, I regard the text as being purely suggestive. I feel at liberty to do this because the lessons suggested are so very true, and so very beautiful.

The text speaks of four wonderful things which are beyond the writer's understanding. 1st. "The way of an eagle in the air". The eagle is often referred to in the Bible. When used, reference is sometimes made to God directly, and sometimes indirectly. Sometimes reference is made to some other subject entirely.

The following texts draw a comparison between God and the eagle. In [Ex 19:4](#) we read, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself". And again in [De 32:9-12](#) inclusive, "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

He found him in a waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spread us aboard her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him."

So, by the eagle, I am reminded of God. The eagle is noted for its immense size, its strength its keenness of vision, and its powers of flight. God is all powerful, observes all things, is everywhere present, and fills the universe. The eagle is spoken of as the king of birds, and God is the sovereign ruler of heaven and earth. The eagle flies swiftly through the sky, and "There is none like unto the god of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky". [De 33:26](#).

There is much that is unknown about the personal habits of the eagle, and there is very, very

much that man cannot know about the mysterious ways of God. We know the eagle builds her nest in a high and inaccessible place, and there rears her young. God's throne is in the heavens, and his church is also above the world.

We have heard that the mother eagle flutters over her young, to demonstrate to them the principles of flight. And how she stirs her nest, and pulls the sticks from under her children until they are forced to leave the nest; then how as they plunge earthward, she swoops under them and bears them up on her wings. This provides a wonderful lesson on how God deals with His children in the Christian experience, and teaches them, also, how to fly. Surely we must say "this is too wonderful for me".

2nd. "The way of a serpent upon a rock". This reminds me of Satan, the serpent which beguiled our mother Eve in the garden. A serpent moves swiftly, silently, mysteriously, and many of them carry the venom of death in their mouths. Satan, also, is slippery and sly, and dispenses the venom of falsehood with his mouth.

Christ is referred to, in the Bible, as a rock. His church is said to be built upon a rock. The church is also the mystical body of Christ. We can but wonder at the way a serpent can move so easily upon a rock, without legs, and without leaving a track.

We must also wonder at the influence which Satan exerts over Christ's church, seemingly crawling up the face of the rock Himself. But although we cannot understand why God permits Satan to be his people's adversary, and to sometimes gain victory over them, we know that Satan has no power at all but what God permits him to have, and that, in God's own good way and time, Satan shall be himself destroyed, with all his angels.

3rd. "The way of a ship in the midst of the sea." This serves to remind me of the church here in the world. A ship rides through the midst of the sea, and often meets with tempest and storm, to seek her desired haven. This was written in the day of sailing vessels, and the wind was often contrary – then there was need of the oars. Sometimes the storm would drive the ship toward the sandbar, or the sharp rocks, and it was all the sailors could do to save the ship. Many a good ship went aground and was broken up.

Christ has promised that His church shall endure, for "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it", but individual local bodies of that church have gone underground and been destroyed. There is much need, then, of that prayer expressed in song, "Jesus, Savior, pilot me, over life's tempestuous sea; Chart and compass came from Thee: Jesus Savior, pilot me."

A ship is very small compared with the sea, and the church is very small compared with the world. The safety of the ship depends upon keeping the sea where it belongs, on the outside of the ship, and not on the inside. The ship belongs in the sea, but the sea certainly does not belong in the ship.

So the church belongs in the world, but the world must be kept out of the church. In the ship and in the church, we see the importance of plugging up the leaks, and it is sometimes necessary to man the pumps.

When we stop to consider, it seems wonderful indeed how a ship can live in a raging storm sea, and how it can ever find its way through the trackless ocean. It is also a great wonder, how the church has survived through the centuries, and has not been destroyed or swallowed by the world. I think one of the greatest of miracles is the church and Christianity itself.

4th. The way of a man with a maid." This reminds me of more than the love of husbands and wives, and the mystery of why a certain man and woman love each other. It reminds me, most of all, of the church. The Bible teaches, "Husbands love wives as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it."

Marriage, as instituted by God, is a type of the union between Christ and His church. As practiced among Israelites; the father of the groom to be, made the marriage arrangement with the father of the bride. God is the father of the groom in the spiritual union between Christ and the church, and also of the bride, and He has made the arrangements for this wedding.

This was typified in Abraham's sending his servant to find a bride for his son Isaac. God was surely in the matter for Rebecca was willing to go, and when Isaac saw her he loved her.

It is said that all true marriages are made in heaven. There is no question but what marriage is a divine institution, and that God has intended it to be a lifetime arrangement, just as the marriage of Christ and His bride is for time and eternity.

God the Father chose the bride for His Son and Christ loved her, and proceeded to woo her and to bring her into His own tent. His love is an everlasting love, and He continues to woo His people and bring them in. The servants of God are still seeking out the appointed ones and when they are found willing, they are led to Isaac (Christ).

The prime purpose of marriage is the bearing of fruit and in this spiritual union fruit is borne to God and righteousness. I do not believe that all of God's spiritual children find membership in His visible church but I do most surely believe that everyone of them shall finally be gathered into the church triumphant.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, 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." [Ro 3:10-12](#). "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin; etc." [Eph 2:1](#). "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." [Joh 6:65](#).

Webster gives this definition of the word, depravity. "The state of being depraved or corrupted; want of virtue; extreme wickedness; absence of religious feeling and principle." The Bible teaches that man, in an unregenerate state (before being born again) is totally depraved, as the

above texts will testify. The "new birth" is essential, before a human individual can "receive the things of the Spirit" or have a desire for them. So regeneration (the new birth) always precedes (goes before) faith and good works.

Until we understand and are willing to accept the doctrine of total depravity, as taught in the Bible, we are in no position to understand and receive the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder so many people do not believe in election and predestination, when they insist on believing that man is inherently good. Once we are brought to believe that man is inherently evil, we are then in a position to believe that salvation is entirely by the grace of God, and we can see the justice in God's plan of redemption. Then the doctrine of God's eternal choice of his people presents no problem to us. Now that we understand that none are deserving of salvation, we can see that God cannot possibly be unjust, or unfair, in saving some and not others. The objection is raised that this is such a humiliating doctrine. It is, and, because of that fact, men do not like to believe it; but, it is supposed to be humiliating — because, we cannot properly glorify God nor have complete dependence in Him, as long as we are trusting in our strength and our own supposed righteousness.

Now, the doctrine of total depravity does not teach, as some might suppose, that there is no righteousness or value in God's "born again" children. Total depravity only pertains to those who are unregenerate or "in the state of nature"; and we were all in that condition, before God had mercy on us. Such is the teaching of the Bible on this subject.

It seems a pity so many of the Lord's dear children, those who give certain evidence of having spiritual and eternal life, stumble at this vital doctrine and become lost in a fog of religious confusion. Many come so very close to the truth of God's word, and yet miss it so far. I refer to those who confess that salvation is by grace, and that "Ye must be born again", and that the new birth is God's own sovereign miraculous work — and yet insist that the dead, alien, sinner can, and must, "accept the Lord in order to be saved — and before God will perform this work of grace in their hearts and lives.

I remember the late Elder Harvey Daily telling about hearing a man preach on the text "You hath he quickened who were dead etc." and making the following statement. "Man is a sinner, and the more he sins the deeper he gets; let's say he is in a well. Now we take the windlass of Christ, the line of faith and the bucket of grace; and we say to him, 'now you get in' — and if he doesn't get in the bucket, whose fault is it?" Elder Daily said he met the man, on the street, a few days after that; and the man said, "Bro. Daily, I was sure glad to see you at our meeting the other night. Tell me, what did you think of my illustration, about the man in the well: did you get the point?" Bro. Daily said, "Yes, I got the point alright; but there's something that bothers me about that. Your text says that the sinner is dead. Now, how in the world do you expect a dead man to get in that bucket? The minister said, "Well, Bro. Daily, what would you do? Bro. Daily replied, "I would just leave him in the well until the Lord gave him life. If I could get him out of the well, he would still be dead — he would still stink!"

Some years ago, a new (so called) translation of the Bible came out, called the Standard Revised Version. It was heralded by a great deal of fanfare, and, in the course of events, I was invited by a local minister to take part in a meeting at our local school for the purpose of promoting the "new Bible". I thought favorably at first, but, before making my final decision, I obtained a copy and investigated for myself. I had been assured that the translators (??) had not changed its meaning, but, when I turned to the above mentioned text, "You hath be quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins", I found the "new Bible" to read like this. — "You hath he made

alive, who were dead through the sins wherein you once walked." If that statement is correct, then all that has to be done, in order for the sinner to be alive is to free him from his sins — just simply pull him out of the "well". But, our old time-proven Bible says that the alien sinner is in two different conditions — he is not only in the well (sins), but is also dead. I agree with Elder Daily that it is utter foolishness to try to get a dead man to do anything. So, faith and works are functions of life, and not the cause of it. Life always pre- cedes action, as any normal child should be able to tell us. There is such a thing as "accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior", but when we do that, it is too late for us to be "born again": that work has already been accomplished. Our "acceptance" is only an evidence of spiritual life, and not the cause of it. Election, Predestination, Effectual Calling, Justification, and Final Glorification (see [Ro 8:29-30](#)) are the sovereign work of God; and God does not require the faith and obedience of men in order to bring his sovereign work about. But, the objection is raised, "That doesn't leave us anything to do!" Oh yes, but it does! It is our work to be faithful and obedient children of our Heavenly Father, after we are "born" into his family. "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." [Ec 12:13](#). We are in a much better position to do this when we can praise God for doing for us what we could not possibly have done for ourselves. The doctrines of Sovereign Grace have the effect of humbling God's people, and of exalting the name of God. They promote love and dispel fear: and love is the law of God's kingdom. "We love Him, because He first loved us." [1Jo 4:19](#).

TOWER OF BABEL

TOWER OF BABEL

"And they said one to another, 'Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

[Ge 11:3](#)

I believe that the tower of Babel episode, recorded in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, presents some very important lessons, both natural and spiritual, and especially applicable to our day.

The old world had been destroyed because of wickedness, for God had sent a great flood upon all the earth. Noah and his family alone were spared.

After men had again multiplied upon the earth, they began to get big ideas. "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." So we see a disposition manifested here, which has characterized the human race through all the annals of history. Indeed, there seems to have been something in human nature, even before the fall, which would cause the language of the serpent to become an enticement, when he said to our mother, Eve, in regard to the eating of the forbidden fruit, "Ye shall be as gods." I notice also, that here was an attempt to thwart the purpose of God, for He had purposed that they should multiply and possess the earth. I am under the impression that God had already determined that they should be scattered upon the face of the earth. So both the motive here, and the action was wrong. But Men have always had the determination to do things their own way and for their own glory. But God

will not tolerate it. He has said, "I will not give my glory to another." [Isa 42:8](#). Idolatry is the greatest of all sins and, in thinking upon the subject, I have come to conclude that in all of its manifestations, idolatry is a form of self-worship. Certainly, self-worship is idolatry; and idolatry has been the underlying cause of all of man's troubles. Some may object to that last statement, upon the grounds that sin is the cause of man's difficulties. But idolatry is the underlying cause of sin, and I believe I can prove that position.

"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city." [Ge 11:6-8](#).

So that was the end of the building of this particular city and this particular tower. But it was, by no means, the end of man's labors to exalt himself and to build without regard to God's will and way. All through the annals of human history, mankind, in general, has been busy building cities and towers "whose top may reach into heaven". All purely human religion is an effort to build to heaven, and the building has always been of the most unstable material — the brick of man's own "righteousness" and the slime of corrupt human nature; as Elder Clevenger expressed it, an attempt "to make a good custard out of rotten eggs".

Under the Jewish economy, the majority of the people were trusting in their own ability to keep the law of Moses according to their own interpretation of that law. Among the heathen, every form of religious worship has been an effort to elevate one's self into a position of favor with deity, and to appease the wrath of the heathen god. And during the gospel age, and among professing christians, the great effort has been to build —through faith and obedience, and to bring ones self into a position where God will be obligated to bless them in time and eternity. The development of the Roman hierarchy was an outgrowth of this effort, the protestant reformation was another, and the proposed "world church" of our day is another. But, in every age, there has been a comparative few that have truly worshipped God from the heart and have walked in the light of truth, as God has been pleased to reveal it to them. We wish to identify ourselves with neither Catholic nor Protestant, but with the small isolated groups that worshipped God in spirit and in truth, even during the dark ages.

To worship God in spirit and truth is to truly worship — praise and adore Him, and to be content with God's way—with His building. Jesus said, "I am the way". He did not say that believing in him, or following him is the way. Nor did he say, "I will show you the way." He was speaking of the way to the Father, and I believe had eternal salvation in mind, when he said "I AM the way." It is one thing for Jesus to simply point out the way, and quite another thing for him to actually BE the way. I believe that the vast majority of people professing faith in Christ believe that Jesus has only shown us the way, and, if we will only travel in the way he has pointed out, we will reach our desired destination through our own faith and obedience. The only way anyone can believe and understand that Jesus IS the way, is to accept the Bible doctrines of election, predestination, blood atonement, and effectual calling.

Israel of old became guilty of worshiping idols of wood, stone or precious metal. The spiritual Israel has become guilty of trusting in her own righteousness, which amounts to about the same thing; because, in either case, the object of worship is a product of one's own invention. What is heathen idolatry but the worship of the works of one's own hands? That is why we say that idolatry is a form of self-worship.

We now live in a day when the masses of humanity worship the god of science and the god of materialism. To great multitudes of people, the state has become a god. This is true in the communist nations, and is becoming increasingly more so even in our own country. Instead of the triune God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it is now the triune god of government, science and materialism. And so we proceed to build another tower of Babel. We will solve our problems by science and invention, and by human wisdom. We talk of a "great society" with no mention of a good society, or a truly Christian society. Much stress is placed upon the necessity to conform.

The gospel which is mainly preached is purely a "social gospel" in which all religious faiths can have a part. The truth must be suppressed, because it would hinder the movement toward "brotherhood" and "world government".

As recorded in our text, God was not pleased with what men were doing in an effort to "make a name for themselves" and to follow their own course without Divine council, so he did something about it – He confused their tongues. When men were building a tower of a different sort, and God's law was being trampled underfoot (during the dark ages), God "confused their tongues," and the Protestant Reformation was the result. In this division which took place at that time, several different religious bodies came into being. These in turn have divided and subdivided until, at this time, "Christendom" is divided into hundreds of different denominations and factions. Have you ever thought, my brethren, just how much responsible this "division of tongues" is for the degree of religious liberty which now exists in the world? This has worked for the good of the true church and of the true worshipers regardless of denominational label. But now we have the great "ecumenical movement" — the building of another tower "whose top may reach to heaven". God is still able to confuse their tongues, and undoubtedly will — in His own good way and time. But this time it seems there is no place for God to "scatter" them to. This thing is on a world-wide scale, which leads me to believe the prophecies of Revelation are about to be fulfilled, where it speaks of a great battle — and the destruction of "Babylon"; and, after that the ushering in of God's own arrangement for human government. But the teachings concerning this great event are difficult and highly controversial. I have no desire to speak further concerning them, especially at this time. They are certainly worthy of careful study and investigation, on the part of each of us, but that is not the purpose of this article.

We wish to close with the high note of confidence that God is still in His heaven, and that He still rules among the affairs of men. We can very safely predict eventual and complete victory over His enemies and the fulfillment of His plan and purpose. Our own peace and prosperity however, depends largely upon our own faithfulness. God knows how to spare and protect His own obedient children.

TRUST AND OBEY

TRUST AND OBEY

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. [Isa 40:31](#).

"They that wait upon the Lord": Those who trust and obey God. To them this text applies and this promise is given. Webster's definition of wait is this — To be in expectation; to expect or look forward to. To stay in expectation, as till the arrival of some person or event. To act as attendant or servant, esp. at table; to serve. — to wait on or upon. I feel sure that all of these definitions will apply to the above text.

Those who "wait upon the Lord", in the sense of our text, are those individuals who trust in God, patiently wait for him to bestow his blessings in his own time and in his own good way, and who serve him by keeping his commandments.

The blessing promised to the true servants of God is, "They shall renew their strength". The promise, as expressed in [De 33:25](#), is "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." In this, the Lord has promised grace sufficient — for every occasion, and this includes "dying grace" as well as grace to live. Everything is included, — grace to labor, grace to endure suffering, grace to withstand temptation, grace to overcome obstacles, grace to persevere — grace to live and grace to die.

In the last chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, the wise man gives us the recipe for successful living and for growing old gracefully, when he says "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Those who begin "waiting upon the Lord" in early life have a decided advantage over those who delay until the later years of life. They have a longer time in which to grow, spiritually, and youth is when the mind is more impressionable and retentive. It is then that habits are more easily formed.

Those who form good habits during the ages of childhood and youth usually take those habits with them all through life. Just so it is that those who "remember their Creator" at an early age usually keep on remembering him throughout life, and continue to grow in grace and truth. The promise is especially to them— "They shall renew their strength". When they come down to old age, and grow frail in body and lose interest in the things that interest their younger companions, they shall be found strong in the things of the spirit. "Tho the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day." They will not be found continually looking back and bemoaning the lost days of the past, but will still be looking forward with joyful anticipation to the future — their watchword being still, "It is better farther on!"

I am convinced that the most important business of our lives is that of character development and growth in grace, and there is only one way to be successful in this business. That is for us to

spend our lives waiting upon the Lord. The song writer expressed it very well, when he wrote these lines —

"Trust and obey, trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus —
But to trust and obey."

UTILITY OF THE GOSPEL

UTILITY OF THE GOSPEL

Our text is found in [Ro 1:16](#), For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Paul goes on to say, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith . . ." Now, everyone familiar with the Primitive Baptist Faith, knows that we do **not** believe the gospel is instrumental in our eternal salvation, or in getting us "born again". We can plainly see however, from the text just quoted, that there **undoubtedly** is a salvation which is brought about by and through the gospel. Our Article of Faith, as pertaining to the gospel, states ..., "We believe that the gospel is to be preached in all the world as a statement of the truth, and as a witness of Jesus for the comfort and instruction of regenerated men and women; **but deny** that it is to offer grace to the unregenerate, or that it asserts there is an obligation resting upon the unregenerate to believe that Jesus is their Savior." What then, does the gospel save the Lord's people from? I immediately reply, that the gospel saves them from ignorance, superstition and fear. It also saves them to something: the gospel saves them to peace and comfort and joy, in the knowledge of what the gospel contains. What then **does** the gospel contain? It contains the information that God has loved a people from all eternity, and that he determined, before the foundation of the world, to fit and prepare them for a home with Him - beyond death and the grave. That the Word, later made flesh, which is Jesus Christ, assumed obligation for them before the world was; and that he suffered and died for their sins - thus satisfying the demands of divine justice. It teaches that God, the Holy Spirit, has or certainly shall enter into the hearts of every one of God's elect people causing them to be "born again": causing them to love God and righteousness. It declares that, when they die, their souls shall go immediately into God's presence; and that, in the resurrection, even their mortal bodies shall be changed and perfected - and that all of God's redeemed shall be with God, to worship and serve Him perfectly, and to enjoy Him forever. The gospel teaches that God's elect people are a countless multitude, numberless as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea. They are of all races, all nationalities; for the promise to Abraham was, "of thy seed (meaning Christ) shall all families of the earth be blessed." This is a most glorious message, my friends, and one well designed to delight the hearts of men and of angels. No wonder it is referred to as "the gospel (good news) of your salvation." "But," you say, "What if I am not included in this?" If you love God and righteousness you are included in it, and if you hate sin you are included in it. And even if you now are an enemy of God and righteousness, and in love with sin, you may yet be very possibly included in

it, because God may yet work a work of grace in your heart - and prepare you to sing His praise. Yet, we are sometimes accused of believing a narrow doctrine. This is the broadest doctrine in all the world, unless it would be the doctrine of Universalism or some other of which I know nothing. And it is a God-honoring doctrine - in perfect harmony with what the Bible has to say about the glorious nature of our God.

So we preach this gospel for the comfort of those who are "poor in spirit, "them that mourn", those "who hunger and thirst after righteousness." We are interested that others of the Lord's people may find the same comfort and joy in these things that we ourselves have found. We are interested that the Lord's children here in the world should learn of Him and his love for them, and that they should learn to love Him more and serve Him better.

VANITY OF VANITIES

VANITY OF VANITIES

Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. [Ec 1:2](#)

To do complete justice to this text, it would be necessary to bring forth a commentary upon the entire book of Ecclesiastes; for the text serves as the basis for that whole wonderful sermon. This was the conclusion reached by the wisest of men, after years of departure from God and searching after the things of the world. God had blessed Solomon above all other men, with wisdom, wealth, and power. He had also caused him to rejoice in a felt sense of God's love, and communion with Him; and one of the saddest accounts in history is that of the apostasy of this man: for he fell from this high estate and forsook God and God's way for the world and its way.

It is believed that Solomon wrote Proverbs in his youth, before he had departed from God's way, and Ecclesiastes in his old age; after he had, by the grace of God, been brought back. The first was the product of his observations, and the second was the product of his experience; both were written by inspiration of God. In Ecclesiastes he sees the folly of his way, and is endeavoring to teach others with regard to those things he has learned.

"The fundamental error of the children of men, and that which is at the bottom of all their departures from God, is the same with that of our first parents — hoping to be as gods by entertaining themselves with that which seems good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise. Now the scope of this book is to show that this is a great mistake — that our happiness consists not in being as gods to ourselves, to have what we will and do what we will, but in having him that made us to be a God to us."
—Matthew Henry

The whole effort of the book of Ecclesiastes is to show the extreme folly of filling one's life with anxious labor to gain those things which appear most important to men of the world —wealth, power, the applause of men, for all of this is "vanity and vexation of spirit," and to "fear God and

keep his commandments" is the "whole duty of man".

Solomon, in this book, is no more arguing that man should be careless about the affairs of this life than the Savior was when he said, "Take no thought for the morrow"; but the lesson is that we should sit comfortably loose to the things of the world, and, rather than worry about tomorrow, we should be content with those things which we have. The failure of most people seems to be that they are so anxious to obtain that which they do not have, that they fail to enjoy those things which God has so graciously given them.

In looking back, I can see that my life has been largely filled with vanity and vexation of spirit — oh I think I have accomplished some worthwhile things, but very much of my energy has been wasted: I should have spent more of my time in thankfulness to God, and in enjoying those blessings I have received of him. I have wanted to carry too much of the burden of the world on my own shoulder, and I have wanted to be a reformer; but the wise man recognized the futility of that when he said, "That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered"

Solomon hadn't proceeded far into his sermon until he made some very definite conclusions — "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness" — and, "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God". He stresses the importance of God's service, he exalts Christian virtues, he gives wise advice to both young and old; then he concludes his sermon by saying, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments for: this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil".

We, then, should labor and serve and enjoy; but most important of all — we should trust and be thankful: in this God is well pleased. As the song writer has put it "Trust and obey, trust and obey; for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey".

VISITING IN THE CEMETERY

VISITING IN THE CEMETERY

I often think of the time we took a certain elderly lady to "visit in the cemetery". That was what she called it — "visiting in the cemetery". As we passed between the rows of graves, in this beautiful and lonely city of the dead, she would say, "One of my old neighbors sleeps here, and another old neighbor sleeps over there" — It seemed that she had been acquainted with almost all of the inhabitants, whose bodies were there quietly awaiting the promised Resurrection And, with a sweep of her hand she would say, "Oh, isn't this a beautiful place! Just look how far you can see!"

This aged sister had been, and was then, a very remarkable woman. She had produced and reared a large family, she was a wonderfully radiant Christian personality, and her family and the church had been her life. She had managed to remain both physically and mentally active and

now, in advanced age, was a bit childish perhaps (she had a right to be), but it seemed to me that this only served to enhance her charm.

She was proud of being a Primitive Baptist, and she was proud of her family. She loved the Lord, and she was looking forward to being with him shortly. But now, for the moment, she was living in the past, and the cemetery held an attraction for her that might be hard for younger folks to understand. She remarked that she didn't get to "visit in the cemetery" often enough, and that, when her children brought her, they wouldn't let her stay very long. We realize that those of her generation were now gone, — almost every one and she, like the "last rose of summer" was left blooming alone.

As we moved down the path to leave she spoke of some of her ancestors and, as I reached out my hand to open the gate, she straightened up and, with a radiant look on her face and with a sparkle in her eye, she remarked "and do you know, they were every one 'Old Baptists'!"

When we reached her home, where she lived with a son, she took us to her room where much of the wall was covered with pictures. There were pictures of sons, daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren — and great-great grandchildren.

I thought I had never seen so many pictures in any one room before. And, with a now familiar sweep of her hand, she said "Look — that's all my generation."

Then, after I had left her to visit with some of the others, she showed Naomi her burial dress. She spoke calmly of death. She knew, like Paul, that the time of her departure was at hand, and, like him, she was willing — and it seemed even anxious, to leave this world. She said, "Why, There is nothing to fear: I'm just going on a trip!" -- and I feel sure she did not mean just to the cemetery. She knew her body would slumber there — beside those of her kindred and old neighbors — but she looked forward to seeing Jesus, and being reunited with her own loved and lost. Such was the faith of Old Sister Taylor, a true mother in Israel and a character to long remember. Yes, Bro. Harold Taylor's grandmother was a truly remarkable woman.

VITAL DOCTRINES

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Primitive Baptists have what we call our Articles of Faith, which are statements expressing what we believe and understand the Bible to teach, concerning all vital and fundamental points of doctrine. I believe it is our duty and responsibility to teach these things, for the comfort and joy of the Lord's people and for their strength and guidance, as much and as often as reasonably possible.

These Articles are eighteen in number, and the first article reads like this — "We believe that the scriptures comprising the Old and New Testaments, as given in what is known as the King James Translation, are of divine authority, and are to be taken as the only rule of faith and practice." We certainly do believe in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and I suppose that Primitive Baptists are perhaps the most fundamental of all fundamentalists. We believe what the Apostle Paul declared in 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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And we consider the King James, or Authorized Version of the Bible; to be, by far the best that has ever been produced. Of

course I am speaking of English translations.

Our second **Article of Faith** reads, "We believe in one God, and that the Father, Son or Word, and the Holy Ghost **are** one God, eternal, immutable, infinite in wisdom, power, justice, holiness, mercy and truth." Of course we cannot believe our first Article of Faith without, believing the second. We most certainly believe in only one true and living God, even though the Bible teaches that the one God consists of three persons. The three persons of the God-Head are only different manifestations of the one God. We consider the doctrine of the Deity of Christ to be **most fundamental** and altogether **vital** to true christian faith. Surely, the quality of anyone's religion is determined by his or her conception or understanding of the true nature of God. We cannot have too high an opinion of the Most High God.

Article No. 3 reads, "We believe that in the transgression of Adam he fell under the condemnation of God's holy law, and that all his posterity were corrupted in him, and so are condemned in sin, and have neither will nor power to deliver themselves from this state and condemnation." There are many Bible texts which can be used to prove the truth of this statement, but I now offer only three – which should be sufficient. [Ro 3:9](#) – "for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And [Ro 3:23](#) – "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And [Ro 8:7](#) – "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Primitive Baptists do not believe in Evolution as it is applied to what has been called the "origin of the species". We do not believe in it for two reasons: it is contrary to the teaching of the Bible, and it is unscientific: it is only an unproven theory, which has been presented in the guise of truth, by men who have sought to discredit the Bible. The Bible declares man to be a separate and distinct creation of God.

The theory of evolution and the Bible cannot both be true, because they present man as going in op-posit directions. Evolution has man starting with a simple one cell creature and evolving into the highly complex creature that he now is. But the Bible declares that man was created in the image of God, but that he fell. Evolution says, "Look how far man has risen." But the Bible says, "Look how far he has fallen." Evolution says, "Man has come this far, who knows how far he may yet rise in the scale of living." The Bible teaches that nothing short of the Sovereign Grace of God can ever lift man out of the condition he is in: for his will is corrupted, and he (in a state of nature) is declared to be "dead in trespasses and sins." Please read [Eph 2:1](#). "You hath he quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins." Surely the word "dead" here means "without spiritual life". The natural man referred to here, has natural life alright, but he is spiritually dead (without spiritual life) until Christ quickens him by His own sovereign Spirit.

Article No. 4 reads, "We believe that the Lord Jesus who was set up from everlasting to be the mediator between God and men, did in the fullness of time really and truly take upon himself a human body and nature, sin excepted, and in that body he suffered, bled and died as the surety for the elect, and in their room and stead, and for no others."

Primitive Baptists believe that Christ died for sinners, and not simply for sin in a general way. And we believe he bore not only the penalty for sin, but sin itself and the guilt of it. We believe

he assumed obligation for his people before the world was, and in so doing he made himself responsible for them, so that the Father could justly hold him responsible, which He did. Now if Christ assumed obligation for all mankind, then all mankind will be saved with an eternal salvation. But we know the Bible certainly does not teach a universal salvation. Now if Christ assumed obligation for only the elect, those the Father had given him, then they will all be saved—or else Christ's work will be in measure a failure and his suffering and death partly wasted. If this be true, then how could the prophet say, "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied"? [Isa 53:11](#). If God wants to save everybody, and multitudes won't let Him, how could he be satisfied with that kind of situation?

The truth of the matter is, God does not owe salvation to anyone – He doesn't even owe anyone a chance — except for the fact that he promised, and that Christ purchased a great multitude with His own blood. But God could have justly withheld His Son from all the human race: He wasn't indebted to any one of them. The wages of sin is death. That, my friends, is what we have all earned. But, "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is what we have not earned: it is a gift. And not only a gift, but an inheritance. Now one can come into an inheritance without accepting it. He doesn't even have to know about it. But, if he knows about it in advance, he will have the joy and satisfaction of knowing — and can enjoy it longer. He can enjoy thinking about it now, and then when he comes into full possession of it, he can really reap the benefits. What a wonderful blessing it is to know about that heavenly inheritance, and it is the right of every Christian believer to have this knowledge. That, my friends, is what the Gospel is for: not to give life, but to impart the good news: for "life and Immortality are brought to light through the Gospel."

I realize that, when we speak of the elect people of God and use the terms Election and Predestination, many folks find it distasteful. This is because they associate those terms with what they think is a narrow, restricted doctrine. If they only knew how broad and how truly wonderful that doctrine really is! And how comforting it is to those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn on account of sin, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. That doctrine teaches that all who truly love God and righteousness are **already** in possession of eternal life, and are among that innumerable company that will enter into joys eternal — and worship and serve God in all eternity. It teaches that there can be no failure in the eternal plan and purpose of our God.

VITAL DOCTRINES II

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As we continue our discussion of our Articles of Faith, we find that .

Article #5 is on the important doctrine of Predestination. This is undoubtedly a Bible doctrine, because the terms predestinate and predestinated **are** Bible terms, and the Bible speaks out very plainly on this subject. And yet, these terms have been understood to teach something which the Bible undoubtedly **does not** teach. The Bible does not teach that God has predestinated all things that come to pass: that would be fatalism, and I want to make it very plain that Primitive Baptists

are not fatalists. But the Bible does teach predestination as pertaining to the eternal salvation of God's elect people. So Article 5 reads like this — "We believe that God has predestinated the elect unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of his will."

The word, predestinate, means to fix destiny beforehand; and we understand the Bible to teach that the eternal destiny of God's chosen people IS fixed beforehand: that every last one of them will finally be saved with an everlasting salva-tion. This is because their eternal destiny is not determined by their will or way, but by the eternal plan and purpose of a sovereign and miracle working God. God's plan of redemption is not based upon a chance system, but rests firmly upon the Rock of Ages —which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am very anxious however, that our readers should understand that we do not believe that God has predestinated anyone to be eternally lost. All men, in the state of nature are **already** lost, on account of transgression, and none would ever be saved if it were not for the electing choice and the predestinating power of God. So Primitive Baptists have been accused of believing something that we are not guilty of believing — in regard to this doctrine of predestination. It is individuals that are predestinated by God — not things or events: it is **Whom** he did predestinate, not what. I quote from the eighth chapter of Romans — **WHOM** he did predestinate, Them he also called etc.

Article 6 reads as follows — "We believe that the Lord Jesus who was set up from everlasting to be the Mediator between God and men, did in the fullness of time really and truly take upon himself a human body and nature, sin excepted, and in that body he suffered, bled and died as the surety of the elect, and in their room and stead, and for no others."

I trust our readers will notice from the above statement, that we do not believe in a general atonement for sin. That is, we do not believe that Christ died for everyone. What we do believe in is a **special** atonement: that he died for the elect family of God. Now if Christ died for everybody, then surely everybody will be saved. Otherwise His blood was largely shed in vain. Christ did not die simply to make salvation possible, but to **save** his people from their sins. He actually bore his people's sins in his own body. He suffered and died on account of those sins, thus satisfying the demands of divine justice.

Article 7 reads, "We believe that Christ hath obtained eternal redemption for the elect; his life, suffering, blood and death constituting a complete and full atonement for their sins, and that this is the only ground of justification before God."

Now we come to Article 8 —"We believe that being born again is not the act of man, nor does it result from what we may believe or do; but is the work of God, who gives eternal life, thus quickening the sinner, which causes him to confess his sin, and to feel the need of a Savior."

Jesus spoke of regeneration as a birth. "Ye must be born again." He did not say, Ye must be reformed or ye must be converted, or ye must accept — or anything of the kind. He simply said, "ye must be born." Now in birth we know the person or thing being born is entirely passive: he is not acting but being acted upon. We know moreover, that one does not choose to be born: one is born first, and then chooses and acts. Life always precedes action or activity of any kind, and it is

eternal or spiritual life that is under consideration. I think the trouble with so many people is that they confuse being born again with conversion. Being born again comes first and then conversion.

Article 9 reads, "We believe that none who are born again will fall away so as to be lost, but that they will persevere through grace to glory." God is able to keep his people and has promised to do so.

He suffers us to disobey and to receive chastisement. Thus we learn by experience that it pays to worship and serve God. But he will not allow his people to fall away and be eternally lost. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." I can understand how those who believe that eternal salvation depends upon the will and way of the creature, could believe in the doctrine of apostasy or "Saved today and lost tomorrow." But Primitive Baptists know that what God gives, freely and without merit on the part of the creature, and seals with the blood of his Son is forever.

Article 10 reads, "We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just (elect) and the unjust, and that the unjust shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." This article requires no comment on our part at this time.

Article 11 reads like this, "We believe that the gospel is to be preached in all the world as a statement of the truth, and as a witness of Jesus for the comfort and instruction of regenerated men and women; but deny that it is to offer grace to the unregenerate, or that it asserts there is an obligation resting upon the unregenerate to believe that Jesus is their Savior.

So we do not believe that the gospel is for the purpose of imparting eternal life or of getting folks born again. We believe it is simply the good news of salvation, and is for the comfort and guidance of those who have already been born again. The "dead in sins" or unre-generate have no desire or appetite for the gospel. "The preaching of the cross is to them that are lost foolishness, but to us who are saved it is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Now we come to Article 12. "We believe that good works, obedience to the commands of God, are well pleasing in his sight, and should be maintained in the church; but they are to be considered only as the evidence of a gracious state, and are not a condition of salvation."

I suppose that no people believe more firmly in good works than Primitive Baptists do, but we do not perform these good works in order to gain a home in heaven or to escape eternal punishment. Those who have been truly born again love God and righteousness, and find delight in serving him to the best of their knowledge and ability.

WALK ABOUT ZION

WALK ABOUT ZION

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following" [Ps 48:12-13](#)).

Here is an invitation, and more than that, it is a precept and a duty: walk about Zion, and go round about her; and as you go, observe. Why the importance of this? — That you may tell the values of the church to your children: to the generation following. Zion is the church; she has beauties and comforts beyond compare; she is also a place of safety; a protection. "Zion is built as a city: compactly together." This adds to her strength. In unity there is strength, and the inhabitants of Zion are bound together by a common faith and a common devotion. Our text says, "Walk about Zion"; not "run about her"; take time to observe. I have often thought that we would see more of the beauties of our world if we would not "run about so much." Modern people have almost lost the art of walking, and much more beauty might be observed if we were not in so great a hurry to get somewhere.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her"; not just part way round. Some of God's people just go part of the way about Zion. They put forth neither the time nor the effort to observe all the benefits of the church. To them the church is something to supply a certain particular need, or something to be observed even casually. To them Christian service is only a part time thing, or, at best, only something to employ a part of their energies. "Tell the towers thereof"; that means to count them. The towers are the high places. The church has its high places: its places of preeminence. The towers of ancient cities were lookout points for warning against the approach of an enemy. They also added greatly to the beauty of the city.

"Mark ye well her bulwarks." Bulwarks were for protection. They were fortifications. "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" ([Isa 26:1](#)). God's providential care is the great protection of the spiritual Jerusalem. The promises of God serve as bulwarks to the Christian faith.

Despite walls and bulwarks, however, a city must be defended from within. In case of willful neglect or disobedience on the part of the inhabitants, God sometimes withdraws Himself, in a sense, and enemies are allowed to infiltrate the city; this is for correction, and is to serve as a lesson to Zion.

"Consider her palaces." "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" (Sol. [Song 2:4](#)). There is incomparable comfort in the felt sense of God's love, and the love and fellowship of His people. There is great joy and peace to be found in the gospel. We should carefully consider these places and so be better able to appreciate them, and to thank God for them.

The expression, "Walk about Zion, go round about her" means that we should completely encircle the city so as to see it from every approach. The church is beautiful from every angle at which we might view it. Oh there are imperfections within, for it is made up of imperfect individuals, but it is still very beautiful ; it is still "the joy of the whole earth" ([Ps 48:2](#)). The greatest beauty of the church is the fact that it is precious in the Lord's sight; it is His own heavenly Jerusalem.

WATER AND SPIRIT

WATER AND SPIRIT

Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. [Joh 3:5](#).

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. [Tit 3:5](#).

I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am unworthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. [Lu 3:16](#).

It is the purpose of this article to explain what I understand the first of the above texts to mean, as I believe many have wondered about the expression, "water and of the Spirit". As we all know, there are those who understand the text to teach that no one can be born again, until he or she has been baptized with water. Many of these same ones understand the kingdom of God to be heaven of eternal glory. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is one of long standing and has plagued the church since before the beginning of the dark ages. I have read that it constituted one of the first departures from the true faith. It will be my purpose to show that the text does not teach that idea, for I am convinced that it is not taught anywhere in the Bible.

First, we need to understand what is meant by the term, "kingdom of God." I am sure it means the same as the term, "kingdom of heaven". The kingdom of heaven, or of God, is the spiritual kingdom which belongs to God, of which heaven is the capitol; but which is located, now, in this world: the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is written of this kingdom and of Christ's kingship, that "the government shall be upon His shoulder" [Isa 9:6](#) and "he must reign, until He has put all enemies under His feet" [1Co 15:25](#). Christ occupies the Father's throne in the heavens, but He is also enthroned in His church; hence the expression, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne". [Re 3:21](#). Christ is seated in the Father's throne in the heavens, and His faithful disciples sit with Him in His throne here in the church.

But before any can enter into spiritual association with Christ, he must be born again - of water and of the Spirit. The explanation of this expression is quite simple: the little word, **and** means 'even'. With a small matter of substitution, the text would then read "of water, **even** of the Spirit. In the Old Testament types and shadows, water was a type or emblem of the Holy Spirit, and the ceremonial washings were a type of regeneration. I believe that is the reason Paul spoke of the "washing of regeneration", as used in the 2nd text at the heading of this article. So the expression, of water and of the Spirit, means, the Spirit working as water; just as the expression, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire" ([Lu 3:16](#)) means, the Holy Ghost working as fire. Both fire and water are cleansing and purifying agents. The word, **and**, translated as "even" is like in the text where it speaks of the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ": it means "the God, even the Father".

The new birth is not simply a reformation, but what the name signifies—a birth. Being a birth, it is not brought about through teaching nor through anything the sinner does; and the life produced is not a further development of the natural life, but something entirely new. That is why the child of God is referred to as being a "new creature". This is a mysterious work, and entirely the result of the sovereign power of God's Spirit.

It is clearly stated that water baptism is not for the purpose of washing away the sins of the individual, but is "the answer of a good conscience toward God." [1Pe 3:21](#).

WE KNOW

WE KNOW

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1Jo 5:13

This article is written in reply to the question, "Can we know that we have eternal life abiding within us" or, as many people would say, "Can we know that we are saved?" As to the last expression, strictly speaking, we are not entirely "saved"; and will not be, until we are "freed from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God", which will not be until the advent of death, and, more especially, the resurrection. But I will take the position that the Lord's children have a right to know, and the Bible provides the means whereby they may know, and the main purpose of the gospel is to convince them of the fact that they, as individuals, are born of God's Spirit and that heaven will some time be their home. In other words, God has begun a good work in them that will certainly be brought to a final successful conclusion; to their everlasting benefit and to God's eternal glory. I believe for us to deny this, is to contradict certain plain statements of Bible truth. I am well aware of the fact that the Lord's children do have doubts and fears, but am convinced that these stem from ignorance or from a lack of faith in God and the teachings of His word. We are sure that, if Satan had his way, he would have all of God's children saying "I don't know" or, if possible, would destroy all hope within them. It will be our purpose, in this article, to review some of the Bible texts which declare that "we know" these things.

Surely our text at, the heading of this article, proves beyond doubt that the inspired apostle, John, believed that the purpose of the Gospel was to convince the people of God that they were already in possession of eternal life. Jesus said, "I GIVE unto them ETERNAL LIFE and THEY shall NEVER PERISH." When Jesus spoke these words he was addressing those to whom he had already described his sheep — "They hear my voice and they follow me." I believe that Eternal Life, within the individual, produces certain effects which are to be regarded as evidences, and when we properly regard those evidences, we are compelled to accept the positive conclusion that this particular person is "born of God." If these evidences are present in our own lives, we should be able to recognize them for what they are, provided we have been properly taught. The purpose of the gospel is to teach us these things and to thus bring us into a position to praise and serve God.

I hope I have made my position sufficiently plain, and will conclude by simply quoting certain Bible statements.

Job said, "I KNOW that MY Redeemer liveth etc.

Paul said, "We KNOW that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, WE have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

John said, "We KNOW we have passed from Death unto Life, because we LOVE the BRETHREN." This same inspired writer also said, "And we KNOW that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." He also said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ

IS born of God" and also, "Whosoever loveth is born of God and knoweth God, for God is love."

The evidences of eternal life are set forth in Galatians and are referred to as the "fruit of the Spirit." "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." [Ga 5:22-23](#). When we observe these fruits in an individual we have reason to KNOW that the Spirit of God dwells in that individual, because these are the fruits produced by the Spirit and can come from NO OTHER SOURCE. These fruits are not bourn in the lives of all of God's children to the same degree, but when we see the fruit, it is of the same kind, and must be accepted as evidence. Even the "flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" is evidence of spiritual and eternal life.

WHAT IS MOST NEEDED?

WHAT IS MOST NEEDED?

I believe, very firmly, that what is most needed by Primitive Baptists is a teaching ministry and studying congregations - or perhaps I should say informed ministers congregations. But we can have neither without teaching and study. Christ set his church up with a congregational form of church government, and how is the church to function successfully, under this form of government, unless the members know and understand what the Bible teaches; for her government is congregational only in a limited sense: she must operate within the bounds, and in accord, with her God-given Constitution (the Bible). How can she make wise decisions without a sound knowledge of bible-teaching? Some may say, "Well, the Spirit of God will guide them." The Spirit does guide and enlighten in the study of the Bible, but to say that the Spirit will guide without the Bible and without effort on our part, is to deny the purpose of the Bible and the admonition given us to study.

Others may think, "Well, that is what the preachers are for: Let them do the studying, then they can tell us what the Bible teaches." But that would do away with the congregational form of government, and we would have a preacher form of church government instead. And the church of Jesus Christ has no need for a Pope or Hierarchy - or Governing Board. Her Federal Head is in Heaven, and He rules through His Holy Spirit and His written word, the Bible. There is nothing much worse for the church, than for the members to follow their leaders blindly. I am convinced that most of our church troubles, divisions etc. have resulted from this very thing. It is a simple thing for anyone, wishing to promote a pet idea, to seek out a text from the Bible and say, "See, here's what the Bible says about it." But, all too often, the text has been taken completely out of its original context and doesn't really teach that thing at all. I feel sure that thing has been done many-many times by preachers and others - whether ignorantly or with intentions to mislead. If the people were all well-informed, they could not be easily misled. But history has shown that when the leaders go astray the sheep will follow. There is something about human nature; call it gullibility, call it laziness; no doubt it is both. We do have bible-instructions to study. The Bible doesn't tell us when to study, where to study, or how often to study; but it does tell us to study.

The answer to these questions must be determined by what best does the job: by what best accomplishes the purpose the word of God has designed to be accomplished. When the apostle said, "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of truth" he was speaking primarily to the ministry, and more especially to a certain minister; but no one can convince me that the instructions do not apply to every Christian individual. I am sure they do. I believe there is nothing that can take the place of a careful, systematic study of the Holy Scriptures, and then letting it be our guide.

WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?

WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?

And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? [Mr 4:41](#).

Jesus was as truly a man, as he was truly God. But what a wonderful man He was! The most wonderful thing about Him was that He was a perfect man: He never did one thing amiss. According to his own testimony, He came to do the will of the Father, and He never allowed anything to deter Him from His purpose. He was faithful in all that He did: His talk, His teachings, His sufferings, and His death. When He prayed the Father always heard Him, and when He spoke the power of the Father was behind Him. He possessed all the power of the Godhead, which enabled one inspired writer to say, "For in him, dwelleth all the fullness of the type of how Christ is able to still the spiritual storms which come upon His people, as they sail on this great sea of life. Jesus Himself said, "In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world". The Lord watches over His people with an eye that never slumbers nor sleeps, and although the man Jesus was sleeping on this occasion, there was yet an all-seeing eye watching them": although God's face is sometimes hidden from His people, He still is mindful of their needs. Our main trouble, and one of the great prevailing sins, is our lack of faith in Him. We just refuse, or we seem to be unable, to take God at His word. As Israel wandered in the wilderness, although God had given them every sign that He was mindful of them, they doubted. And God rebuked them for their unbelief, and it was because of unbelief that the great multitude of them died in the wilderness, and were not permitted to enter into the promised land. Idolatry, which is the greatest of all transgressions, is the product of unbelief. One might think, that with all of the evidence that was given to them, Israel would not have doubted; but they did, and God's people still doubt and fear, and it is nothing to boast about. We all need to be reminded constantly of the Lord's goodness to us, and of the promises that have been given: we need to encourage each other, and labor together for Christian growth and development. We need to "neglect not the assembling of ourselves together", and to hear the gospel preached — the story of Jesus — that we may say with those disciples of old, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

WHAT PURPOSE?

WHAT PURPOSE?

But When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to re- deem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. —

[Ga 4:4](#)

For what purpose did Christ come into the world? This is a very-very important question, for it is vital to the true gospel of Christ. Many answers to the question might be given, and different people would no doubt give a different answer, but no **right** answer, can be given, but that which is set forth in the above text. I am convinced that great multitudes of professing Christians have little or no understanding of the doctrine of Atonement as set forth in the Bible. I am equally certain that no individual can be a true Christian without at least some knowledge of this subject. Now notice, I did not say "a child of God: I said Christian. A great many (we believe) of God's own heaven-born children are not Christians. I do not wish to go deeper into that subject at this time, except to say that "children of God are born, while Christians are made. It is the business of preaching to make Christians out of those who have already been born of God's Spirit. Those are the only kind of people you can make Christians out of. But it is vital to Christianity to have a fitting and proper answer to our question. For what purpose did Christ come into the world? When we find the answer to his question, we will have the answer to another: Why did Christ die? I remember writing an article one time on that subject, **For whom** did Christ die: now this article will deal with the subject of Why did he die? For Christ came into the world for the express purpose of suffering and dying.

I think many people rather have the idea that Christ came into the world merely to set a good example, and if people will only follow His example, God will be under obligation to save them with an eternal salvation. These same folks talk about God giving man a chance, and about Christ coming to make salvation possible. But I tell you my friends, Christ did not come merely to set a good example; if that were true, not one son of Adam would be saved: because the law of God demands absolute and perpetual obedience, and no one yet has kept that law, except Christ himself. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2;10. Christ did come to set a good example, but that certainly was not his main purpose in coming.

Christ came into the world a sin-bearer, and for the purpose of putting away sin: and this he did by suffering and dying on Calvary's cross. Divine justice demanded his death: Why? Simply because He bore the sins of his people in his own body. The Bible puts it this way, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." [2Co 5:21](#). The Father could justly hold His Son responsible for his people's sins, because Christ had assumed responsibility for them before the worm was. This takes us back to the eternal councils, and no one can properly understand this without accepting the doctrines of Election and Predestination. In assuming obligation for God's elect people, Christ made himself legally and rightly responsible for them. Since this was done before they had a being, Christ became their federal spiritual head, and could stand in their room and stead. Although He had no sins of his own, his people's sins had now become his: as much so as though he had actually committed them. I insist that Christ did not simply bear the penalty for his people's sins, but **the sin itself, and the guilt of it**. Our sins were removed from us and placed upon Him, and he suffered and died for them (our sins). In this way, Divine justice was satisfied. That is why all for whom Christ died will never have to suffer in a devil's hell for their sins. That, my friends, is the basis upon which sinners are saved.

Of course, atonement for our sins is not enough; we must have a perfect righteousness. But Christ has provided that also. He kept the law of God **for** us, just as he bore our sins. It is a matter of substitution: Our sins were charged to Him, and his righteousness was credited to us. But the matter doesn't stop here: God has placed his Spirit in his people, and given them a new nature, a nature to love God and righteousness. In giving this new nature, the old nature is not entirely removed however: hence the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. This warfare will continue as long as we live in this world; active sin, which dwells in our mortal bodies will continue to be a problem to us. But this problem will be entirely solved in a glorious resurrection, when God will "CHANGE OUR VILE bodies and fashion them like unto the body of his Son." The Christian looks forward, with joyous anticipation, to that day.

WHAT SHALL I RENDER? (Article 01)

WHAT SHALL I RENDER?

Article One — October 1964

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. [Ps 116:12-14](#).

"What shall I render unto the Lord" is a question that applies to every individual who loves God. If we have never asked ourselves that question, we either have no love for God or we are very thoughtless indeed. The writer of this psalm begins by proclaiming his own love for God. — "I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." Surely the Lord has heard his people's prayers and has answered them in his own good way and time. True, his answers have not always been in the affirmative — his answer has sometimes been "no"; but in a surprisingly large percentage of the time his answer has been "yes" — he has given us what we asked for. Even when he has failed to grant our petitions, we know it was not because of any lack of love or faithfulness on his part; but either for correction, or because what we asked for would not be to our best interest. Surely our God has been very gracious to us, and it is good for us to take time, frequently, to count our many blessings: "name them one by one." — Then to reason in this way, "since the Lord has been so very good to me, there is surely something that I should do in return." The very thing that the psalmist determined to do is what every child of God should do, if properly instructed and informed.

What "child of the King" has never resolved to do better, and what heaven born soul has never desired to serve God in the very best way possible? Many who have rejoiced in the Lord have promised themselves and God that they would go to the old church and tell their friends what great things the Lord has done for them; and yet, have delayed for many years. Many, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, are yet trying to work out their own eternal salvation — ie. to earn salvation. These need to "take the cup of salvation" as the psalmist said. There is such a thing as accepting, by faith, the salvation that the Lord has provided — not to obtain eternal inheritance, but to rejoice in the finished work of Jesus. After this is done, there should yet be much calling upon the name of the Lord. But I would especially emphasize the latter part of the text. — "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." He said, "I will do it now." He meant without delay: without putting it off. Procrastination: putting things off, is

one of the great failings of mankind. This is a very great evil and, on the part of the Lord's people, a very great sin. "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." I believe some people actually think they can serve the Lord as well outside of the church as they can in it. Such reasoning as this casts reflection upon the wisdom of the Lord in setting up the church. The church is for the purpose of enabling the Lord's children to let their light shine more effectively in this world ie. to bear more effective testimony. We cannot make our witness fully effective without publicly confessing the Lord Jesus before men, and hiding our light "under a bushel" is of much the same effect as denying Him. The benefits of church membership are many. It is possible for folks to be a great benefit to the church without actually being members of it, and the church can be a great benefit to them. They can support the church financially and also with their attendance and with their prayers. They can enjoy the preaching, rejoice in a sense of the Lord's presence, and have a degree of fellowship with the church; but the full benefits of gospel service cannot be obtained on the outside looking out, than to be inside. It is much better to be on the outside looking in.

WHAT SHALL I RENDER? (Article 02)

WHAT SHALL I RENDER?

Article Two—April 1967

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

[Ps 116:12](#)

No doubt, the question has arisen in the minds of God's people many times, "What must I do, to show my appreciation for what God has done for me?" This must have been a very great question in the mind of the psalmist, and the answer that he gave is surely as good an answer as can be given. It is as applicable to us, today, as it was to the people of that day. Listen to what he says. "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."

The psalmist says, "I will take the cup of salvation." That means to lay hold upon salvation by faith. It is one thing to have salvation, and quite another thing to lay hold upon it experimentally. Unless we know about it and believe in it, we cannot rejoice in it nor use it as an incentive to good works. Next he says, "I will call upon the name of the Lord." And that means to trust in God and depend upon him. Prayer is an acknowledgement of trust and dependence—in fact, trust and a feeling of dependence is prayer. Next he says, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord." This is as much as to say "I have made good resolutions and have promised God that I would keep them." What one of the Lord's people has not made such resolutions? Each of our readers no doubt have said "I will do this or that." Perhaps many of you have promised God that someday you will unite with the church. Perhaps all of us have made strong resolution to live a better Christian life. We have promised ourselves and God that we will do this. But no doubt many of us have delayed. The psalmist says, "I will do it now." And he says, "In the presence of all his people." There is something about public profession and public acknowledgement that nothing will take the place of. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see

your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." We can't hide our faith, and do all our good works in private, and still let our light shine "before men."

Some have said, if not in words, then certainly by their actions, "I can serve the Lord just as well outside the church as I can in it" — but that simply is not true. Jesus has called us to be witnesses and to testify. The church is described as a candlestick, and a candlestick is for the purpose of holding candles. "No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." Secret disciples are hiding their light.

But we need not only to have our names on the church book, but to live in the church — day by day. And, as we live in it, we need to be good examples for Christianity in the world. The church is in the world, although not of the world, and it is to serve as the "light of the world." The great light that emanates from the church is a combination of little lights. That light is hindered if we allow our own lamps to become tarnished. May we labor to keep our lamps burnished, the wicks properly trimmed, and our lights brightly burning.

WHERE ARE THE NINE?

WHERE ARE THE NINE?

"And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' And when he saw them, he said unto them, 'go shew yourselves unto the priests.' And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of, them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God. And fell on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.' And he said unto him, 'Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.' " [Lu 17:12-19](#).

"Being the worst form of disease, leprosy was fixed upon by God to be the especial type of sin, and the injunctions regarding it had reference to its typical character. It was (1) hereditary; (2) contagious; (3) ever tending to increase; (4) incurable except by the power of God; (5) a shame and disgrace; (6) rendering one alone in the world; (7) deforming, unclean. Another point is referred to by Thompson (in "The Land and The Book"): "Some, as they look on infancy, reject with horror the idea that sin exists within. But so might anyone say that looked upon the beautiful babe in the arms of a leprous mother. But time brings forth the fearful malady. Newborn babes of leprous parents are often as pretty and as healthy in appearance as any; but by and by its presence and workings become visible in some of the signs described in the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus." —Smith's Bible Dictionary.

Jesus, in His work of healing "all manner of disease" gave special attention to the healing of lepers; in this He demonstrated His power to forgive sin, and proved Himself to be God. It was believed, in that day, that leprosy was visited upon people for some particular sin; this accounts for the shame and disgrace that was associated with it. It is certain that sin was at the bottom of that disease, as with all others, for sin is the indirect cause of all our ills. But Jesus has not only

power to forgive sin, but to destroy it. No where was that power better demonstrated, in type, than when Jesus cleansed the lepers.

The account given by Luke, that we wish to principally base our remarks upon, was a mass healing of lepers. There were ten of them; miserable creatures; traveling together. They cried unto Jesus, with great desire, and in all sincerity, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." To cry unto Jesus, in faith believing, is to pray unto Him. These lepers must have undoubtedly prayed to Jesus, because their petition was granted. They must have been children of God, then, because people don't pray to Jesus until they have spiritual life. - Jesus heard their prayer and answered it, just as He answers the prayer of every sinner who begs to be freed from his spiritual leprosy; but, since the ceremonial law was still in effect, He directed them to attend to that duty which the law required: "Go show yourselves unto the priests." But, one, finding himself healed and knowing Jesus to have been the immediate cause of that healing, could not wait to give thanks to Jesus and glorify God. He knew he was cleansed; he needed no priest to tell him that, so the legal matter can wait until later: the moral obligation is most important at the present, so he returned to Jesus, fell at His feet, and with a loud voice, glorified God. Then it was, that Jesus asked the question which serves as our text, "Were there not ten cleansed? **But where are the nine?**" The nine were, no doubt, on the way to fulfill the ceremonial law; but they were neglecting their more important duty: they did not return to give glory to God. Our first duty is to love God and to show our love by praising Him, and we should do it publicly. The sin of ingratitude is a terrible sin, and especially so when that ingratitude is toward God. These nine were, in great measure at least, guilty of ingratitude. Otherwise they would have returned to thank Jesus and to glorify God. It is not recorded what went through the minds of those nine. Some of them may have doubted their cleansing: lack of faith is a great obstacle to the Christian profession of many of God's children. Some of them may have resolved to discharge their duty toward Christ later, when it was more convenient; procrastination is also a sin, and stands in the way of many. Whatever it was that kept them from their duty (and privilege), they were deprived of much joy in service and no doubt felt somewhat guilty in conscience. No matter how many excuses they may have offered, they could not think of even one good reason.

Now, my friends, this account given is to serve as a lesson to us: These men's disease was a type and they were a type also. The question, "Where are the nine?" is a question for us and is especially poignant for our day. I wonder if the proportion of those who make public profession of their faith and openly thank Christ by following Him, is any greater now than it was when Christ walked this earth. I wonder if more than ten per cent of those who have been cleansed from spiritual leprosy (sin) by Christ's atoning blood, and have been born of His Spirit, return to glorify God by openly becoming His disciples. I believe it was Shakespeare who wrote, "Blow, blow thou wintry winds; thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude." But it is not altogether ingratitude that keeps people from bearing the cross and following the Master.

I can think of five reasons, besides ingratitude, that keep God's children from uniting with the church; and ingratitude, no doubt, plays a great part in the last two of these. I shall name them, and comment on each one in order.

- 1.—Ignorance of gospel truths. I am convinced that countless thousands of the Lord's people are ignorant of the true teachings of the Bible. The doctrine of grace has the effect of glorifying God by attributing our eternal salvation to Him alone, but if folks are ignorant of that doctrine they cannot glorify and serve Him properly. But in the account of the ten lepers, those were men who believe in Jesus and prayed to Him. Many such characters as those do not return to give God glory because of the other four reasons that I shall name.

2.—Lack of faith in God. Perhaps the most prevailing sin of the Lord's people is the sin of unbelief and doubt. All of God's children have some degree of faith, for faith is a distinct property of spiritual life; but our faith is often weak; we should pray for God to give us more faith, and we would exercise what faith we have that it may grow stronger. God's people, all too often, believe that God is able to heal them of their spiritual diseases, but they doubt if He will. That is where gospel instruction comes in: to inform folks that God not only can, but that He has, and will.

3.—A feeling of unworthiness. This is a common reason why some of the best and most spiritual of people often linger outside the church. They have not only Christian humility but an inferiority complex. That, coupled with a lack of faith that God can or will enable them to live honorably and profitably in His church, and we have a bad situation indeed.

One of the first marks of a child of God is a knowledge of our own weakness and imperfection, and without humility one cannot be a follower of Christ; but if this is carried to extreme, it can hinder or even prevent our service to Him. I think that the purpose of the gospel is not only to help keep the Lord's people humble, but to help prevent (or cure). inferiority complexes. In ourselves we are very imperfect, but Christ is our perfection. In ourselves we are very weak, but in Christ we are strong. All that we are, we owe to Him. For all that we shall be, we must look to Him. But we are not worthless, as we might suppose: we are precious and valuable to Him. We should lift up our heads; not in fleshly pride, but in spiritual pride, for I believe there is such: We should have pride in our God, and we should be proud of being Christians. True, we must not glory in the flesh, but we should certainly glory in the Lord. How can we do that if we are continually looking at our imperfections and mourning on account of sin?

4.—Unwillingness to deny ones-self, in the sense of which the Savior spoke, means much more than depriving ones-self of certain things: it means to deny one's own righteousness, and one's ability to stand alone. In order to be great in the kingdom of heaven, one must humble ones-self as a little child. This is contrary to the will of the flesh. Failure to deny ones-self is the result of fleshly pride. Pride prevents many from taking up their cross to follow the Master.

5.—Unwillingness to bear the cross. There is a cross to bear, if we would be Christians. There are certain sacrifices to be made: some things we may enjoy doing must be left off, and oftentimes these are things that the world considers all right. Sometimes close relatives, a companion perhaps, is very strongly opposed to us taking up our cross, so this, itself, becomes a part of the cross. Then we may have a position to maintain in the community, a business perhaps, and to become a Christian might jeopardize that position; so that, too, becomes a part of the cross. So we may decide that, although we would like to unite with the church and follow in that good way, it just isn't worth the price. Then we might add, as many have, the conclusion that "I can follow Christ as well outside of the Church as I can on the inside anyway." It is true that some people do follow Him more closely outside the Church than many do on the inside, but this is not to be laid to the charge of Christianity, and is the exception rather than the rule.

It is much easier to follow Christ inside the church, than to follow Him on the outside; and it is utterly impossible to follow Him "all the way" without uniting with the church, and being baptized. Oh, heaven will be just as sure to us, and its joys just as sweet, but our happiness will not be as great in this life and our service will be incomplete. The church is a candlestick, and we can let our light shine better there than anywhere else. To say that we can serve as well in the world as we can in the church, is to deny the wisdom of Christ in setting up the church.

But what about the cross, for there is one. The cross is very real, but Jesus bore a much greater one; and the cross that we are called upon to bear is not nearly so great as we may think. Jesus

has promised to help us bear our cross, and "the cross is not greater than His grace." What if we are called upon to forego certain pleasures which may stand in our way of Christian service, if, by so doing, we gain other pleasures which are much greater and more lasting? But what about our business, won't it suffer if I live the life that the church would require of me? The answer to that question is found in the Bible, and in the Savior's own words, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these (natural) things shall be added unto you." Do we believe Him: are we willing to take Him at His word?

There is one other thing that we might mention: Sometimes someone feels that they cannot unite with the church because of some particular member of it. Because of some hard feeling they say, "I just can't belong to a church that so and so is a member of." They therefore allow personal feeling against this one to prevent them from duty. These folks fail to consider the text which reads, "What God has cleansed, that call not thou common or unclean." The knowledge that God has many disobedient children in the world, but that He loves them and has paid the supreme sacrifice for their sins should enable us to think kindly of every individual in whom we may see evidences of spiritual life. The knowledge of how God has forgiven us so very much, should certainly help us to forgive others. Of course, we must be willing to forgive before we can be of any great service to the Master.

The lesson of the lepers who were cleansed, and of the nine who did not return to glorify God is a lesson not only for those who have not "taken up their cross", but also for we who have. We are continually receiving benefits from the Lord, which places us under constant obligation to return, in prayer, to thank Him. May He give us the grace to do that, and may He ever lay upon our hearts the question "but where are the nine."

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 01)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article One

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#)

It has been said of the Old and New Testaments that "the new is in the old concealed, and the old is in the new revealed." I believe this to be true since the Old and New Testaments "dovetail" together — the New Testament explaining the Old, and the Old Testament enlightening and substantiating (proving) the New. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is certainly hidden in the dark sayings of the prophets and the types and shadows of the ceremonial law. God's dealings with his people, national Israel, prefigures his dealings with his heaven-born children (spiritually) and, more especially, with the New Testament church.

In calling out the national Israel, God was demonstrating his own doctrine of election, or eternal choice. We must not get the idea, however, that the people of Israel were the only ones whom God loved, or the only ones whom He saved, in that day, with an eternal salvation. The work of regenerating the souls of men and preparing them for heaven and immortal glory has been going

on through all ages of the world's history, and will continue to go on until the last individual of God's elect family is gathered in. The nation of Israel was called out, by God, to be his own peculiar and highly favored people — to the intent that they should be a representative people, and a repository of the true religion; to testify to the reality of the only true God, and to declare the glorious attributes of God. In so doing, He was preparing a people for the eventual setting up of Christ's spiritual kingdom (the church) and providing lessons for the benefit of the people of God, who should live during this gospel age.

God delivered Israel from a life and land of bondage, just as he has delivered every heaven-born soul from the bondage of sin and Satan's dominion. He led them forth in a wilderness land and toward a land of promise, just as he leads his spiritual children forth in the Christian experience and finally into the gospel church — for the crossing of Jordan represents baptism and the land of Canaan is representative of the gospel church. I believe the journey through the wilderness is also a figure of how God leads his children, of whatever nationality, through the wilderness of this world and finally into the "heavenly Canaan's". For that is where every heaven-born soul is headed, and God guides, directs, protects and comforts — with his own eternal presence.

Israel was not long out of the land of bondage, before God had them encamped at Mt. Sinai, and Moses was bidden to come up. God had led them, and did continue to lead them, by a pillar of cloud (by day) and fire (by night), and God was actually in the cloud and in the fire. The fiery cloud settled upon the mount and God spoke to Israel there, and Moses was commanded to enter the mount and to approach unto Him who has said "I dwell in the thick darkness". There God delivered the law — both the ten commandments and the ceremonial law — to Israel by Moses. The great leader of Israel, a type of Christ, was commanded to see to the building of a tabernacle, a place of worship, and detailed instructions were given; both as to the tabernacle itself and as to the furniture thereof. God also gave instructions to Moses as to the forms of religious service. God sternly cautioned Moses — "See that thou fashion all things like unto the pattern which was shown thee in the mount." This was because the tabernacle and all things pertaining to it, including the ordinances, were to serve as types and figures of Christ and God's eternal plan of salvation.

The tabernacle was a portrayal of Christ and his work of delivering his people from their sins. It was a picture of the whole plan of redemption and also, in a sense, of the gospel church.

It is the tabernacle that we wish to make an object of study in this series of articles. I believe I have recently made some important discoveries concerning the tabernacle and what it represents, that our readers will find not only interesting, but enlightening and beneficial. So I beg you to go along with us, from month to month, and to study not only what I may say about it but to check the references and make sure of having a "thus saith the Lord". I mention discoveries which I have recently made — I speak of things which are so to me. The study of the Bible is an adventure, and we may reasonably expect to make important discoveries — if we apply ourselves. What is new to me, may not be so to many of our readers; but I wish to pass on what I believe I have learned and what I consider to be of real importance to a better understanding and appreciation of what God has provided for us. I think this also may help to substantiate the faith of some.

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 02)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN Article Two

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#)

In the Old Testament types and shadows we find many beautiful pictures of Christ and God's eternal plan of redemption, but perhaps none so vivid as that presented by the tabernacle in the wilderness. As we study the Old Testament scriptures. I think we need to always bear in mind the fact that no type is perfect in every detail. No object casts a perfect shadow, as we all know; but the shadow is proof of the object itself and does provide an outline to supply valuable information. Every type and figure used in the Bible is sufficient to portray the information intended, if we study it in the light of Christian experience and general Bible teaching. We wish to study the tabernacle in detail, since God said to Moses, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." [Heb 8:5](#).

Imagine then, an enclosure 150 ft. one way and 75 ft. the other — a space about the size of an average city lot. This enclosure was formed by a curtain or fence of white linen 7 1/2 ft. high and supported by brazen pillars resting upon a foundation of brazen sockets. This enclosure was called the court of the Gentiles and always faced the east. The only entrance to this court was a gate 30 ft. wide in the east with a hanging curtain of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen. Just inside this gate, and first to greet the eyes of one entering, was an altar made of brass — called The Altar of Sacrifice. Next, and farther inside the gate, was the brazen laver — a vessel made of brass and used for ceremonial cleansing, which contained water for this purpose. The altar and the laver were the only items of furniture contained in this outer court of the tabernacle, but beyond these and at the opposite end of this enclosure, was the building called the sanctuary.

All The Sanctuary was a comparatively small tent like building, 45 ft. long, 15 ft. wide, and 15 ft. in height; which also faced the east and its entrance was covered with another hanging curtain or veil of the same colors as the first. This building, the sanctuary or tabernacle proper, was divided into two rooms; the first of which was called the Holy Place, and the second and smaller of which was called the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies. The Holy Place was the size of a large living room, 30' x 15' x 15'. The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube, 15' x 15' x 15'. These two rooms were separated by a third and very heavy curtain containing all the colors of the first two.

The furniture of the Holy Place consisted of three items; on the north side was the dining table or "table of shew bread, on the south side and directly opposite the table, was the golden candlestick; and between the two, and slightly to the rear, was the golden altar of incense. The furniture of the Holy of Holies consisted of two items, the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat — thus making seven items of furniture in all: the Brazen Altar, the Brazen Laver, the Table, the Candlestick, the golden Altar of Incense, the Ark and the Mercy Seat. These items of

furniture were so arranged and the tabernacle enclosure and sanctuary were so proportioned that one could draw a straight line from the gate of the outer court, through the Altar of Sacrifice, the Laver, the Altar of Incense, the Ark and Mercy Seat; and another through the Table and Candlestick — these lines extending to the outer bounds of the Tabernacle Enclosure — thus forming a perfect cross. I suggest that our readers get a pencil, paper, and ruler and draw (by scale) a diagram of the table, including the furniture, as I have just described it to you. I promise you will not be sorry if you do. You will have need for it as we continue on with this series of articles.

It is our intention to consider each of the items mentioned, together with its spiritual significance, in the articles which we trust may follow.

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 03)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article Three

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#)

The Tabernacle Enclosure

or

Court of the Gentiles

We have said that the tabernacle enclosure was formed by a curtain or fence of white linen, supported by pillars of brass set in brazen sockets, with a gate in the east end, which was covered a hanging curtain of white linen. In this curtain or covering of the gate was embroidered figures in blue, purple, and scarlet. We believe the white linen represented purity and that the white linen fence represented the perfect law of God. I believe it is also figurative of the sinless humanity of Christ. All that the stranger from the outside could see of the tabernacle was this white linen fence, with the sanctuary rising above it in the west-end of the enclosure. The outer covering of the sanctuary was of badger skin, a material quite durable and weather resistant, but unattractive to the eye. All the unregenerate person of this world can see of Christ, his church, and the plan of redemption is the white linen of human morality. They can readily see something of Christ's sinless character and can perhaps regard him as a good example, but they can see nothing of his Deity and of his atoning blood. The white linen fence stands as a barrier to entrance into the tabernacle, and the only object within that can be seen from the outside appears unattractive — "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." [Isa 53:2](#). 's But God has provided a way, in the person of his Son who is represented by the door of the tabernacle. Christ said, "I am the door." But the one on the outside, who knows nothing of the glories within, has no desire to enter, and must be brought in by irresistible grace. Jesus said, "No man CAN come unto me, except my Father which has sent me DRAW HIM." But the truth yet remains that Christ is the door, and his infinite perfections were represented by the four colors of the curtain; blue for his heavenly origin, purple for his deity, red (crimson) for his atoning blood, and white

for his sinless humanity; for white always represents purity, crimson is the color of blood, purple is the color of royalty, blue is the color of heaven. It would appear that the embroidered colors were on the inside of this curtain and that only the white linen appeared from the outside. Please remember the colors of this curtain, as they are found in each of the veils or curtains we shall mention later.

The Tabernacle Enclosure we believe to be figurative of God's Eternal Covenant. God's people are brought under covenant relationship with him by virtue of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, for, before the world was, Christ the incarnate Word was given his part in God's eternal plan. Christ was with the Father even then. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." [Joh 1:1](#). All who were inside the tabernacle enclosure were figuratively "in Christ."

Now, we are well aware of the fact that many of the present day religious world will insist that the way we get into Christ is by faith in his redemptive work, and that since "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, only those who hear the preached word can be saved — hence the great anxiety we see manifested in taking the gospel to the heathen etc. It is true that the gospel saves (delivers) from ignorance, superstition and fear, but we deny that it is in any way a means of imparting eternal life or of bringing one into vital relationship with God. This reminds me of the minister who, when visiting in our home, told of a debate he once engaged in. His opponent drew, on the blackboard, a circle which he declared to represent Christ. On the inside of the circle was written the text, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ." The man's argument was that all who want to receive these spiritual blessings must get into Christ, for that is where these blessings are, and the way to get into Christ is by faith. When it came our Elder's time to speak, he asked his opponent "Is not faith a spiritual blessing?" and his opponent replied "yes". Then our brother pointed out that, according to the diagram, faith was inside the circle; since the text declares that "He hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings IN CHRIST." Now, he asked, "If faith is inside the circle, the man is on the outside, and he can't get in without faith, how is he ever going to get in? So we do not get into Christ by faith. We receive faith as a result of the regenerating power of God's Spirit, as it operates mysteriously, miraculously, and sovereignly, as described by Jesus when he declared "Ye must be born again," to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. And I feel sure he was not teaching Nicodemus that he, personally, must be taking steps to get born again; because I feel sure that Nicodemus was already a regenerated man, otherwise he would not have been interested in knowing Jesus and would not have put forth the effort to come to him "by night." All he needed was to know the ways of God more perfectly, and he had come to Jesus for that very purpose.

Please read along with us carefully, as we have much more to disclose in future articles on this subject.

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 04)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN
Article Four

For there is one God, and mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#).

I suspect that some may object to a part of our last article upon the grounds that the people know what was on the inside of the tabernacle and the necessity of bringing their sacrifice. If their sins were to be remitted, and that they did enter within the enclosure when they brought their sacrifices to be offered. Yes, that is true, but we must remember that all the people of Israel were under covenant relationship with God – so far as the ceremonial law was concerned. I still believe that this outer enclosure, or court, was a type of God's eternal covenant of redemption and the priests who officiated there were a type of those who are not only in Christ, in a covenant sense, but who also serve him in the gospel church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people of Israel, entered within the court of the tabernacle, but went no further. In this, they are a type of God's people among the Gentiles – being the recipients of the grace of God, so far as the atonement and regeneration are concerned, but not permitted to enter into the gospel church. Only the priests were permitted to enter the tabernacle itself, or sanctuary: and only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies.

We have said that the first object to meet the eye of one entering this enclosure, through the gate with its curtain of white, purple, crimson and blue, was THE BRAZEN ALTAR or Altar of Sacrifice. In the order of God's plan of redemption, the eternal covenant comes first; and then the atonement. The sins of all who are embraced in God's eternal plan (are within the enclosure) must have their sins remitted or put away. Even the priests were called upon to offer sacrifice for their own sins as well as for the sins of the people. In offering sacrifice for their own sins they are a type of God's people, and in offering sacrifice for the people of Israel they are a type of the Lord Jesus. We have told that no type is perfect and complete within itself. It only serves to present a particular lesson, and the Old Testament types and shadows are often obscure and confusing – as they frequently overlap, to present two or even three lessons at the same time. That is why it is so necessary to study the Bible deeply and thoroughly – and not merely skim about on the surface.

The Brazen Altar points to the Atonement. The animal which was slain represented Christ. The fire on the altar represented divine justice. And the altar is figurative of the Eternal God Himself. Divine Justice demands death to every violator of God's holy law. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, therefore all would be condemned to eternal death and "eternal burnings" were it not for the wise provision God has made in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ, as our federal spiritual head, assumed obligation for us before the world was. He promised the Father that he would be responsible for every one of God's elect family. I will insist that this made him responsible. He then became his people's surety. The rod of divine justice could not fall upon them, but MUST fall upon him. Justice demanded it. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." [2Co 5:21](#).

The people would bring their beast, lay their hand upon its head — thus signifying that their sins were transferred to the animal and it had now become their substitute — then the animal was killed and the sacrifice was consumed by the fire on the altar. Long before this, God had taught

Abraham of the necessity of a substitute; when his son, Isaac, was spared — only by the substitute God had prepared, in the person of the ram whose horns were caught in the bushes. There is no hope for the sinner without the substitute, and "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission."

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 05)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article Five

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and Man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#).

The Altar of Sacrifice and The Laver

In our last article, we spoke of the Brazen Altar (altar of sacrifice) as pointing to the Atonement for sin, accomplished by the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. There were five kinds of offerings accomplished by the priests of God upon this altar. These five were The Burnt Offering, The Meat Offering, The Peace Offering, The Sin Offering, and the Trespass offering. The first was an offering for sin in general — what we call the Adamic sin. The second was an offering of meal or of unleavened cakes, and pointed, we believe, to the doctrine of Imputed Righteousness. The third was a prayer offering or an offering of thanksgiving, and pointed to the fact of peace now having been established between the offended God and the offending creature — also to the peace which the knowledge of this imparts to the believer. The fourth was an offering made for some particular sin, in which the believer pleads for forgiveness on the basis of Christ's atoning blood. And the fifth is an offering for the failure to minister properly in the service of God. The first two offerings pertain to eternal salvation, the last two pertain to time salvation, while the peace offering pertains to both.

The fire on the Brazen Altar was kindled by God himself, as shown in [Le 9:24](#), and was to be kept burning continually: it must never be allowed to go out. "For our God is a consuming fire." [Heb 12:29](#). The sense of the lesson is this — Were it not for the sacrifice (substitute) which was offered, the fire would have consumed the people. It did consume (kill) two of the sons of Aaron (priests) that very day that it was first kindled. Were it not for Christ, who offered himself to God — and was accepted as the only perfect sacrifice -- the fire of God's wrath would surely consume every son of Adam — and that means every one of us.

Next, after the altar, we come to the Brazen Laver. This was a large vessel of brass containing water, in which the priests washed their hands and their feet before ministering in the service of God. After being chosen of God and having our sins atoned for, we must be "born again" or regenerated by the sovereign Spirit

of God. We must also wash ourselves in a practical and time sense, before we are fit to minister in God's service. In the day that they were ordained to this service, these priests washed their whole bodies (regeneration) and, after that, before serving at the altar and before entering the tabernacle itself, they required to wash their hands and their feet. "They must be clean, who bear the vessels of the Lord." So the Laver becomes a double type.

Both the altar and the laver were located in the outer court of the tabernacle, and point to that which is effectual to every heaven-born soul: all who are in Christ, actually and experimentally. This includes both Jew and Gentile, for God is no respecter of persons. All who love God and righteousness are included. Not all of God's born-again children, however, are permitted to enter into the gospel church—which was pre-figured by the holy place or first sanctuary of the tabernacle. Before the priest could enter into the tabernacle or sanctuary itself, he must pass through the curtain or second veil; the one that closed up the opening at the east end of the tent. This veil not only represented Christ who declared himself to be "the door", but also pre-figures baptism. The Bible uses the term "baptized into Christ". Of course, this is to be understood as pertaining to a profession of faith in Christ and an entering in to his visible church. For baptism (in water) is "not to the putting away of the sins of the flesh, but is the answer of a good conscience toward God." Before one can fully behold the beauties of Christ's church, he must enter beyond this veil; and he must do this before he can fully eat of the bread of heaven, walk in the light of the golden candlestick, and minister to others at the golden incense altar. But we will leave this until our next article.

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 06)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article Six

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6.](#)

The Tabernacle or Sanctuary

The tabernacle itself was a portable building or tent where God had promised to meet with his people. It was the center or focal point of Israel's religious service. It was a type of Christ and also of the Gospel Church. We must remember that just as God promised to meet the national Israel at this place, and did; just so has Christ promised to meet with the Spiritual Israel in his church, and does.

The walls of the tabernacle were made of wooden boards completely overlaid with gold. The boards were made of Shittim-wood (Acacia), very close grained and hard, and represented Christ's humanity. The gold, with which they were covered, represented His deity. The trees, from which the boards were taken, grew in the desert and Christ is spoken of as "the Branch" and

"a root out of dry ground." It was the gold of Christ's deity that sanctified his humanity and gave to it its beauty. These boards were approximately fifteen feet in length and were stood on end. They were anchored in sockets of silver, and were locked together by staves of shittim-wood overlaid with gold. These staves were shot through rings provided for that purpose.

The ceiling of the tabernacle consisted of four separate coverings or curtains, which were draped over the tops of the boards and one over the other. These curtains hung down for some distance on the outside of the building. The first curtain was of fine linen in which was embroidered figures of cherubim in purple, crimson, and blue. This was the covering in view from the inside of the tabernacle, and over it was a covering of cloth woven of goat hair, then a covering of ram's skins dyed red. Over all was placed a covering of badger skins.

The white linen of the inner covering represented Christ's sinless humanity, the purple his royalty (kingship), the crimson his atoning blood, and the blue his eternal being — "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, etc." The ram's skins pointed to his offering for sin—"Behold the Lamb of God." the red coloring, for they were dyed red, pointed to his shed blood; for "He stood a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The badger-skin outer covering represented his humble birth and humble abode among men. He labored with his hands in the carpenter shop, and later testified "The birds of the air have nests, and the foxes have holes, but the Son of Man, hath nowhere to lay his head."

We have said the foundation of this building was of silver. This foundation weighed some-thing like five ton. We read in the Bible, [Ex 38:25-27](#), that this foundation was provided by a tax levied upon the people when they were numbered and was called "Atonement Money". The silver doubtless represented Christ's blood, as we read of His atoning blood and "The life is in the blood" and "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Again we read, "Feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." So the whole structure of God's eternal plan of redemption and of His church, rests upon a foundation of blood. Indeed, this tabernacle was a house of blood; for everything spoke of blood, from the Altar of Sacrifice to the Mercy Seat. The whole structure of salvation rests upon the atoning blood of a sacrifice.

The Table, the Candlestick, the Golden Altar –

The one entering the door, would see to his right (on the north) the Table of Shew-Bread, and to his left (directly opposite the table) the golden candlestick. Straight ahead of him, and to the rear of the room, he would see the golden altar of incense. Each of these items of furniture had its particular significance and each pointed to some particular phase or aspect at Christ's person and his work. The table was made of shittim-wood overlaid with gold, the candlestick was made of fine beaten gold and held seven lamps which burned olive oil. The altar of incense was made of shittim-wood, also overlaid with gold. Remember, the wood represents Christ's humanity and the gold his deity. He was both perfect man and perfect God —the God-Man and the Man-God. "For in him dwelt all the fullness of the God-head, bodily."

The finery of it all — the gold, the silver, the fine linen, the exquisite needlework— denotes the "unspeakable gift" of God, and the glory of that salvation that has been purchased out there in the

outer court, just inside the gate — at the brazen altar of sacrifice. It also suggests, therefore, the great price of our redemption.

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 07)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article Seven

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#).

The Service of the First Sanctuary

In the Holy Place or First Sanctuary only the priests were allowed to enter, and they must first wash their hands and their feet in the water of the Brazen Laver. The priests, then, were a type of God's people — those who have been made partakers of the great Sacrifice for sin, and have been washed in the laver of Regeneration — and especially of those who have been permitted to enter into the Gospel or New Testament church. "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." [Re 1; 5-6](#). Only these were allowed to eat of the shewbread, walk in the light of the golden candlestick, and offer incense upon the golden altar. Only the priests were allowed to approach that near to what was concealed beyond the veil which separated the Holy Place from that which was Most Holy.

On the table, which was on the north side of the room, were spread two stacks of loaves (or cakes) of bread — six loaves on either end (twelve in all) and on these was sprinkled incense. This bread would remain there from one Sabbath to another, but, on the Sabbath the priests were to remove the incense and eat the bread. This bread must not be removed from the sanctuary but eaten in the Holy Place. The incense was burned on the Golden Altar. Twelve fresh loaves were placed on the table, with fresh incense, to remain until the following Sabbath — when the whole process was repeated.

We know the bread was figurative of Christ who declared, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." [Joh 5:35](#). When Christ instituted the Communion Service, he said of the bread, "This is my body, broken for you;" and the Apostle Paul speaks of eating and drinking unworthily "not discerning the Lord's body." Jesus said, "This is that bread which cometh down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." Of course, he was speaking of a "faith eating" or a laying hold upon him by faith. So the shewbread represented Christ the Redeemer. The incense, I believe, represents the graces and perfections of the Lord Jesus, which redound to the honor and glory of the Father. The priests, in burning this incense on the altar, were, in type, offering praise and thanksgiving to God. This also signified that as the bread was theirs to eat, so the incense was God's as a sweet smelling savor.

The candlestick of pure beaten gold, represented Christ as the light of the world. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." It also represented the church, for Jesus also said "ye are the light of the world etc." Christ, who is the light of the world, dwells in his people — making them the light of the world. This candlestick held seven lamps, and it was the business of the priests to keep the lamps trimmed, filled with oil, and burning continually. The number seven is very significant, signifying perfection and completeness.

Only those who were chosen and ordained as priests were permitted to eat of the bread, walk in the light of the candlestick, and offer incense upon the altar; and only those who have been chosen of God and brought into his church are permitted to sit in Christ's banqueting house, walk in the light of his promises and sing his praises to their joy and his glory. "Who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." [Eph 2:6](#). This not mean that one of God's children cannot rejoice in the gospel outside of the visible church, but it is certainly true that only those who have taken up their cross, to follow the Master in a public way, can enter fully into the joys pictured here. It is not until one has eaten, by faith, of the heavenly manna; walked in the light of the gospel, that he is prepared to offer praise and thanksgiving, and minister to others at the golden altar. In this latter position, we are as close to heaven as we can ever be in this world. The Golden Altar of Incense was just before the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat – separated from those only by the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy. Since the Holy Place is figurative of the church, the Holy Of Holies represents Heaven itself. As the priests ministered in the Holy Place, there was always that sense of the mysterious, and, no doubt, a feeling of awe — on account of that which was beyond the veil. The ordinary priests were never permitted to look beyond this veil, for God has said, "No man shall see my face and live". There were no windows in the tabernacle, so the light of the candlestick was all they had to minister by. The light of this golden candlestick did not penetrate the veil, so the Most Holy Place was swathed in deep darkness. God had said, "I dwell in the thick darkness." Only the high priest (a type of Christ) was permitted to go beyond this veil, and that only once a year — on the Day of Atonement. Much of the mystery has now been revealed to we who know the gospel, for the veil has now been torn — "rent from top to bottom" so that, with an eye of faith, we are permitted to look into the heavens — where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered. Nevertheless, as Paul put it, "we see through a glass darkly. When our loved ones pass beyond the veil, there is still a sense of the mysterious. We long to see more clearly, and look forward to that day when, according to God's promise, we shall see "face to face".

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 08)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article 8

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#)

The Holy of Holies

The Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, was a small room in the form of a perfect cube, 15' X 15' X 15', without windows, and separated from the Holy Place, or Sanctuary, by a heavy veil. This veil was a curtain of white linen with embroidered figures of cherubim in purple, crimson and blue. The furniture of this room consisted of two items, the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat. The Ark was a wooden chest approximately 3 1/2 feet long and 2 foot in width and the same in depth. It was overlaid, within and without with gold. This chest, or ark, served as a repository for the tables of the covenant which Moses brought down from the mount, the vessel of manna which they were commanded to preserve as a testimony, and Aaron's rod that budded. The Mercy Seat was a sheet of solid gold which served as a covering for the ark. Upon either end of the Mercy Seat was a figure of a cherub. These two figures (cherubim) were in a kneeling position, facing one another and with their eyes cast downward. They were in such position that their wings touched, overshadowing the Mercy Seat. Both the Mercy Seat and the Cherubim were made together, out of the same piece, and must be considered as one. It seems that the Mercy Seat served as a lid for the Ark, but was not attached to it: it merely rested upon the Ark.

The Apostle Paul, in the Hebrew letter, explains that the Holy of Holies represented the eternal Heaven. I think there can be no doubt, therefore, that the Ark of the Covenant together with its covering, the Mercy Seat, provided a type, or picture, of the Throne of God. We have said that the wood in the tabernacle represented Christ's humanity, and the gold represented his deity, or his Divine nature. The Ark was made of wood overlaid with gold, and must be a figure of Christ -- who was (and is) both human and Divine. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." [Col 2:3](#). "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." [Col 2:9](#). "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." [1Co 2:16](#). So I believe that those items which were contained in the Ark pointed to the glorious attributes of God and, in some measure at least, to all those individuals of the fallen race of Adam who are embraced in the great reservoir of God's eternal love— "elect of God and precious." We have, in this, a picture of God, in Christ, upholding and defending his infinite perfections and his glory. I notice that the Cherubim were in a posture which would indicate that they were busily engaged in prayer and adoration. They were kneeling and their faces were turned downward. I think they represented all the heavenly host of God's angels, and I am reminded of this text — "which things the angels desire to look into." [1Pe 1:12](#). The angels of God are vitally concerned with the glory of God, and the fulfillment of his eternal plan. Not only did the cherubim have their faces turned toward the Ark and the Mercy Seat, but it is important for us to consider that the priest, as he officiated at the Golden Altar, had his face turned in the same direction. He stood with his back to the people, and with his face toward the Holiest of All — being separated from the Ark and the Mercy Seat only by the veil. So God's people, as they worship and serve the Living God, have their backs to the world and their faces turned toward God. They are separated from Him only by the veil which separates this life from the next.

We have said that the Ark and Mercy Seat represented God's throne, and we need to remember that God actually occupied that Most Holy Place and actually spoke with Israel, through the priests, from that very place — from "between the cherubim". As Israel marched, God went before them — in the pillar of cloud and fire. When the pillar ceased from moving before them,

Israel pitched their camp. The tabernacle was the first to be set up, and then the pillar settled upon the tabernacle. God had promised to dwell there, and Israel received her instructions from that place. We know that God did not vacate his throne in the heavens, in favor of dwelling in an earthly tabernacle. But we do know in a very special manner, His presence did dwell at the center of the camp of Israel. The Bible teaches plainly that God is everywhere present, but there is a special sense in which He dwells with his people and in them — and in his church. There is no question but what there was a mysterious Presence enthroned in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The priests were conscious of this Presence, and were held in supreme awe of that which was beyond the veil at the western end of the Sanctuary. So we, with our faces toward the setting of the sun, stand in awe of the great God of the universe. We are bidden, however, to "come boldly to a throne of grace" because of the meritorious work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may be assured that an entrance will be made for us by our heavenly Advocate. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." [1Jo 2:1](#).

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 09)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article Nine

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#)

The High Priest and "Day of Atonement"

The Most Holy Place was swathed in darkness, and it seems that no one ever entered, with the exception of the High Priest — and he only once each year, on what was known as the Day of Atonement. On this day, the High Priest alone would officiate, both in the Sanctuary and in the Holy of Holies. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary as to what took place. "On this occasion only the high priest was permitted to enter into the holy of holies. Having bathed his person and dressed himself entirely in the holy white linen garments, he brought forward a young bullock for a sin offering, purchased at his own cost, on account of himself and his family, and two young goats for a sin offering, with a ram for a burnt offering, which were paid for out of the public treasury, on account of the people. He then presented the two goats before the door of the tabernacle and cast lots upon them. On one lot 'For Jehovah' was inscribed, and on the other 'for Azazel,' After various sacrifices and ceremonies, the goat upon which the lot 'For Jehovah' had fallen was slain and the high priest sprinkled its blood before the mercy-seat in the same manner as he had done that of the bullock. Going out of the holy of holies, he purified the holy place, sprinkling some of the blood of both the victims upon the altar of incense. At this time no one besides the high priest was suffered to be in the holy place. The purification of the holy of holies — and of the holy place being thus completed, the high priest laid his hands upon the head of the goat on which the lot 'For Azazel' had fallen, and confessed over it all the sins of the people. The goat was then led by a man chosen for the purpose, into the wilderness, into a land not inhabited,

and was there let loose. The high priest after this returned into the holy place, bathed himself again, put on the usual garments of his office, and offered the two rams as burnt offerings, one for himself and one for the people."

We must remember that the high priest, as he ministered on the day of atonement, was a clear type of our Lord Jesus Christ who himself was not only a priest but also a sacrifice. It was necessary that Christ should suffer in his own spotless humanity, as signified by the pure white linen of the high priest's garments. It is important to notice that on ordinary days the high priest wore the magnificent and costly robes of his office, but on the day of atonement he wore only the white linen garments like those worn by the inferior priests. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him (Christ) 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 2:17](#). The magnificent and costly garments no doubt represented his deity, but the white linen garments point to his humanity. He was "born of a woman and born under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law."

The animal sacrifice was made at the brazen altar or Altar of Sacrifice, so Christ suffered at Calvary. A token amount of the blood was applied to the altar itself and to other ceremonial uses, but the remainder was poured out in the bottom of the altar. The animal was first slain and then its blood was poured out, so Christ first died and then a Roman soldier pierced his side and the blood gushed forth. The fat and certain portions of the body were laid on the fire of the altar and the rest of the carcass was burned on the outside of the camp. So the fire of divine justice consumed the body of our Lord Jesus and it was laid away in the tomb. But his enemies could not kill his soul nor rob him of his deity, so he was able to raise up his body on the third day. The work of atonement was completed, but he had yet work to do. You will remember that when Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden, after his resurrection, she would have touched him; but he said to her "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended unto my Father." Before entering into the holy place and the holiest of all, the high priest was required to wash in the brazen laver, and if any of the congregation had touched him he would have been ceremonially unclean. Jesus' work as typified on the day of atonement, was not yet finished – he had not yet presented his blood before the throne of God in the heavens. The Apostle tells us what the holy of holies represented. It represented heaven itself. This being true we are positive that the ark and mercy seat represented God's throne. The high priest would take the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it upon and before the mercy seat. So Christ must appear before God the Father as our intercessor: he must ascend into the heavens. So we have the text, "Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." According to the text, eternal redemption was already obtained when he entered into the holy place (heaven). When and where was it obtained? Why certainly, it was obtained when he suffered, died, and his blood was poured out upon Calvary, as typified by what took place at the brazen altar. According to the text, it was not just an opportunity or a chance, but eternal redemption that was thus obtained. We will insist that when Jesus spoke the words "it is finished", he spoke of the work of atonement, and when he "cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost"—eternal redemption was already obtained for every heir of glory. His was a shout of victory, and nothing (no nothing) is required on the part of the sinner to make this work effectual. The redemption price was paid at Calvary, and God has accepted that price. Incidentally, Christ was not offered to man, but to God; and God accepted the sacrifice.

There was something about the tabernacle and the tabernacle service that we must yet mention. There was no chair or bench in the tabernacle. There was a brazen altar, a laver, a table, a candlestick, a golden altar, an ark and a mercy seat — but nowhere to sit down. The priests always ministered standing, and that was because their work was never finished. Their work must go on day after day, year after year; because those sacrifices that they offered could never actually take away sins. But when Christ came, "born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them which were under the Law": and when he offered himself without spot to God, he entered once into the holy place (into heaven itself) and SAT DOWN! And here is the text for that. — "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down on the right hand of God ; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." [Heb 10:12-13](#).

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 10)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article 10

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[1Ti 2:5-6](#)

The Scape Goat and Vail of the Temple

In the last article, two goats were mentioned. One was sacrificed as a burnt offering, and the other was turned loose in the wilderness — after the high priest had laid his hands upon it of the people. Both goats and confessed over it all the sins are a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it takes both to complete the type. The first goat is a type of Christ as the great sacrifice, and the second is a type of Christ our substitute and sin bearer. Christ must needs suffer for our sins now charged to him, and having paid the redemption price, has put our sins as far away from us "as the east is from the west." He has borne our sins completely away, and into the "land of forgetfulness." The price being paid, God will remember our sins against us no more. Every sin we have ever committed or ever shall commit was laid upon Jesus, and he has borne them completely away. Jesus is, therefore, our scape goat. Jesus having put our sins completely away from us, we are bidden to "come boldly to a throne of "grace:" and that brings us to the subject of the vail of the temple.

The high priest of the Levitical priesthood entered into the holy of holies, a type of heaven, once each year with the blood of the sacrifice — which could never actually take away sin. This was merely a type or picture of one, yet to come, who would be both the priest and the offering, and who would put sin entirely away — and forever. So the high priest would always minister standing: he was never permitted to sit down. But Christ being come a high priest forever "after the order of Melchisedec" presented himself, before God in heaven, as both priest and offering — and SAT DOWN! The work was now finished, the final offering had been made, God had accepted that offering, so the High Priest could now sit down. He "sat down at the right hand of

the throne of God, from henceforth expecting 'til his enemies be made his footstool."

When the high priests of the Levitical priesthood entered into the holiest of all, it is believed, although the Bible does not say, that he went in sideways — with his back to the ark and mercy seat — and did not look in that direction until the room became filled with the smoke of the burning incense. We do know that he was commanded to burn the incense first, before presenting the offering; and this under fear of death. Everything must be done exactly right, and we do know that God had said "no man shall see my face and live." So it was undoubtedly with fear and trembling that the high priest approached to this place where God had promised that his presence would dwell. But when Christ expired on the cross the scriptures say that there was a great earthquake — the earth did quake and the rocks rent, and we have this expression, "And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." [Mt 27:51](#). This event signified the fact that the entrance into the holiest of all (heaven) had now been perfected, the old law service was now to come to a close, and God's people, now, with an eye of faith could look into heaven itself, whether Jesus our forerunner had entered. God's people can now come boldly to a throne of grace through the merits and atoning blood of a saviour. It is true that we "see through a glass darkly", but we do see through. The holy place is no longer swathed in darkness.

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 11)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article 11

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. — [1Ti 2:5-6](#).

Way of The Cross

We mentioned in our second article that the layout of the tabernacle and outer court, and the arrangement of the furniture was such that an imaginary line could be drawn bisecting the brazen altar, the altar of incense, the ark and mercy seat; then another bisecting the table and candlestick, thus forming a perfect cross. I believe this was purposely included in the divine blueprint to point forward to the cross of Calvary. There is no other way of salvation. This is true so far as our eternal destiny is concerned, and will also apply to "time salvation". Of course, those who are acquainted with Primitive Baptists will understand that we do not believe that the matter of "eternal salvation" is dependent upon our hearing and believing the gospel. Both faith and works are the effect of the new birth, and not the cause of it. But there is such a thing as progress in the Christian life. Peter said, "But grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." — [2Pe 3:18](#).

I wonder how many of our readers have bothered to draw the diagram which was suggested in our second article. If you have not done so, it will be helpful if you will do so now.

When we begin our Christian life, where do we begin? Consult your diagram and find out. We begin at the foot of the cross. And where do we end up? In the Holy of Holies, which represents heaven itself! But, on the way, we view the brazen altar—which represents the atonement; and we meditate upon the scene of Calvary, as represented by the slain animal sacrifice. Next, we wash ourselves in the waters of baptism, which are a type of regeneration as pictured in the brazen laver. Then we come to the tabernacle itself, and are entitled to enter in — for we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and by the washing of regeneration. So we may now pass beyond the veil, which represents Christ, and enter the sanctuary which is the church. In Christ's church we are permitted to eat of the bread of heaven (Christ) and walk in the light of the candlestick — which is Christ the light of the world. We are also permitted and enabled to offer incense (our prayers and adoration) at the golden altar. In short, it is here that we "sit together in heavenly places in Christ." We are now as close to God and heaven as we can ever be in this life. We are yet confronted by the veil, which separates between this life and the next. But just as surely as we have come this far: just as surely as we have begun the journey, the veil shall be parted and we shall some day pass beyond —and enter into the glorious presence of Him who sits upon the throne. We shall see King Jesus in all his glorious majesty and shall look upon the face of God. A glorious future awaits all those embraced in the eternal covenant, as pictured by the outer court of the tabernacle. We may look forward to an eternity of happy, joyous, and willing service. There will be no sorrow, suffering or pain; and no sin. Notice, it is the same individual that enters the gate at the east end of the enclosure who finally reaches this desired haven. True it is that "The way of the cross leads home." As surely as we have walked that way, we may rest assured that we are God's children; for these are the evidences of eternal life.

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN (Article 12)

WHERE GOD MEETS MAN

Article 12

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. -- [1Ti 2:5-6](#).

Before bringing this series of articles to a close, I think it will be well to comment, in some detail, upon the above text; which has been used at the heading of each of the past eleven articles. But, first, a word about the title. I do not intend to convey the idea, by the title, that God has provided a universal atonement for all mankind, as so many would have us believe; nor that the eternal destiny of all mankind is determined by their "acceptance" or "non-acceptance" of Jesus Christ as savior. But God does meet man, in the sense and from the standpoint of his own elect people, in the person of His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; and blesses them as the result of Christ's own meritorious work. Perhaps the title might be misleading to some, without the above explanation.

Now for an exposition of the text above. "For there is one God—" Surely all Christian people will acknowledge this fact, that although there be gods many and lords many" — for idolatry is the evidence on every hand — there is only one true God; the Creator and upholder of all things.

All petty gods are the work of men's hands and the product of their own evil imaginations. All nature testifies, and the Scriptures abound with unshakable evidence, that there is only one God; and just as truly as there is only one God, there is also only "one mediator between God and men."

A mediator is one who "goes between" or acts to bring about a reconciliation between opposing parties. In this case, man had sinned and by his transgression had offended the all-righteous God of the universe. By their transgressions, our first parents had plunged themselves and all their posterity into a state of sin and death in sins. A state of enmity was caused to exist between the offending creature and the offended Deity. Peace was restored through the sacrificial offering of the body of Jesus "once for all." That means once for all time. But our text says that Christ gave himself a ransom for all, which means for all of God's elect family, whether Jew or Gentile. The expressions "all", "all men", "the whole world" etc. do not always mean the whole of mankind. It is necessary to study the context in order to determine just what is meant in any particular verse of scripture. Christ gave himself to be a ransom for all those whom the Father had given him, "to be testified in due time."

In "due time" the Holy Spirit will so operate in the hearts and lives of all for whom Christ "gave himself a ransom" as to produce the evidences of spiritual and eternal life. The Spirit, in this way, testifies of God's eternal choice. It will be further "testified" in the last day and in the final judgment, when Christ shall "divide the sheep upon the right hand, and the goats upon the left."

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." [Mt 25:46](#).

This concludes our series of articles entitled "Where God Meets Man." I shall bring this to a close with the simple request that each reader look up the last twelve issues of our paper and read all twelve articles in their proper order and as one. May the Lord bless the truth to our understanding, and may he bless each of us to present our own bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" which is our "reasonable service." See [Ro 12:1](#).

WHOSE I AM AND WHOM I SERVE

WHOSE I AM AND WHOM I SERVE

I am much impressed with the above expression which is found in [Ac 27:23](#). Paul said, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve."

We, as the Lord's people, do not belong to ourselves: we belong to God. We are His property. We belong to God, not only by right of creation, but by right of purchase: we have been bought with a price, and the redemption price is noth-ing less than the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ — God's own Son. Therefore we are under the most solemn obligation to worship and serve God. To fail to do so is the height of human ingratitude. To be primarily self-serving is idoltry of the worst kind.

We not only belong to God, but God in the person of Jesus Christ also belongs to us. He was given for us and to us, and is ever serving our best interest. So close is the relationship between Christ and his people. He is our Prophet, Priest and King.

WHY DO WE NOT HAVE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

WHY DO WE NOT HAVE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

There is a question in the minds of a great many people as to why Primitive Baptists do not have Sunday schools, and we have doubtless been criticized by many for our failure to do so. I suspect that many of our people, if confronted with this question, would be unprepared to give a satisfactory answer. I feel that I have some thoughts with regard to this that it might be well to present.

I know of no better way to begin than by stating some of the reasons why other folks have Sunday schools in their churches. It is believed that the Sunday school should serve the purpose of fitting the gospel to the mentality of the child, and serve to prepare him for church membership later. The Sunday school has been sometimes referred to as "The nursery of the church".

Of course, the belief of most of these folks is that one is "born again" when he accepts Christ as his personal Savior, and that such acceptance constitutes the "new birth". Moreover, since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," it is believed that the gospel is the means of eternal salvation. The great and prime purpose then, of the Sunday school, is to assist the church in the business of bringing souls to Christ that He may save them eternally.

Since Primitive Baptists do not regard the gospel as a means of eternal salvation, nor the church a means to that end; the great argument for the Sunday school is here largely removed, where we are concerned.

But since the church does have a great purpose in the world, and since its purpose is largely to teach, and since such teaching does serve to save folks from error and superstition and fear; why not have a Primitive Baptist Sunday school? That is a question that I shall attempt to answer, for I know that it is a very serious question in the minds of some of our people.

I shall begin by saying that the Sunday school is an organization of comparatively recent origin—it was not found in the early church, nor did Christ command it. I am sure that if the Sunday school was needed, Christ would have foreseen that need. But "doesn't the Bible teach that we should 'bring up our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord' someone will ask? Yes, it certainly does; but the question is, How is this to be done?"

All arguments in favor of the Sunday school are based, more or less, upon the assumption that the pure gospel as presented in the Bible, and from the pulpit, is too complicated for the mind of

a child to grasp. To my mind THIS IS A SERIOUS MISTAKE. The gospel is a simple story suited to God's children of all ages and that story which rejoices the hearts of the fathers and mothers can also rejoice the heart of the child—the gospel does not need to be watered down or sugar coated to suit the mentality of the child.

Many times we have seen small children sit with rapt attention and even with tears while the gospel was being preached. Many of these children have come home to the church, and have manifested their love for the Lord in many ways. Many Primitive Baptist parents have heard their children remark, after attending Sunday school with their little friends, "I answered more of the questions than any of them".

I am reminded of what I heard one of our very able ministers say, while talking on this subject, "WE MUST NOT INSULT THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE CHILD".

It is true that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to the "dead in sins", regardless of their ages; but to those whom God has made spiritually alive, it is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" — and this also regardless of age. The gospel can never be made simple enough nor sufficiently attractive to the "natural man" that he will receive it, because the Bible says HE CANNOT.

WHY THE CONTRADICTION?

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Just this morning, I heard a minister on the radio, talking about the rich young man who came to Jesus with the question, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" This minister mentioned that the young man's question was wrongly stated, since there is nothing one can do to inherit something. An inheritance is something which is transferred from one to another as the result of relationship existing between them. This, of course, is absolutely right. But, then, he proceeded to tell what one must do in order to establish that relationship with God which will entitle them to this inheritance: they must be "born again" by "accepting Christ" as their personal savior. So first he says nothing can be done to inherit, and then he ends up by saying it is up to the sinner to do something in order to be born into the family of God; and, as a result of this relationship he inherits. Why the contradiction? Why not accept the plain Bible truth that when Jesus said "Ye must be born again" he meant precisely that, and that in the second birth one is entirely passive, just the same as he was the first time?

But it seems they think they must, by all means, avoid the doctrines of Election and Predestination. Perhaps they think they must defend their own doctrine of "the dignity of man." I say they, because perhaps ninety five percent of those who preach on radio and television, and from the pulpits of our land, take much the same position. Some say one must do more than this man mentioned, but all say one must do as much. I think this must be due to the fact that the carnal mind is naturally biased against God and against the truth. These men frequently quote the text, "But as many as

received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God", but they seldom ever quote the rest of it, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the Flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." —[Joh 1:13](#). Perhaps most of them think this last verse is unimportant, or they simply don't know what to do with it. It simply doesn't "fit" into their system of theology.

One can see, as those two verses are considered together, that those under consideration were born first, and then given power to become the sons of God (by profession). As we study the Bible, we must consider the definitions of words, and words do have more than one definition.

WITHOUT SIN UNTO SALVATION

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So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them who look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. [Heb 9:28](#).

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. [2Ti 4:8](#)

As we study the Hebrew letter, we are made to see that the expression "Christ was once offered" clearly means, he was offered once for all. He was offered only once, and since that offering was completed and fully effectual, He shall never need to be offered again. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." [Heb 10:12-13](#).

It was necessary that the priests under the law should offer up sacrifices repeatedly; for they were offering only in type and shadow, and their sacrifices could, at best, only roll the sins forward another year: they could not actually take away sin. But Christ, being the great eternal high priest, could and did make an offering which was fully effectual, and which did actually put away sin.

"For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." [Heb 10:14](#). To be sanctified is to be set apart to holy service, and it is God who has so sanctified, or elected his people. "According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" [Eph 1:4](#).

Notice, our text does not say that Christ was offered for everyone, but to bear the sins of many. We have no way of knowing how many, but the Bible certainly makes it clear that it is a great many. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" [Re 7:9](#).

How can we know and recognize God's redeemed here on earth? The answer to that question is simple — by their fruits. The evidences of spiritual life are clearly set forth in the Bible, and where we see those evidences we may know that here is one of the Lord's children.

In complete absence of those evidences we cannot judge an individual to be eternally lost, however, because we cannot know at what moment the quickening Spirit may enter into the heart of such a one, and fruit may yet be borne of the Spirit.

Perhaps the clearest and most outstanding evidence of spiritual life is faith. God's children have faith in God, and every true Christian looks for Christ's appearing.

The Christian looks for Christ's appearing again and again in his Christian experience, and he believes that some day Christ shall come again to earth in like manner as the disciples saw him go away. Now our text says that "unto all them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation".

In His first coming Christ came with sin unto death, because He came bearing all the sins of His people. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." [2Co 5:21](#). The Bible teaches that Christ bore not only the penalty for sin, but the sin itself. I believe that the sins of all of God's people were so charged to Christ, that those sins as actually became his, as though he (Himself) had committed them.

In His second visible appearing. He shall come without sin-unto salvation. Those sins were atoned for, so He will not come bringing them. After atoning for the sins of His people, and after giving them eternal life, He left them here in the world. He promised to be with them in Spirit, but has been away from them bodily.

While here, they enter into many of the joys of their salvation. They look forward to their final deliverance, and their entering into the fullness of their Lord. Jesus has promised to come again and to receive them unto Himself that they may be with Him. So His second coming will be unto salvation.

It may be that countless multitudes who do not look for Him will be recipients of that salvation, for many have never heard of Him; but it is certain that unto them who do look for him he will appear a second time without sin unto salvation.

Our second text is the language of the apostle Paul when he knew that he had about reached the end of his earthly pilgrimage. So he says to the young man, Timothy, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, etc."

Now notice, he doesn't say a crown of life, as many understand him to mean, but a crown of righteousness. He had finished his course with joy, he had made a splendid record, he had great reason to rejoice. He could now say "Henceforth (not therefore) there is laid up for me a crown

of righteousness."

Where is the crown laid up? In heaven? I would sooner think here in the church. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, 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."

But it is certain that Paul looked forward to the joys which awaited him in the glory world, and if that was what he meant by the crown, the truth would yet remain that none of this was based on his faith or faithfulness. I repeat, Paul did not say therefore (because of what I have done) but henceforth (from now on) there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

Whatever this crown of righteousness is, and when and where received, it is still something that Paul rejoiced in and which is to be given "to all them which love his appearing." Christian people do love the appearing of the Lord Jesus, both in a spiritual sense and in the sense of his visible appearance.

So we say with the beloved John the revelator, "Come Lord Jesus."

WRITTEN ARTICLES

WRITTEN ARTICLES

Some have thought that written articles, on Bible subjects, are not as important to the Lord's people, and to the cause of Christ in general, as sermons delivered from the pulpit. I remember of once hearing a minister express the opinion that "preaching" is God's ordained way of declaring the gospel, and not writing. I believe that God's ordained way is any lawful way, that may be effectual in reaching the Lord's people and presenting gospel truths, regardless of whether it may be through the printed word, by the medium of radio, through private conversation, or preaching in private homes or from the pulpit. Surely God is able, by His spirit, to bless any means used for the dissemination of His gospel. Some, no doubt, will point out that the command given to the apostles was to "go". That is very true. But we must remember that the printed word was not available. The printing press had not been invented, neither had the radio. Writing was then a laborious and slow (by hand) process, and very few people were skilled in either reading or writing.

While writing will not actually take the place of oral preaching, for various and obvious reasons, I can see certain advantages to preaching through the written word. Certainly a good written article, or a sermon preached on the radio or television, will reach more people than the usual oral sermon. And, in the case of the written article, the reader can read and re-read, and really digest, the truths presented. He can use his Bible as a "measuring rod" and determine as to whether or not "these things be so." Then he can lay the paper aside, and preserve for future reading and study.

I think the pastors of churches have a serious responsibility to encourage their people to study the Bible for themselves, and to enlist the aid of religious writings, by our ministers of today and of

yesteryear. A wise pastor can render a very valuable service by suggesting those books and periodicals that will likely prove most helpful to the people.

We who are ministers and pastors of churches, must ever bear in mind the admonition, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth." [2Ti 2:15](#)

While the Holy Spirit does guide and direct God's ministers in their study and in their preaching, God has commanded that we study. And, while Primitive Baptist preachers do not "prepare" their sermons in the way that word is commonly considered to imply, we do try to familiarize ourselves with the teachings of the Bible. And the most able and useful of our ministers are those who have not confined themselves entirely to the use of the Bible alone, but have been willing and wise enough to accept those "helps" that have been available. Surely the Bible, A good Concordance, and a good Dictionary (including a Bible Dictionary) are of the utmost importance to the Bible student. All other books and helps are secondary, but not to be lightly valued. A good Church History is very valuable, and should be recommended.

The statement has been made that if all of God's ministers were educated men, they would "shoot over the heads" of too many people in their congregations, but I believe that this is not necessarily so. Those who are truly educated know how to present their thoughts in such words, and in such a way, that even the ignorant and unlearned can understand. It is mostly those who are only partially educated who misuse the language and confuse their audience. The Apostle Paul was a highly educated man, and yet he declared, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I believe he used such language as his hearers could understand. but with such words as would best convey his thoughts.

Christ had a purpose in choosing "ignorant and unlearned men" to follow him, but we have no record that they forever remained ignorant and unlearned. I believe that one reason for his choice was that his power could be more readily demonstrated in such men as these, as on the day of Pentecost; and the other reason was that they could be free from the vain philosophies of men, and he would teach them and further supervise their teaching. The Bible is our guide, and all other literature must be measured by that perfect standard; but the thoughts and opinions of others are helpful in our study. May we take full advantage of those "helps" which God has placed at our disposal.

ZZ APPENDIX - AN APOLOGY

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We want to apologize for the errors which you have found in the book. Some of them are misspelled words, wrong words and some whole wrong sentences. These were due to typographical errors in the Gospel Witness from which the articles were taken. Rather than typeset the whole book because the cost would have been so much more, we decided to use the material straight from the paper. We are sorry and hope the readers will understand and forgive us.

In blessed hope,
Elder and Sister Floy Gross