

Advocate and Messenger

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136th Year APRIL 1997 No. 4

Advocate and Messenger

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

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IMMORTAL TREASURES

Thy word, dear Lord, with promise sweet
Doth to the righteous say,
That Thou wilt give sufficient grace
To hold them on their way.

No worthwhile thing wilt Thou withhold
From those who walk upright,
They shall be filled with holy zeal
And bathed in heav'nly light.

Immortal treasures, joy untold,
And love beyond degree,
Such are the pleasures Thou dost give
To those who follow Thee.

6-05-94 R.E.H.

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THINK ABOUT IT

Every year during the Christmas season we hear statements to the effect that this is the time of year when we should all stop and reflect on the many blessings we have received and give thanks to God. Now it is not my desire to make anyone an offender for a word, but I think if we will pause and seriously consider such statements we may want to be a little more careful how we express ourselves.

If we will give a little thought to the matter will we not all agree that reflecting on the many blessings God has bestowed upon us and giving thanks for them is not, and should not be, a seasonal thing? Will we not agree that one season is no better suited for that

purpose than another? Shouldn't that be a daily habit or practice? Shouldn't we be doing that continually? The apostle Paul said he was afraid of those who observed days, and months, and times, and years, because it indicated that his labors among them had very possibly been in vain (See Gal. 4:11).

During the last Christmas season I read the following statement: "This is the season for love, giving, and peace." But again, is love, giving and peace supposed to be seasonal? Shouldn't we manifest our love one toward another just as much one day as another? Shouldn't we be just as giving of ourselves and our substance every other time of the year as we are at Christmas? Shouldn't we seek uncompromising peace just as much one season as another?

I am not condemning anyone, but am simply asking each of you to think about this. —*Editor.*

CHRIST OFFERED HIMSELF TO GOD, NOT TO MAN

The whole fabric of arminianism, or, as I prefer to call it, "popular religion", stands or falls on whether or not Christ offered Himself to mankind for their acceptance or rejection. But did Christ ever make such an offer? Can such a thing be found anywhere between the lids of the Bible? It is easy enough for any conscientious person to find out. They need only acquire a good Concordance and an Authorized 1611 King James Version of the Bible and look up all the references to any form of the word *offer*. If they do so they will soon discover that there is no mention of Christ ever *offering* Himself to any man or set of men. Heb. 7:27 says He offered Himself *up*, but it does not say He offered Himself *to men*. And Heb. 9:14 tells us to whom Christ did offer Himself. Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot "*to God*", and Heb. 10:14 tells us what that offering accomplished: it "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Show me a man who is sanctified in the sense of that text and I will show you a man who was *forever* perfected by

the offering of Christ. And if he was *forever* perfected by that offering, what else remains to be done in order for him to be perfected?

When Christ offered Himself "to God" it was as a spotless sacrifice in the room and stead of "**His people**" (Matt. 1:21). "The good shepherd giveth his life **for the sheep**" (John 10:11). He "loved **the church**, and gave himself **for it**" (Eph. 5:25). He was "offered to bear the sins of **many**" (Heb. 9:28), not the sins of the whole human race—the goats as well as the sheep. And as their Sin-bearer and Substitute He bore the penalty they would have had to bear. He satisfied Justice in their behalf. The curse of the Law was laid *on Him* in their room, and hence He put their sins away "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). For them the sin-debt is fully and forever paid. There is no one who can lay anything to their charge (Rom. 8:33); no one who can condemn them (ver. 34), and no *one* or no *thing* that can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (verses 35-39). All the sins of all the elect were charged to Christ, and consequently the Lord will not impute those sins to them (See Rom. 4:8). It would be the grossest of injustices for God to lay the sins of the elect upon their Surety and Mediator Jesus Christ and then later on lay those same sins to *their* charge. He is a *just* God (Isa. 45:21), and could never be a part of any such unholy procedure.

There was a body (a sinless physical body) prepared for the Son of God (See Heb. 10:5) beginning with its conception of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary (See Luke 1:35). And our Lord assumed this sinless human nature into union with His divine nature in order that He might offer Himself "without spot" **to God**. His was a *perfect* offering, entirely pure in every sense of the word, and it was accepted of the Father as a propitiation for the sins of His people. It covered every sin of every heir of promise for all time, so that one sweet day Christ will come to earth again and take His redeemed people home to Glory where He will say to the Father, "Behold I and the children which Thou hast given me" (Heb. 2:13). Of all which the Father gave Him He will have lost nothing (See John 6:39).

If we have a sweet hope that we will at last be among that happy host we should show our gratitude by a life of devotion to the glory of the One who hung on Calvary's rugged cross in our place. Oh, how I hope to praise His name through ceaseless ages!—*Editor.*

WHY DID CHRIST DIE?

Did Christ die in order to make salvation possible or to give men a chance to be saved?

If the answer is "yes", does that not necessitate the conclusion that it was *not* possible and that there was no chance for men to be saved before He died?

If salvation was *not* possible before Christ died does that not necessitate the conclusion that all those who died prior to His death were eternally lost?

But, if salvation *was* possible before the death of Christ why would He have died in order to give men a chance to be saved and to make that possible which was already possible?

These are questions which no arminian has ever been able to answer intelligently.

If a person takes the position that Christ died to make salvation possible and to give men a chance to be saved, he must either take the position that Christ died to make that possible which was already possible, which is an absurdity, or else acknowledge that salvation was not possible prior to the death of Christ. And, if he takes the position that salvation was not possible prior to the death of Christ then that forces the catastrophic conclusion that all who died prior to the death of Christ were and are eternally lost.

But if a person takes the position that salvation *was already possible* before Christ died he then cannot consistently or sensibly take the position that He died in order to make salvation possible. He must then acknowledge that Christ died for some other reason.

The truth is that Christ did *not* die in order to make salvation *possible* or to give men a *chance* to be saved, but rather to make

salvation an *accomplished fact* in behalf of all those for whom He died, and His death reached all the way *back* to the *first* of His children to be born into this world, and all the way *forward* to the *last* of His children who *will* be born.

Christ *saved His people* from their sins just as the angel told Joseph He would (Matt. 1:21), and any "falling" or "being lost" that may occur in their lives is in a *timely sense* only. They cannot be lost, die, or fall in an eternal sense for their sin debt has been *paid* by their Surety and will never have to be paid again. They may, and often do, sin and suffer, but they can never sin and be *eternally lost*, for that would prove the substitutionary sin-offering of Christ to be a failure. They can, and often do, suffer chastisement from God as a corrective measure and as an act of Parental love, but they can never suffer eternal damnation.

There is great comfort and satisfaction in the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, but anything else produces either total complacency or else great fear, anxiety and confusion. The true gospel is *good news* and makes perfectly good sense, but popular religion produces bondage, fear and uncertainty, for it declares that eternal salvation is not a sure thing to anyone. It maintains that it is *obtained* by performing certain conditions and can only be *kept* by performing certain conditions. And though its advocates *say* they are not teaching salvation by works, the truth is that their *doctrine* necessitates the conclusion that it *is* by works and not by grace.

It is argued by the vast majority of religionists in this country that every man *deserves* a chance to be saved. But we are persuaded to believe that if a person was deserving enough to merit a *chance* he would be too deserving to *need* a chance; too deserving to need saving in the first place; too deserving to be an object of mercy; too deserving to receive anything *by grace*.

The correct definition of *grace* is—*free and unmerited favor bestowed upon an undeserving character*. Consequently there can be no such thing as saving a deserving man *by grace*.

A deserving man might be saved from various temporal circumstances merely because of the fact that his fellow men would

be *obliged* by common decency to save him, but he could never be saved either in a timely or an eternal sense *by grace*. He might be saved from any number of timely calamities because it was the common duty of those around him to come to his aid, but he could never be the object of *grace*. And if he were deserving enough before God that God could not be fair or just unless He gave him a *chance*, then he would be too deserving to need a chance in the first place, and certainly too deserving to be an object of *grace*.

Christ died for the “ungodly”, and for those “without strength” (Rom. 5:6), *not* for people who were so deserving that He had to give them a *chance* in order to be just and fair. He would have been just and fair if He had never died for anybody, for no one was *worthy* to be saved.

Yes, salvation *is* by grace, and it is “through faith” only in the sense that God was *faithful* to do what He had promised. The *faith* we are speaking of is clearly “not of ourselves” (See Eph. 2:8). The only conditions that were ever connected with *eternal* salvation were performed by Christ, and He “finished” the work.—*Editor*.

SOBERING THOUGHTS

Paul told the people at Athens that God is not far from any of us, “for in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:27-28), and I believe he was referring here to the fact that God is omnipresent and is consequently everywhere at once, so that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without His knowing it and taking notice of it. In His Divine essence He fills the immensity of space and surrounds the farthest galaxy with His being. He is not limited by either terrestrial or celestial boundaries. He is God, and as such He far exceeds the feeble limits of our comprehension, so that we can only stand in awe and proclaim, “How great Thou art?!”

God is not far from any of us in His Godhood, though He be ever so far from us feelingly and manifestly. And it is a comfort even in those times when He seems “clean gone forever,” to know in

our heart of hearts that He is still with us and will never leave us nor forsake us (See Psalm 77:8 and Heb. 13:5).

It is in God that we first *live*, then *move*. The religious world has this completely backwards. They teach us that if we will *move* we will *live*; but that will not work in nature and neither will it work in grace. Life must precede action. It has never been seen otherwise, and never will be. God gives *natural* life and there is *natural* activity—He gives *spiritual* life and there is *spiritual* activity.

It is in God that we have our being. In other words we owe our very existence to Him. It should be self evident that “it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves” (Psa. 100:3). And if He did not sustain our lives we would immediately have no being. Sobering thoughts are these. Let us think on these things and be humbled.—
Editor.

HE KNOWS ALL THINGS

Before the world was ever formed
The Lord knew ev'ry heir of grace;
He knew the color of their skin
And ev'ry feature of their face.

He knew each thought each one would think
And ev'ry word each one would speak,
Where each of them would dwell, and when,
Their ev'ry valley, ev'ry peak.

He knew each pain they e'er would feel,
Each heartache, grief or doubt:
He knew each conflict they would face
And how, at last, it would turn out.

Blind unbelief cannot embrace
So great and wise a God as this,
'Tis faith alone that looks to Him
And longs for heav'nly life and bliss.

How comforting by faith to know
We have a God so great and wise
Who knows all things and has all pow'r
And ne'er is taken by surprise.

He always occupies the throne
And rules by ancient, sure design,
He wields a calm and sure control
For all eternity and time.

'Tis good to know that in the end
God's purpose will have been worked out
And great will be the day when He
Descends from heaven with a shout.

11-10-96

R.E.H.

THE BOOK OF ACTS AND CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

A few years ago a young brother who had been fighting his duty for some time asked to receive baptism. We had been hiring some ladies for cooks for our meeting at the time and all of them expressed great surprise that any of our young people would not have been baptized at infancy. Theirs all were. But we Old Baptists say the proper way is for the Lord's people to pass through something we call an experience of grace. We deem it to be one of the essentials for worship. Yet, it is a greatly misunderstood principle.

We have all known of individuals who had enlightening visions or dreams, even to seeing departed loved ones, or our Lord Himself. Or we may hear of some who passed through periods of great rebellion like Saul of Tarsus only to be arrested in the way. We may hear of some who were going along with no concern for religion, only to be suddenly found of the Lord, as Jacob was. I knew one brother who said he was fishing on the banks of a stream on a Sunday

when this happened, and another who was gambling in a back room of an old gas station. We may know of some who found their need of the Lord revealed through illnesses, accidents, losses, or great troubles. But there are many who cannot relate such things, and have concluded that they do not possess an experience of grace. If they love the Lord they are wrong about that.

An experience of grace is that which turns an individual from nature's ways to know and love the Lord, creating in him a hunger for Bible truth, making him to crave the Lord's mercies, forgiveness, and grace, giving him a desire for a place in the Lord's true church. Whatever the experiences were that taught you to love those things is your experience. One of the best of all is to have had godly parents who never failed to take you to church, so that you never knew anything else and therefore never had to unlearn a lot of error. God is truly good to such persons.

Nor is an experience limited to the beginnings of this love, for it follows the saints to their dying day, as long as God in His providence leads them. There are experiences of grace given daily, though often we have to look back upon them from later years to recognize them as such. It wouldn't surprise me at all if the moment of our death may not be the greatest experience saints will know in this world.

Why is it essential? Because all nature leads us to seek our own ways, to trust in self. This has been so ever since Eden, when the first man fell to temptation to become as a god. If our Lord had not opened their eyes, the disciples would not have preached at Pentecost (Acts 2), nor would those in that congregation have been any different than those others who said the apostles were drunken. The best of parents, and the best of religious teachers, cannot impart spiritual judgment, for only God can do that. Nor can any but God strengthen believers to face adversity, or to enable them to see God's hand in it.

One thing I have often wished was that, like those first disciples (Acts 1) who met together to visit about what things they had seen and heard, the saints would talk to each other more about their experiences. Have you noticed that Paul's experience was something he preached and talked about everywhere, to the church and to

governors and kings? It is good for everyone, even while it confuses and confounds the world. I can say with the Psalmist (Psalm 107:2), "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." The church of God is supposed to be different from the world, not to conform to it, and there is nothing in the world like this. If we could put a bunch of saints, strangers to each other, in one room and have them all relate their experiences of grace, it would be the foundation for a wonderful fellowship, and at the same time it would erase a lot of criticisms, judgments, and suspicions strangers often hold toward others. If this be the foundation for christian charity, I think it is also the basis for all true praise, and is what made the song of the uncountable multitude (Rev. 7) so harmonious.

An experience of grace is not confined to any age, place, or circumstances. Church members aren't the only ones to have them by any means, for God works with His own wherever they are, each in the necessary way. Do not think, my friend, that His saints in some heathen land cannot praise God! If God appears to them they can and will, just as Adam did, or Job, or Moses at the burning bush. We read of Abraham's servant who said, "I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." A little later he found honest courage to add, "I will not eat until I have told mine errand," and this he did not knowing how it would be received. He only knew that if God were in the matter, it would be accepted, and if not, he must continue his search.

As we have said before, the worldly wise believe they can qualify the unlearned (the heathen, children, the wicked) as church members by passing them through schools, and some have presumed to create preachers by similar means. Afterwards of course they deceive by telling them they are christian. Not so! only God can create a worshipping obedient heart. Thus, in the Books of Acts, which serves as our precedent, God opened the hearts of the eunuch (Acts 8), Cornelius and his household (Ch. 10), the Gentiles (Ch. 13:48), Lydia (Ch. 16:14), and countless others. Festus might think Paul mad through much learning, but Agrippa who had come to believe the prophets did not think so (Ch. 25). God's way works, it serves

to start the saint on his journey but can also hold him steadfast throughout great trials.

Therefore the church has always watched for evidence of this spiritual experience. They see it in fervent songs and prayers, in tears of joy and sorrow when the truth is preached, in little expressions of love for the brethren. They see it in the manner people face great tribulations, and in their joys at deliverances. They see it in those who are unable to see it in themselves, for the Spirit humbles, making the sinner distrustful of himself. This is right, for little people almost never injure the Lord's church. And Judas sayeth unto Him, "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:22).

ELDER RAYMOND WEBB

EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION

It should be no wonder that preachers who are blessed to deliver moving experiential messages have such a warm spot in the hearts of God's people. They speak of something that even the smallest and weakest of babes can understand. The intellect of many is not sufficient to delve into the deep mysteries of godliness, but that which they have felt is real to them, and it is a great comfort to them to be reassured that it is God Who has thus gently and lovingly dealt with them.

In quoting the Old Testament, Christ assured us that "they shall all be taught of God." He, of course, does all things well and so the teaching that He does is without fault. When Paul spoke of his initial experience with the Lord, he expressed it thusly, "Sin revived, and I died." The Lord had taught him that he was a great sinner. His own sinfulness rose up before him and he saw himself justly condemned before the holy God. Only God could have taught him that. He expressed it somewhat differently in another place; "Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." It was that same Christ who came to save him who taught him that he was the chief of sinners.

Pastors ought to strive to instruct God's children in the doctrines of the Bible every opportunity they have, and it is one of their chief joys to see those little ones grow in truth. Some, however, never seem to gain much ground in the logic of the scriptures. Many of the finer points of the great doctrines just seem to escape them, despite our best efforts to expound them. To such as this, there needs to be a liberal dose of references to those things which God teaches, for we can be assured that they have learned *those* things. "Whereas I was blind, now I see," is a fact to which they all can relate. They may not be able to correctly state all the points of doctrine of the incarnation, that great mystery of godliness, but if they have been taught of God, they will be able to see their Immanuel as "altogether lovely," for God has taught them that.

ELDER MARK GREEN

AFRAID TO BE POOR

"I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord" (Zeph. 3:12).

Does it seem that there has generally been a greater fervency in the religion of those who were poor in this world's goods and privileges than in that of those who were "rich, and increased with goods" and in need of nothing materially? Perhaps my impression is wrong, but as I read back through history, it does appear that not many wise, wealthy and noble men are found among those humbly seeking the Lord's face. A man does not have to be poor to be truly devout, but more often than not that seems to be the case.

God says in our text that He will have His poor. "In the midst of thee" will be a people who will trust in the Lord because they have been taught by hard experience that He is the only one Who can be trusted. Their poverty has brought them to the most blessed place

they could find in this sinful world - the feet of their Saviour. To be among them is joy unspeakable.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," our Lord said. Instead, we seem afraid to be poor, both spiritually and materially. We seem to have a fear of sinking below the world's standard of what is acceptable. We will sacrifice spiritual fatness if we can feel satisfied with ourselves. It is of small consequence that we have wandered far from the Lord if we have carnal security. I often wonder if I am afraid of being thus wealthy, or afraid of being poor. It is a subject that deserves my sober consideration.

ELDER MARK GREEN

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

In I Tim. 3:16 Paul says, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..." In this verse the apostle declares the great truth that Jesus Christ is God. This is one of the most important foundational truths of the word of God. The Scriptures are so saturated with this teaching that in order for one to deny it he must also deny the infallibility and inspiration of the Bible. Therefore, a child of God who seeks to defend this great truth must also be able to defend the inspiration and infallibility of the word of God.

The truth of the deity of Christ is not a matter of contention among the Primitive Baptists. We would sooner question the law of gravity than the deity of Christ. This article seeks to confirm that which you already know and better equip you to defend this truth against those who would challenge it. As John said, "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."

The doctrine of the deity of Christ is important for many reasons. First, it is important because it is TRUTH! As John said, "For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever" (II John 2).

Second, this doctrine is important because to deny it is dishonoring to God. In John 5:23 the apostle says, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

Third, believing and confessing this truth is one of the ways in which a child of God is manifested. In I Cor. 12:3 we read, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Again John said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God..." When Jesus was confronted by the Jews, they said, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you" (John 10:24-26).

The fourth reason this doctrine is important is that believing this truth is one of the prerequisites for baptism. In Acts 8:36-38 we read the account of Philip and the Eunuch. Notice what Philip's answer to the Eunuch's question is as you read. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

The fifth reason for the importance of this doctrine is that the Church stands upon it. When Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered and said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 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" (Matt. 16:16-18). The Church therefore stands upon the solid Rock, Jesus

Christ, and the truth that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Finally, this truth is important because our salvation depends on its being true. If Jesus was anything less than God manifest in the flesh, then the sacrifice He made at Calvary would not have been acceptable. We would still be in our sins and as Paul said, "of all men most miserable." But of course Jesus Christ *is* God manifest in the flesh and thus our salvation is complete in Him. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).

As we said, the Bible is saturated with the doctrine of the deity of Christ. In addition to the plain declarations of our Lord recorded in the Gospels, the apostles themselves under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit declared this great truth. John states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made," and in verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." These verses confirm that Jesus Christ is the same Creator God of Genesis 1.

Speaking of Jesus Christ the Son of God, the apostle Paul says in Col. 1:15-19, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell..." Heb. 1:3 says, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our

sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high..." Col. 2:9 says, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

These are just a few of the multitude of scriptures that declare the Deity of Christ. Space will not permit us to list more. I hope you will take time to look up all the verses that pertain to this doctrine and fortify your faith with them.

While Christ was on earth the world sought to lay hands on Him and kill Him when He proclaimed His deity. When he said in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one," the next verse says, "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him." As a matter of fact, it was upon this very point that our Lord was convicted and sentenced to die at Calvary. "Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death" (Mark 14:61-64).

Since His resurrection and return to heaven, the world being unable to assail Him, has sought to lay hands on and destroy the scriptures that teach the truth that Jesus Christ is God. John identifies those who would deny the deity of Christ in I John 4:3, "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." As God's people we should be always ready to confess and defend this great truth, knowing that, "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (I John 4:5-6).

ELDER LONNIE MOZINGO, JR.

No tradition of men will ever be practiced long enough to achieve sacred authority.

ADDITIONAL DON'TS

Elder W. N. Tharp's "**Don'ts for Young Baptist Preachers**," first published in 1915, and republished in the January 1997 issue of the **ADVOCATE AND MESSENGER**, contains good advice, and his ten points are relevant for all ministers, whether young or old. Although his admonition did not deal with doctrinal or theological matters, I am confident Old Baptists, especially our ministry, would be perceived much more positively if his counsel had been followed down to the present day.

Elder Tharp's list could be variously expanded, but I believe two additional points are worthy of serious consideration. They are: (1.) "Don't try to incorporate the gamut of our theology in a single sermon; it can't be done, and trying to do so is neither instructive nor edifying. (2.) Don't waste time "skinning" arminians; after all, that's not "rightly dividing the word of truth."

My personal experience in listening to many, many sermons leads me to propose the two additional points. Also, these proposals gain credence by the input I've received from associates who are not Old Baptists, and by the way we are typically represented by the public media. The following example quoted from page 269 of Frances E. Adair's **A LITTLE LEAVEN** (1983, Cherokee Press) illustrates both points.

"..., so she and the children walked to the meetin' which began at eleven o'clock and lasted until three. She wasn't surprised that the services lasted so long. She had heard Brother Brazleton before at the Cross Roads church, but she endured for she did want her children to see a foot washing.

Rambling, his disconnected preaching started in Gethsemane but quickly shifted to Jonah's encounter with the whale. He then flitted through the doctrines of election, predestination, the Virgin Birth, and his versions of the "Burning Bush" and the "Red Sea" deliverance. Finally, he got around to emphasizing baptism and foot washing, and along the way and in no uncertain terms, he vilified

arminian theology, singling out the Methodists' mode of baptism, their Sunday School, and missionary societies. Many of the indignant Methodist onlookers left, but Nancy with her girls, sat there on those puncheon seats.

At last, when Brother Brazleton did sit down after he had preached at length against 'sprinkling,' it was Brother Coffee's time to exhort. He took up Brother Brazleton's theme and emphasized it by saying: 'I'd ruther my younguns 'uld roam the neighbors' fields any Sunday huntin' dewberries and blackberries than fer 'em to be found in a Methodist Sunday School a-hearin' talk of fallin' frum Grace. Ah La! Why I tell you-uns, I'm pow'ful glad I cain't lose my religion.'

While the above example is taken from a book of fiction, with a setting around the turn of the century, doesn't it have a familiar sound, like some sermons we've heard even in our present day? If we're honest with ourselves, we'll have to shamefully admit it does. And has the perpetuation of these two don'ts been to our detriment? I believe it has.

Ministers must understand they cannot aptly teach a multitude of topics in one sermon, or for that matter, even exhaust all the ramifications of a single topic in one sermon. The use of a few carefully chosen scriptural passages to teach a single, simple lesson, whether it be for doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness is profitable. And although every hearer may not agree with the way the word of truth is divided, there would be no cause to invite ridicule from a coherently taught lesson.

In preaching his sermon to the Corinthians on the topic of "Not Being Carnal Minded," the Apostle Paul left us a perfect example of the scope and organization of a sermon. First, he quoted the Scriptures from Isaiah to them, and then proceeded to instruct them in the difference between being spiritual minded and carnal minded. Without a single digression from that central theme, he taught them simply, but forcibly and straightforwardly, in the spirit of love. Would anyone question the profitability of that sermon, or could

anyone caricature Paul by the way it was presented? I think not. Furthermore, to conclude a sermon with the congregation wanting more is far more effective than belaboring points repetitiously and causing the congregation to lose interest and wish for a sermon's termination.

Secondly, where in the Scriptures does one find any authorization for condemning those whose religious persuasions differ from ours, and to scoffingly single them out by name? Preaching to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" is authorized, but even that is to be done with "all long suffering and doctrine," and "for love's sake." Untold numbers of individuals have never visited our assemblies more than one or two times, simply because they have been subjected uncharitably to senseless name-calling and public mockery. Honestly, isn't this one of the reasons why our children have hesitated to invite their friends to attend church with them? Haven't we, likewise, been reluctant to encourage our friends to attend for the same reason? The answer is all too plain.

Truth presented aright (that is, rightly divided) may, and often does, provoke internal conflict within the untaught or erroneously taught hearer's mind, but it does not generate outward sarcasm and enmity against those who believe and teach it. The internal conflict and inquiry it generates is good evidence that conversion is at work in a child of God. Jesus taught the Jews that "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" so, those suffering conflict of mind, genuinely seeking the truth, are likely to come again to hear more, and may be liberated (set free) as they understand more and more of the truth.

I don't appreciate the common perception, or stereotype, that many outsiders have of Old Baptists, for I know better. Nevertheless, I'll have to admit we've provoked and encouraged their erroneous judgment by the way some have carelessly presented the word of truth, and we've tolerated it. The world at large will never appreciate our doctrine, but let us do some self examination and refrain from provoking ridicule and hostility by our own attitude of superiority, thoughtlessness, carelessness, and negligence. Failing to do so is

keeping our candles under a bushel, when the Scriptures clearly teach that they should be on candlesticks shining before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

BROTHER WAYNE R. FAIRCLOTH
Valdosta, Georgia

THE OLD WAY OF CHRIST IS BEST

We are called "Old Baptists," "Primitive Baptists," because we seek to maintain the doctrine and practice of our people. I have seriously sought to teach our people this way. I have observed a progressive spirit rising up among us from time to time, urging that we can safely get out of the "old ruts" in many things; but this progressive spirit is a conforming to this world, and is encouraged by the world. "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2).

I do not believe it is a cranky, foolish spirit in us that looks on progression among our people as dangerous to the principles of our people. It is urged that Primitive Baptists may as well have modern improvements in worship as not—that we have as good right to these things as anyone: but when we install all the modern churches' usages, are we *Primitive* Baptists, or would we be Primitives with all the modern customs used among us?

If we desire to hold to the doctrine of Primitives, should we not look with jealousy on what is called modern usages among our people? If we had not opposed them in the division with the Campbellites where would be our plain meetings, our old-fashioned meetings? Had no one stood for primitive customs in the division with the Missionaries, would there be any Primitive Baptists now?

I have been among our people fifty years, and have seen a progressive spirit rise up more than once, and have noticed how the world favors a progressive spirit among us, and gives the progressives all the advantages it can. If no one had urged this progressive spirit among us in the last fifty years we would now be united Primitive

Baptists, as one man together standing for what "Primitive Baptist" means. How good and pleasant it would be to have it so, and if we would now all come together on the old path, and bury the past, and henceforth live together in love. How good it would be!

Love one another and forgive one another, and labor in love to encourage our churches. When division is in our midst it is hard to remove it. It is not common to see strife get less, but it is often the other way.

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." We need the Spirit of Christ so that we can love and forgive one another. It would not be a serious innovation to urge that we pray more and live more godly in this world. If some dear Elder would rise, pleading for more prayer and deeper humility among us, it would not do harm. I would welcome such a man in my home and churches. It would do more good than to plead for the organ or any other innovation.

I read with sorrow of the death of Elder Morris. I never met him but I loved him. I regret that Elder Henderson is aged, and Elder R. W. Thompson and myself and many others among us are white with years, and all of us will soon be called home. Our young Elders need to be humble and trustful; but I believe the Lord will provide the Church with men that will cry aloud and spare not, and will enable them to be faithful to the end. We will not be losers in death. "Better is the day of one's death than the day of his birth" (See Ecc. 7:1). To be with Christ is best; and I find a willingness to go hence more than usual. Till we are called home let us try to be peacemakers.

I wish our brethren would seek some method by which division could be overcome and strife put away. Division is a serious thing. We are to mark them that cause it. We must be faithful, and contend earnestly for truth, but let us do so in love. —**Elder J. H. Oliphant,**
The Gospel Messenger, 1919.

No life can surpass that of a man who quietly continues to serve God in the place where providence has placed him.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

LIVING FOR OTHERS

Life is man's invaluable possession. He is under obligation to himself and to those about him and should constantly strive to get all he can out of life for himself and to make his life a blessing to the world. He can make his life a delight to himself and a help to the community in which he lives if he will. How sad to think that the community would have been better if we had never lived! It is absolutely necessary that we be a benefit to others if we would get much out of life for ourselves.

Human Society is made up of individuals and each exerts an influence on the others. No matter how humble our nativity or how low our estate we must exert an influence among those about us for good or evil. It should be our constant aim to delight and help others. This is the command of all nature to man.

In the Springtime the trees put on their foliage; the flowers bloom; the waters sparkle; the sun day after day arises in glory in the morning and sets in splendor in the evening; the moon gives her light and the stars twinkle at night; and all this is for the comfort and happiness of man. Were they to refuse to fill this station they would become useless. Man is the noblest of all God's creation, but the last to fill the station to which God assigned him. You, kind reader, should live to gladden, enrich, and invigorate the lives of our fellowmen.

The greatest human development is to live for others. This should continually be impressed upon the minds of the young. Life's greatest aim should not be to acquire knowledge or wealth simply for personal gain, but that we may use it for the betterment of mankind. God calls us to this service. We speak of the nurse upon the battlefield in highest terms of respect and appreciation. We cannot all be nurses, but we can serve in the army where we are. The door of opportunity stands open wide and ever. Let us volunteer to do our "bit."

Our duty to man is moral, intellectual and spiritual. We cannot save from the wrath of God's broken law; this is the work of Christ. But we can throw around men that influence which will make them better morally, develop intellectually, and help the Christian along the straight and narrow way. Let's do it. —**Elder William H. Crouse**, *From "What is Truth" 1918.*

CORRESPONDENCE AND NEWS NOTES

THANK YOU

I would like to express my sincere thanks for the cards, letters, phone calls, gifts and especially for the prayers offered in our behalf during my recent hip replacement surgery and recuperation. I am back at work on a limited basis, but hope, after my 3 month checkup March 12th, the doctor will let me resume a full work schedule. I still walk with a cane and probably will for quite some time, but for the most part am pain free, for which we are certainly thankful. I would like to say a special thanks to my home church (New Hope) for the way they have cared for Owreta and me financially while I was unable to work. May the Lord richly bless you all is our prayer.
—**Elder Jim Turner, Jr.**, *Little Rock, Arkansas*.

UNION MEETINGS

WASHINGTON/BETHEL (*9101 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, Virginia*)—Will hold their Union Meeting jointly third Saturday, April 19, with regular services on Sunday. —**Elder Bill Dillon**, Pastor. Ph. 703-573-0854.

BENTONVILLE —First Sunday, May 4. All day Sunday only. To be held in the South Warren Fire Hall at Bentonville, Virginia.—**Elder Tolliver Utz**, Pastor. Ph. 540-948-4803.

MILL CREEK (*Hamburg, Virginia*)—Second Sunday, May 11. All day Sunday only. Scheduled visiting minister, *Elder F. W. Stack, Jr.* —**Elder Ernest M. Long**, Pastor. Ph. 540-778-2763.

HAWKSBILL (*Near Stanley, Virginia*)—Third Sunday, May 18, and Saturday before. All day both days. Scheduled visiting ministers, *Elder Paul Trautner* and *Elder Thomas Mann*. —**Elder Ernest M. Long**, Pastor.

CEDAR CREEK (*Near Marlboro, Virginia*)—Fourth Sunday, May 25, and Saturday before. All day both days. Scheduled visiting minister, *Elder Bob Dickerson*. —**Elder Ernest M. Long**, Pastor.

ANNUAL MEETING AT BETHEL, NASHVILLE

The Lord willing *Bethel* Primitive Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, will hold its Annual Meeting beginning Thursday night, May 1, at 7 o'clock and continuing through Sunday, May 4.

The meeting house is located at 3810 Gallatin Rd. in the Inglewood Community of northeast Nashville. This is one and a half miles south of the Briley Parkway/Gallatin Rd. Interchange (Exit 14B).

Those coming from the south should follow I-65 north through Nashville to Briley Parkway/Opryland Exit. Take Briley Pkwy to Gallatin Rd. (Exit 14B); turn south on Gallatin Rd. Go to 3810 Gallatin Rd.

Coming from the north follow I-65 south to Briley Parkway/Opryland; take Briley to Gallatin Rd. (Exit 14B) and turn south.

Those coming from the east or west should take I-40 to Briley Parkway/Opryland exit and follow Briley Parkway past Opryland to Gallatin Rd. (Exit 14B) and then turn south on Gallatin Rd.

Plenty of private homes are available, but those preferring motel accommodations should contact *Elder Lonnie Mazingo, Jr.* at 615-452-9015. Our heartfelt invitation is extended to you to come and worship with us this year.

DONATIONS TO THE ADVOCATE AND MESSENGER, INC.

Mrs. C. M. Dillon, Ms., \$40.00; Lewis Judd, Va., \$15.00; Elva Payne, Va., \$25.00; Fern A. Barrett, Neb. \$15.00; Mary Lee Olinger, Va., \$5.00; A Friend, Ark., \$20.00; Jerry E. Hirst, Co., \$20.00; Elder Ralph K. Culy, Ind., \$20.00; Elder Ernest M. Long, Va., \$10.00; Ernest Roberts, Ind., \$5.00; Virginia P. Kane, Va., \$10.00; Willard Davis, Ill., \$10.00; Edwin L. & Betty Simmons, Fla., \$5.00; Arnold Holden, Ala., \$10.00; Nancy H. Jackson, Va., \$15.00; Elder Elmer S. Skeen, Va., \$10.00; Haskell Jenkins, Va., \$5.00; Jack C. Griffith, Jr., Ohio, \$5.00; Bro. Dave Roberts, Va., \$10.00; Mrs. Floyd Reed, Ind., \$10.00.

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

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

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

NORTH FORK - Held in Upperville Primitive Baptist Church, Upperville, Va. 2nd Sunday 10:30 a.m. Elder J. Frank Coppedge, Pastor, SR4, Box 176A, Brightwood, Va. 22715, Tel. (540) 948-4357; Sister Elsie S. Payne, Clerk, 571 Curry Springs Place, Hamilton, Va. 22068-9801, Tel. (540) 338-5531. May '97

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

THIRD SUNDAY

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

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

NEW HOME - Covington Co., Ala., From Gantt, Ala. go west 5 mi. on 82 to 23 and take the right; Coming from Red Level, go east on 82 to 23 and take the left, go 4/10 mi. and take the right on 7, go 3 mi. on pavement and 1 1/2 mi. after pavement ends, turn at church sign at top of Clay Hill, Church 1/4 mi.; Meets 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.; Elder Ralph Harris, Pastor, 3687 King Rd., Caryville, Fla. 32427, Tel (904) 547-4615; Bridgman Harris, Clerk, 386 E. Saunders Rd., Lot E. 514, Dothan, Ala., Tel. (334) 792-5614. Mar. '97

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

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

THORNTON GAP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH - Near Sperryville, Va.; Meets 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10:30 a.m.; Wayne Baldwin, Clerk, P.O. Box 572, Culpeper, Va. 22701, Tel. (540) 825-8394. July '97

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

FOURTH SUNDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHITE OAK - On the White Oak Road, about 6 miles east of Fredericksburg, Va.; Meets 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 '97