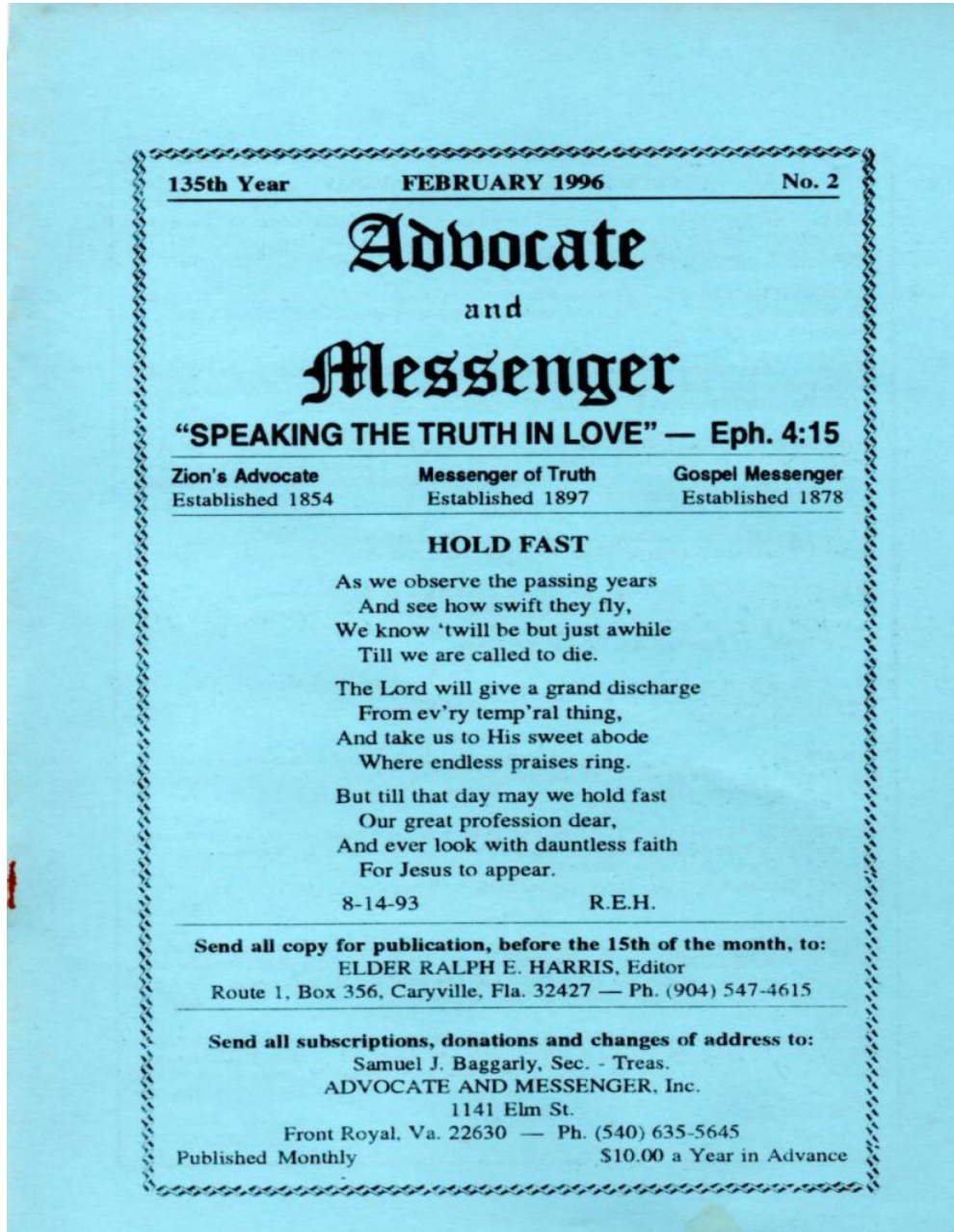


Advocate and Messenger



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SOME THOUGHTS ON PREACHING

I have been trying to speak in the name of the Lord for thirty-six years, and I hope I have done a little preaching along the way, though I sometimes wonder if I may not have been deceived in the whole matter all along. I sometimes think it is much easier for us to be deceived about ourselves and spiritual things, or at least what we *perceive* to be spiritual things, than we generally think. When we consider that we are by nature carnal, sold under sin (See Rom. 7:14) it seems to me that it should at least *occur* to us once in a while that we *might possibly* be misjudging things of a Divine nature. The things of the Spirit of God can only be discerned spiritu-

ally (See 1st Cor. 2:14), and it seems to me in view of the fact that we are poor sinners and that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9), it would behoove us to examine ourselves more than we normally do whether we be in the faith (See 2nd Cor. 13:5) and to more honestly question ourselves as to just how much spiritual discernment we actually possess. It might surprise us if we knew how little we have.

I don't see nearly as much evidence of humility in this regard as I would like, particularly in some of the present-day ministry. I fear that secretly, and perhaps unknown to ourselves, we are prone to be too satisfied with our little efforts to speak in the name of the Lord and are not as mindful as we ought to be of what a solemn and serious thing it is to occupy the sacred pulpit. If I am wrong in this I trust the reader will be charitable in his judgment of me.

I feel very confident that I have done a lot of preaching, if it may rightly be called *preaching*, that for one reason or another was not profitable. Perhaps I had not adequately sought the Lord's blessings beforehand, and was consequently not in a spiritual enough frame of mind and heart to undertake so solemn a work as is expounding the precious word of a thrice-holy God. Perhaps I had not given as much time to meditation and study as would have been pleasing to the Lord, or I did not approach the pulpit as meekly and prayerfully as I should have. Perhaps I did not feel as much dependence on the Lord as such an awesome undertaking calls for. And last, but by no means least, perhaps my congregation had been guilty of the same things I had, and had not been praying for me, or for themselves, as they should have. Whatever the reasons, I have often struggled in trying to preach and have been left feeling very unfulfilled, disappointed and downcast, ashamed of my effort, and feeling that perhaps it would be best if I never made the effort again.

I have many times felt that I was ready to adopt the language of Jeremiah and say, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name" (Jer. 20:9). But I have never been able to live up to that resolve either, for like Jeremiah, the word of God, it has seemed to me, has been in my heart "as a burning fire shut up in my

bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”

I have at times felt so low after an effort to preach that I have actually begged the Lord that if He was not pleased to bless me to do any better in the future than I had done in the past I would be grateful if He would just take me on out of my misery. And it has been my experience, as a general rule, that it is after such seeming failures that no one has given me any encouragement; and it wouldn't have done any good if they had, for I knew I had not preached and was convinced that I, along with my effort, was a total failure.

However, there have been times—enough of them to keep me struggling on—when I felt surely the Lord must have condescended to bless my little, feeble efforts with some degree of success and had given me evidence that others thought so too. Oh! how humble this has made me feel, that such a poor worm as I should be so blest; that one so low should be lifted so high! But even then I have many times rehashed my sermons afterward and have found much in them to be faulted.

How frustrating it has been to be a perfectionist and at the same time to be so imperfect! I have often wondered if anyone could witness with me in any of my feelings. I have seen some preachers who seemed to be very confident of themselves and their own abilities and have sometimes almost envied them. But when I have thought soberly about it I have felt that it was much better to be kept lowly, feeble and dependent in my feelings than to exalt myself and have to be brought down under the awful weight of God's chastening hand of judgment. As mortifying as it has been to have my failures put on public display, I still much rather endure the embarrassment involved in that than to become the least bit exalted in myself or take the smallest grain of credit for what the Lord alone is due all the honor and praise. I want to always be mindful, deeply and reverentially mindful, of the fact that without the Lord I can do nothing of any real value, whether it be preaching, writing, or any other effort in His name.

Oh! how I look forward to the day when this stammering tongue will be glorified and loosed from the present restraints of the flesh

so that it may sing and shout the praises of its heavenly King with perfect freedom, liberty and satisfaction, with no unpleasant aftertaste and no regrets. What a day that will be! The thought of it makes me long for the Lord's soon return.—*Editor.*

WE MAY MISJUDGE OUR CASE

When the sons of Jacob returned to him from Egypt where they had been to buy corn and related to him what had transpired (Gen. 42), he said, "All these things are against me" (ver. 36). How typical of God's people was this reaction to outward appearances! "Man looketh on the outward appearance" (1st Sam. 16:7). How like them it is to assume the worst! In reality all that had happened in Egypt was for Jacob's good, and for the good of his family, but to him it all appeared to be against him.

Many times we mortals cannot see God's hand in the circumstances surrounding us until after His purpose in them is played out. How many times have we thought the hand of providence frowned upon us, when in fact it was very much in our favor! How often have we felt, as did Jacob, that all things were against us, when in truth our troubles were God's way of bringing good to us and promoting our betterment! How often it is that in His wise dealings with us *weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning* (See Psalm 30:5). We would do well to learn patience during our dark seasons, expecting that there will eventually be an end of them, at which time the rainbow of God's love and faithfulness will again cheer our hearts.

How much better it is that we have trials and afflictions in this life with ultimate deliverance and rejoicing than to have a life of ease and pleasure with ultimate terror and condemnation. We read in Luke 16 of a rich man who had good things in his lifetime while Lazarus, a poor beggar, had evil things, but ultimately Lazarus was comforted while the rich man was tormented. Wouldn't all of us who have a sweet hope in Christ much prefer to fill the place of Lazarus than to fill the place of the rich man?

Some of us have been poor in this life, poor, that is, by the world's standards, and there have been those who have supposed our poverty was evidence that all things were against us. But if we had been offered an opportunity to exchange places with the richest and most prosperous men in the world we would not have done so because we were blest to see that we had riches and pleasures the world knows nothing about.

Let us not be too hasty to assume that all things are against us when circumstances around us seem to all be going wrong. Who can tell what God intends to bring out of our troubles? No matter what the righteous have to suffer in this life it will ultimately be well with them (See Isa. 3:10).—*Editor.*

ANOTHER REMINDER

On numerous occasions I have commented to my wife that if at any time the Lord should choose not to deliver us we simply would not be delivered. There are a great many situations and circumstances we may be confronted with in this life from which we cannot deliver ourselves, even when we are being as cautious and careful as we know how to be. I had this fact quite vividly brought to mind again just this morning (Dec. 19th). I raked up a pile of leaves under a large live oak, loaded them into the wheelbarrow, and carried them to the fire. When I returned to the spot where I had been raking there was a large limb laying right where I had been standing less than five minutes before; a limb large enough that had it struck me on the head it would no doubt have killed me, for it fell from a considerable height. We can only wonder how many times we may have been delivered in a similar way, often without ever knowing about it.

On last November 5th one of our good friends was killed instantly in an automobile accident. Brother John Lee Buie was 54 years old and the Lord had preserved his life all that time, but that morning He did not choose to intervene and prevent what He obviously knew

would otherwise take place. Did He have the power to deliver Brother John? Certainly! He had no doubt delivered him many, many times before, for he drove a delivery truck for a living and was always exposed to the dangers of the highways. So, why did He not choose to do so again, especially in view of the fact that Brother John was so greatly needed by Sister Mary and the rest of his family and friends. We can only answer as did Christ Himself on one occasion when He said, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:26). We are sure that the Lord knows best, and His ways and His thoughts are much higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9). We need only to seek reconciliation to His holy will.

Our lives hang by a thread and there are any number of ways they might be snuffed out if God should lift His hand of protection or remove His providential restraints. We are dependent upon Him for every breath we breathe and we would die immediately if He did not sustain us. A realization of this solemn truth will make us to know how frail we are (Psa. 39:4) and will tend much toward keeping pride and arrogancy in check. Indeed, we are "poor and needy" (See for instance Psa. 40:17). I thank Thee, dear Lord, for reminding me of that again today.—*Editor.*

A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE, O GOD

A closer walk with Thee, O God,
Should be our highest aim;
Our chief desire in life should be
To glorify Thy name.

There is no greater pleasure here
Than in Thy love to dwell
And feel a holy confidence
That with our soul 'tis well.

A closer walk with Thee, O God,
Is worth far more than gold:

It gives us courage in our youth
And cheers us when we're old.

It saves us from a thousand snares—
Ten thousand cares and fears;
It helps to hold us on our way,
And smile through bitter tears.

A closer walk with Thee, O God,
May we maintain each day!
O may our light shine clear and bright
Until we pass away!

And ev'n in death may we rejoice
And from all fear be free,
And give us in that final hour
A closer walk with Thee!

9-20-95

R.E.H.

BROTHERLY KINDNESS

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32).

We must ever remember that the true churches of the Lord Jesus are made up of sheep. Sheep are timid, tender, defenseless, inoffensive creatures which fully picture the characters of the regenerated people of God. Sheep, both natural and spiritual, will not stand up well under rough treatment. They must be led with a kind and gentle hand if they are to prosper as they should.

We must also remember that the church is made up of sinners, each and every one of us. We make mistakes. Under the very best of circumstances we often conduct ourselves in an offensive and thoughtless manner. Given the fact that church members are tender lambs of God, but still sinners, it is absolutely necessary that we be

careful to act in a spirit of kindness and forgiveness in our church relationships. If we do not, we may well self-destruct in a very short period of time. Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit and a necessary one for the well-being and even the very survival of a church body. God the Holy Spirit gave it to us and He intends that we use it.

My thesaurus gives as the opposite of kindness, "harshness, cruelty, severity, roughness." Dear brethren and sisters, our Lord and Saviour never, ever, ever treated one of His people in this way. Under no circumstances whatsoever is there an excuse for us to deviate from the example that He set. Even in times of difficulty, disagreement, or discipline this rule still remains. In fact, one of the most shining witnesses of the reality of our faith and doctrine is our kindness even to those in the world with whom we must do business from time to time. We are to put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.

As Primitive Baptists, we should solemnly resolve that in all our dealings we will conduct ourselves in accordance with the very highest standards of all that goes to make up Christian courtesy (which in no wise excludes boldness). If we would do that, without fail, there would be very few difficulties that could not be resolved and love would flow freely from heart to heart. Our gracious Lord and Master requires and deserves that it be thus in His church.

ELDER MARK GREEN

PATIENCE

Patience seems to be such a virtue when we see it in other people! That determination not to lie down and quit, when about all the person can do is grit his teeth and hang on! But we all confess when our own trials come, we feel to be lacking in it.

Patience was not given to saints for the good times, but for the bad. To have patience when wishes are all denied, when ambitions become unattainable, when friends turn away or become foes, when family or health problems become great, when one's own mistakes

loom large as mountains and a guilty conscience cries out from within, when duties seem to weigh us down with the weight of worlds, when everything seems to bring obstacles to our doing what we know to be right, this is when patience begins.

Sometimes when things are hard, I do wonder if it is the Lord's way of telling us we must expect change. At least, we must open our spiritual minds to see whether He may be closing a door on the road we have been traveling, to open another. It could be a time for us to lay aside self-pity, to get up and do something constructive. After all, patience is the product of faith, and if we believe God as we claim, we must know there is something better waiting us. Faith and patience walk hand in hand with hope.

ELDER RAYMOND WEBB

LEADING

Sometimes when people pray for God to lead them, they really want Him to lead from afar but let them make all the immediate decisions. There are examples of this in the Scriptures too. We read of the wise men who came seeking Jesus, being led by the star in the distant heavens. They were wise in seeking, but their judgment was not wise, else they would have trusted that star rather than making inquiry of King Herod. It led to great sorrow.

When those same wise men left Jerusalem to travel the short distance of only about six miles to Bethlehem, that star seemed to come down low and lead slowly. Here was a matter that allowed no room for human judgments, or human error! And it brought them to the place where the infant child lay, God's own Son.

We must conclude that being led from afar is good, but being so weak and uncertain in understanding, we require that God will lead us near at hand if we are to find Him and worship.

ELDER RAYMOND WEBB

God is a timeless Being. We should not fear tomorrow, for in a sense He is already there.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

When we are born in a natural sense we come forth as babes from our mother's womb. A newborn child is totally helpless and without the proper care and nourishment would not survive very long. There is nothing in this world as beautiful and innocent as a baby, for they have not been tarnished or corrupted by the things of this world. Those of us who have been blessed with children can certainly relate, especially to the beauty of our own child. Our children are just a little bit prettier, just because they are ours. Do you ever think how wonderful it would be if this beauty and innocence would last forever? But, alas, how quickly those babes grow up, and before you know it they are grown and eventually leave the nest to try out their own wings. As they leave us there is sadness, as well as some feeling of accomplishment, even though we made so many mistakes in bringing them up, they are still able to fly away and we hope they will return again.

Harry Chapin sings a song that can bring sadness to a lot of parents. The name of the ballad is "The Cat's in the Cradle". He tells us of a son and father as life passes them by so quickly, they don't do the things together and have totally missed so many of life's most precious moments. Too often this song is so true in many families today. I hear this song and tears come to my eyes as I realize how much time I wasted and missed so many beautiful moments that little children offer to us every day. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them."

So many of us are so entangled with the things of the world that we fail to realize our children are a heritage from God. The job beckons to us. Overtime means more money, and more money means having more material things. We watch television with the extra money we made and fail to read to our children a book, or a poem, or simply hold them to our breast and sing a lullaby as they drift off to sleep.

As our children grow older, they have more needs and wants.

Our job beckons again, and we know we must provide. They must have the best, or close to it. We run and we have no direction, we listen but we do not hear, we see but we are blinded by the cares and worries that have evolved and threaten to sink us. What happened to the simple life? Is there no hope for the future generation? History will record and reflect what values are kept and those that are cast aside as silly traditions. We as parents must accept our share of responsibility and stop blaming the world, the schools, peer pressure, and other outside influences that scoff at once-treasured traditions, such as honesty, loyalty, and responsibility for one's own actions and behavior.

Our children are the future of this great nation, and how did we perform as parents? Now, those of us that have reared children and are blessed with grandchildren can look firsthand at our teaching, or lack of it, in the behavior of our grandchildren. Sometimes we, (as parents) can see the same mistakes that we made and have a tendency to point this out to our children that maybe they should be more attentive and slow down and enjoy the precious moments we missed. Sometimes they may listen, but too often they continue on the same path that we trod.

Jeremiah 6:16 states, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." I am not implying that our generation walked the old paths, no, in no wise. The path our children are walking is the same path they observed and saw with their own eyes. The example was seen, no matter what was heard, the eye sees and acts accordingly.

How do we jump off the treadmill and get back to the simple way of life? Matt. 6:33 states, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." It is never too late to set a godly example in our own life. Remember it's what you do and not what you say. Until our generation adheres to God's word and follows the teaching that the Bible states as requirements to be true disciples, we need not expect our children or our grandchildren to do anything different.

It is so easy to blame outside influence for all the problems, and certainly I grant you that it will be extremely difficult to overcome a lot of the distractions. As a matter of fact, left to our own devices and strength we will not overcome, but there is a way! John 14:6 says, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life." Do you want to know where the "old paths" are? If you truly desire to know, then start learning and practicing the path that our Saviour walked. Read your Bible for your instructions. In Psalm 119, verse 105, we read, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Your Bible provides sufficient instructions, but instructions are worthless unless they are read and followed.

"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" (Matt. 7:13-14). Certainly, we know Jesus is not speaking of eternal life here, but a spiritual life that is in harmony with His word and doctrine! In other words, SPIRITUAL MATURITY. Just as our physical body grows and matures over the years, our spiritual being should also grow and be equipped to face the obstacles that are in our way. In Ephesians 6 the apostle Paul tells us to "put on the whole armour of God" (please read the entire chapter). "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2nd Peter 3:18). "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1st Peter 2:2).

Have you ever fed a newborn babe or looked on as the mother nourished her baby? That is a beautiful sight, and there is no doubt that the baby is hungry and is thoroughly enjoying his or her milk. Wouldn't it be wonderful if God's children would show that kind of appetite for the "sincere milk of the word." There will certainly be growth to give us the strength and courage to be a disciple if this same kind of appetite is present within us.

Now, to try to conclude, and hopefully tie the loose ends. I ask the reader to be charitable and overlook my many shortcomings.

Spiritual maturity will only be obtained by keeping our eyes on

our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and running with patience the race that is set before us, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2). Remember, it is never too late to be a good example! You can't go back and change the pages of your life that you would like to change. History is the past, reality and opportunity lies ahead of us. Remember the words of the apostle Paul to the church of Philippi, Chapter 3, verses 13 and 14; "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, 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."

ELDER GERALD AUTRY
Covington, Georgia

THE TEN LEPERS

I have felt impressed to write upon the subject of Jesus cleansing the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). I realize I am not able to write of the precious teaching of Jesus, or to lift up His name, in a way that He should be exalted. Our endeavors will never be able to show forth the whole beauty and majesty of Jesus.

In the gospel according to Luke it says that Jesus passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee and entered into a certain village. It also says there met him ten men that were lepers which stood afar off. Let us try to bring into perspective these ten lepers and this "certain village." The lepers represent the body of Christ, and this certain village is the church. Luke tells us that the lepers stood afar off. Under Levitical law men that were lepers were forbidden to mingle with others in the cities or villages. They were to dwell without, and we see that these ten were "afar off". Can we see the beauty of this type? These ten that were afflicted were not able to enter into the village because of their infirmities. Is it not the same with a child of God? Are we able to enter into the blessings of the church before we are cleansed? This is a picture of a child of grace in his spiritual infirmity standing afar off. "But now," praise be to

God, "in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). Let us see how Jesus teaches that we are brought nigh into the village.

The scripture tells us that they said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." In desperation these lepers call out to Jesus for mercy. They are begging for physical healing. This is a type of a child of grace calling to Jesus for spiritual peace and cleansing. Jesus through the Spirit reveals Himself to us with such peace and comfort in knowing He is our Saviour. Shouldn't this teach us that we are not able to call on Him until He reveals Himself to us.

After the lepers call out to Jesus He tells them to show themselves unto the priest. Leviticus 13 details all of the conditions of leprosy. It is a plague of the flesh, with scabs, sores, and open wounds. A leper is not able to cleanse himself of his affliction. This is a parallel to the condition of a poor sinner. He is no more able to remove himself from his nature of sin than a leper is able to cleanse himself. Are we not all by nature under the plague of sin? Jesus is teaching us an important lesson here. He tells them to show themselves unto the priest. Under the levitical law a leper was to present himself to the priest. It was the priest's responsibility to determine whether a leper was to be deemed clean or unclean. However, the priest himself was not able to cleanse. Was Jesus able to cleanse these lepers? Certainly He was. The Scriptures tell us that the lepers were cleansed as they went, not cleansed after seeing the priest. This is a lesson for God's children in purification, righteousness, justification, and salvation. Jesus cleansed these lepers without their visiting the priest. Did this not show that Christ was ushering in a new dispensation, doing away with the law service?

These lepers are a type of the children of grace in their inability to help their wretched and miserable condition. Notice the scripture says all ten were cleansed. Every child of grace chosen in Christ Jesus is cleansed by His blood. Do all of God's children enter into the blessings of knowing "whence cometh (their) help" (Psa. 121:1)? The scripture says *one* turned back. This one was able to turn to Jesus and glorify God for his cleansing. Should we not thank and

praise God that He reveals Himself to us in a way that we are able to know that Jesus is our propitiation, righteousness, redeemer and Saviour? This one that turned back glorified God "with a loud voice." If we are born of God's Spirit and by His grace are able to see the precious Son as our healer, cleanser, and redeemer, may we also with loud voice praise the God of heaven. May we thank and honor Him, not only for eternal salvation in Jesus, but also for revealing this precious gift to His children in time. Luke tells us that this one "fell down on his face at his feet." If we love the Lord for His mercy toward us, should we not also be at His feet? Do we believe that those to whom God reveals Himself are the body of Christ? Brethren, the body of Christ, His children, should be at His feet, thanking Him and pouring out their heart unto Him for His great and precious mercy, for it is through Him that they who were once lepers and without merit have obtained righteousness and holiness. Is not this the "ministry of reconciliation" which He committed to His ministers?

Jesus said to the one that returned, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." The scripture does not tell us where the other nine were. Jesus had told them to show themselves unto the priest. The Levitical law give details how the priests were to determine whether or not a leper was cleansed. Is this not a type of men being justified by the law service? The apostle Paul tells us that the "law worketh wrath" (Rom. 4:15). A sinner cannot keep the law unto perfection, and is therefore justly condemned. Yet, it seems that a great many of God's children endeavor to be justified and seek righteousness in keeping the law service. Were the nine that did not return deceived, and after being cleansed on the way, seek to be deemed clean, righteous and holy by the priest? Surely they were in a wretched and miserable condition, yet they were cleansed "as they went". They were not cleansed in showing themselves unto the priest, but cleansed by Jesus. What did Jesus say to the one that returned? Does He tell him to turn to the priest or the law service? No, but He says, "Arise, go thy way."

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. We are not bound unto the law service for our cleansing, redemption and justification. Thanks be to God that we are not bound, but made free in Jesus. He was able to keep the law to every jot and tittle. Dear brethren, He has done for us what we are not able to do for ourselves. I am made to say with the Psalmist David, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me." Let us not be quick to judge the nine, but may we return to give praise and honor to Jesus.

BROTHER BRIAN BALLENGER
6949 Baker Road
Hagerstown, Indiana 46346

SAVED BY GOD'S MERCY

Titus 3:5, reads as follows: "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." Now according to my view of the above scripture, Arminianism, with all its cunning craftiness, is compelled to be silent along this line; especially if they emphasize the plain way in which the apostle pointed out the plan of salvation. He said emphatically that we are not saved by our righteous works, but according to the mercy of the Lord.

Arminians will agree that this is all true, but they will not stand up to it, nor will their ministers preach according to it. They insist that there is a work for the unregenerate sinner to do in order to his eternal salvation, and that it is his duty to perform this task or he will be eternally lost. They say that the unborn sinner must hear and believe the word of God. Well, I insist that whenever a sinner hears and believes the word of God, he is *already* saved. He is not saved by or because of his hearing the word, but he hears because of being saved. "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47). It is as plain as it could be stated. No use for any man to cavil over it.

If the alien sinner does not hear (understandingly) the word of God, it is because he is in a dead state, and the dead cannot hear,

cannot see, nor believe. Then if a poor sinner is saved, it is by the mercy of God, which He shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus our Saviour. —**M. D. Rice**, (Colored) *Primitive Monitor*, 1918.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCES

Beloved Brethren Thompson and Goble: The Monitor is still filled with good things, and every number so far has been all that could be expected from imperfect and finite mortals. May it continue to be as good. I would write oftener if it were not for two things. One is that the Monitor is already filled and crowded with matter from able and sound writers; and another is my own inability to write to edification. I propose, however, to write briefly upon the above named subject, and leave it for your disposal.

Among the very numerous instances recorded in the divine oracles of the special providences of God over and in behalf of His dear children who have trusted in Him, I have chosen for the present article, Paul's going to Rome to preach. When our God declares His purpose to perform anything, or to have it done by any of His servants, though the end or accomplishment may be far in the future, yet all the chain of circumstances and events connected therewith are under His control, though they may be entirely out of the sight of mortals till they transpire; and we have to look back rather than in the future to see how His mysterious hand has worked. In Acts 23:11, the apostle was informed by his Lord that he must "bear witness also in Rome," as well as at Jerusalem, but, as yet he does not know when nor how he is to get there. Jerusalem, where he then was, being east of the Mediterranean sea, and Rome over a thousand miles by water, northwest. Does he appoint a missionary board to direct? No. Does he require the churches and the rich men of the world to raise a few thousand dollars to charter a ship, and to procure an honorable outfit? No, not that. But how did he get to Rome, and when? We shall see by reading from Acts 23:16 to 28:16. A few only of the interesting events in the mysterious footsteps of divine Providence will be noted.

More than forty of his persecuting countrymen formed a plot, and took an oath, (first abstinence society) that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul; but, in the providence of God, a nephew reveals to the apostle their murderous intentions, and he is sent under guard to Cesarea, on the sea-coast, some sixty miles northwest of Jerusalem. So the plot utterly failed, for Paul must yet go to Rome. At Cesarea he was kept under guard over two years; and if Paul's preaching at Rome was to save sinners from the wrath to come, many were lost by the delay of the apostle in getting there; but thanks be to God, "Salvation is of the Lord," and not of men or angels.

He is accused before Felix at Cesarea, and in his defense he preached Jesus and the resurrection to his Hebrew accusers, and the Gentile governor. Again he is tried, but his enemies fail to convict him of crime. When Festus came into power he inquired of the apostle whether he would meet his accusers at Jerusalem again and be tried. But knowing their murderous intentions, and being a Roman citizen, he could, and did, legally appeal to Caesar at the city of Rome, the emperor of the Roman empire. He was driven to take this course by his persecutors; and in the providence of God, the way is opened for him to go to Rome, and to bear witness, and thus we see that "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psa. 76:10). Before he departed for Rome he was brought before an august court of king, governor, and other noted men, and in their presence he declared his wonderful conversion, and proclaimed the death and resurrection of Jesus.

They are bound by law to send him a prisoner to Rome, and thus, in the inscrutable providence of God, the persecutors of this eminent apostle drive him to where God intended him to go; and instead of a mission board, and a large sum of money made up by churches, and a farewell song, we see him depart to his field of labor as a prisoner, at government expense! "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known" (Psalm 77:19). They are wrecked on the voyage, but none are lost, and while wintering among barbarians, God enables His servant to

heal the sick of the island, and they in turn freely furnished the unfortunate people with a full supply of provisions.

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.”

But in spite of wreck, and storm, and dangers he landed at the city of Rome, as God had said he should, and there for two whole years he bore witness to the truth of Jesus and the resurrection, “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:31).

If Paul had preached to please the people, he would not have incurred their displeasure; and if they had loved him and his doctrine, they would not have sought his life; and if he had not had a nephew, then what? But there were no *ifs* in the case, but God said to him, “So *must* thou bear witness also in Rome.” Nothing can miscarry that which God designs to do, or have done. Should we not go on and serve Him, and trust Him for His guidance?—Elder I. N. Vanmeter, *Primitive Monitor*, 1886.

AN OLD ERROR REFUTED

“My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, 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” (Psalm 139:15-16).

Immediately preceding the text David declares this body to be fearfully and wonderfully *made* and as the type was *made* by the hand of God, so, in the text he declares the anti-type was *made*; spiritually we “are his *workmanship*, created in Christ.”

A speculation which has confused our people is that of “eternal children—the church as old as Christ Himself,” etc. Here the

Psalmist says this frame *was made*, and concludes the text by saying they were seen of God *when as yet there was none of them*.

Elder Potter (Lemuel) was once approached by a member who had heard him, the member saying: "Brother Potter you seem to think God had no children until he created them."

"Thank you," said Elder Potter; "you understand me exactly—this is what I tried to say."

A moments thought will convince us that this eternal individual existence error makes void every operation of grace. One never lost will not have need of a Saviour. God could have *known* an eternal child, but could never have *foreknown* one.—Elder Charles H. Waters, *Zion's Advocate*, 1906.

GOD DESERVES OUR FIDELITY

Under God's mighty hand all His children should humble themselves, casting all their care upon Him who careth for them. He is pleased to have them trust in Him with all their hearts. When they murmur at what befalls them they murmur at Him. It is a sweet privilege they have to confide in Him—to trust all their affairs in His hand. Then under the shadow of His wings, what a secure and delightful resting place that is!

Oh, how sweet to lie passive in His hand and know no will but His! He cannot make mistakes or do wrong, for He is too wise and good. To love Him dearly, to submit to Him patiently, to confide in Him implicitly, to serve Him faithfully, should be the delight of all who have reasons to believe that He has saved them by His grace and is keeping them by His power.

A faithful friend deserves fidelity from all who would share in the blessings of His friendship. Let all who profess to love Him, then, strive to draw near to Him with a full assurance of faith, and strive to live near to Him in obedience. Then will they feel the protection of His power and rest in the support of His grace. The more we know of the excellency of His loving kindness, the harder

we should strive to live in close touch with Him. He will not forsake us if we are His, then let us not forsake Him. If the oil and the meal fail not, let us glorify Him who supplies us every day.—**Elder John R. Daily**, *Zion's Advocate*, 1904.

THE GOSPEL TEACHES THE LIVING

The man who preaches a doctrine that the world receives has all the evidence he needs that he is preaching contrary to the preachings of Christ and the apostles, for Paul said, as recorded in 1st Cor. 1:23, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." So we claim no more today than Paul claimed in the above text, that the gospel does not quicken the dead soul, but teaches those who have been called out of darkness into light. Then Jesus is the one Who is mighty to save. He and He alone it is who can save a poor sinner and make him love the things he once hated, and He does this by shedding abroad His love in the sinner's heart, which in return makes the sinner love Jesus. No wonder John said, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." This love is not shed in vain, because Paul said, "His love constraineth us;" that is, it overpowers us. In other words, the sinner always loves God in return when God sheds His love in the heart. John said: "We love him because he first loved us," and just as sure as Jesus ever loved us we will some time love Him, and not only love Him, but He will take us home to sweetly dwell with Him forever, because, "He is still traveling in His strength."—**W. E. Brush**, *Zion's Advocate*, 1914.

"The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy." —*Psalm 145:20*.

Men banish God from their presence (in a practical sense), but He remains the same. What if He banished *them* from *His* presence? Would *they* remain the same?

GOD SEES ALL AND KNOWS ALL

It is a sobering thought that our lives are a completely open book to the Lord, and not the least detail is hidden from His view. He even knows our thoughts. Paul said, "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13); and Job asked, "Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps?" (Ch. 31, ver. 4). The Psalmist said, "His understanding is infinite" (Psa. 147:5), and John said, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1st John 3:20).

No one should entertain the slightest notion that they can hide anything from the Lord, and all their words and actions should be governed and guided by this fact, and they should strive to think as much as possible on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, etc., (See Phil. 4:8).

It should serve as a great check upon the carnal inclinations of our human nature to be aware of God's omniscience. He sees what we do, He hears what we say, and He knows what we think; and we must give account to Him for all these things. He deals mercifully with His people, and His chastenings are performed with a view to their correction and improvement, but for the present those chastenings are grievous (See Heb. 12:11). May He help us to serve Him acceptably and live so as to often enjoy the smiles of His face and the tokens of His favor.—*Editor.*

NEWS NOTES

A BROTHER WANTS INFORMATION

Brother Shane Nix is a 27 year old man who is scheduled to be stationed in Puerto Rico in late January. He would like for anyone to write him if they know of any Primitive Baptists in that U.S. Territory. Bro. Nix is a member of the *Tidewater* Primitive Baptist Church in Norfolk, Virginia, where Elder Ed Kirkpatrick is pastor. Send all communications in care of —**Mr. Jonathan Snyder—1932 Blue Knob Rd—Virginia Beach, VA 23464**, or call (804) 479-1015.

NOTICE OF AN ORDINATION SERVICE

Acting on a request from *Mount Carmel* Primitive Baptist Church of Luray, Virginia, to the *Alma* Primitive Baptist Church of Stanley, Va., calling for the ordination of Brother Forest N. Atwood, Jr., to the full work of the Gospel Ministry, the church at *Alma*, while in conference Saturday evening, Dec. 2, 1995, voted unanimously to schedule the ordination services for Saturday, March 2, 1996, beginning at 10:00 AM at *Alma* Church.

We invite all ordained ministers to meet with us for the purpose of considering the ordination of Brother Forest to the office of Elder.

This notice is to be considered as an invitation to all our sister churches to meet with us for these services. The Lord willing the ordination service will be held after lunch.

Done by order of *Alma* Church, Dec. 2, 1995.—**Elder Ernest M. Long**, Pastor, **Sister Deborah Snellings**, Church Clerk.

DEDICATION SERVICE

At long last the congregation of *Palm Chapel* Primitive Baptist Church in Crestview, Florida, has moved into its new meeting house. We thank God for His mercies upon us for giving us a place that the gospel of God's grace may be proclaimed and the simplicity of the Lord's house may be maintained.

A dedication service has been planned for Sunday, Feb. 25, 1996. Regular morning services are scheduled at 10:30, followed by lunch, and then the dedication service at 2:00 that afternoon. Elder Lasserre Bradley, Jr., of Cincinnati, Ohio, has agreed to be with us for both meetings. Please pray that this meeting will be blessed by the presence of God's Spirit and that all the endeavors by the little church called *Palm Chapel* will be to His praise.

The church is located at 1900 PJ Adams Parkway in Crestview. For further information please call **Brother David Cadle** at (904) 682-6828.

BOOK OF POEMS

My poem collection, titled "Walking With God" has swelled to about 90 pages. I put these together by hand as they are requested and would not want anyone to order them expecting a professional binding. If you desire a copy simply write and request it. I make no charge but if you should desire to help with the expense I think about \$5.00 would cover what cost I have in them, not counting time, labor, etc. To order write to: **Elder Ralph Harris—Rt 1 Box 356—Caryville, FL 32427.**

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Until further notice all **NEW** subscribers to the A&M will only have to pay half the regular subscription rate. The other \$5.00 will be paid by one of our generous readers. **This offer applies only to new subscribers, not to renewals.** It provides an excellent opportunity for many of our readers to introduce the paper to some friend or loved one. Please send all subscriptions, donations and changes of address to—**Mr. Samuel J. Baggaly—1141 Elm St.—Front Royal, VA 22630.**

DONATIONS TO THE ADVOCATE AND MESSENGER, INC.

Gladys O. Denny, Ind., \$15.00; Evelyn Yates, Va., \$5.00; Elder Mark Green, Ark., \$40.00; Mary Lee Olinger, Va., \$5.00; Estel H. Ashby, Va., \$10.00; Elder Ralph K. Culy, Ind., \$20.00; Esther Shepherd, Ind., \$10.00; Charles W. Autry, Ga., \$25.00; Sis. Ruth Mortenson, Neb., \$10.00; George A. Eckler, Ind., \$10.00; James and Virginia Creel, Va., \$10.00; Ray Rountree, Ga., \$15.00.

If we devote our energies to defense of truth, it is a great work, and it is better to have Divine approval with public sentiment against us than to be popular and yet in error.—*Elder J. H. Oliphant, 1914.*

SECOND SUNDAY

BATTLE RUN - Rappahannock Co., Va.; Meets 2nd Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder E. S. Skeen, Pastor. Rt. 7, Box 7420, Palmyra, Va. 22963, Tel. (804) 589-8551; Sister Tessie Skeen, Clerk. Rt. 7, Box 7420, Palmyra, Va. 22963, Tel. (804) 589-8551. June '96

LITTLE FLOCK - 9 miles southeast of Amelia, Va., take Rt. 38 out of Amelia to Rt. 614, left on Rt. 608, right on 677 at church sign, church on left; 1st. Sun. 10:30 a.m., 2nd Sun. 10:30 a.m. and Sat. before at 10:30 a.m.; Communion 2nd Sunday in June; Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P.O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Kim Watley, Clerk, 13671 Lodore Road, Amelia, Va. 23002, Tel. (804) 561-2133. July '96

MARTINSBURG - Martinsburg, W. Va., Corner Wilson St. and New York Ave.; meets 2nd Sun. 10:30 a.m.; Elder Phillip Johnson, Pastor, P. O. Box 283, Strasburg, Va. 22657, Tel. (540) 465-3118; Clerk, L. E. Farley, 9526 Downsview Pike, Williamsport, Md. 21795, Tel. (301) 223-6195. Mar. '96

MILL CREEK - Hamburg, Va., about 2 miles west of Luray, Va., off Hwy. 211 at Rt. 766; 2nd Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ernest Long, Pastor, Rt. 2, Box 236, Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763; Gary Bauserman, Clerk, Rt. 3, Luray, Va. 22835, Tel. (540) 743-5014. April '96

NORTH FORK - Held in Upperville Primitive Baptist Church, Upperville, Va. 2nd Sunday 10:30 a.m. Elder J. Frank Coppedge, Pastor, SR4, Box 176A, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4357; Sister Elsie S. Payne, Clerk, 571 Curry Springs Place, Hamilton, Va. 22068-9801, Tel. (540) 338-5531. May '96

ROBINSON RIVER - Brightwood, Va. on U.S. Rt. 29; Meets 2nd Sun. at 10:30 a.m. and Sat. before at 2:00 p.m.; 4th and 5th Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder J. Tolliver Utz, Pastor, S.R. 5, Box 540, Madison, Va. 22727, Tel. (540) 948-4803; Aubrey E. Utz, Clerk, Madison, Va. 22727, Tel. (540) 948-4360. Dec. '96

THIRD SUNDAY

HAWKSBILL - Near Stanley, Va. 3rd Sun. 11:00 a.m. and Sat. night before 7:30 p.m. Elder Ernest Long, Pastor, Rt. 2, Box 236, Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763. Johnnie W. Huffman, Clerk, Shenandoah, Va. Tel. (540) 652-8625. April '96

MT. BETHEL - Three Churches, W. Va.; Services 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Douglas Heare, Pastor, H. C. 74 Box 87-I, Romney, W. Va. 26757-9721, Tel. (304) 822-3228; Wilson Saville, Clerk, R. R. 2, Box 78, Oldtown, Md. 21555, Tel. (301) 478-5253. Aug. '96

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

SOUTH RIVER - Browntown, Va.; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Phillip Johnson, Pastor., P.O. Box 283, Strasburg, Va. 22657, Tel. (540) 465-3118. Mrs. Marie Partlowe, Clerk, 2209 Gooney Manor Loop, Bentonville, Va. 22610, Tel. (540) 635-4718. July '96

THORNTON GAP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - Near Sperryville, Va.; Meets 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Rodger Frazier, Pastor, 12045 N. Avey Rd., Remington, Va. 22734, Tel. (540) 439-3606; Aaron M. Moyer, Clerk, Rt. 3, Box 3715, Ruckersville, Va. 22968, Tel. (540) 985-7409. July '96

THUMB RUN - Near Marshall, Va.; Take Rt. 647 off of Rt. 55 (Flint Hill Road) about 5 miles, turn left off 733 - about 2 miles to the church; Coming off Rt. 211 on 688 (Orlean Road), turn right on Rt. 732 in Orlean, Approx. 4 miles to Church, Meets 3rd Sunday and Saturday before at 10:30 a.m., Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P. O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Mrs. Clydie Klopp, Clerk, 5867 Free State Road, Marshall, Va. 22115. April '96

FOURTH SUNDAY

BARROWS RUN PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - 5 miles south of Warrenton, Va. on U.S. Route 29 and 15; 4th Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Raymond Pressley, Pastor, P.O. Box 54, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4337; Mary Lee Olinger, Clerk, 67 Frazier Rd., Warrenton, Va. 22186, Tel. (540) 347-3538. Mar. '96

CEDAR CREEK - Frederick Co. near Marlboro, Va. and just a few miles northwest of Middleton, Va.; 4th Sun. 10:30 a.m. Elder Ernest Long, Pastor, Rt. 2, Box 236, Stanley, Va. 22851, Tel. (540) 778-2763. Sister Carol E. Swanson, Clerk, Rt. 1, Box 229K, Strasburg, Va. 22657, Tel. (540) 465-8484. May '96

HAPPY CREEK - 202 Church St., Front Royal, Va., corner of Stonewall Dr. and Church St.; Meets 2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. and 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday before the 4th Sunday at 6:00 p.m.; Elder Gary Utz, Pastor, 429 West Duck St., Front Royal, Va. 22630, Tel. (540) 636-9434; Sister Hazel Priest, Clerk, 321 Blue Ridge Ave., Front Royal, Va. 22630, Tel. (540) 635-4764. June '96

MT. CARMEL - South Broad St., Luray, Va.; Meets 4th Sun. at 10:30 a.m. and Sat. before at 7:30 p.m., 5th Sun. at 10:30 a.m.; Frances B. Hite, Clerk, 10 Greenfield Road, Luray, Va. 22835, Tel. (540) 743-3211. Dec. '96

SALEM PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - 9100 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Richmond, Va. 23225; Meets 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder James R. Kosch, Pastor, 168 Longstreet Ave., Fredericksburg, Va. 22401; Sis. Lynda Garner, Clerk, 110 Boykins Ave., Colonial Heights, Va. 23834, Tel. (804) 526-2464. Dec. '97

UPPERVILLE, Va. - 4th Sun. 10:30 a.m.; Elder Dwayne Fletcher, Pastor, 2456 Hunting Ridge Road, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 667-4756; Sister Bessanna Trussell, Clerk, 138 Steepwood Lane, Winchester, Va. 22603, Tel. (540) 662-1605. Dec. '95

WASHINGTON CHURCH - (Meets at Bethel Church) 9101 Leesburg Pike (Rt. 7), Vienna, Va.; Meets 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Bill Dillon, Pastor, 8459 Ararat Court, Annandale, Va. 22003, Tel. (703) 573-0854; Sis. Patty Dillon, Clerk, 8459 Ararat Court, Annandale, Va. 22003, Tel. (703) 573-0854. Dec. '95

WHITE OAK - On the White Oak Road, about 6 miles east of Fredericksburg, Va.; Meets 2nd and 4th Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Rodger Frazier, Pastor, 12045 N. Avey Rd., Remington, Va. 22734, Tel. (540) 439-3606; Betty Jo Lael, Clerk, 9701 Peppertree Rd., Spotsylvania, Va. 22553. March '96

