

Miscellaneous Writings

of

Elder H. C. Ker

Elder H. C. Ker was a co-editor of the “Signs of the Times”. He was in this position from 1906 through 1922. He shared this responsibility and privilege with Elders Chick and Dodson.

Some of the writings contained in this document are from before he was an editor and some are from during the time he was an editor. In order to differentiate you will need to pay attention to the date at the end of each writing. Quite a few of the writings have been specified whether they were Editorials or not. I can’t guarantee that all were correctly identified though.

I know that the writings that are contained in this document are but a handful of all of his writings. I hope though that these will prove a blessing to you the reader!

Please know for most of his articles he simply signed it with a “K”. I took some editor liberality and added in “(Elder) H. C. Ker” at the end of each of his writings.

Tom Adams
January 2023

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ACTS X. 34.

“THEN Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”

The above text is often used to sustain the idea of non-election and free will, but like all other Scripture it belongs to the household of faith, and teaches the doctrine believed and advocated by the Old School Baptists.

After referring briefly to the direct import we hope to establish by this very text the truth that God is a respecter of persons, and that the man respected of God has never had anything to do with the favor shown him, in the sense of meriting it.

Jesus said on one occasion to his disciples, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd. The disciples did not understand these words when they were spoken, but were given to know them afterwards. It is sometimes said that Peter did not know, even on the day of Pentecost, that God would show mercy to the Gentiles. Perhaps he did not, but it will be remembered that in that wonderful sermon he said to his brethren (Jews), “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” “Unto you, and to your children,” was as far as the promise extended to the Jews; they that were afar off were Gentiles, these God would call. Peter may not have known just then what the Spirit meant to signify by the words, “to all that are afar off,” but it pleased the Lord to give him a vision after this by which he was taught God’s purpose concerning the Gentiles. Peter went upon the housetop to pray, “and he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.” Peter was a Jew, and had observed the law, hence no unclean beast or fowl had been partaken of by him. While the lamb, the kid and clean birds were in the sheet or vessel, they had become contaminated by the company of the unclean, hence Peter said all were common and unclean. He did not know at the moment what this vision meant, but doubted what it should mean. Just here we will call attention to the fact that this vessel with all therein was let down from heaven and received up

into heaven again. Does God deal with unclean things? Yes, he does not deal with anything else. The things in the vessel show that all men by nature are unclean, the Jew as well as the Gentile: “God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” But while by nature unclean, God through his Son hath cleansed them, hence we must not call God’s people common or unclean. This vision was for the express purpose, doubtless, to make known to his servant Peter the secret that had been hid from the beginning of the world: that God had a people among the Gentiles. God’s ways are equal, hence before this experience of Peter upon the housetop God had appeared to a certain man in Caesarea, called Cornelius, who was a Gentile, and commanded him to send to Joppa for Peter. His messengers reached Joppa while Peter was wondering what the vision should mean, and told him their mission. God now commands Peter to go with them, doubting nothing. When he came to the house and heard Cornelius tell of God’s work he then said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” He then understood that God has a people among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews, and that all alike are cleansed by the blood of Christ; he then understood the language of Jesus: “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold;” he now understood the true import of his own words on the day of Pentecost: “to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” So far as nationality is concerned God is not a respecter of persons.

We will now take up the opposite view and endeavor to show by our text and its connection that God is a respecter of persons, that he ever has been a respecter of persons, and that the man respected never did merit God’s favor. The very fact that all manner of beasts and creeping things and fowls were in the vessel shows clearly that God is a respecter of persons or he would not have shown that he has a people in every nation, tongue and kindred. If God is not a respecter of persons why did he send Peter to Cornelius that he might hear his everlasting gospel? If God is not a respecter of persons why did he choose a people in Christ before the world began? To manifest his respect unto men he blessed Abel with faith, gave him to know that he (Abel) was righteous. This he did not do for Cain, though by nature there was no difference between them, both were sinners. It was to show him a respecter of persons even with the second born in the earth; strange as it may seem he manifested his choice in the second born or younger throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. When God caused the flood to come upon the earth he showed himself a respecter of person in that he saved Noah and his family, while death came to all other men. In the ark with Noah and his family were all manner of beasts and fowls of the air, and creeping things, exactly the same as were in the vessel which Peter, in vision, saw let down from heaven, and in the ark they represented the same truth that they did in the vision given to Peter.

God himself has preached his own everlasting gospel from the beginning of the world; he preached it to Adam in the garden of Eden, he preached it in Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and all the prophets, and in all the ordinances and sacrifices of the law. Election according to his purpose and grace, and conformity to the image of his Son according to his predestination, has ever been his doctrine, and it will stand when all worlds are passed away. God's first sermon to man was salvation by grace through Jesus Christ. His second sermon was election according to his foreknowledge and will, made manifest in the choice of Abel, while Cain was left in his sins. The same is true in the case of Jacob; by nature there was no difference between him and his brother Esau, but according to God's election there was a great difference, therefore God said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This he said that his purpose according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, and this he said before the children were born, neither having done good or evil. This doctrine was preached by Paul, who said, By grace are ye saved, not of works, lest any man should boast. God loved Jacob in Christ before the world began, he loved him before he was born of the flesh, he loved him when he took advantage of his brother and obtained his birthright, he loved him when he deceived his old blind father, Isaac, and received the blessing intended for Esau. God did not love him because of his wickedness, but because of his own election or respect of persons according to his purpose and grace given him in Christ before the world began. For this same purpose he called Paul and Timothy with an holy calling, not according to their works, he did not hate Esau because of any evil performed by him, but because he was not included in his electing love and mercy. This is God's right, and no man can say to him, Thou art unjust; we are the clay, he is our Potter. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" The whole Bible is filled with this doctrine of God's discriminating grace, which shows God to be a respecter of persons. Time would fail us to mention all places where it is declared and made manifest. But before we bring this feeble effort to a close let us all examine our own experience in this matter. Many of us have been separated from parents, brothers and sisters in the flesh, by this work of grace in our hearts, as we hope. We have also been separated from companions and friends and made to feel alone in the world. Is not this because God is a respecter of persons? In our own life this has been the case, not one of our father's family is an Old Baptist; we are the youngest of the family; if God is not a respecter of persons why should we be where we are and what we are? We feel to say with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." This every child of God will say.

May we all, dear brethren, be more and more confirmed in this doctrine of election which makes God a respecter of persons. O for hearts of gratitude for his abounding grace and mercy in calling us out of nature's darkness into his marvelous light. May he give us to show forth his praises, and his name shall have all the glory.

We now leave the subject for your consideration. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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ACTS XVII. 29, 30.

“FORASMUCH then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”

The apostles were scattered in different parts of the world, in their day, for the purpose of preaching the gospel to all nations. In some places they were received gladly as the servants of God, but more often affliction and persecution were their lot, which was to show them that the servant is not greater than his Lord. The loadings of the Spirit were marvelous in those days. Often the apostles would determine to visit some special place or country, and the Spirit would direct them into some other field where the ground had been prepared for the reception of the word. In the case before us Paul found himself in this strange place, Athens, and while he waited for Silas and Timotheus his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. The Lord worked in him a desire that at least some of that city might know the truth that had so wonderfully comforted and strengthened him; hence he disputed with the Jews in the synagogue and with devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. To all these he preached Jesus and his resurrection from the dead, and through his preaching the way was opened for him to reach higher classes of men. They, hearing of him, and of the “strange things” set forth by him, desired to hear him, but seemed to have, at that time, little respect for him, the philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics saying, “What will this babbler say?” Others said, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus, and the resurrection. The matter of respect, however, did not trouble Paul in the least. To glorify God and magnify his grace seemed his one desire, and he having been a persecutor of the saints of God, and receiving the assurance from

the Lord that he should suffer for his name's sake, expected nothing else but hardship, and nothing turned him away from the service and worship of Jesus. The city being given wholly to idolatry, many thought Paul a setter forth of strange gods, or idols unknown to them, because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. They supposed that Jesus was the name of one god, and the resurrection the name of another, and being anxious to learn about these new things Paul was brought before the noble and great men of the city, that he might explain to them what his preaching meant; and as he stood in the midst of Mars' hill his boldness was discovered, for with rebuke and insult he began his great and wonderful sermon, saying, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." Under ordinary circumstances this would have ended any man's explanation of his position or views, but the Lord had brought Paul to that place and hour for the defence of his everlasting truth, and on the other hand had brought the learned and great to hear it, hence no offence was taken at his boldness. Paul had witnessed some of their devotions, and noticed an altar with the inscription, "To the unknown God," and these words he used as a text, and began by saying, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." in the inscription was confession of an incomprehensible God, and that altar was erected unto him. We have sometimes felt fellowship with them, in that we are frank to confess God is unknown to us, so far as grasping his infinite Being and attributes is concerned. He is so high and so deep and so infinitely glorious that even "the earnest of the Spirit" fails to understand him and trace his path in the sea. Often no language is more expressive of our feeling toward God than the words, "The unknown God." There seems something very strange about this, for Paul said the whole city was given to idolatry, yet he declares "the unknown God" is the God of glory, creation and mercy, and further that those addressed worshiped him ignorantly. The worship of God, even though "ignorantly," is not the worship of an idol, hence it seems that God had worshipers at Athens, reckoned as heathen, who needed to be instructed in righteousness, and Paul was there for that purpose. And he said, The unknown God, whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." In this is shown the difference between the living, unknown God, and the gods of gold, silver, brass and wood. All these needed the help of man, their maker, to set them up and take them down, carry them from one place to another, &c. Those gods had feet, but could not walk, eyes, but could not see, ears, but could not hear, mouths, but could not speak, nor could they, dead themselves, give life and breath. But "the unknown God" could do all these things, and all these things were necessary to be done for man, the creature of God. The same "unknown God" made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and determined the times before

appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. This shows that by nature all men are alike, and that God intended that they should dwell upon the face of the earth, and also that the bounds of their habitation were set, and not one can ever pass the mark set for him. Another purpose of “the unknown God” in the creation of men is that they should seek after him and find him, though he he not far from every one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being. Even the poets of Athens said, “We are also his offspring.” Here Paul took advantage of the expression of the learned to make the everlasting point: If we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. Nothing void of life can have offspring, hence if the men of Athens said, We are God’s offspring, they should not associate “the unknown God” with gods of gold, silver and such like. It would seem that by this time the philosophers and Stoics were beginning to find out what the “babbling” would say.

“The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” This part of the text shows that there was a time of ignorance of God and his eternal purpose, and that he suffered it, or winked at it; but now that Christ had come, accomplished the work of salvation, risen from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God, all men, or all nations, everywhere were commanded to repent; that is, turn away from the worship of gods of gold, silver, stone, &c., to worship the “Lord of heaven and earth.” The command of God is not wooing, persuading sinners to give their hearts to the Lord, but there is power in his word; he speaks and it is done, he commands and it stands fast. Therefore wherever the Lord begins a good work in man he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Repentance and the forgiveness of sins are given to Israel, or, in other words, to all the family of God. Certain men clave unto Paul and believed; thus is shown the working of God with them, and every one that felt the influence of “the unknown God” believed on him and his blessed Son, whom Paul had preached, and his resurrection. Because I live, ye shall live also.

May each subject of divine grace have this blessed assurance of life eternal through Christ, the Head of the church. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Editorial

Signs of the Times
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ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN.

ELDER KER: – I want your views on the length of time that Adam and Eve were in the garden before the transgression. I love the SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Your unworthy friend, IRA NANCE.
Hickory Grove, Ky., Feb. 24, 1914.

Our friend has asked a question not answered anywhere in the Scriptures, and we do not think any one can have the slightest idea as to the exact length of time Adam and Eve were in the garden before the transgression. The Bible most positively declares, however, that they were there, and disobeyed the Lord's commandment relative to the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty-five years on the earth; he was in the garden long enough to know the blessedness of innocence and the guilt of conscience because of sin; there long enough to make aprons of fig leaves; long enough to be clothed by the Lord with skins and receive the promise of eternal life through the Seed of the woman. He lived outside of the garden long enough to know there was no way in himself to enter the garden again where the Tree of life was; the flaming sword turned every way to prevent the approach of the transgressor. No doubt he felt, as well as saw, the necessity of a Mediator between him and God. Hence the days of his years were those of sorrow and affliction while he tilled the ground from whence he was taken. To our mind no man has ever known better than did Adam why the ground brings forth briers and thorns, nor better what it is for man to live by the sweat of his face. He knew experimentally the vast contrast between the garden of Eden, with all its glory, and the cursed ground outside, in which he had to toil and of which he was a part, therefore could appreciate the bitterness of earth life equal if not to a greater extent than any one of his posterity.

It may be in the mind of our friend Nance that the creation of the world, the giving of the law to Adam and the transgression of the same all took place in six days, as we now count time. Such may have been, but each "day" may have been a dispensation of time covering hundreds of years, as careful reading shows a multiplication of all beasts, fowls of the air, fishes of the sea, and every tree brought forth after its kind from the seed during the six days. Does it not seem right to think the Creator gave, in the creation and formation, a nature to all creatures? If so, that nature was the same in the beginning as now, hence it required the same length of time to multiply then as now, and the same time for a tree to bring forth fruit then as now. If this idea is correct, then Adam may have been in the garden several hundred years before the transgression. We have often

refrained from presenting a thought that would seem a little different from the general idea of brethren, lest some one be disturbed by it, yet it is well, we think, to have the pure mind exercised to investigation of things for one's self, that "the Scriptures be the man of our counsel," and not the notion or idea of any man. One thing is most positively sure, which all must admit, viz., when the prophets used the term, "In that day," they did not refer to a day of twelve or twenty-four hours, but to the gospel day, which has now lasted two thousand years about, and the Maker thereof only knows how much longer it will endure. Be it a million years, or even longer, it will be "one day unto the Lord."

We leave these reflections for the careful consideration of our friend. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs of the Times

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April 1, 1914

ADOPTION.

IN Romans viii. 15-17, this subject will be found, and as our mind has been occupied with it more or less for the last few days, we shall offer a few suggestions for the consideration of our readers. The gospel is never preached but what this important doctrine is presented in an indirect way, but seldom is it dwelt upon directly. No subject can be of more importance, nor is any point of doctrine more comforting and assuring than that of adoption.

The apostle presents two spirits in the text before us, and calls special attention to the work of each one. He first assured the brethren that they had "not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Fear hath torment, therefore produces bondage. Before the coming of Christ all men possessed that spirit and feared death in consequence. Even now all who have not received the Spirit of adoption fear death because of the spirit of bondage.

God made promise in the beginning of the world that the seed of the woman (Christ) should bruise the serpent's head, and, having fulfilled His promise, the apostle said, "The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;" and,

“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.” This first quotation shows the perfect work of Christ in the destruction of the works of the devil. The second quotation shows that Christ was made one with “the children “in his incarnation, and that through his death he destroyed him that had the power of death (the devil), and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Death is now abolished, and life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel. This glorious and wonderful truth is given the redeemed in the revelation of Jesus saying as he did to those in bondage when he was in the flesh, “I am the resurrection, and the life: * * * whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” I am the life, he, therefore, who has His life shall never die. If any poor soul sees that death has lost its sting, and the grave its victory, and the fear of death therefore has vanished as the dew before the morning sun, it is because he or she has received the Spirit of adoption.

The adoption law of our country and its work can only in part be compared with the work of the Spirit of adoption. Through that law the son of one man becomes legally the son of another, and if a son, then an heir of the adopter and a joint-heir with his own children. This is the extent of the figure, if we may so call it. The law of adoption cannot change or make void the relationship existing between the actual father and his son. Though adopted by another, and legally his son and heir, he is still bone and flesh of his own father.

Some excellent brethren confess that they do not understand the work of the Spirit of adoption, and ask, How can the children of God, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, be adopted children? Whether any of us understand it or not it is an absolute Bible truth, and should not be denied nor considered lightly. We should remember that in God’s plan, purpose and decree they were children, but not actual children by generation and birth. The natural birth precedes the spiritual; that which is first is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual; hence Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” By natural generation and birth men are the sons of Adam, but by regeneration and the work of the Spirit of adoption they become the children of God, “bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.” The only reason any mortal can give for men and women becoming the children of God, is that God “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” When this scriptural reason is analyzed it seems clear enough to convince the most biased mind that the man predestinated unto the adoption of a child is as passive in the matter as the child born in nature.

The very fact that by nature men are the children of Adam, possessing his life, his nature and his sin, makes it necessary that they be adopted into the family of God; and the work of the Spirit of adoption is so perfect and glorious that the sons and daughters of Adam become the actual children of God, being partakers of his life and divine nature, and are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, (Romans viii. 9,) hence are heirs of God through Christ.

We understand the work of the Spirit of adoption to be close kin to the spiritual birth, as it is called, and will call your attention to John i. 12, to establish our opinion: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Power was given men to become the sons of God; it was through their birth of the Word of God, that incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever, that they became the sons of God. In our text we are told that through the Spirit of adoption we cry, Abba, Father; the cry always follows the birth, and those who were the children of Adam are now the children of God through Christ, the Spirit of adoption, and if children, then heirs of God their Father and joint-heirs with Christ, the only begotten Son. This seems too wonderful, too good for poor, halting sinners, yet it is God's word.

We shall not attempt to enumerate the wonders and glory of the inheritance of Christ, but whatever he is heir to, the children, by adoption, share in the same measure.

Immediately the suffering of Christ is mentioned, as though it were necessary for the children to suffer with him that they be glorified together. This suffering with him does not mean that the children sweat as it were great drops of blood as he did, nor that they wear a crown of thorns, nor be nailed to the cross, but that they shall suffer for sin with him. He bare our sins in his own body, therefore knows the guilt and iniquity of all his people; he was pressed down as a cart under many sheaves. Is it a wonder that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! Each one must suffer in his own measure with Christ. If it is in any way through suffering that we are glorified together with Christ, we should not think of the word "glorified" as referring altogether to the future state of the redeemed of the Lord. The word has a broader meaning than that; it means "honored; dignified; exalted to glory." One of the ten lepers returned and "glorified God;" that is, he honored him. By reading Romans viii. 29, 30, it will be seen that the apostle speaks in the past tense in presenting the work of God in the salvation of sinners. If we believe and are agreed that He has already "called," already "justified," why not accept the same tense used in the next clause: "them he also glorified"! If the children of God are so honored as to be acknowledged or owned by him, having been exalted in Christ above the law, sin and death, and are in possession of his life and divine nature, are they not already glorified together with Christ! And because of this gracious work

they shall all at last enter the haven of rest where hope and faith are done away in fruition, but charity, the love of God, shall abide forever. Now because ye are the sons of God, through the Spirit of adoption, He sends forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father. This Spirit comes when sent of God, and always cries the same thing: Abba, Father. It guides the children into all truth, keeps them in the day of temptation, supports them in the time of affliction and receives them at last unto glory.
K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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MARCH 1, 1908.

ALONE.

HAVING had a little time to reflect upon the past and that which so recently took place: the death of our beloved associate, Elder Chick, the above word is very expressive of our feeling, and we think a short article along this line will not be out of place at this time. The SIGNS was founded by Elder Gilbert Beebe and other brethren, as will be seen by the prospectus, and edited and published by him from 1832 until 1881, when he was called home to enjoy the fullness of salvation at the right hand of God. After his death Elder Wm. L. Beebe, his son, was appointed to the position of editor, and continued until 1894, when he retired. During his service he resided in Warwick, N. Y., and Elder Benton Jenkins was in the SIGNS office, and of course was of great assistance to Elder Beebe, so that he was not “alone.” Elder Jenkins was still in the office when Elder Chick succeeded Elder Wm. L. Beebe, and was appointed to the editorial staff with Elder Chick, so that neither was “alone.” At the death of Elder Jenkins, in 1897, brother Benton Beebe, owner and publisher of the SIGNS, became associated with Elder Chick in the editorial work, hence was not “alone.” At his death, in 1904, we were assigned to the office work that had been done by him, and after a year or two were appointed to the editorial staff with Elder Chick, so that he was not “alone.” We served

together in perfect union and fellowship to the day of his death. Now that he has been called to his eternal reward we are left entirely alone, a condition of no editor of the SIGNS since the time when Elder Gilbert Beebe was the sole editor, and even then in the latter part of his work Elder Jenkins was in the office with him. The fact of Elder Chick having lived in Hopewell, N. J., one hundred and twenty miles away from the SIGNS office, much of the work, such as preparation of copy and proofreading, fell upon us, but while he lived we felt that he shared the entire responsibility of the publication of the SIGNS, and whenever anything of special importance came up we could advise with him, and always found his counsel wise and his attitude kind and gentle. But he is no more, and we are “alone” in the editorial department, which position we feel altogether unequal to, and never imagined that such responsibility would fall upon us. Few, if any, realize what the position means. Not only are we expected to write for each number of the SIGNS, but to see that nothing but sound doctrine enters its columns, also to avoid controversy and at all times to deal gently and kindly with all writers and subscribers, regardless of conditions or circumstances. The SIGNS OF THE TIMES has ever been a representative periodical, setting forth the doctrine of the original, or genuine, Old School Baptists of America, and to maintain its standard means more labor and hardship than many imagine. To write editorially number after number requires a very fruitful mind, in order to have sufficient variety to keep its readers interested. To answer the many questions regarding doctrine, order and practice requires much understanding of the Scriptures, order of the house and plainness of expression. To judge matter for publication, and the preparation of the same, requires almost acute judgment, much patience and hours of labor. To convince a brother that it would be better not to publish his article, which in itself might be excellent, for the reasons that it would be likely to cause controversy or offend some tender conscience, is not at all times an easy matter to accomplish. After enumerating the above qualifications of a man suitable for an editor of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, is it any wonder that we feel utterly insufficient for the responsibilities now resting upon us? We humbly trust that the Lord has a David or a Solomon somewhere for the place, but until made manifest we shall have to do the best we can. Some way or other we feel that the Lord does not intend that such a grave position shall be occupied long by us.

We have received many letters of sympathy and encouragement since the death of brother Chick, and we appreciate each one and thank the brethren for their remembrance of us. Some have hoped and suggested that we maintain in all our efforts the meek, quiet, gentle and loving spirit that characterized all of dear brother Chick’s, labors. How gladly we would be such a man as he was, but the brethren doubtless know that every man has his own gifts, and it would be hypocrisy to be other than self, or, in other words, try to imitate another. Each editor of the SIGNS from its first issue has had his own gift, style of writing and expression; no two have been at all alike. This is also true

in the ministry, every man has his own gift, and while the same truth is expressed, it is always done in different language and with different emphasis. We can only look to the Lord for help, strength and guidance, and if he gives to the writers and subscribers of the SIGNS to hold up our hands we shall do the best we can to maintain the high standard of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Be it remembered that if we delay in replying to requests it will be for lack of time or understanding, was we do not mean to be indifferent toward the wishes of any one. We hope the brethren and sisters will continue to write for the SIGNS as often as they can, we need their help in this direction also, and while it may be burdensome to one, and another feel that his or her gift is not great in writing, we say for your encouragement that often articles and private letters published in the SIGNS are much more enjoyed than the editorials, and we feel sure that such will be the case now more than ever before. The SIGNS is read by hundreds of believers who need just such comfort as those give who feel poor and needy, weak and worthless, sick and faint.

Before closing we desire to say that the Old School Baptist denomination has suffered a great loss in the death of Elder Chick. Not only was he an able editor, but an excellent preacher of the gospel of the grace of God. We had known him almost from childhood, and knew him to be a favorite with all classes of men, because of his kind and gentle manner. We never knew of his speaking illy of any one, but rather was always ready to excuse and forgive any who manifested faults and failings. His disposition was to be envied. He said of himself that he was never angry but once in his life, and that time when a mere boy. How richly blessed of the Lord was he, an example of good works.

Often the people of God are made to wonder at his dealings with men, suffering hundreds to remain who would be glad to go because of age and infirmities, because of poverty and distresses, and taking those so useful, so much needed, in the very prime of life. At this time in our eastern associations there seems real need of ministers, as there are many more churches than preachers, and some churches accustomed to having meeting every Sunday have had to divide the time of their pastors with sister churches that have been left destitute through the death or moving away of their own ministers. But the Lord is able to supply all the needs of his people through the riches of Christ Jesus, and his promises are yea and amen to his honor and glory. Yet often many of us become "faint-hearted," and say with Jacob of old, All these things are against us. May the Lord give to each of his ministers to stand in their lot with zeal and fortitude, remembering that He is the builder of the house and the keeper of the city, and that when it pleases him the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, rivers break forth in the mountains and springs in the valleys. May the Lord keep all his people as the apple of his eye and reconcile them to his holy will in all things. K.

BRIEF REPLIES.

“FOR as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

This text embraces all gospel truth, and volumes could be written upon it and the half not be told. Death in Adam is the result of disobedience, and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Death as spoken of in this text includes both death by sin and corporeal death, as it seems to us. It is evident from the Word “all” in this Scripture that there is no exception – all die. First, the saints of God fully understand that not one of Adam’s posterity ever escaped that death which separated all men from God; all by nature are dead in trespasses and sin until quickened into divine life by the Spirit of God. Second, all men from the beginning of the world have died corporeally and continue to die. Not one has escaped this death from Adam down, except those who now live, and soon, likely less than one hundred years, every one living to-day will be gone forever from the earth. Thus “in Adam all die.”

Many brethren think that our text refers to headships, and that all in Adam, all his children, die, so in Christ, our living Head, all shall be made alive. That is, all the elect children, beginning with Abel to the end of time, each one, shall be quickened into divine life. Perhaps this view is the right one, at any rate it is true in a gospel sense. Of one thing we feel sure: that Paul was not presenting universal salvation, but it seems to us two special points of doctrine are set forth in the text, viz., death by sin and life’ because of righteousness. Look to Adam from whatever standpoint one may, death is in evidence. No hope of peace with God through man. Look to Christ from whatever standpoint a child of God may and life from the dead is manifest. He lived in and with the Father before the world was; he lived in the flesh – “God manifest in the flesh.” He arose from the dead because he could not be holden of death. He ever liveth at the right hand of God. In him there is life, and the life is the light (understanding) of men. Hence “in Christ shall all be made alive;” not only quickened into divine life while here, but shall be made alive from the dead. Then shall all know and experience “the redemption of our body.”

We have thought also that the apostle was presenting salvation in Christ from a national standpoint. By nature the Jews, while the favored people of God, were no better than the Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles were dead in sin and under the curse of the law, but inasmuch as Christ paid the debt for all nations, in him there is neither Jew nor Gentile, all nations and classes shall be made alive in him. .

Written at the request of G. E. Lee, Roanoke, Ala. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs of the Times

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May 1, 1916



CHRIST MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.

(Hebrews ii. 10.)

In what sense Christ was made perfect through sufferings is one of the most important subjects that ever occupied the mind of man. If we class him in his humanity with Adam we make a fatal mistake. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." The first natural, the last spiritual; the first was made of the dust of the ground, and before the law, the last was made of a woman and under the law, to redeem them that were under the law; the first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven; the first saw corruption, the last saw no corruption. To say Christ was imperfect in any sense would be to contradict every type of him in the Old Testament. To say his nature was faulty would be to say sin was in it, for man is faulty only because of sin. The man Christ Jesus was not the son of Adam, but the Son of God; he was not the seed of man, but "the seed of the woman." He did take on him the seed of Abraham, so far as lineage was concerned, and was the promised seed, but God was his Father, and not Abraham. None of the sons of Abraham could have atoned for sin. "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." The taking of flesh and blood did not make him imperfect, he was not a faulty creature because of sin, but God manifest in the flesh. He took flesh and blood upon him that he might die or shed his blood for the remission of sins. His blood or life was not contaminated with sin or disease, he was the spotless Lamb of God. We in the

flesh are imperfect because we are the sons of Adam; in the Spirit we are perfect because we are the sons of God. Would not the only Begotten of the Father, both in the flesh and Spirit, be perfect from the same cause! Christ is presented throughout the Scriptures as being gloriously perfect; in the types, in prophecy, in his own words and in all that is written of him by the apostles it is so. The idea that he had to be imperfect in his humanity in order to be made perfect, is wrong; he was the Word “made flesh;” he was perfect with the Father before time began, and he was perfect also in the flesh. “Mark the perfect man.” – Psalms xxxvii. 37. We shall now quote a few Scriptures to prove the perfection of his humanity as the Son of God. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” These references are sufficient to establish his perfection as a man both human and divine. The book of Hebrews begins by presenting Christ the Son of God; he is “appointed heir of all things, by whom also he [God] made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image, of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, * * * Being made so much better than the angels.” “All this exalts him far above man, and forbids us to say that his humanity was imperfect. If Adam was perfect, (not spiritual) without sin and faultless, having been made in the image of God, why not Christ the Son, who is the express image of his person and the brightness of his glory? He “was made a little lower than the angels.” This refers always to Christ, and means in the sense of his ignominious death, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”

We shall now attempt to answer the important question: In what sense was Christ made perfect through sufferings! It became God “in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” These sons would be afflicted with severe trials, persecutions and temptations, therefore would need one who could succor them. As captain he was perfect, but they needed also in him an high priest who could be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, hence it behooved God to call his only begotten Son to pass through all that his sons, brought unto glory, would be called upon to endure. “In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.” Therefore by actual experience our High Priest knows our infirmities, having been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Under the law the high priest who offered blood for the sins of the people, first offered for himself, he having sins. Our High Priest knew no sin, but was made sin for us, and in this sense he is one with us, knowing our temptations and sins, having borne them in his own body. “Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless,

undented, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” He was made perfect (prepared) through his sufferings to be an high priest. These sufferings were trials, persecutions and temptations, and not the sufferings of death. There is no sense in which he as a man, the Son of God, was made perfect through the sufferings of death. His body, the church, was perfected, however, in that one offering. When he said, in Luke xiii. 32, “The third day I shall be perfected,” he referred to his resurrection and the resurrection, in him, of his members, by the glory of the Father from under the curse of the law. Had he not been tempted in all points like as we are, he would not know our sufferings by experience. We could not come to him for succor, in his character of High Priest, had he not known and felt our infirmities, yet he was perfect in his humanity. Thus we understand how he was made perfect (prepared, not purified) through sufferings to succor them that are tempted. This was in fulfillment of the prophecy, “In all their affliction he was afflicted.” In Hebrews v. 8, we are told, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” There is a vast difference between learning obedience, and being made obedient by the things which he suffered; that kind of obedience is not acceptable in the sight of God. Therefore Christ was not forced or made obedient by the things he suffered; it was his “delight” to do the will of God, it was his meat and his drink to finish the work given him of the Father to do. The obedience of Christ preceded his sufferings, he was obedient even unto death. Obedience to God always, in his sons and daughters, precedes their sufferings, they suffer because of obedience, living, as it were, a living death, or in other words, crucifying the flesh day and night. It is in the crucifixion that we suffer, and the crucifixion is because of obedience; “crucified with Christ.” Adam satisfied the lusts of his flesh, hence no obedience, no sufferings. Christ learned what Adam never knew, viz., obedience, living “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” or in living in perfect obedience to the righteous law of God. Adam transgressed and died; Christ obeyed and lives to make intercession for us. In his sufferings he learned that the law given to Adam demanded perfect obedience. We learn obedience in the same way, but are not made obedient by the things we suffer; our sufferings are the best evidence we can have that we are obedient. It must be a willing, though painful crucifixion, or it is not acceptable to God.

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” We should not confound the office of high priest with the offering for sin. This text is presenting Christ the Son of God as the Author of salvation, and it shows him to be a perfect offering, not made so through sufferings, but because he was the Son of God. God the Father made him perfect for the work of redemption: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” He could not have done this had he been imperfect in any sense of the word. If Christ was imperfect, as some think, and

sufferings could purify or perfect his flesh or humanity, then might we not ask, Could not our sufferings make us perfect also? If this were possible we would need no Savior, but could atone for our own imperfections through our own sufferings. God made the Son “without blemish and without spot,” therefore being made perfect he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; not unto all who say they are obedient, but unto all who, like himself, live the life of crucifixion: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live.”

We leave these reflections for the consideration of our readers. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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COLOSSIANS I. 23.

DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS: – Reading in the first chapter of Colossians this afternoon I came upon a passage that I would like very much to have your opinion upon. It is in the twenty-third verse, and reads, “If ye continue in the faith ground and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven,” &c. In the two verses preceding Paul speaks of the reconciliation and cleansing (spiritually) of the Colossians through the sacrifice of Jesus. The “if” here seems to introduce a condition upon which they shall be presented holy, unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight. Also I would like to know your opinion as to when it was that the gospel was preached to every creature, as is stated in the latter part of this verse in these words: “The hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” If you feel moved to write in the SIGNS on these questions I will be deeply grateful.

I am unworthily, your sister,
GRACE VEECH SMITH.

IT would be a pleasure to comply with the request of sister Smith, on page 328, could we but feel the guiding Spirit of the Lord inditing the matter. Many such requests come to the office, and some of them are not granted because of lack of understanding, never because of disregard for the wishes of those who make such requests. While it sometimes seems that an editor is expected to know all things, and ready at all times to expound the most difficult questions, we are frank to confess that there is much more we do not know than there is that we understand, and it is always with a feeling of fear that we approach any divine subject. We therefore trust that no one will feel that their request is wilfully ignored.

The Scripture, and its connections, suggested by our sister proves that the very thing all missionary systems are trying to do was accomplished by the apostles almost two thousand years ago. In this subject is also encouched the work of salvation wrought by the Redeemer of sinners two thousand years ago, but which is now supposed to be brought about by the combined efforts of the Arminian world. False prophets were numerous in days of old, and since the gospel dispensation was ushered in, the world has never been without false teachers. The word of God is the man of our counsel, and if men do not write, speak and think in harmony with it it is because they have no light in them, and it makes no difference whatever about their intellectual ability. Some of the apostles were not reckoned as being very intellectual, but they had the truth of God, and testified to it, which no mortal could except he had been with Jesus and learned of him. Such testimony was better then than all the wisdom of the world, and the same is true today. Coming more directly to the subject, we will say that Paul, having heard of the faith in God, and love to the brethren of those at Colosse, wrote this wonderful letter that they might know of his love for and joy in them, and to confirm them in the faith and exhort them to faithfulness and steadfastness in the gospel of Christ, which gospel he clearly defined as the power of God, and the message of salvation to both Jew and Gentile. He told them of the wonderful mystery and secret of God in the redemption of all nations, that while all were enemies to him by wicked works, he had mercy upon all, that then salvation might be reckoned of grace rather than of debt. This secret was made known in the gift of Christ, the anointed of God, who blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was contrary to them, and spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them, that the dead might live unto God, justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law. Having therefore been quickened together with Him they had become subjects of grace, and subjects, therefore, for gospel preaching, the message of salvation, which they joyously received and believed. In the body of his flesh, through death, Christ had reconciled them to present them holy and unblamable and unreprouable in the sight of God the Father. This means “without fault before him in

love.” The word “if” referred to by our sister, does not, in our understanding, present a condition upon their part as to whether or not they could be presented in His sight holy and unblamable and unprovable, but rather, like all his exhortations, and those also of the other apostles, he warned them against those who would subvert the gospel of Christ and carry them away in their minds, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in whom they were complete. The Galatians after being manifested as the children of God, and had received Paul as an angel of God, even as the Lord Jesus, and had it been possible would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him, became bewitched by false teachers who preached to them that except they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses they could not be saved. Paul, therefore, knowing the weakness of babes in Christ, and the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive, impressed upon them the importance of steadfastness in the faith, that they might grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The work of God in regeneration and justification was as complete when Christ rose from the dead as it will be when worlds are no more; if his children are not pure and holy in his sight now they never can be. The efficacy of the blood of the Lamb was so wonderful that not a shadow of guilt remains upon one for whom he died, but the lives of men and women are not always spotless here in the eyes of the world, nor in the eyes of the law of his church. In those days many by their walk denied the Lord that bought them, while on the other hand many were steadfast, and commended for it. This will be seen by reading the messages to the churches of Asia. It is a wonderful thing to be grounded and settled in the faith of God and to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The apostle told those brethren that the same gospel which they heard had been preached to every creature under heaven. Our sister asks, When was that done? It will be remembered that when Christ came he came unto his own, the Jews, of which nation he was, being of the house of David. When he preached it was to the Jews, when he sent his disciples out to preach they were restricted to the Jewish nation; his manner of life was that of a Jew, and the manner of his burial was that of the Jews. His choice of apostles was of the Jews, the church was established among the Jews, but just before his ascension to the Father he commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It should be remembered that this commission was given to the apostles, and it is natural to suppose that they obeyed the Lord; at any rate, Paul said they did. First, on the day of Pentecost we find Jews, devout men of every nation, kindred and tongue under heaven there, and when the apostles preached in the power of the Holy Ghost every man heard in his own tongue, wherein he was born, “the wonderful works of God” meaning the salvation of sinners, wrought through his Son, Jesus Christ. While on that day all were Jews, they represented every nation under heaven. Inasmuch as the middle wall of partition that separated between Jew and Gentile

had been removed, the mystery of God that he had a people among all nations was revealed in the command to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven. The preaching of the gospel is simply delivering the message of salvation. All nations being included in God's plan and purpose, all embraced in his love and mercy, it was necessary that the message of salvation be sent to all nations, or, in other words, to every creature. That work, therefore, was done by the apostles, they went everywhere, preaching to the Gentiles as well as the Jews the unsearchable riches of Christ. Preaching the gospel to every creature means nothing more or less than preaching to both Jew and Gentile. May we all who love his name be grounded and settled in the faith, growing in grace and knowledge until "the hope of the gospel" be swallowed up in fruition. K.

Elder H.C. Ker

Signs of the Times
Volume 87, No. 21
November 1, 1919

COMMUNION - WHAT IS IT?

IN years past we were exercised more upon this important subject than of later years; not that it has become of less magnitude, but because we have become more settled upon the matter. In our first experience in the church, the matter of communion was mentioned three or four times a year, a certain Sunday appointed for the purpose. Often before the time some brother or sister would say, "The next third Sunday is our communion season." At first we thought nothing special about it, further than to desire to be present at that time, but later the subject occupied much of our thought, until, as we hope, the Lord gave us to understand the matter better than before. When a boy we used to wonder why Baptists did not admit other denominations to their table, and among those with whom we associated there was a bitter feeling against the Old Baptists because of their "close communion." This feeling has grown no less bitter toward them as the years have gone on, nor will it ever be less among those who oppose the church of God. When Jesus instituted what is called "the Lord's supper," he "sat down with the twelve," and to them only gave he the bread and wine, which he called his body and blood. There were many at that time who claimed to be his disciples, yet not one other

than the twelve ate and drank of the bread and wine. Now was Jesus guilty of “close communion” in this particular sense? if so, why censure the Old Baptists for not admitting any except their own to their Lord’s table? “Communion,” however, means more than to sit at the same table and eat and drink of the bread and wine, and it was along this line that we were given to understand many years ago. It is right to have times set apart for this holy ordinance, and right for every member to be present, and no one identified with the church has the privilege to refuse to partake of the supper, for in so doing that one manifests direct contempt of the command of the Judge of the whole earth. Yet there is such a thing as communion regardless of the above course, which is always of the flesh. Again we say, communion means more than to eat and drink of the bread and wine. Some years ago we were present at a communion season of an Old Baptist Church, and when the members took their seats to be served, a lady of another denomination being present, took a seat with the church, and when the bread and wine were passed, the deacon, being an old man whose sight was somewhat dim, did not notice that she was a stranger, and passed the emblems to her, and, of course, she partook. After meeting was over some one mentioned the fact to him and he was very much wrought upon, and suggested that he go to her home and tell her his mistake, which he admitted to the church. Several thought his idea of going and telling the woman good, and doubtless would have been carried out had we not spoken and said, “My brother, no harm has been done; that woman did not commune with the church to-day.” “What?” he replied, “Why not? She surely partook of the bread and wine, for I passed them to her.” We said, “Yes, we know you did, and while we all would oppose such a thing in a general way, communion is impossible where there is no union.” Oneness, agreement, “union,” must exist before there can be communion. Therefore, instead of partaking of the bread and wine in order to commune with each other, we partake of them as an evidence of communion one with another. Had Christ sat down at the table with the multitude of five thousand who claimed to be his disciples, there would have been no communion except between him and the apostles, because of lack of union. Union means “united,” hence being united in one body to one Head, there is communion with the children of God, though the emblems were never seen or tasted. As said above, to absent one’s self from the table does not affect the union and communion of saints. When we sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it is in union and communion with them. Though they be dead according to the flesh, yet they live unto God, and the saints of to-day are brought unto the spirits of these and other just men made perfect. Paul presented the union of the church of God in the figure of a body having members: “One body, but many members;” so also is Christ. Being “members one of another,” there is perfect union, though the members be located some distance apart. It requires all members to compose a perfect body, and the very fact that no one member is independent of the others proves conclusively the union, hence

communion. If this be so with a natural body, how much more so with the body of Christ, having members in particular, God having placed them in the body as it hath pleased him. The vital unity of Christ and the church is one of the most sublime subjects of the doctrine of God. Unity that eternally unites Head and body; unity from which communion of members (the church) springs and abides forever and forever.

Again let us say, communion means more than to simply partake of the bread and wine, and that those redeemed who refuse to eat the bread and drink the wine do still commune one with another. On the other hand, those who are not members of the body of Christ do not, cannot commune with the church of God, though they were to sit at the table and partake of the bread and wine every day in the year. We have ever been glad that we were given to see, and, we trust, feel, communion in this blessed light, and we hope that what we have here written may be of interest and comfort to others. It is good when questioning in our minds as to whether we keep the commandments of God or not to be led by the Spirit into the deep mysteries and purposes of our Creator, there to behold that the arrangements of him are such that with all our powers we could not transgress his laws governing us as members of his spiritual body. For instance, the Israelites could break the sabbath day by gathering sticks, kindling fires, leading their beasts to water, &c., but the spiritual Israel of God can do nothing but keep the Sabbath (gospel day), because there is absolutely no work to be done; all was finished by Jesus Christ our Lord. Rest, therefore, as well as communion, is sure to and for all who believe in Him. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 7
April 1, 1914

CORRESPONDENCE

[The following correspondence between our pastor at Middletown, and New Vernon, Elder H. C. Ker, and Elder H. J. Redd, of Alabama, concerning a communication from the latter, which was published in No. 1, current volume, we have, in compliance with the request of a number of brethren, obtained the consent of Elder Ker to publish. The subject treated upon is one of deep interest to all, and the following letters we feel will be edifying and instructive to all who love the truth. – Ed.]

Middletown, N. Y., Jan. 6, 1899.

ELDER H. J. Redd – My Dear Brother: – For some time I have enjoyed your writings, and several times have felt as though I would like to write you a line, and express my satisfaction in the able work of your pen, but until now have not been able to do so. Now I wish to say, I have enjoyed your article just published in the Signs OF The Times of January 1st, 1899, in which you speak of young and inexperienced preachers not being fit for pastors. This I deeply feel to be true, and am often made to exclaim, “Who is sufficient for these things?” I am an entire stranger to you in the flesh, but I hope and believe we have traveled the same road, and the landmarks are known to us alike. I am thirty-eight years of age; was baptized by Elder A. B. Francis, Sunday after the third Saturday in May, 1894; was ordained Nov. 17th, 1897; was called to serve the church here, and at New Vernon, May, 1898; accepted, and settled with my wife and two children, the last week in July, the same year. It seems to me of all men I am less qualified for a pastor of churches, than they all, yet I am here, and often ask, Why I am? How could I ever accept a call to be pastor of churches, when I do not feel I have the gift? According to your idea, and my feelings, I am not qualified for the place. May I ask you a few questions! Please bear with me in my weakness and ignorance. You say in your judgment it requires old and tried men for true pastors. Do we learn this altogether by experience? Is not a pastoral gift one of the gifts of God to men? If a gift, is it something to be learned! Is it not like the gift to preach! Can any man learn to preach? The more we try to learn, the worse we get. Paul said to Timothy, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” I understand by the exercise of the gift, it develops. Yet we do not learn to preach by exercise; if so, any one could be a preacher. The gift is one thing, and the exercise is another. We improve as taught by the Spirit; here a little, and there a little; line upon line, and precept upon precept. When we begin, we know but little, and can tell but little, but as one grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he can present such things as are given him. So is it not the case with a pastor? If we have the gift, is it not necessary to be a pastor, that the gift may develop? If so, is a man who has been preaching for years, and never had the care of churches, any better qualified than one who has not been preaching so long! Do you think the Lord has

ever given the gift of pastor to one, and never brought him into the hearts of his people as such, hence he never is a pastor of a church or churches? Do the qualifications come by experience of a pastor? Does not the experience develop the qualifications? Are not the qualifications a gift of God! Do they come any other way? It appears to me that the qualifications of a pastor are these: sound in doctrine, firm, cool-headed, good judgment, faithful, honest, still tongued, so far as bearing news from one to another is concerned, gentle, kind, one who can rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep, one who has the welfare and peace of Zion at heart, one who can bear hardness as a good soldier for Christ, and his nearest friend know nothing of his sorrow, one who shows no partiality among his brethren, one who can rebuke as well as exhort, one who will visit the well, as well as the sick, one who does not feel above his brethren, but feels his place is at their feet, one who is not selfish, but is always glad when the God he serves sends visiting ministers among his flock.

I find I must close, as there seems to be no end to the subject. What I have written, I have written I hope, in the Spirit of Christ. If you have not time to write a letter direct to me, you can, when you feel impressed, answer my feeble questions through the Signs, when writing for them.

With christian love and fellowship, I am your brother in gospel bonds,
H. C. KER.

River View, Ala., Jan. 10, 1899.

ELDER H. C. Ker – My Dear Brother In Christ: – Yours of 6th inst. to hand, and on reading it I felt almost sorry that I had written what I had. Indeed, I sometimes wish I had never written anything at all for publication, feeling perhaps my writings have done more harm than good. I fear that the article alluded to has had a tendency to discourage you, as well as others, but if I know my heart, that was not my design at all, and I guess if you knew what a worthless and unprofitable servant I am, and always have been, together with all my faults and failings, and short-comings, you would not trouble yourself much about what I write. Elder J. E. W. Henderson once said, “A man can establish a reputation by his writings, that will give him the bellows to sustain,” and I have thought of the expression many times. The idea of a poor, obscure human being like myself, stirring the hearts of people hundreds of miles away, by a few strokes of the pen, is something to be wondered at. Yet it is written, “Out of the mouths of babes and

sucklings thou hast ordained strength;" and, "My strength is made perfect in weakness;" and Paul said, "I will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power." I imagine that John the baptist was a tough looking case, but there was power in his words. Jesus himself was a "man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." He was "smitten of God, and afflicted." There was no "beauty in him that we should desire him," and yet there was power in his words. Paul's speech and preaching was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power."

Now, as to the questions you have asked me, I will try to answer them in a general way. I will say to you that I am fifty years of age, am now nothing but a poor renter, trying to dig a living out of the ground. I was liberated to "exercise" eight or ten years before I was ordained, but exercised but little in public, till about a year before I was ordained; was ordained in 1880, or 1881. I have never served more than eight or nine different churches, and perhaps have not baptized more than twenty persons. Have traveled and preached a good deal over Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. Perhaps I should not have written what I did about pastors, but it seems to me that I can see in the churches a kind of worldly spirit, and a disposition to ignore, discard and neglect, the older ministers. Paul did say that a bishop must not be a "novice," and he gives the reason: "Lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Yes, I believe that the office of pastor is a special gift from God, but I have long since learned that the "calling" is one thing, and the qualifications quite another. The Scriptures indicate that Moses was Impressed with the fact that he would lead the children of Israel out from Egyptian bondage, when he went out to visit them, and slew the Egyptian. (Acts vii. 25-36.) But the time had not yet come, besides Moses was not yet qualified for the great undertaking. He had yet something to learn, before he could have endured the abuse and hard sayings of his brethren, and become to be the "meekest" of all men. He must be an exile in a strange land, mind his father-in-law's sheep, go to the back side of the wilderness, and there witness the "burning bush." Jonah's experience in the whale's belly, was to my mind a necessary qualification for him to preach to the Ninevehites. Christ himself "learned obedience by things he suffered." I could write much here, but will try to abbreviate. I believe if the Lord calls a man to preach, and to serve as pastor, that he will in the proper time give him churches to serve. But when first called, he has not then the necessary experience and qualifications to serve as pastor, but as you say, he must learn here a little, and there a little; line upon line, and precept upon precept. And the Lord will teach him, and instruct and qualify him for the work whereunto he has called him. These things I now know from experience, but it took me a long time to find it out. It took me a long time to learn that the call to preach was one thing, but the qualification another. Christ is the great teacher. It is his Spirit alone that qualifies us for every duty. Old School Baptist preachers are nothing but flesh and blood, like other

people, and young and inexperienced preachers are liable to be “lifted up with pride,” by being called to serve churches in youth, and I have seen the evil effects of these things.

I have doubtless failed in my effort to give you satisfactory answers to your questions. I feel my inability to make myself understood. As to the office of pastor, I know I am totally unfit for that.

I hope you will not feel discouraged by anything I have said. I presume the churches you are serving, thought they saw in you the gift of pastor, and I trust the Lord will qualify and strengthen you in your labors, that you may be enabled to serve them acceptably, and to the honor and glory of God, and to your own comfort. Your “sufficiency is of God,” and he is able to make you an “able minister of the New Testament,” but doubtless if you live to be fifty years old, you will then say, “Well, I find that brother Redd was right.” I trust, my brother, that your ministerial pathway will be smoother than mine has been, and that it may not be fraught with the troubles, trials and conflicts, that I have been called to endure. I feel that my whole life has been spent in vain, and I can only look back upon an unprofitable career. My only hope is in God, and O, if I could only say with confidence, “By the grace of God I am what I am,” it would be enough. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

May the blessings of God attend you, and the churches you serve.

Yours, I hope, in gospel bonds,

H. J. REDD.

Signs Of The Times

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FEBRUARY 15, 1899.



CORRESPONDENCE

Middletown, N. Y., Jan. 19, 1899.

Dear Brethren: – For some time I have been trying to write a few lines for the Signs, but have not been able to take up my pen to do so until now. I realize my inability to write

such as would be of comfort or instruction to the Lord's dear people. Yet I have been requested to write by many of my brethren and friends, and to comply with their wish, and also to speak of a few thoughts which seem to be in my mind, I will make the attempt, looking to him who is able to support the weak. It has been some time since I wrote directly for the Signs. It is filled with such good matter, I have not felt able to add to its columns. When I had accepted the call to serve the church here, and at New Vernon, many of my brethren and friends, of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, requested that I write of my welfare, as they were interested in me. We were warmly received when we arrived here, and since our coming everything has been done that we could wish, for our comfort and happiness. The churches are in a prosperous condition; the Lord adding to them such as shall be saved. Since the death of their former pastor, our dear and fondly remembered brother, Elder Benton Jenkins, there has been eleven added to the two churches, Elder Chick having baptized three, Elder Francis two, Elder Vail one, and it has been my privilege to baptize five. Yet there is room, and several among us, who have been brought from darkness to light, and we hope before long the Lord will give them strength to come, and boldly confess him, and ask for a place which the Lord prepared for them in his kingdom. In the eleven additions, the Elders spoken of, and also myself, are given to feel the fullness of the words of Jesus, when he said to his disciples, "And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." – John iv. 37, 38. We indeed feel that he who finished his course, and crossed the Jordan, faithfully labored here, and these eleven, and many others, were brought out under his ministry. May I fill my place here, and everywhere, as faithfully as did he. Only in the Spirit and power of God, can I do this. May his blessing rest upon the weak.

In my mind is a few thoughts upon the subject of charity. Paul said, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Jesus taught humility. We are told to esteem others better than ourself. There was a time when the Pharisees took to Jesus a poor woman, who was a great sinner, and accused her to him. She did not make any claim, when accused by them. She did not so much as open her mouth, when brought to him and accused, that we have any record of. Those who accused her did not realize their own sin, and said to Jesus, Moses said such should he stoned, but what sayest thou! The Savior knowing their condition, their evil heart, their wicked acts, said to them), "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." They being "Convicted by their own conscience, went out, one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst." The Pharisees were given to know that it was not their right to accuse or condemn. Did the Savior condemn her? No, but he said, "Go and sin no more." How merciful he came not to condemn, but to save and justify the sinner, and as the poor woman, we each stand "alone" before

Jesus, to answer for our own sin, and not the sin of another. O that we could have charity, and bear with one another. But we often find the spirit of the Pharisees in us; not looking at our own sinful heart, our own short-comings, our failings, our weakness, not seeing in ourself every fault that our brother has. We are all alike, and what have we to boast except in Jesus, our Savior! When we complain of a brother or a sister, is it not a pharisaical spirit? Should not we, who hope we have the Spirit of Christ, manifest that spirit by charity toward each other, and forgive rather than condemn! Sometimes some one will speak favorably of a brother to us, and often we answer, Yes, he is a good brother, but, so and so. Before answering in this manner, should not we examine our own heart, and see if we have not every “so and so,” which we condemn our brother for having! We would speak very differently, sometimes, if we would think before we speak. I have thought that this is sometimes jealousy. We all like to be well spoken of ourselves, but when others are spoken well of it does not suit us so well. We often say hard and unnecessary things of gospel ministers. If we, who speak such things, could know the trials, sufferings, afflictions and sorrows, of the poor servants who go bowed down all their lives, surely we would never say anything, or do anything, to wound their feelings. Sometimes some one will say to us, Such an Elder is a good preacher. We answer, Yes, but he only preaches experience, and it matters not what text he takes. This gives the idea that he preaches the same sermon at all times. Or we will say, He is no preacher to me. Is this the Spirit of Christ, or charity? The preacher is not to be blamed, the church which ordained him is responsible, they being the judge of his gift. If one of God’s sheep or lambs have ever been fed by him, he is a preacher, and who are we to find fault with the work of God? It has pleased the Lord to give different gifts. Some ministers are expounders of the Word; this gift does not suit every one, but because we cannot enjoy such preaching, is it our right to decide the matter! Some enjoy such preaching; they are prepared to receive it, and the gift is given for them. The pathway of a gospel minister is not so pleasant as many suppose; he has to have many trials and sufferings, to prepare him to comfort the people of God. There is a duty due every servant of God, from his brethren, this is to stand by him, hold up his hands, and thus encourage him; giving him to feel that he is not only respected, but esteemed for the work’s sake.

Jesus said, “Love one another.” Evil speaking, backbiting, devouring each other, accusing, fault-finding and so on, does not proceed from that fountain. This is not charity. If we do not manifest our love one toward another, how are all men to know we are his disciples! He said, By this love, one to another, all should know we are his disciples. (John xiii. 35.) When tempted to say aught against our brother or sister, let us consider ourself, and may we have grace to bridle our tongue, and our religion not be vain. May we ever forgive others, as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us. Let us as children of God manifest the fruits of charity.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thiuketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.”
– 1 Cor. xiii. 4-8.

Yours in hope of life eternal,
H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 67, No. 3.
FEBRUARY 1, 1899.

CORRESPONDENCE

Middletown, N. Y., Feb., 1899.

ELDER F. A. Chick – Dear Brother In Christ: – I feel impressed, as I hope, of the Lord to write you a few lines. Not long since I was in company, and the subject of the travel of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, came up, and during the conversation some views were presented that were new to me. While those views may be entirely right, and I wholly wrong, yet some of the thoughts presented did not agree with my experience, and since that time my mind has been very much upon the subject, and so far I have not changed my view, which is the same as I have ever had since I received a hope. I have read and reread your editorial of October 23d, 1895. I hope that I have prayerfully considered the matter, and I have hoped for light. Please understand me: I do not wish to find fault with your editorial, or with the views of others, but, if I know my own heart, I do desire to know the truth, and if I am wrong I do want to be righted. In some parts of your editorial I agree with you exactly. Other parts I do not see clearly. You say Egypt sets forth the world. This is what I think, (under the law.) The idea with some is, that we are only under the law from Sinai to Jordan. That the salvation seen at the Red Sea, was only a separation from the world, and has nothing to do with, and neither is it a type of the salvation in Christ, when we in our experience come to the stand still place; hemmed in on all sides, and see death pressing upon us. In my view, we are there given to see Christ the only salvation. While I know that Moses was the leader of Israel from Egypt to

Jordan, there are some things which I cannot understand. You say, in your editorial, that Moses was a representative of his brethren. This I believe. You say faith separated him from Egypt. This I also see. When faith came, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, (that is of Egypt, or the world.) Moses was in Egypt when faith came, and it seems to me that I was, too. What does Pharaoh's daughter here represent! You say in your editorial, in one place, the Egyptians were their enemy, and in another that sin is our enemy. I agree with you here. Did not the same water that saved Noah, destroy all others who were enemies to God? Was not the salvation of Israel at the Red Sea, death to the Egyptians, their enemy? Is it not so with Christ our salvation? His death saved the elect, and forever sealed the fate of sin, our enemy, or Egypt, or the world. I do not mean to say that the people of God are free from sin while in the flesh, but it has dominion over them no longer. We find that Israel passed through the Red Sea by faith. (Heb. xi. 29.) After crossing, the travel in the wilderness began. In a few days the law was given them written upon tables of stone. After our deliverance from Egyptian bondage by faith, we also find a law given us, not on tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. This law proves us, teaches us what we are by nature. We find that we cannot keep the law; yet though we live in disobedience day by day, God is faithful, our needs are supplied, and we are not forsaken of him who has called us out of darkness (or Egypt) into his marvelous light.

Some have said, the law followed them to the brink of Jordan, where they are no longer under Moses, but Joshua, representing Jesus, becomes their leader. Does not Joshua instruct them in the law of Moses, after entering the promised land! Does he not command them to keep it! Does he not circumcise them? Does not Paul in writing to the churches say, If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit for nothing! If they were under the same law after crossing Jordan, I cannot understand how Canaan can represent the church. Here is a mystery to me. I have never been able to see Canaan as the church, or heaven, as some understand. If none of the children of Israel could cross Jordan, except under the leadership of Joshua, What can we do with the spies who went over first? You I speak in one place of the Canaanites, as a nation, fighting for the possession of the land, and in another as the lusts of our flesh, fighting; experimentally I hope that I know something of this warfare. You say that Canaan is a type of that rest which all believers enter into through faith in Christ. Was it not a place of war to Israel? When we enter the church do we find it inhabited by enemies, except in our own body? Do we not find kindred and friends there who are glad to welcome us to the promised land, and to our rest and borne! Do we not find in that land a people who know, love and fear God?

Now please do not think that I have written to criticise your editorial, or the views of others. I have written simply for information, desiring to be instructed in the word of

God. If, after reading this, you can see a difference between us, please write me a line, that I may know the difference. I may not understand your editorial fully, but I think that I do the views above mentioned. It appears to me that what happened to Israel naturally, also does to the people of God spiritually, from first to last.

This leaves us all well. My wife joins me in love to you and yours, and to the household of faith.

I am your brother, I hope,
H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 67, No. 7
April 1, 1899

CORRESPONDENCE.

Middletown, N. Y., Feb. 27, 1900.

Dear Brethren Editors: – I have been requested by our dear brother, Elder D. M. Vail, to write for publication upon a portion of the word as found in Matt, xxiii. 37, 38: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

I feel that brother Vail could write upon the subject much more to the comfort and instruction of the dear saints of God, than it will be possible for me to. Many times I have been requested to write for the Signs, by lovers of the truth, but if I have any gift at all, it is not to write for publication, yet if I am to serve the brethren, I suppose it must be as they wish, and not as I desire. We should not forget that we are members one of another, and are helpers of each other’s joy. None of us have anything that we did not receive, and nothing we have belongs to us individually, but to one another. In this sense we have all things common.

The Scripture named above has for many years been a mystery to me, and to this day I do not feel that I have any special light upon it, yet I cannot say I have never had any

thought in reference to it. In reading the word it is always profitable to know who is speaking, and to whom the address is made, also at what time and under what circumstances, and when we are asked our views upon Scripture, it is not safe to give any until these things have been considered; for instance, we are told the kingdom of God is like unto leaven that the woman hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. Now in the writings of the apostle he says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Should we be asked the meaning of *the* last quotation, knowing something of the first, and not fully acquainted with the latter, we would be apt to give a wrong interpretation, as the meanings are altogether different. Hence, let us consider by whom the words of the text were spoken, to whom, and at what time. We often make mistakes in applying the Scripture of the first four books of the New Testament, thinking that the gospel dispensation began with the preaching of John the Baptist, and Jesus, who followed, or came after him: such is not the case. If the gospel day began with the preaching of the gospel, we will have to go back to the time when God preached the gospel unto Abraham. There was no overlapping, no mixture of legality and grace, hence the gospel dispensation did not begin until after the death and resurrection of Jesus. In his death the demands of the law were satisfied, and an end of all rights and ceremonies under the law as service to God, the last offering for sin having been sacrificed: Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin So it is clear to see that as Jesus was made under the law, he lived in the flesh during that dispensation, and the law was in full force while he lived.

It pleased God to promise Abraham that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. Christ was the seed, and all the blessings of life and salvation were and are in him. God chose the Israelites, who were the offsprings of Abraham, as a people for himself, and when in Egyptian bondage, he delivered them by his servant Moses, to whom his brethren said, years before, "Who hath made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" God gave this people a law, but they were stiff-necked and rebellious, yet God was merciful to them, supplying their needs, and giving to them the promised land, Canaan.

Jerusalem was the holy city of the Jews, or the church under the law. From time to time, God raised up prophets, and sent them unto this people with messages, such as, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you." Let us bear in mind this was all under the covenant of works. The Jews, because of their hardness of heart and unbelief, refused to hearken unto the messages of God unto them. They did not believe God had sent them, and instead of listening to them, and living in obedience to the law given them, they killed the prophets of God. Now, according to the promise of God, he sends his Son, as the apostle says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." – Heb. i. 1, 2. But while this declaration is made, let us remember that it was the Spirit of Christ

in the prophets that caused them to prophesy, hence it was God speaking to his people, the Jews, all the time, whether in the prophets, or by his Son in the flesh. When Jesus came to his own (nation) his own received him not, and as was said to Moses, We will not have this man to rule over us. Though Jesus had said unto them he was the Son of God, and had sent his disciples to preach unto them saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, they believed not. We would understand from this twenty-third chapter of Matthew, that Jesus was at, Jerusalem preaching in the temple to his disciples and multitude, in the presence of the scribes and pharisees. These were the teachers and rulers of the nation. In those respects they sat in Moses' seat, because they were teachers of the law of Moses, and enforced obedience to it, and Jesus said, "Therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." Here we find Jesus telling his disciples to keep the law of Moses, but not to do the works of the scribes and pharisees. We are taught here that none are justifiable in doing beyond what the word teaches; we should not follow those who teach for doctrine the commandments of men. The worship of the Jews was in ordinances and ceremonies, and not in spirit and truth, therefore their righteousness was only in the law, and the Savior said to his disciples, If their righteousness did not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, they could in no wise enter into the kingdom of God. After addressing the disciples the Savior directs his words to the scribes and pharisees; he calls them hypocrites, and tells them of all their evil doings, devouring widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers, and that they compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and that when he was made, he is made two-fold more a child of hell than they themselves.

These scribes and pharisees said, If they had been in the days of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets, and Jesus said, "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" – Matt, xxiii. 31-33. In the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth verses of this chapter, Jesus speaks prophetically to the same people, saying, "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew! between the temple and the altar."

The same God who had sent prophets unto this people during the legal dispensation, was now promising to send others under the gospel, and said this people would treat them in the same way as their fathers had in all the years past, that upon them should be all the righteous blood shed. This was only a few days before Jesus was crucified, the last time

he would ever be in that temple, and speak to this still stiff-necked and rebellious nation. He says to them, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," &c. As we said in the beginning, let us see who speaks, and who is addressed. Jesus speaks, that great Prophet. It was his Spirit in all the prophets that had spoken, and not the man, so now it is the same Spirit, and not the flesh, that speaks to the same national Israel, under the same covenant of works they had been under since the days of Moses. The blessings of life and the salvation of these people were temporal, and not eternal. They were a type of the spiritual Israel of God, whose blessings of life and salvation are both temporal and eternal. Jesus says in the text to the carnal Jews, or Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." The Savior did not mean to say, while I have been with you in the flesh I would have gathered thy children, but in all the years past; he, as the God of heaven and earth, would have blessed them, and saved them from harm, danger and captivity, but they would not hear the words of the Lord. (See Jer. xiii. 9-14.)

He presents the emblem of a hen gathering her chickens under her wings. Does she gather them under her wings in order to make them chickens? No, but because they are chickens, and belong to her; they are gathered at times to protect them from danger, and at other times to protect them from the cold and from the rain, to keep them warm and comfortable. The chickens know the voice of the mother, and are not stiff-necked and rebellious like the Jewish nation was, but at the voice of the hen they make haste to obey. Jesus did not mean in the text, as the world thinks, that he desired these people at Jerusalem to be Christians, but had not the power to accomplish his will unless they would surrender themselves. He had no reference whatever to eternal salvation, but all time and temporal, and under that covenant of, "If you will I will." Now, as that covenant was about to end, and the gospel dispensation to be ushered in, he says to them, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." This was the house of Israel, or Jewish kingdom, and desolate because God would no more dwell among them as a nation, and where God is not, there is nothing but desolation and destruction. To-day we are not under law, but under grace, under the new covenant God has made with his spiritual Israel, as is recorded in Jer. xxxi. 31-33. In this dispensation God has not sent his prophets and servants to us saying, "If you will I will," but "I will and you shall," is the message to-day to the Israel of God. And how thankful we should be that it is so, knowing we are weak, and prone to sin, and cannot keep his righteous law except he works in us, "Both to will and to do of his good pleasure." I say keep his law, not the law of Moses, but the law of grace, that which is written in the heart.

We know that Jerusalem was destroyed by fire not many years after the death of Christ, because their house had been left unto them desolate, and as Jesus said, not one stone was left upon another, but total destruction of that temple, and of all their ordinances and

ceremonies. But now the new Jerusalem, which is from above, and the mother of us all, stands forever; here God reigns, “Here our best friends and kindred dwell.” This is a tabernacle that shall never be taken down not one of her stakes removed, nor one of her cords be broken.

I have tried to present such thoughts as I have upon the subject, hoping brother Vail and others may at least be given a travel of mind upon the subject. I would be glad if others would write upon the same text.

H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times

Volume 68, No. 6.

MARCH 15, 1900.

CORRESPONDENCE

Middletown, N. Y., July 10, 1900.

Elder F. A. Chick – Dear Brother In The Lord: – Your kind, welcome letter came yesterday, and I am glad to know that I am still remembered by you, and also by the other friends at Hopewell, N. J. Even in the depths of sorrow and affliction, our hearts are made glad when we have the assurance of the love and fellowship of the saints. To know in sickness that they are praying for our recovery, and in affliction that they are praying for God’s presence to be with us, and his everlasting arms underneath us, that we may be supported and sustained in the trial of our faith, which is more precious than that of gold, which perisheth not, though it be tried with fire, is truly a comfort and help. Yet at the time, our trial cannot be seen to be to this end, else it would cease to be a trial; for “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” I feel that I do know what sorrow is, and affliction has been my lot for years. I hope that I do fully realize what the chastenings of our God are, and that they are all sent in love, that the saints may be partakers of his glory. They all are exercised thereby and come forth as gold from the furnace, which is purified and shining, and as Moses on the mount, they reflect the glory of God. The fathers and mothers in Israel behold the shining after the burning by deep affliction, and trial, and sorrow, of the babes, and are

made to shout for joy, and to sing, “Glory to God in the highest,” who hath ordained praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. How wonderful indeed are the teachings of God, what a peculiar school; one teacher, one class, and above all, the still small voice. I often doubt if indeed I know anything of these things, I go on from day to day hoping that I may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; when night falls around I ask, Have I been taught anything to-day? and always have to say no, I am the same poor, ignorant worm of the dust that I have ever been. I am not exercised by my trials and afflictions, and if in the school at all, I am dull, slow to understand, and often do not seem to know or think that the hand of God is upon me. I have never been able to say with Job, “When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” O, that I might be able to say in truth these words, but it seems that it is not for me. How different it has been with me from what I hoped or expected in my first experience, even before I had a hope, I then boasted that if ever I was a christian, I would be a model one, I would be an example for men to follow. After the hope came, I did hope soon to be better, and to go on to grow in grace, and to be a perfect man, but how short of all this I have come, I realize every day that I cannot do the things that I would; sometimes I feel that I would like for the brethren to know me just as I am, and at other times I would not have them to know me in that way for the world, for then surely I should be cut off from them, and of all things in the world, I dread that most, yet I fear that some day I shall be a castaway. My conversation does not seem to me godly, and my walk not circumspect, and my thoughts like the fool’s eye, wandering to the ends of the earth, and with Paul I often say, “O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

When I began to write, I only intended to acknowledge your letter, and state the condition of my health, but what I have written I have written. You have heard through others of my recent illness, from which I am now steadily recovering, and I think that in a few more weeks, I will be able to again meet my appointments. My sufferings were great, I never expect to suffer more when the time shall come to end the scene, it would be impossible to describe the agony, not only of body but also of mind. You stated in your letter that you hoped that I had been made to hope during my sickness. I thought, how differently from Elder Durand, was I dealt with, while he realized the presence of God, and could feel his sustaining power, and the sweet peace of mind, which passeth all understanding, and realize that all was right, because the Lord did it, such was not the case with me. If ever, since I have been given a hope, I have been without it utterly, it was during my illness, from the first of it until now, I can hardly dare say that I have a hope in the mercy of God at all. I have often quoted the words of the Savior in his dying hour, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” but never in all my life did I know what they meant until now, when it seemed to me a few hours would end the scene with me. This was my experience; O, the darkness of mind I can never tell, it seemed my

hope was gone, not one thing in the past could I bud to relieve me, not the slightest evidence could I find that I was born of God, it was like taking a leap in the dark, and if ever I quote again those words of anguish, I shall know better than I did before what they mean.

Last Sunday I was able to ride down to the meeting-house, and hear Elder McCounell preach, and was comforted to find that I did know the joyful sound.

My wife joins me in love to you and family, and to all the dear friends who manifest such an interest in my welfare. I hope that I appreciate their interest in my welfare. As ever your brother I hope, in the bonds of life,

H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 68, No. 16.
AUGUST 15, 1900.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Middletown, N. Y., Feb. 12, 1901.

Dear Brother Chick: – I have just read your editorial in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES for February 15th, on the subject of prayer, with comfort and instruction. This subject has for many years given me much comfort, as well as many doubts and fears. The question often with me is, What is prayer! and do I know anything about it as the children of God do, who often express themselves as to the comfort and sweetness of it, or in it, to them? I can remember when a mere boy I often would try to thank God for the preservation of my life, and the blessings I as a child enjoyed, also when I did wrong would ask his forgiveness. I can say, for the last thirty years I have been trying to pray, and to-day I ask solemnly, Gave I ever in the Spirit approached the throne of grace? My dear brother, such questionings occupy much of my time. My doubts and fears are many, but my assurances few, as I hardly ever get above doubt and unbelief, and some of the questions I find in my mind often bring with them horror, and I am made to mourn because of my lack of faith, trust and confidence in an all-wise and gracious God, whose promises are

yea and amen in Christ Jesus our Lord. I can now see that my prayers when a child were entirely selfish and without faith, and I fear they are the same to-day. When speaking publicly in the way of prayer, I often feel it is cold, lifeless and without faith, and often would rather try to preach than to try to pray. When I seem to have freedom of mind in making my wants and desires known to God, the devil comes and tells me, You are doing well to-day, the brethren will enjoy such a prayer, at once horror takes hold of me and I fear and tremble. Again, when I seem to stammer and stumble, the devil comes and says, You have not prayer in your heart, and this is only form and mockery, and my soul sinks within me. Sometimes at night in my wakeful hours, and again at my duties in the day, I try to pray, and address the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, begin with a few words, and perhaps in a few moments I come to myself and behold I have forgotten I began to pray: my mind has been taken up with something of the world, and again I fear and quake. Do you wonder at such a poor, helpless, dependent sinner as I, having doubts, fears and sufferings of mind!

“I am a stranger here below,
And what I am ‘tis hard to know,
I am so vile, so prone to sin,
I fear that I’m not born-again.”

Lord, decide the doubtful case and give my weary conscience case.

The few thoughts above will give you an idea of what trouble I have passed through in regard to prayer, but feel sure you cannot fellowship such an experience, and this causes me doubt also, to know I am alone in such an experience, but just so I am, and instead of growing stronger, as I hoped years ago, I am getting weaker and weaker each day of my life.

You say in your editorial, The Lord waits his own time to answer prayer, and if he wait long we should not faint or be discouraged. This I fully believe, but sometimes the request is not granted at all. Now the idea presents itself that a form of words is not always prayer, and many times when we have thought we were praying, there was not a word of prayer in it; words without faith never reach God. You well remember when President Garfield was shot, how the different denominations of the United States set apart days to pray for his recovery, but he died, this fully demonstrates the fact that all which is called prayer is not prayer. Had one of the thousands who desired his recovery had faith to believe God would hear or grant his request, the president would have lived. James tells us, “We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss.” We do not know what we need, and if all our desires were granted, we would soon be cut off from the fellowship of God’s people, or would have a very different experience from what we do

have. We ask to be delivered from temptation, affliction, fears, doubts, sorrows and pain, if this was granted how could we be conformed to the image of the Son of God! How could we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Nature and grace have their opposites, so what seems evil to us is good and to the glory of God. The sick child would prefer sweets to the bitter medicine it needs, and so with the children of God, they would have the sweets at all times, but their Father knowing what is good for them, gives affliction, sorrow and pain, not that he has pleasure in their sufferings, but that they may know more of him, and his strong arm, that they may have fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and know the power of his resurrection. If we could feel as we would like, the time would be but short before we would be proud pharisees, and would be thanking God that we were not as other men. This is not according to the will of God, therefore we are a poor and afflicted people, yet trust in the name of the Lord. The very knowledge we have of our sinful and depraved nature is a blessing, because it brings us to God, and here we see Christ the Mediator between, in garments dyed with blood; he is seen and not us. He paid the debt and is forever at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. Now the question comes, Who prays and whose prayer is answered always? The apostle tells us in the following language, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” – Rom. viii. 26, 27. Nothing therefore in the way of prayer is answered but that which is in accordance with the will of God, consequently such petitions are given of God, and ascend to him through the Spirit, as Jesus said, “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Hence we cannot come unto him in prayer only through or in Christ, any more than we can ascend to him when the summons comes that calls us from time to eternity, without having Christ, the truth, the way and the life. We poor worms of the dust should indeed be thankful and rejoice because we have such an High Priest, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who being tempted in all points like as we, is able to succor us who are tempted, and with his own blood did cleanse us from all sin. Yet we feel the leprosy remaining, and are in continual warfare, but through him the victory is ours, over death, sin and the grave. Notwithstanding all this, we find ourselves trying to pray always, and are neither faint or discouraged though we wait, and wait again.

The prayer of the publican is in the mind of the saint more than any other, and whether a child of God or not, it suits my case: “God be merciful to me a sinner.” For surely sin is mixed with all I do, and mercy and grace I need every moment of my life. Mercy because of my sin, unbelief and rebellion, and grace to keep me and sustain me in the trials and conflicts of my pilgrimage. So, because of my crippled condition, I go halting and stumbling along, finding in this life no continuing city, but I seek one to come,

where prayer and desire are no more, but there the saints have fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

With love and fellowship, I am your brother in hope of the gospel,
H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 69, No. 7
April 1, 1901

CORRESPONDENCE.

MIDDLETOWN, N. Y., Feb. 22, 1905.

Dr. B. F. Coulter – My Dear Brother: – A few days ago I received your welcome letter. For several weeks you had been much in my mind, and I had really been expecting a letter from you, but could not tell why, and now do not know why you should think of me and write, unless you realized in the spirit I am a companion to you in these dreadful and very peculiar exercises of mind and Soul of which you speak in your letter, Paul communed in the spirit with his brethren when in body they were separated by many miles. This communion is common to-day with the children of God. I believe, brother Coulter, you and I had such communion these last few weeks, though one hundred and sixty-five miles apart, The Spirit of Christ is one, and dwells in each member of his body, as the natural life is in each member of our earthly body. We are members one of another. This mysterious union is beyond our conception or comprehension, but faith lays hold upon the glorious truth and mystery, Christ manifest in the flesh. Where Christ is, there is communion and fellowship. As we speak or write these things we feel their assurance with power for the members of the body of Christ. But you know when the sons of God present themselves before the Lord, Satan is there also to present himself, (we feel to us more than to God) and he says to us, The body of Christ is perfect, each member as perfect as the head, and you know you are vile, unclean, hateful, deceitful, hypocritical, full of cursing and bitterness; every act you perform is utter selfishness, your walk in the church is merely mechanical, your manifested love is a lie, your humility is pride, your prayers are mockery, for many times when so engaged your mind is filled with some vain or vile subject, your professed fellowship is only for gain, your

writings are not from the heart, but of the head, and for the purpose that you may have the applause of men. While Satan is said to be a liar from the beginning, he told Eve the truth when he said their eyes would be opened, and they should be as gods, knowing good and evil. (See Gen. iii. 22.) These above suggestions from him are in my case too true, too true. I believe, my brother, you are my companion in these trials of mind, and to Satan we are compelled to say, No, it cannot be that I am a member of the body of Christ. Where are past evidences, joys, songs of praise and heart-felt adoration to God? Gone, yes, and it seems forever. You say, "At such times we cannot walk in the beauty of holiness, nor can we write in the darkness." Neither can we live without hope, and we long for renewed evidences (daily bread), but learn man is not to live by bread alone. How prone we are to think God is slack concerning his promise, one day, with him, is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. We can never have better or stronger evidence that we are members of his body than to be with him in the wilderness, in the garden and in prison, to be hungry and thirsty, sick and naked, weary and oppressed, crying with strong groanings and tears because of fear, striving against sin, praying to be delivered from our enemies, and in anguish of Soul ask, Why is the way so dark and the night so long? or why hast thou forsaken me? This was the life of Christ while here as a man, and it is his life still in each member of his body. I know well, my brother, what it is to be in the belly of hell, at the bottom of the mountains with the seaweeds wrapped about my head. Well do I know what it is to groan within myself passing under the rod. With all such I can walk in fellowship, I know little of bright and glorious experiences, and of wonderful visions and revelations. Jonah with his rebellion and running away from the Lord, and Peter with his denial of Jesus and his cursing and swearing, are more companionable to me than John with his ardent affection and love. Is there not a turning over to Satan in our experience for (he destruction of the flesh, as well as in the order of the house? Was it not so in the case of Job? While he was perfect in the sight of God through the blood and righteousness of Jesus, Job realized his experience to be needful, that he might be refined, and said, When I am tried (refined) I shall come forth as gold. The destruction of Job's earthly passions represents all the passions of our carnal nature, these must be destroyed (consumed) that the spirit be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. The image of Jesus can never be seen until all dross and tin are burned up, then his image appears in the gold (spirit); it cannot be seen in the flesh, for "the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

You ask why faith is not always in exercise? Because we do not need faith when we flunk evidences are so bright and clear that we can walk by sight. Faith is in exercise only when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, faith is the evidence of things not seen, it is never stronger than when all sight disappears and the darkness of night settles upon us. A few other evidences for the members of the body of Christ I will

mention for your consideration and, I hope, comfort. Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The pharisees complained and said he spoke blasphemies. Jesus answered, "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk!" Hence to say, "Thy sins are forgiven," is to say to the dead, Rise up and walk, and to say, Rise up and walk, is to say, "Thy sins are forgiven." (See John v. 5, 9.) Every child of God realizes, as Paul did, he is dead, yet he lives. This is because his sins are forgiven; he is lame on both feet, yet he walks; he is blind, yet he sees what the world can never see; he is naked, yet he is clothed; he is poor, yet rich in faith and an heir of the kingdom; he is filled with unbelief, yet believes and cries. Lord, help thou my unbelief; he is a leper, yet he is permitted to mingle with the people of God; he is dumb, yet he speaks; he is cast down, but not destroyed; forsaken, but not alone; he doubts and fears, yet is in possession of a good hope through grace; he is cast out by men, yet sits down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; he is vile and unclean, yet loved with an everlasting love. These are evidences of God's mercy to poor sinners, and that we are members of his body. Many times the best evidences of our acceptance with him we count as the things which are against us. When the Lord showed Manoah and his wife wonderful things in days of old, Manoah said, "We shall surely die;" but his wife said, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have shown us these things. So today, my brother, if the Lord intended to kill us he would not have given us the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, or manifested himself to us in his wonderful works of salvation. What we feel to be evil to us he intends for good. Then may we not call light darkness, and darkness light. We may be mistaken in some of the bright seasons of joy and gladness, but the dying of the Lord Jesus is so marked in his members that it hardly seems possible to mistake it.

I am glad of your letter, brother Coulter, it did me good. Did you ever feel that all men had turned from you, and that the assembly of the saints would be perfect without you! This produces a lonely feeling indeed. In such a condition to receive a letter like yours to me, brings comfort and encouragement. Little of my life is spent except in this darkness of mind and Soul.

Will now close, as I have already written more than I expected, and have perhaps said more than I should have done.

With love I hope unfeigned, I am your brother and companion in tribulation,
H. C. KER,

Signs Of The Times
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DECEMBER 15, 1905.



CORRESPONDENCE.

MIDDLETOWN, N.Y., August 9, 1905.

ELDER W. W. POLK – Dear Brother In The Lord: – Yours of the 4th inst. just received. You call my attention to Matthew xviii. 8-14. My understanding is that we cannot use these verses alone and grasp the subject; verses 6, 7 and 15 are inseparably connected with verses 8-14. Verse 6 tells us who are offended (little ones), and of the judgment of God upon the offender. Verse 7 tells us who the offender is (the “world,” or man of the world). Verse 8 calls the man of the world, whether king, governor, magistrate or private citizen, “thy hand,” “thy foot.” Verse 9 teaches the same thing when the “eye” in figure is used. Jesus never used an imperfect figure, therefore the hand, foot and eye cannot refer to members of the body of Christ, because if cut off or plucked out restoration could never be made; all the skill of earthly physicians can never restore the hand or foot of a man if it be cut off, or the eye if it be plucked out. The body of Christ would not be perfect if any member should be cut off, or an eye plucked out. Wherefore if thy support or strength, “hand or foot,” offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own.” “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” Verse 10 presents a different aspect entirely, viz: that the apostles themselves should take heed that they despise not one of the little ones who believe in Jesus. The apostles were not to be lords over God’s heritage, but were to be kind and gentle as a nurse in the care of children; they were to instruct the children rather than “provoke them to wrath.” Verse 10 also teaches the standing of the “little ones” with the Father of Jesus Christ; they are his, “bought with a price.” Verse 11 teaches us what the work of the Son of man was and is: to seek and “to save that which was lost.” Verse 12 presents the love of God to the redeemed, and the tender care and watchfulness of the great Shepherd, and also the tenderness and long-suffering that we should have one toward another. If a little one should go astray we should not seek that one with the intention to wound or kill him, but to save him or restore him to the fold; if he cannot walk for lack of strength, if he cannot return of himself, we should use all our strength (ability) to bring him back. “He which converteth the sinner [a stray little one] from the error of his way shall save a Soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Extreme measures should never be resorted to, unless after all of our tenderness, long-suffering and labor, the offender still lives in open transgression and rebellion against the church, then such an one should be turned over “to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Such an one until repentance is given him should be unto us “as an heathen man and a publican.” Verse 13 speaks of the experience of rejoicing when the wanderer or wayward one is found and restored (not killed) to the fold. Surely there is more reason to rejoice over the return of this one sheep than over the ninety and nine which went not astray. “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” Verse 14 shows clearly that it is not the will of God that one of these little ones should perish, therefore it should not be our desire; should our desire be in that direction, it will never change God’s will, or word, or purpose: that not one of these little ones shall perish. Though they may go far astray they shall not perish, neither can any man pluck them out of the Father’s hand. Verse 15 shows that personal offence may come from a brother as well as from the world, and when such is the case the rule is here given how to deal with that brother, not to cut him off and cast him from thee, as in the other case, but go to him alone and tell him his fault between thee and him, and if possible gain thy brother. In this case we are to use all possible labor, tenderness and long-suffering before telling it to the church.

The lesson taught in these verses belonged to each apostle separately, and to them as a body; it also belongs to each of God’s ministers, to each private member, to each separate branch of the church, and to the great body of Christ, the church, to-day.

Now, brother Polk, I have given you freely such as I have, and leave it with you to judge whether it is according to the word of God or not. May the Lord bless, guide and keep you.

I am your brother in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, I hope,
H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times
Volume 78., No. 22.
NOVEMBER 15, 1905.



“DEEP CALLETH UNTO DEEP.”

WHILE sitting to-day by the fathomless ocean, gazing upon its boundless wonder and magnificence, its proud waves ceaselessly beating upon the shore, spending their fury there, and while gazing upward to the heavens, ninety-five millions of miles from the earth, the above words of Scripture presented themselves to our mind. We are lost in wonder and admiration at the infinite wisdom, power, glory and majesty of God. So incomprehensible is He that we ask with fear and trembling, Have we ever known anything of so wonderful a God? It is really no wonder that David, while viewing the handiwork of God said, “Deep calleth unto deep.” Surely the Lord made a grand and beautiful world for his creatures to dwell upon, together with every needful thing suited to the needs and necessities of each one. One week ago we were in the mountains of Delaware County, New York, and while viewing their grandeur and beauty, with the valleys, and sparkling streams dashing through them, we remarked to those present, You people are wonderfully blessed of the Lord to live in such a country as this. While there we thought nothing could more fully set forth the works of God in nature, nor set forth the security of the Jerusalem of our God. David, when viewing the mountains round about Jerusalem, said, As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people henceforth and forever. All his works in nature, in some sense, declare his works in grace. As the mountains surrounded Jerusalem and protected it from the assaults of her many enemies, so the Lord guards, protects and keeps safely his kingdom, or church. He is also the glory in the midst. When we think of the unmeasurable distance between the fathomless ocean and the starry sky we can but say with David, “Deep calleth unto deep.” The sea calls upon the sun, moon and stars to behold it, so far beneath them with reference to distance, yet equal in manifestation of the power, wisdom and glory of God. The sun, moon and stars call upon the mighty ocean to behold them, each saying, Wondrous are thy works, Lord God Almighty. “Deep calleth unto deep.” How deep, unmeasurable, are the works of God; how strange are his dealings with mankind, yet how merciful how gracious. All nature is for man, and man for God. What a wonder! what a wonder! When all the powers of man fail to grasp the works of God in nature, how may any of us expect or hope to enter into the works of the Spirit? How often the children of God would fathom the heights and depths of the spirit world and enter into the hidden mysteries of the Almighty, but all our proud waves, thoughts and efforts are staid; no ascending unto the things reserved for them that love him, no going down into the buried things of wisdom. His glory he will not give to another. All must keep silence before him; all must know he is God. Many are the oceans in the experience of his people. Affliction, sorrow, loss and cares; all too “deep” for them to understand. Deep calls unto Deep, but there is no reply. Why does the Lord

thus deal with me? is often the cry. Why am I so hindered? Why this anguish of soul? Why am I so far from God? Why am I beset with such horrible thoughts of wickedness? Why so tempted to give it all up and say, There is no God? How often in this way the very deeps of depraved nature are made known. How often the pains of hell get hold upon the Lord's people. Oh the depths of sin, who can tell? The sorrows of death who can tell? In the human heart are the very recesses of hell; the bottomless pit is there, and should the Lord deal with us according to the sins of our hearts, who could stand in his presence? Oh the unmeasurable deep of God's longsuffering, his loving-kindness, his tender mercy, his immutability. Faith is needed in this dark day where all light seems gone, the Lord having left his people to themselves, as it were, to show to them the hidden evils of nature, and the lengths men will go to satisfy self. The mystery of iniquity – the mystery of godliness - "Deep calleth unto deep." From the beginning these two deeps have existed, and until time shall be no more deep will call unto deep. The infinite gulf between heaven and earth, between God and man, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between grace and works, law and gospel, is fixed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that "Deep calleth unto deep." The exaltation of God is revealed through the "deep" opposite to his character and godhead. When man transgressed the law of the Lord, sin, with all its blackness of death and condemnation, was manifest in the separation of man from God. That horrible condition continued until the law was fulfilled and justice satisfied by the atonement of Jesus, the Savior of sinners. Deep calling unto deep, God in his mercy, and in the person of his Son, reconciled the world unto himself, and in so doing removed the gulf between heaven and earth, bringing the new Jerusalem down to man; lifting man up through the righteousness of the Mediator between God and men. Here deep called unto deep. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, heaven and earth have kissed each other, in that they have met through the salvation of man.

The above thoughts were written while at Ocean City, Maryland, the latter part of August, and while they may give food for thoughts to some of our readers, we fully realize that the thoughts are but a faint hint at the "deep," unfathomable works of God, both in nature and grace. Knowledge of him and his mighty works is only in part here, language is inadequate to express even what little his children know; the glory, however, is in the Lord, there to abide until that which is in part is done away and that which is perfect appears, when we shall all see him face to face, and shall know as we are known. Until then "deep" will continue to call unto deep. - K

Elder E.H. Ker

Signs of the Times

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EPHESIANS VI. 4.

“AND, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Brother H. H. Bentley, whose address is 580 Decatur St., Atlanta, Ga., asks that we give “a little talk” upon Sunday Schools, and Old Baptist parents allowing their children to attend the same. We are willing to give such as we have upon the subject, which no doubt is one of importance, and one which has perhaps been neglected. It is good for us all to be reminded often of our obligations to God in all things. Our children are the gift of God to us, and we should endeavor to do all in our power for their welfare. We should instil, if possible, every honest and upright principle in them, beginning in their infancy; we should teach them to honor father and mother, to respect old age, to be kind and gentle toward each other; we should take them to meetings with us, teach them to respect the day of rest, Sunday, (so called) because the law of our country demands it, teach them as far as we can of God and his almighty power. As far as we are able we should educate our children and give them a profession or trade, that they may be independent, prepared to take care of themselves when it becomes necessary. All this is the duty of the Old Baptist parent to the child, but this is not the duty of the Sunday School teacher concerning our children. A believer should never feel that he can trust an unbeliever to instruct his child in the Sunday School.

The original design of the Sunday School was to teach poor children, whose parents were not able to send them to regular schools, to read and write. After a short time the Bible was read to the children, and little by little the original design of Sunday Schools disappeared until not a shadow of it remains. To-day, children are taught a lie in Sunday Schools: they are taught that God wants to save them if they will only let him; if they will be good God will love and bless them here and take them to heaven when they die. Does not this teaching fill the mind of the child with the idea or belief that God is subject to him in the salvation of his soul! What could be a greater falsehood!

No harm can be done by us in reading the Bible to our children, and in talking to them of God and his power to save, but to send or allow them to attend Sunday School is inconsistent. Why should we be willing for our children to go where we ourselves would not go? It is sometimes said, The Lord is able to keep our children and to bring them out even should they unite with other denominations. None of us doubt the power of God,

but this should not make us indifferent concerning the welfare of our children; the Lord is just as able to take our children from the gambling den or the saloon as he is to separate them from the Sunday School, but we do not want them to frequent such places. The idea to let them go and if the Lord wants to manifest them as his he will do so, if not all our carefulness amounts to nothing, is more fatalism than predestination. Sunday Schools, where a lie is taught, and where God is dishonored, and where his people are ridiculed, is no place for our children, hence let us keep them away from such places; if we cannot teach them the truth let us see to it that they are not taught false doctrine. The children of the Israelites were not permitted to mingle with the nations round about or to worship their idols; why should the children of spiritual Israel be allowed to do so?

The text at the head of this writing is the stronghold of those who believe in Sunday Schools, but it has no bearing whatever upon that subject; the apostle is admonishing children to obey their “parents in the Lord;” he tells them it is right to do so. These parents in the Lord are fathers and mothers in Israel, hence it is right for the children to obey and honor them; it is the commandment of God that they may live (spiritually) long upon the earth; if they disobey and dishonor them they die to their confidence and fellowship.

How well we all remember when we were little children in the church, and how at that time we honored and obeyed those older in grace and experience, how we recognized their superior judgment in all things pertaining to the christian life and order of the house of God. The fathers are not to provoke the children to wrath, this is not the way to bring up children either in our homes or in the church. All are children when they unite with the church, though they may be well stricken with years, and all need to be kindly and affectionately dealt with by the fathers and mothers in the Lord; those who were once children are now qualified, through the training of others, to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; it is in this way that the order of the house is maintained. Solomon said, “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Surely this cannot refer to natural children, for many of them do depart from the moral training of good and faithful parents. Solomon and Paul are in perfect accord upon this subject; it is the child in the church to which Solomon refers. If he is brought up in the way he should go, he will not depart from it; to be instructed in doctrine and in the order of the house is “the way.” When he becomes a man, instead of departing he is qualified to instruct others who are young in experience, hence those who were babes become fathers and mothers in Israel.

Let us “be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners,” but let us beware of antichrist in all its forms. We know well that it is not in the power of natural men to teach spiritual things, if so, some of us would have known them much sooner than we did. The Scriptures belong to the man of God, that he may be perfect, thoroughly

furnished unto all good works. In the New Testament we find no example or authority for Sunday Schools, therefore whatever is unwarranted by the word of God we may be sure is false, being only the notion of men.

May the Lord deliver us and our children from the snares of the devil. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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ETERNAL VITAL UNITY

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.” - Genesis ii.23.

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” - Luke xxiv. 26.

Having been requested to write upon the subject embraced in the above Scripture, we shall endeavor to do so with such ability as the Lord may give us. The subject is vast, sublime and of the greatest importance to the Lord’s children, though many of his children have failed to see clearly this vital relationship between Christ and his people, so wonderfully set forth in the Scripture at the head of this article. That lack of sight, however, does not make them less the children of God, nor does it make this point of doctrine less God’s eternal truth. The truth of God is an endless chain, so to speak, taking in every point of doctrine, order and practice. Anything, therefore, outside of this chain cannot be connected thereto, nor can anything of the chain be taken from it. It is just as the Lord made it, and will stand as made.

Adam was created and made according to God’s purpose and plan, regardless of desire, willingness or objection, upon his part. He was “the figure of him that was to come” - Christ. It is perfectly understood that Adam in his creation and formation knew nothing of Christ, hence it was not by choice upon his part that he was the figure of Christ. It should be remembered that the definite article *the* is used in that record of him; not a

figure, as one of many, but “the figure.” “So God created man in his own image, in the likeness of God created he him; male and female created he them ... and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.”

There has been much discussion with reference as to the image of God in which man was created and made, but there seems no room for debate on that subject, as the Scriptures just quoted declare plainly that the union between Adam and Eve was the likeness of God, and in that union, or unity, was Adam, male and female, the likeness of Him that was to come. In their creation they were one, and their name one - “Adam.” In formation they were one, male and female, or, in other words, Eve was in Adam; hence one life, making separation between them impossible, either in life or death. Eve being in Adam when the law was given, received that law and was as much accountable to the law as was Adam. When she, therefore, ate of the forbidden fruit she transgressed the law. The unity between Adam and Eve, his wife, was so complete that her sin was his sin, and had not Adam partaken of the fruit personally he would have been responsible for her sin and one with her in the transgression. The union between Adam and his posterity was such that his sin was their sin, or, in other words, when he transgressed all his children transgressed in him and all were under the same curse. Adam and Eve were one in creation, one in formation, one in life, one in receiving the law, one in transgression and one in death, hence the figure of Him that was to come. God, the eternal Spirit, had chosen in Christ his people, or bride, before the world began, unto salvation, that they should live with him in glory, rather than in Eden. The choice of God, of his people in Christ, thus giving them to Christ in union, to be his bride, made them one. In order that the world be peopled and the choice of God be manifested, the creation of Adam and Eve was necessary. In order that those ordained unto eternal life be saved and become manifestly the sons and daughters of God, sin must enter the world and death by sin. Hence the law was given, temptation came, the law was transgressed and in consequence the bride, or God’s chosen people in Christ, were condemned and became the children of wrath, by nature, even as others.

These things are all links in that endless chain mentioned already. The unity of Christ and the church (bride) as between Adam and Eve, was so complete, inseparable, that her sin was his sin, though he personally sinned not, and was responsible to the law for her debt. This we have shown in “the figure,” that had Adam not partaken of the fruit himself, he would have been responsible for the sin of Eve. The law demanded perfect satisfaction for the transgression. That satisfaction meant perfect obedience to the law, even unto death. Adam transgressed and brought death to his race, or children; Christ was obedient even unto death, the death of the cross, and brought life and immortality to the chosen of God. He was made of a woman and made under the law of sin and death, to redeem them that were under the same law. In the coming of Christ the love of God

was made manifest, yes, love to sinners, not because they were sinners, but because he loved them in Christ before the world began, and his love changed not when they were dead in trespasses and sins. Inasmuch as the children of God were sinners, the law demanded the life of Christ, the husband. Paul, in speaking of the unity of Christ and the church, calls attention to the union of husband and wife, the two being one, then adds, This is a great mystery, but I speak of Christ and the church. We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. At the appointed time of the Father, Jesus came to do the will of him that sent him, and that will was that of all which he had given him he should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day. Therefore because of the unity of Christ and the church, and in obedience to the law, Jesus died upon the cross, paid the debt his bride owed to both law and justice with his own life, or blood, was buried and arose for their justification, and presented them without spot, blemish, wrinkle or any such thing to God the Father. “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” It was his obligation as the husband of the church, it was the Father’s purpose, plan and will. Inasmuch therefore as it was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the whole church must answer his question and say, Yes, Christ ought to have suffered and to enter into his glory. The church is the glory of Christ, and in the midst of her he sings praises to God for the gift and for the purpose he purposed in himself before the world was, that through his blood she should be holy and without blame before the Father in love. These glorious matters of redemption were not revealed to Moses, the Israelites and their children, but were secret things known to God in that age of the world. They had the law, and legal things were revealed that they should do all the works of that law, but the redeemed bride has the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It was because the old covenant did not have and reveal gospel things that the disciples were fools and slow of heart to believe what the Scriptures declared, in prophecy, of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. The term “fools” means without understanding. After saying these things to them, Jesus began with Moses and opened the Scriptures, which had been hid from the beginning, to their understanding. In this he made darkness light, crooked things straight and rough places smooth.

Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways. How good it is to see the life-standing of the Lord’s people in Christ, while in Adam they die.

H.C. Ker



GRACE - WHAT IS IT?

PERHAPS there is no subject of the Scriptures more important. Perhaps no subject is so little understood by the masses of men. Surely no subject should be emphasized more. After an acquaintance and experience with and in the ministry for many years I have never heard any man tell his audience what “grace” is. This is my one point in this short article, and I wish that every statement he tried by the holy Scriptures, which are the infallible record of God, by which everything pertaining to godliness must be tried to see if it be true, just and right.

When the Lord put Adam in the garden of Eden to keep it and dress it, he gave him a law by which his life therein should be governed. The law gave him right to all the trees of the garden except one, which was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The law said to him, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” That law was the word of God, hence was holy, just and good, and for Adam to transgress it meant death to him and to all his posterity. He did eat of that tree, in violation of the law, and immediately became dead in trespasses and in sin, separated from God, driven out of the garden, and the flaming sword was placed at the entrance of the garden to avoid his return. In that sad state and condition the Lord made Adam the promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, or undo the devil’s work in bringing sin, and death by sin, into the world. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” “So by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous.” Here is the key to the subject, “grace.” If the law of our land holds the transgressor thereof responsible for his disobedience, and the guilty must meet its every demand, how much more so does the law of God hold the guilty accountable. Should man commit willful murder the law says he shall die. If he were to faithfully promise never to transgress again, and were able to keep that promise, would the law excuse him? Certainly not. If all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God, does God’s law excuse the guilty upon promise to do better? Certainly not. The only hope for a man indicted for crime is to prove that man innocent in the eyes of the law of the crime of which he is charged. This is often done, but every man was guilty in the eyes of God’s law, because all had sinned; hence by nature all were under the curse. All being in this condition, “without hope and without God in the world,” the Lord manifested his mercy to men in sending his only begotten Son to die that they might live. Christ met every demand of God’s law, suffered all its penalty, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Therefore Paul tells us that we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Since the sinner therefore could not merit the favor of God, since he could not undo what he had done, salvation is God’s free, unmerited gift, which is “grace.”

It seems remarkably strange that while all intelligent persons admit the above facts, many still contend that all men are saved by their own works of obedience and self-righteousness. The apostle tells Titus plainly that men are not saved by works of righteousness performed by them, neither are they called with an holy calling according to their works, but according to the purpose and grace given them in Christ before the world began. A man condemned to death by the law and in the death-house awaiting the day of execution is no more helpless to work himself into the favor of the law and be excused for his crime than is the man condemned by the law of God for sin. When the apostles conceived the idea that they could do some things themselves, and desired, each, to be the greatest in the kingdom, the Savior said, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter the kingdom of God. Little children are helpless, and can do nothing whatever for themselves. This is why, it seems to us, the Savior said, "Little children." There must be a realizing sense of this helplessness and a revelation of the power of God before any man can know experimentally that salvation is by grace and in no sense of creature works. If the children of God are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus, what part of the work did they perform and what part in the creation did they take? Such questions put the wisest men to silence, as was the case of Job when the Lord asked him, saying, Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? That question taught Job that he was not in existence when the Lord laid the foundations, hence had no part whatever in the work. The word "create" means to bring into existence that which did not exist before. Hence if the children of God were created of the Father in Christ Jesus what part of the work did they perform? Absolutely none. Therefore salvation is by grace, to the glory of God the Father, and because of this salvation they are called with an holy calling unto holiness and everlasting life. But salvation by grace is not for eternity only, but for this time state, that the children may be saved now from falling away from the doctrine of Christ; that they be saved from despair when overtaken with the afflictions of this world; that they be kept from evil in the day of temptation; that the tongue be bridled that it speak no guile; that the hands be governed that they commit no crime. It is also a light to the pathway of the pilgrim, that the feet be kept in the way of peace. When we see the mighty works of God in building his spiritual house, the song is grace, grace be unto it. Then of grace let us sing, of grace let us preach, of grace let us write.

"Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear;
Heaven with the echo shall resound,
And all the saints shall bear."

K.

Elder H. C. Ker

HOLINESS PEOPLE.

Dear Brother: – We have a band of “Holliness People” here that rely mostly on Paul’s letter to the Hebrews (vi. 4-7; xii. 14-17,) to prove their doctrine. They claim all baptism is Holy Ghost baptism. If not too much trouble please explain this.

R. R. HURST.
Clarendon, Ark.

The above request, as will be seen, comes from a brother who lives in the midst of “Holliness People.” What good neighbors and citizens they must make. We believe they claim holiness to the extent that it is impossible for them to sin. How strange that the Lord did not so bless the patriarchs, prophets and apostles; not one man, who knew the grace of God, from Abel to the end of the apostles’ day, nor since, could say, I am wholly without sin. But all have confessed that they were and are sinners, though saved by grace. The mighty apostle Paul said, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” He did not speak in the past tense, as to say he was the chief of sinners when Saul of Tarsus, but “I am” now the chief of sinners.

We are told in the Scriptures that, “There be gods many and lords many,” and delusions are just as numerous, but this holiness idea is the chief of them all; it denies every statement of salvation, because salvation refers only to sinners, no other character ever needed it. Jesus said, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” The righteous (holy) are not called at all by him; they need no repentance, therefore have no need of Christ. He died for sinners and keeps sinners through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. John wrote the things which he and the other apostles had heard, seen and handled of the Word of life, that the brethren in Christ might have fellowship with them and with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. In

this same letter he said, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” If there was no possibility of the brethren sinning, we fail to understand just why John should thus write, and if the children of God are without sin in the flesh we fail to understand why John said, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” We have every confidence that John was right, and that then or now the man who says he has no sin is a liar, not only against his own conscience, but against God and his holy word. If we have no sin how can we confess our sins to God? and how can he prove his faithfulness in forgiving our sins? Paul said of a certain class, “It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.” It is indeed a shame, and if some of the deeds of those who claim to be without sin were brought to light it would be a hard matter to convince men that they are absolutely holy. Not one believes it who has the grace of God in the heart.

The Scripture in Hebrews cited by our brother as the foundation of the doctrine of the “Holliness People” has no bearing whatever upon such doctrine, therefore does not belong to them. “Hebrews vi. 4-7, reads as follows: “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God.” The apostle had in the preceding verses of the same chapter called their attention to the principles of the doctrine of Christ, which he had no doubt carefully and faithfully presented to them before, and in which they should have been established, but he reproved them in the former chapter for lack of knowledge, saying, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” Now, after once more having called their attention to the principles of the doctrine of Christ, he said, “Let us go on unto perfection.” The going on unto perfection did not signify that they could attain unto holiness or perfection in the flesh, but that there were gracious and glorious things in the Scriptures concerning Christ and the salvation of sinners that they should not be ignorant of. The priesthood of Melchisedec and Aaron must be brought to their knowledge and compared with the royal priesthood of Christ; these and other types must be presented as shadows only; Christ must be preached as the Antitype or body of all shadows. Therefore the apostle means a perfect knowledge of Jesus in the fullness of his character by the word “perfection,” as he said to the church at Ephesus: “Till we all come in the unit of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” He is Shepherd, Husband,

Head, Lawgiver, Savior, Redeemer, Resurrection, Mediator, Counselor, High Priest, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Mighty God. To speak of him and show his relation to his people in all these wonderful names is indeed perfection which the “Holliness People” have not yet arrived at.

In verses four, five and six the apostle shows clearly the character and efficacy of salvation through the blood of Christ. It is impossible to renew any again unto repentance “if they shall fall away;” it is equally impossible for any to fall away, for “we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the savings of the soul.” – Heb. x. 39. Yes, the work of Jesus is so perfect that neither life nor death shall separate us from the love of God. If one sinner for whom Christ died could fall away and be lost, every declaration of salvation would be denied and all men be left without hope. But to the praise of the glory of his grace he hath by one offering perfected forever all them that are sanctified or set apart. As man stands in Christ, our living Head, he is holy and without blame before God, but as he stands in Adam the body is dead because of sin, therefore the law of sin in his members is still active, bringing him often into captivity. If Paul realized this and confessed that sin dwelt in him, how shall any man now claim to be without sin?

Hebrews xii. 14-17, reads thus: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” Verse fourteen is an exhortation to godliness in life and deportment. Men may believe and be established in the doctrine of God, and yet in their lives, by bad conduct and unclean conversation, deny Christ who bought them. Men who are not willing to suffer shame and reproach for the name and cause of Jesus Christ are not apt to live peaceably with all men. To follow after holiness is to deal justly, love mercy and walk humbly. The apostle does not say, If we do not follow after holiness we shall not see the Lord, but without holiness or righteousness no man shall see him. If his name is called “The Lord our Righteousness,” he surely must be our holiness also. Therefore without his righteousness or holiness no man shall see him. Verse fifteen continues the exhortation by saying we should be diligent lest any fail of the grace of God; this would be receiving the grace in vain, is, that grace makes no change in the life of the man who has received it; if it does not make the liar truthful, the drunkard sober and the thief honest, it is of no benefit to such men in their lives, nor does it glorify God in such men. The apostle’s meaning is that all who have received the grace of God should “mortify the deeds of the body,” put off the old man (former life), which is corrupt, and

put on the new man (newness of life), which is created in righteousness and true holiness. In following this course no root of bitterness will spring up, nor will any be defiled. Verse sixteen and seventeen clearly show the possibility of the children of God sinning and being visited with the displeasure of God because of their transgression. These two last verses completely remove the foundation from under the “Holiness People.” “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” – Eccl. vii. 20.

With regard to “all baptism being Holy Ghost baptism,” will say, if it be true how shall we understand why God sent John the Baptist to baptize with water, or why Christ was baptized in the Jordan, or why the apostles baptized in the days of the flesh of Jesus, or why Christ commanded the apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? The eunuch said to Philip, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? and Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” The chariot was commanded to stand still, and they went down both into the water and Philip baptized him. Why people should wrest the Scriptures to suit their convenience and bring about their own destruction is difficult to understand, but such has ever been the case and will doubtless continue, since “God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned.” Holy Ghost baptism is that which sanctifies the sinner, makes him a believer and causes him to follow Christ. Cornelius and his house had received this baptism before Peter commanded them to be baptized with “water.” The apostles were commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but not with the Holy Ghost. Water baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God in putting on Christ before men, professing faith in him as the crucified and risen Savior. It shows the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. A man who is not dead to sin is not a fit subject for water baptism, and should he be buried and raised in the likeness of the resurrection of Christ he could not “walk in newness of life” because he is not, in Christ, a new creature.

We now leave the subject for the consideration of our brother, hoping he may in a measure at least be satisfied with our explanation.

K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Signs Of The Times Editorial
Volume 75, No. 16
August 15, 1907

“I MUSE ON THE YEARS THAT ARE PAST.”

I Am thinking of the past because it is all I have now, and doubt if my thoughts will be of profit to any one except myself, however, I will try to write of a few things that were joy, peace and gladness in days gone by. In order to reach the experiences upon which “I muse” it will be necessary to mention some things which preceded, and also some things which have followed. When I was about thirteen years of age there came to my native town (Qnantico, Wicomico Co., Md.) a man by the name of Shaffer, a good, conscientious man, I believe; he made his home at my mother’s and preached for the Missionary Baptist churches of that county. During his stay with us he held meetings in the school-house in the village; these meetings developed into a revival (so called) and I, with six or seven others professed religion, and was baptized. For a time I tried to be good and avoid all evil, but after awhile I found myself drifted away from all called good and great. I often felt badly because I had made the profession, for I thought it was a great sin when one afterwards denied it by walk and conversation. At the age of about seventeen I went to Washington, D. C. After spending several years there in business, I went to Chicago, Illinois, and spent fifteen months: during this period my life was one of anything and everything except a religious one; never having a thought of God or my own condition as a sinner. In 1885 I returned from Chicago and located in Delmar, Delaware, there I soon became associated with Old School Baptists, but had no use for them, as I had heard all my life that the doctrine they believed and preached was worse than infidelity. In the spring of 1886 I was married to a daughter of Old Baptist parents: through respect to them I would occasionally go to hear their minister, who at that time was Elder E. Rittenhouse, afterwards Elder A. B. Francis. When the minister had finished his discourse I did not know any more than I did before he began; I confess I did not know what he was trying to get at, neither did I believe he knew: it was all a strange mixture to me. Once I went to hear Elder Wilson Housel; during his remarks he said, “It is a grand thing that the division took place in the church in 18:52, for it separated the wheat from the chaff:” he then took up the “Old School “as the wheat and the “New School” as the chaff: this I understood, for he really did ridicule the New School; (I now know he preached a good sermon,) this offended me, and I solemnly vowed never to hear another Old Baptist preacher; for a long time I kept my word. Several years after this a strange feeling came over me which I did not understand, a feeling of wretchedness, a feeling of depression, a craving for something I did not know what, a feeling of guilt, a feeling of loneliness, for no one was like me; never had I heard of such an experience: my only companions were the dragons and owls of the

wilderness. My life seemed completely changed; the earth was empty and void. I found myself occasionally reading the Bible, but to what end I did not know, for I did not understand it. At times my reckless life would come up before me with condemning force, and I thought every one knew me and could read me like a book: this cut me off from society, because I did not feel worthy to mingle with these “who had been my company. About this time I was taken dangerously ill, and for some time lingered between life and death: no one around me knew what I was suffering in mind because of my sins, neither can I describe that suffering here. I was at the end of all my works, and “What will become of me?” was the one question with me. One day when all hope seemed gone that I would ever recover and my very Soul in despair, there came a voice (not earthly) which said, “God has saved you;” darkness and fear fled away, and the joy of that hour no tongue can tell. “I muse on the years that are past.” I was ready then to depart and be with God, but instead I began to recover from that very hour, and in a few weeks was able to be around my room. When I was able to get around again I went to hear Old Baptist preaching: it was no longer a strange mixture to me, but salvation by the grace of God; this suited me because it fitted my case. I plodded along outside of the church until May, 1894, when I was received in the fellowship of the Little Creek church, Delaware, and was baptized by Elder A. B. Francis. We had preaching only once a month; the time seemed so long to wait to hear the gospel proclaimed, of which every word at that time filled my Soul with, it seemed, an heavenly rapture. “I muse on the years that are past.” The way of life and salvation seemed so clear and plain that I verily thought I could tell it to all men, and I tried to do so, but after awhile I learned that I could not raise the dead nor open the eyes of the blind. From the day I was baptized I felt impressed that I would have to preach; the burden became heavier and heavier; often subjects would be presented to my mind, and for relief I would write, and some of these writings appeared in the SIGNS. After a time I was called upon to read a hymn or speak in prayer or make a few remarks at our regular meetings; sometimes I could and other times I could not. Often when I knew I had to try to speak on the morrow I would spend a sleepless night; my appetite would fail me, and often I had to hold on to the desk to steady myself because of physical weakness. In 1896 the church licensed me to exercise my gift wherever in providence a door might be opened, and in 1897 ordained me. During my first experience in the church and in the ministry, visions came by night and revelations by day; my Soul was filled with wonder, praise and zeal, but I have grown older in years and in sin since then, and now “I muse on the years that are past.” The shades of night have fallen; if there is *now* a day of the Lord, surely it is one of darkness, in which is no brightness at all. There are no more visions by night, no more revelations by day, no more zeal. It seems that I have ceased to have spiritual emotions; no lead of mind into these glorious truths of the Bible, no more pleasant meditation upon the secret of the Lord, no more comfort in hearing the word preached, no more inclination to read

the Scriptures, and if I have that *real desire* for the welfare and prosperity of Zion that I once had, it is not in exercise. I am dead to everything called spiritual, and the worst of it is I fear I am indifferent to it all. That heart of feeling I once had is now stone; that fountain of tears which once so freely flowed is now dry; the tongue that once freely spoke of the glory, goodness and mercy of God is now silent, except when I try to preach. Days and nights pass without a word of prayer; I am indeed at times afraid to try to pray, afraid to take the holy name of God in my sinful lips; I feel at times that I fear God as I would an angry monarch in whose presence the transgressor cannot stand; then on the other hand, when the time of our regular meeting arrives I am afraid not to try to pray. I am not worthy to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and at times tremble at the thought, yet I am afraid not to make the attempt. How many, many times I have said, I will give it all up, and often have thought I could if I were not afraid. I am often questioning if this kind of service is acceptable to God; it is the best I have now, but it was not so in my first experience; then I would have owned my Lord, I believe, at the sacrifice of my own life; "I muse on the years that are past;" but now I feel sure, were I brought to the test, I would say, "I know not the man." No mystery is so great, it seems to me, as the "mystery of iniquity." O the bottomless pit of the human heart. Views of Scripture which once seemed so clear and full, are to me now cloudy and dark; texts that I have used in days past with liberty, as I thought, are now sealed; my very Soul seems chilled with the atmosphere of winter. No more can I "sing with the spirit and with the understanding also;" there seems no life in the good old hymns of the past. All that I do or say that has the appearance of religion, seems to me to be only mechanical. I am a tree without fruit, a cloud without rain, a well without water. In many of these bitter things I feel alone; my brethren are living and walking in the Lord, and when I see it I am glad for them. Should I have been told years ago, when all was joy and peace, that such a change could come in my feelings, I could not have believed it, and should I be told now that I will again experience the joy, peace and love which were mine in the years that are past, I could hardly dare hope for it. Well do I remember these days when I longed for meetings that I might hear the Word preached, and to visit the brethren that I might hear them talk of spiritual things, but these days are gone. Surely if the path of the just is as a light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, I do not belong to that class. I cannot see the clear sky of God's wonders to the children of men. If I could not muse on the years that are past I would be hopeless, but there is some comfort in remembering *now* my Creator in the days of my youth; when no evil days came, and when the clouds returned not after rain: then I could read and sing with joy and gladness of heart, and drink in the truth as the parched earth drinks in the rain which comes seldom upon it. "I muse on the years that are past." Can it be possible that blindness, destitution, nakedness and poverty of soul are evidences of our sonship with God? How gladly we would lay hold upon them as such if we could; they seem rather to cut us off.

All my hope and ambition of years ago, that I might grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, have been blasted, and I am brought to grief and disappointment.

I hope it may not distress the mind of any one who may read this letter; surely it is not written for that purpose. We are told to bring all the tithes into the storehouse: we can bring only what we have, this I have done in this letter.

H. C. KER.
MIDDLETOWN, N. Y.

Signs Of The Times
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IN WHAT RESPECT IS MAN IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD?

THE record is that man was made in the image, or likeness, of God. This means that Adam was the figure of Him that was to come. God created man male and female, and called their name Adam. The unity was so complete that the two were one, yes, one in creation, one in formation, one in life, one in death. This vital unity is the image of Christ and the church, in which Adam was made. Christ and the church, Head and body, are so inseparably connected that they are one, yes, one in life and in death, one in the resurrection and one before the Father in glory, and as the Father and Son are one, so the saints are perfect in one.

Written at the request of D. P. McCauley, Lipan Texas. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Signs of the Times
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ISAIAH XL. 10, 11.

“BEHOLD, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

In the first verse of this wonderful chapter the Lord commands his servants to comfort his people by declaring certain things unto them. The cry of the afflicted, the poor and the needy had always been, God deliver us; in mercy remember thy people, and here is comfort for them. It has seemed to us that beginning with the fortieth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah we have gospel messages, gospel promises, and the work of redemption presented, and the church brought to view as complete in her living Head, although now and then there are shadows. Jerusalem in the first verse of the fortieth chapter is called upon to rejoice in her Lord because of his great work in fighting her battle against death and delivering her from its power. The weakness, the vanity of man is presented by comparing him in all his glory with the flower of the grass. To those born again this gives increased hope in the Lord, because all know with Paul that no good thing dwells in the flesh, and with Solomon they agree that all is vanity. But while these things are true of the flesh, Jerusalem is given the blessed assurance that the Word of the Lord endureth forever, and by the gospel this Word is preached unto them. Hence our text is a testimony of the Word, the Lamb of God. The record is, “The Lord God will come with strong hand.” This gives glory to Christ, who is equal with the Father. “I and my Father are one.” The Godhead dwells bodily in him. His name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. It was therefore the Lord God who came with strong hand, traveling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save. Of the people there was none” with him, no eye to pity, no hand to help, so his own arm brought salvation to the ends of the earth. Yes, his arm ruled for him, and shall rule until time shall he no more. Men are sometimes called “rulers,” but their rule is limited to certain dominions; they are finite, and often make mistakes in judgment, through which destruction is brought upon those over whom they rule, But “the Lord God” rules in heaven above and in the earth beneath; heaven is his throne and the earth his footstool. His dominion embraces all worlds and all beings. Kings and monarchs are subject to him. Not only so, but the small est insect, that has to be seen through a magnifying glass, and dies in a few hours of old age, is also ruled by Him. Yes, the very hairs of your head are all numbered, and not one shall fall without. His purpose.

When he came his reward was with him, yes, in the very work he did. How often he said to the disciples, My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish

his work. Again, I delight to do thy will, O God. In this he was the example of all the children of God. They never think of God rewarding them hereafter for their good works here. If they minister to the body of Christ (one another) the reward is in the very act of kindness, let it be what it may. In all the obedience rendered to the blessed commandments of God is the answer of a good conscience toward him, therefore our reward is with us and in the work, instead of for it, otherwise it would be reckoned of debt. When man is given to rightly behold himself he will then understand how impossible it is to bring the God of mercy and grace into his debt; will more fully grasp the import of Jesus' words: Ten thousand talents in debt, and not one farthing to pay.

The work of Jesus was before him in the sense that the eternal purpose of God was accomplished in his death and resurrection. All other works performed by him were minor compared with that of redemption and justification, and this was the work, or will, of the Father which he delighted in. In this he abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. Having done this merciful and gracious work for his chosen, it is now his work to feed his flock like a shepherd. "One Hook and one Shepherd." The flock belongs to Christ, and he is their Shepherd. To him they look for food – pure, nourishing food. Some need milk, others need strong meat. Sometimes in meditating upon this subject the sheep and lambs lose sight entirely of the ministers of the great Shepherd, and rejoice in Paul's statement: Having Him We have all things, and with the poet they sing:

"I say he's my meat and my drink,
My life, my strength and my store,
My shepherd, my husband, my friend,
My Savior from sin and from thrall,
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord and my all."

He never has delegated man to gather his lambs, but does that work with his own arm (power), saying to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. Once gathered they enter the fold forever, with believers enrolled, with believers to live and to die. In times of weakness, danger and fear he carries them in his bosom; yes, tenderly, lovingly and safely he carries them to the haven of rest. He gently leads those that are with young. This means those not yet made manifest. These are sheep with life within, and not one of them is forgotten of him. He led in this way Saul of Tarsus, watching over him, bringing him to the place where the life should be made manifest, and when he called him he told him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," showing that God had been dealing with

him before the day of his conversion”. Having such a Shepherd, all our enemies shall be destroyed, and having such a great Physician, all our diseases shall be healed, and having such a Savior, all the sheep shall be safely gathered into the upper and better kingdom, and shall go no more out forever. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Editorial

Signs of the Times
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ISAIAH LI. 1, 2.

“HEARKEN to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord; look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.”

A few words on this text will not be out of place, perhaps, at this time, when so much discouragement is felt by the church throughout the land. Surely it is a day of adversity and depression. Such Scriptures are intended for the comfort of Zion, hence it is our desire to give its true import, if blessed to do so, to the end that the church everywhere be reminded of its faithful Builder and Keeper, his omnipotent power and Godhead. The key to the subject is found in the two last verses of the preceding chapter and the following verse to our text. By reading the last two verses of the fiftieth chapter it will be seen that in that age of the world, and at the time our text was written, there were two classes among the Jews. One who feared the Lord and obeyed the voice of his servant, or, in other words, kept the law given by Moses. That class walked in darkness and had no light, which means that they walked by faith, as there is no sight in the walk of faith. To this class the word was: Trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon your God. The other class had kindled a fire and compassed themselves about with sparks. They walked in the light of their fire and in the sparks that they had kindled. In them was no obedience to the law, nor fear of God, their walk was by sight, hence no faith in it. They did not trust in God for the fulfillment of his promises, nor was their hope in him of

salvation. They composed “Jerusalem, Jerusalem,” and the Lord said, “This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.” To the same class, in fulfillment of this condemnation, Jesus said to them, “Your house is left unto you desolate.” To the other class all promises are now kept through Christ.

In that dark age of the world the faithful among the Jews often became depressed and discouraged. The promise of salvation and deliverance from sin, through “the Seed of the woman,” seemed long delayed. Centuries had elapsed, millions had died and all things continued as they formerly had. Where is the promise of his coming? was the question often with those who trusted in the Lord. Time after time the Lord sent renewed promises to his people and gave them renewed tokens of his faithfulness to them. At the time of our text he was gracious in reminding them of marvelous things with which they were well acquainted, but of which they lost sight now and then. We should not forget the fact that those who feared the Lord and obeyed the voice of his servant were the ones called upon to hearken to Him. He had something to say to theme that followed after righteousness, or, in other words, desired righteousness and peace with God. They were “hungering after righteousness,” and in verse three the promise is that they should have it. Calling their minds to his wonderful work, the Lord commands them to look to the rock whence they were hewn and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged, then called their attention to the fact that Abraham and Sarah, their father and mother, were represented by the rock and hole of the pit. He said, as it were, if when there were none known of my people, all living as they listed, like Sodom and Gomorrah, for instance, I could call one man, Abraham, alone, just one man, and bless him and multiply him until his seed were like the sand of the seashore and as the stars of heaven for multitudes; if I could cause Sarah, a barren woman all her life, at the age of ninety years to conceive and bring forth a son, can I not now bless and multiply my people? There was one rock, but many chips; one Abraham, but many children. Every chip that falls from a rock being hewn is a part of that rock, so every Israelite was a child of Abraham. Paul tells us that from one man, Abraham, and he as good as dead, sprang an innumerable host. Sarah laughed at the very idea of her conception at the advanced age of ninety years, thinking it impossible, but Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

After reminding those who followed after the things of God of his wonders performed through Abraham and Sarah, establishing thereby his sovereign power to do his will, he renewed the promise to comfort Zion and to build her waste places that she might be like the garden of the Lord, wherein are rejoicing and the voice of melody. This message has been heralded since the ascension of Christ. Comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak comfortably unto Jerusalem, cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. In these trying times of darkness, depression, falling away, the love of many waxing cold, when men are lovers

of pleasure more than of God, when death to the church seems sure, when discouragement is on every hand, it is still good to be reminded that God is at the helm, able to accomplish his will both in heaven and in earth, that if of one man he could, in the days of Abraham, develop the greatest nation the world has ever known, he can now of one man, even Christ, if it pleases him, develop the children of his love into the largest number that earth or heaven has ever known. But if it is not his will to do so, do we as his followers want it done? Should we not be content with his work, let it be what it may? If it be his purpose to add to the church of such as shall be saved, all would be glad. On the other hand, if such be not his will, why should any of us be faint-hearted and feel like giving up the ship while he is our Captain? May we all be reminded often of his wonderful works to the children of men. We, many of us, have reached “the haven of rest,” where our souls are anchored, and He will bring every one of his redeemed to the same haven, where they shall find rest to their souls. Let us remember the things of old, when God worked and none could hinder. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs of the Times

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ISAIAH LII. 3.

“THUS saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.”

Sister Susie Gillett, whose post-office is Mardela Springs, Mil., desires that we give some expression concerning “money “as it appears in the Scriptures. She has mentioned several places both in the Old and New Testaments where the word occurs. We quote the above text as a starting point, with the hope that we may be given something that may be of interest, at least, to our sister and others who love the truth as it is in Jesus.

Never in our experience in the church have we felt more destitute of all things pertaining to righteousness than now; we feel that if our redemption depends upon money, and good works of the creature, we are forever lost. We are glad that our text declares the idea of salvation by money and works to be absolutely false.

Let us now consider the first clause of the text: "Thus saith the Lord." The prophets in declaring the messages of God to Israel said, "Thus saith the Lord." The Savior called attention to these holy things declared by the prophets, and the apostles spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; thus the Old and New Testaments are to us the word of God or the "Thus saith the Lord." And as far as we know, the Old Baptists and those of like precious faith are the only people who accept it just as it is, and believe that the sinner must be saved by grace alone. We are always safe in presenting the way of life and salvation just as the Scriptures teach it; we are safe in declaring predestination, election or any other point of doctrine just as the word of God declares it; science, philosophy and all the wisdom of the world combined, in the salvation of the soul, fall to the earth when weighed by the "Thus saith the Lord."

The text at the head of this article no doubt literally refers to the captivity, and deliverance of Israel from Babylon. By their transgressions against God's law in living in and partaking of the things which perish with the using, they had sold themselves for nought. The same is true in the case of Adam in the beginning; the forbidden fruit was that which perished with the using; only one tree in the garden of Eden yielded abiding fruit, which tree was the tree of life.

The greed for money has taken possession of the entire country; many men of high rank (so called) have fallen into disgrace because of it; some have gone down into the grave with guilt stamped upon them, others are languishing behind prison bars, others living in seclusion and others confined in insane asylums. Wives and children have been disgraced and brought low because of husbands and fathers having sold themselves for nought. Let us beware of this disease and not sell our birthright for a mess of pottage. The love of money is the root of all evil, says the word of God. Some of Israel were called greedy dogs that could not be satisfied; this principle is to-day in the flesh of all men. If a man accumulates one thousand dollars he then wants two; if he accumulates a million he wants more; this appetite can never be satisfied. It sometimes causes the children of God to neglect their church privileges, and instead of worldly prosperity making one more liberal, it often has the opposite effect. When we sell ourselves for nought we may rest assured that money can never redeem us from that bondage.

Israel went into captivity; they had sold themselves for nought, or for the things which perish. The Lord called Cyrus, a ravenous bird from the east, to execute his counsel in their deliverance; no money was paid as a ransom, but by the mighty working power of

God in his servant Cyrus and also in those who followed him, Israel was delivered. In their deliverance they were taught that their money, works or righteousness had not redeemed them, but instead God's mercy according to his promise had done all for them.

The spiritual import of our text teaches us the important lesson that we sold ourselves for nought, in the transgression of Adam, and were beyond the reach of all earthly help, as the transgressor has never been able to undo what he did, by good works or money. If he should give a world of money and live morally till the end of time he is still a transgressor. If neither money nor good works can redeem the sinner, what can?" Ye shall be redeemed without money," saith the Lord. The first representation of this redemption was in the shedding of the blood of a lamb by the faith of Abel, who realized himself to be a sinner, and was taught by the Spirit of God that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission. Cain did not know he was a sinner, hence saw no need of the shedding of blood.

According to the Missionary idea few will be saved without money, and works of the creature; none are preachers in their sight who do not go through the schools of men to be prepared for the work as the lawyer and physician are prepared. Just who they will attribute the faith of Abel to, and the walk of Enoch, by faith, with God, and the preaching of righteousness by Noah, we do not know, but one thing is sure: they had nothing to do with it. The Lord works in the hearts of his children to-day to believe in him and to trust in him as their Redeemer just as he did in the beginning of the world, and as he did in the days of Job, who said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

The idea of the Mission cause is that it requires money to save souls, and that without it and the gospel being sent to the heathen they must be lost. No, not if redeemed without money; the gospel is the message of salvation, but not the means unto salvation, except salvation from error, idolatry and every false way.

God made promise to the first transgressor, manifestly, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, or in other words, the works of the devil should be destroyed, not by money, but by the Lamb of God. The sinner who knew the plague of his own heart looked for the fulfillment of this promise; generation after generation, age after age passed away before the appointed time of God for the redemption of the transgressor, but this did not affect the faith of those who died without the sight, neither did it affect their eternal salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, neither will one among the heathen or elsewhere for whom Christ died be lost. The blood of the Lamb was the price paid for the redemption of the transgressor; this was all that law and justice demanded; this was God's way and purpose in Christ; no money used in the redemption. Ye shall be redeemed without money, therefore not one penny has ever or can ever be used in the

redemption of the sinner. Peter says we “were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,” “but with the precious blood of Christ.”

Because of the redemption the Spirit calls upon the church (Zion) to awake and put on her beautiful garments; the garments of salvation doubtless are meant; these are faith, hope and charity, and every other grace, together with every fundamental principle of truth, such as election, predestination, salvation by grace, special and complete atonement and resurrection. The church clothed in such a beautiful manner is established in the truth and prepared to fight against spiritual wickedness in high places. In this clothing is clearly presented the whole armor of God which the church is commanded to put on that it may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil.

To the thirsty soul the call is, Come and buy wine and milk without money and without price; the poor and needy have neither good works nor money, hence gladly hear and obey the voice of their Shepherd, and drink. The Fountain of life provides every needful blessing for the redeemed, and it is because of the redemption through Christ that every blessing for time and eternity comes to the sinner.

Let us not forget the fact that Christ did not redeem his sheep in order to make them his, but because they were his already; not purchased with money, but chosen in him before the world began. The relationship between Christ and his people existed in eternity, hence how absurd for man in this age of the world to teach that those who are not the children of God can become children if they choose. “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.” There is no middle ground in this matter, we are either the children of God or not his children; we are either redeemed or not redeemed. With us all, faith lays hold upon the finished work of Jesus and we hope in his righteousness. To God the Father, through Christ, belongs all the praise for our redemption and sonship. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

Volume 74, No. 9

May 1, 1906



ISAIAH LXI. 3.

“Called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

While all the prophecies are wonderful, it has often seemed to us that the declarations of Isaiah are, if possible, more wonderful and profound than those of any other prophet. The text quoted above, together with the context, is one of special interest to the church in this gospel age of the world. Indeed, the whole book of Isaiah has more direct reference to the gospel dispensation than the legal covenant, and many expressions are so suited to the understanding of the Lord's people that it seems they cannot err in their spiritual interpretation of them. Yet as simple as they seem, and are, to the wayfaring man, even though a fool, they cannot be properly interpreted by the wise of the world, for the reason that the world by wisdom knows not God; hence all sorts of constructions are put upon the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments by the untaught of the Lord to please the carnal mind and to tickle the ear of those who cannot and will not endure sound doctrine. The figures employed by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures convey to the spiritual mind or man the truth of the doctrine of grace, just as a good teacher conveys by simple figure or illustration to the mind of the child the very essence of knowledge. Hence when God's protection of his people is presented mountains are used as a figure, David saying, As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people henceforth and forever. When the everlasting love of God was preached it was done by the figure of a woman's love, the Spirit saying by the prophet, A woman may forget her child, to have compassion upon her offspring, but I will never forget thee; thy walls are ever before me, and thy names are graven in the palms of my hands. When the chosen family of God and all that belongs to his children in the covenant of grace were distinguished by Solomon, the figure of a garden inclosed was employed; so in our text, when the righteous in Christ Jesus, the work of God through him, are mentioned by the prophet, the figure of trees is used. When the unity of Christ and his people and the steadfastness of the gospel government were preached in the days of old, the illustration of a tree was brought to view: They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the works of their hands. In our text the elect are spoken of as trees of righteousness. There are many kinds of trees in nature, the Lord giving them to man to meet his needs and tastes. Each tree has its own name and each has its own peculiar value. The mahogany, the walnut, the oak, the chestnut, the poplar, the pine, and we we might mention hundreds of other kinds, but these are sufficient to illustrate our thought that each is absolutely distinct from the other and is valued according to its kind. The mahogany is perhaps the most valuable tree in nature, so far as the wood is concerned, and likely in the order that we have mentioned them the value of

the tree decreases. Then fruit trees have their own peculiar nature and value according to their kind. More than likely the orange tree is reckoned about as valuable as any fruit tree. Each and every fruit tree has some value owing to its fruit, every tree bringing forth after its kind. If it be a bad tree bad fruit is sure to be made manifest, and a good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit. The first name trees grow without cultivation, but the fruit trees named are planted and cultivated by men, and men reap the benefit. Often after years of toil and expense, however, crops are sometimes utter failures, owing to certain conditions, and the owners of such trees suffer great loss, but such is not the case with the Lord, he can suffer no loss. The trees he plants are ever-living, every-bearing or fruitful. Man has no hand in the matter. The Lord prepares the ground, plants the tree and gives them his personal care, so to speak. The cold of winter does not affect them, the heat of summer does not harm them, the floods do not uproot them, the fires do not kindle upon them, tornadoes and hurricanes never disturb them. They are simply proof against all powers, against all elements and every enemy, even death itself. As trees in nature are called by their names, or each given its name according to the wood or fruit, so the trees, the planting of the Lord, are called, or named, "Trees of righteousness." This name is given because of the nature and fruits of the trees. An orange tree bears, or brings forth, oranges, because it is an orange tree. The same is true of the lemon tree, it bears fruit after its kind, and every other fruit tree brings forth the fruit characteristic of its nature. So in grace the Lord named the trees of his planting, Trees of righteousness, hence because of their divine nature they bring forth righteous fruits, or the fruits of righteousness, which are faith, love, joy, peace, gentleness, longsuffering, kindness, meekness, temperance, charity, sobriety, truthfulness, honesty, in short, everything characteristic of the Spirit of the Planter and Dresser. As the owner of the orange, apple, peach or any other orchard is honored and enriched by the fruits of his trees, so the Lord is glorified through the fruits of his trees of righteousness. The owner of the orchard, literally, cares for it, that it may be protected from all enemies, that it may bring forth abundantly, so the Lord keeps his trees as the apple of his eye. He who keeps them neither slumbers nor sleeps, lest any should hurt or destroy one of his trees. Hence how secure, how sure to do the bidding of the Lord.

These trees of the Lord's planting are peculiar characters, such as "the meek," "broken hearted," "captives bound in prison," "they that mourn." Their work, or fruit, as declared, shall be to build the wastes, raise up the former desolations of many generations. The gospel ministry among the Gentiles is presented in verse five, which reads as follows: "And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your vinedresses." These are all included in the trees of righteousness, and shall be named, "The priests of the Lord," and shall be called, "The ministers of our God." "Priests of the Lord" is only another name by which the trees of righteousness are called. Made priests unto God through the blood of Jesus

Christ to offer spiritual sacrifices unto the Lord, even the fruit of our lips. The priests of the Lord have access to God through Christ, and each one offers for himself in the temple of the Lord and is heard, the Lord never turning any empty away who come unto him through Christ, the Head of this living priesthood. He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Therefore the trees, the planting of the Lord, are righteousness itself in him who knew no sin.

In the first Psalm Jesus, the man who was never found in the way, or path, of sinners, nor in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his law did he meditate day and night, is compared to a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Thus is Christ preached by the figure of a tree. The tree planted by the river of waters is fruitful, and it flourishes because of being well watered. It is said to live forever, in that its leaf shall not wither, and all his works shall prosper. This is just as true of each tree of righteousness as it is of Christ, the Tree of trees. God's work nor his word returns unto him void, but accomplishes his purpose, and prospers in the thing (tree) whereunto he sends it. The house of the Lord is spoken of as a well watered garden. Each tree of righteousness has in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, hence can neither wither nor die, but must bring forth fruit unto the praise and honor of God, through which he is glorified and his grace magnified.

May the God of our salvation continue to plant trees of righteousness in his gospel kingdom, and give those long planted there daily tokens of their acceptance in the Beloved, and that they shall continue to bear fruit to his honor and glory until gathered at his right hand to join in the song of the servants of God and the Lamb. - K.

Elder H.C. Ker
Signs of the Times
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ISAIAH LXVI. 7-9.

“BEFORE she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such

things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not. cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.”

Sister M. J. Riley, of Romulus, Okla., wishes our view of verses eight and nine above quoted, but as verse seven is in immediate connection it cannot be separated from verses eight and nine. In order to reach the subject we feel it necessary to call attention also to verses one and two of this chapter: “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.” In this God declares his immensity as filling heaven and earth, as being over all things, controlling all things in heaven and in earth; thus showing that he needs no such house or place of rest as the Jews could build. They had taken much credit to themselves in that vast work, but the Lord said, “All those things hath mine hand made;” that is, it was by his counsel and purpose that they existed. But instead of looking to those things and dwelling in them, he would look to (respect) the man who is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at his word. In these sayings is presented the difference between the legal covenant and the covenant of grace; the difference between the house or dwelling-place of God under the law, as the Jews thought, and his dwelling-place in the gospel. He “dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men’s hands.” He dwells in the heart of his people; this is the place of his rest, because there is his kingdom. These two first verses have their special bearing upon the prophecy contained in our text concerning the great prosperity of the church in having the Gentiles added to it after the natural branches (Jews) had been broken off. There was a remnant, however, of the Jews who did believe, and who according to prophecy were saved: “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.” The gospel church was first established with the Jews, but the number was only one hundred and twenty on the day of Pentecost, before the Lord “added unto them about three thousand souls.” This number was far short of that multitude of which the fourth part could not be numbered.

In Isaiah liv. 1-3, we have the following language: “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.” The Jewish church is here set forth as a married

woman, who, like Sarah, had long been barren, but is now called upon to enlarge the place of her tent, to lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes, because she should break forth on the right hand and on the left, for her seed should “inherit the Gentiles.” This Scripture seems to furnish, as it were, a key to the subject to which our attention has been called: “Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.” The Jewish gospel church was profoundly ignorant of God’s purpose and will to manifest the Gentiles as his people, hence before the thought was conceived the work was done. The Gentiles were brought into the saving knowledge of God’s grace, given the Holy Ghost and turned from idolatry to serve God; therefore were brought into full fellowship with the Jews. “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together.” (See Eph. ii. 11-22.) The Jews rejoiced that God had granted repentance to the Gentiles, hence joy without pain and sorrow. Thus we understand how the church brought forth before she travailed, and how she was delivered of a man child before her pain came. The expression, “delivered of a man child,” signifies, we think, the manifestation of the holy child Jesus in Gentile believers. Well might the questions have been asked: “Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?” No mortal had heard such a thing nor had seen such things. These things had been alone with God from eternity. While the Gentiles were often spoken of by the prophets, Israel did not understand God’s purpose concerning them; this secret had been hid from the beginning, “That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” This work was so vast and so wonderful that it appeared as marvelous as though the earth had brought forth in one day, or so sudden and unexpected that it seemed the work of a day only. How different from the way God dealt with man and made known his purposes in ancient times! First he called Abraham and blessed him, then Isaac, then Jacob, afterwards the twelve patriarchs were manifested. It required four hundred and thirty years to produce the nation of Israel, which was all done according to nature. But the spiritual nation, contrary to nature, was by his power produced, as it were, in one day. “Shall a nation be born at once! for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” This last sentence of Scripture is not a contradiction to verse seven, but it qualifies that Zion, the church of God, is presented in this figurative language.

Peter calls the Gentile believers “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation;” chosen in Christ before the world began, a royal priesthood, because of having been washed in the blood of Christ and made kings and priests unto God; an holy nation because of God’s imputed righteousness.

“Shall I bring to birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut tee womb? saith thy God.” In this verso we are taught that God does not divide his glory with another; he it is who brings to birth, and causes to be brought forth.

God in his own great, wonder-working way prepared the Gentiles, by giving them divine life, to receive the gospel and to rejoice in it. No power could have hindered his purpose in that grand manifestation of his power, grace and mercy. It is said in Isaiah lxx. 24, concerning the Gentiles, “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer.” Therefore we must say, It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. The Lord’s ways are equal, therefore where he begins a work he will perform it until completely and gloriously accomplished. Man often fails in his purposes, but not so with God, he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The immutability of God is clearly presented in the last sentence of our text; he will not repent, he will not leave his work undone; “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” His promises are as sure as his decrees; he never promised anything that he had not before decreed to bestow upon his children.

We have now briefly given such thoughts as we have upon this wonderful subject, and leave them for the consideration of sister Riley and all who may read them. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

Volume 74., No. 20.

OCTOBER 15, 1906.

JAMES I. 26.

Elder H. C. Ker – Dear Brother: – When you have opportunity I would like to have your views on the general epistle of James i. 20.

Your brother in Christ, I hope,

F. W. WATERBURY.

Westwood, N. J., April 13, 1908.

For several reasons we have delayed replying to the request of brother Waterbury. The Scripture suggested by him, and its connection, will call for some expressions which may strike so close to the line as to cause some of us to feel the shock. The text reads as follows: “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but

deceived his own heart, this man's religion is vain." It is difficult for the children of God who confess their faults to him and to one another, to read expositions of such Scriptures without feeling and perhaps saying, That is for me, when no thought of accusation was in the mind of the writer. This is one reason why we have felt delicate about replying, but the chief reason is self-condemnation.

James from first to last in his epistle sets forth things of great importance, and no letter of the New Testament is more comprehensive or instructive with regard to pure and undefiled and vain religion. The brethren addressed must have had notions contrary to the law of liberty; they perhaps thought that all things were lawful unto them, as Paul said concerning himself. All things are lawful in the sense that nothing can again bring the redeemed of the Lord into condemnation, but all things are not expedient, nor is their liberty to be used for a cloak in evil or wrong doing. Paul was so completely delivered from the Jews' religion that he could eat meat forbidden by the law, yet he would eat no meat while he lived if it would cause his brother to offend; and while he was so firmly established in the gospel that all days were alike to him, he would not condemn the weak brother who did esteem one day above another. Well might he say, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." This is the lesson James also taught his brethren, and the same lesson is most important now for us all.

There seems to have been an idea in the minds of those brethren that when they were tempted to evil the Lord did it, and therefore what they did and said was lawful or right. James would not allow them to so accuse the Lord, and said to them, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man). But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He most positively told them that their temptations were not of God, and that they erred in so thinking. Every man is tempted when drawn away of his own lust and enticed; nothing wrong can be charged against God; every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from him. Predestination never justifies a man in wrong doing, neither does it make God the author of sin.

Three kinds of religion are spoken of in the Bible: pure and undefiled, the Jews' and vain. Pure and undefiled is the religion of Christ; it causes a man to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, not only with good words, but with food, fuel and clothing. It is sufficient to live with and to die with. The Jews' religion consisted in rites, forms and ceremonies, and has no place in the gospel. Vain religion is that which does not glorify God nor benefit the man who has it, in the eyes of his brethren and neighbors,

and is made manifest by the tongue, that “unruly member.” Jesus said, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” These, like all other words of the Lord, are true and sure. Men therefore should be swift to hear, but slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not (manifests not) the righteousness of God. “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles,” and escapes the judgment surely to be visited upon the man who does not bridle his tongue. We put bits in horses’ mouths, and their whole body is turned thereby; we govern the course of the ship with a very small helm; all beasts, birds and serpents have been tamed, but the tongue can no man tame, it is full of deadly poison; “it sitteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.” With the same tongue we bless God and curse men. Well did the apostle say, “My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” Yet they were and are now, and doubtless will continue as long as man lives upon the earth. How weak and frail man is! O that we could all “apply our hearts unto wisdom.” How much we all need the power and grace of God to keep us, but by our constant failures we are made to feel that we have neither, and that our religion is vain, our hope vain, and that we are still in our sins.

James speaks of a “tongue among our members;” did he mean in the church, or among the members of each individual body! Perhaps some have observed the work of the tongue in the church, ever stirring up strife and bitterness. One such tongue can do more mischief than a thousand tongues can do good which speak of love and mercy. A man may feel hurt at some intentional or unintentional thing of a brother, and speak in justification of himself, yet ninety-nine times out of a hundred he deceives his own heart, and condemns himself in his speech. If he uses harsh or unkind language he is condemned; if he speaks of the injury to another before speaking to and having an understanding with his brother, he condemns himself; if he refuses in his heart to forgive his brother, who may not ask it of him, as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us, he condemns himself; if he continues to talk of his brother’s offence and to justify himself when the brother accused is not present, he deceives his own heart, condemns himself and his religion is vain. How natural it is for every man to see the mote in his brother’s eye, but never to observe the beam in his own, neither can he be convinced that even the smallest atom is in his eye. How prone all men are to speak of the faults of others, but seldom, if ever, speak of their own. Perhaps none of us can imagine the intense anxiety of the apostle when he said to his brethren, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” How few of us seem to be clothed with the beautiful garment, charity. It “suffereth long, and is kind; charity enveith Dot; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her

own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” Why is it that we cannot all be and feel as we did when first we knew the Lord? Then the brethren had no faults, hence there was no criticism in our tongues, but our hearts were filled with love to them, and like newborn babes we needed their care, love and forbearance. Charity surely was put on, we did not think evil, we did not speak hard things, we did not curse men, we were not puffed up. But children grow to be men very soon, and then charity is not in evidence; faults are many, love waxes cold, we think of man as man, and not as a brother in the Lord; we become great men, in our own estimation, and unrighteous judges; we want prominence, and envy those who have it. When we sum it all up we have become such as other men are who have not known the grace of God, or in other words, we have received the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. vi. 1.)

If we have no understanding of any other portion of God’s word, we feel that this text suggested by brother Waterbury is fully understood, experimentally, by us, but while the Lord shows us our weakness and sinfulness, may he also show us his power to save. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times
Volume 76., No. 16.
AUGUST 15, 1908.

JEHOVAH-JIREH.

WHEN reading the Old Testament Scriptures it is pleasant to behold the dealings of the Lord with his chosen and blessed people; pleasant to be reminded of his loving-kindness and faithful care of them in all generations. How true the saying of Moses: Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. The mercy of the Lord has been in evidence since man transgressed his law; yea, even before man was formed of the dust of the ground the Lord’s mercy was manifest in the creation and formation of everything needful for him while time shall last. But even this was not the beginning of the Lord’s mercy, for spiritually all the elect were blessed in his choice of them unto salvation in Christ our Lord before the world began. The mercy of God endureth forever and forever, and his faithfulness is even unto the ends of the earth. Never has he failed one called by his name – he cannot deny himself. But how unfaithful and forgetful are all his children

of him; how we all deny him in our lives, saying, "I know not the man." But as he knew in Peter's day all things, he is fully acquainted with us now, and as Peter received mercy and forgiveness, so do we.

When Peter told the Lord he knew all things, he had in mind his vow, his promise never to forsake, never to deny him; he would go to prison and to death with him, though he did none of these things. Yes, he knew the Lord remembered all he had said, and on the other hand, he knew just as well that the Lord knew he loved him, notwithstanding his denial and unfaithfulness. How good it is now to know that the Lord knoweth all things, and that he searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God. Peter, like all the Lord's people now, had the faith of Abraham, hence the things written with reference to Abraham were not written for him alone, but for us all, if we believe that Christ died and rose again. Such belief was counted to Abraham for righteousness; such faith is also counted for righteousness to all the family. Abraham is the father of the faithful, or, in other words, of all who have faith. The faith of Abraham was severely tried when the Lord commanded him to offer Isaac, his only son, as a burnt offering. In that son was hope for all nations of the earth, but Abraham believed God was able to raise him up from the dead and fulfill his promise in him. Isaac in a sense was not the promised seed, because in Christ are all nations blessed, and he according to the flesh was Abraham's seed, hence Isaac's offspring as well as Abraham's. The Savior said, Abraham desired to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. How little the poor old man knew how and through what sore distress that revelation should come. The desire of his heart, or prayer, was to see the day of Jesus Christ: day of salvation, redemption and justification; that day of rest from all labor; that day when seeking the building of God, which hath foundations, would cease; that day when his seed should be as the stars of heaven gathered into the fold of God, when the kingdom of Christ should become greater than all other kingdoms. This vision had to come through the trial of his faith in the sacrifice of Isaac, his only son. Early in the morning Abraham, his son and two young men started on the journey to the mount which God would afterward shew him. Two days were ended before the mountain appeared where and when the sacrifice had to be made. Two days or dispensations passed before the mountain of God's holiness appeared where Christ was offered for the redemption of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, together with all the promised seed. As Abraham, Isaac and the two young men drew near the place Abraham said to the young men, You abide here while I and the lad go yonder and worship and return unto you. Something seemed to say within Abraham, The son shall return with me. Here is seen the wonderful faith of the man of God, yes, faith that laid hold upon the truth that God was faithful to his promise, and if the life of the boy should be taken he would raise him up again and he should return with the father to the young men. When Isaac asked, saying, Father, here is the wood and here is the fire, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? Abraham by faith answered, My son, God will provide himself a

lamb for an offering. A slight glimpse of the day of Christ was then seen. They journeyed until they came to the place, and Abraham built the altar, bound Isaac and placed him on it, fully expecting to take his life. We read of no resistance upon the part of Isaac, nor was there any way of escape in sight at that critical moment. Isaac was a figure of the church bound by the fetters of sin, without hope and without God in the world, absolutely no way of escape in and of herself, yet God had provided a Lamb for her deliverance. When Abraham raised the knife to take the life of Isaac the angel out of heaven said, Do the lad no harm, for now I know that thou fearest God. That was not it new thing to God, but was said that it might be recorded for the comfort of the tried and faithful. Abraham looked behind him, and saw a ram caught by the horns in the thicket, and he took the ram and offered it instead of Isaac. Through that sacrifice Isaac escaped, and Abraham then and there saw the day of Christ, salvation of the church, and was glad. Thus his prayer was answered, and Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh, which means, the Lord will provide.

O how little we know what we are asking when in our attempts to pray to God. We have sometimes thought if we could know how our prayers would be answered, through what great deeps we must pass, what fires we must endure, what heartaches and tears, that we would be most afraid to ask anything of God. We are glad he knows our frame, glad he knows all our needs, glad he will provide for all our needs through grace in Christ Jesus. If the children fail in asking, the blessings will not be less. If the cross be heavy, the strength shall be equal.

In conclusion we will say, if any have seen the Lamb of God, by faith, that they have seen the same as did Abraham, and now sit down in the kingdom of God with him. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs of the Times
Volume 84, No. 18.
September 15, 1916



JEREMIAH XVIII. 4.

Editors Of The Signs Of The Times: – It is past the time that I should have renewed, but hope you will excuse my neglect. I herewith inclose one dollar, to be placed to my credit for the Signs; we cannot well do without it. I get very little gospel preaching except through the Signs. I think brother Chick’s article good on the Adamic man and the old man, in volume 74, Oct. 1st, 1906, page 603, and brother Ker’s in volume 75, April 15th, 1907, page 248. I think it the best I ever read on that text. Brother Ker, if not asking too much please give your view on Jeremiah xviii. 4, on the last vessel.

HENRY WILSON.

Potter, Ark., April 30, 1908.

The above request has been delayed on account of many duties other than writing. Such requests inspire in us desire to write and speak of the wonderful works of God. Yet there is with us that awful realization of our utter unfitness for these things, and we are continually between the two powers, and often in a strait as to whether we shall give up “the ship “or continue in “the race.”

The Scripture to which our brother calls attention reads as follows: “And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”

It is one of those Scriptures which show the dealings of the Lord with Israel under the law, and yet the gospel is hid in those sayings. In that day the Lord revealed his ways and purposes to the prophets in visions and by signs, and thereby prepared them to speak to “the fathers.” Israel was God’s peculiar treasure – the only people in that age of the world recognized by him and the prophets as his. Their blessings were many, and God’s faithfulness to his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was ever in evidence. Yet the people denied, forsook and rebelled against him, and because of their transgressions and idolatry the prophets were sent to tell them of the Lord’s displeasure and to warn them of the judgments surely to be visited upon them except they repented. If they would repent, God would repent and not do the evil he thought to do unto them. The repentance of God has ever, more or less, confused the minds of his people who are established in the doctrine of his sovereignty and immutability, believing him to be the same yesterday, to-day and forever, that he changes not. We should not forget that he dealt with Israel in the law, in which was every commandment, every ordinance and every ceremony, and also the punishment for every transgression. “The law is holy, just and good,” and in all the messages to Israel, and of all the judgments sent upon them, there was nothing contrary to the law, nor was anything added. When they sinned, the Lord sent prophets to remind

them of his anger, as was in the law, but when they were obedient, blessing and prosperity followed, in which the Lord's pleasure was made manifest according to the law. For instance, we of this country have what are called "United States laws" governing our country. When one transgresses any point of these laws the anger of our government is made manifest. When we live in obedience to the laws, peace is the fruit, but the government has in nowise changed. Therefore it is seen that God in his infinite character and being did not change in that age of the world, nor does he change now. "I am the Lord, I change not." His anger and his kindness were both made known through the law, neither did he deal with that people in any other way.

In the case before us, Israel had departed from the law and its precepts, and therefore the judgments of the law (anger of God) were to be visited upon them. The Lord sent Jeremiah down to the potter's house and there made known to him the condition of Israel at that time; he told the prophet that there he should hear his words. When he arrived the potter was at his work, and Jeremiah observed a work wrought on the wheels. The vessel first made by the potter was marred in his hand, but of the same clay he made another vessel as seemed good to himself. This was a sign or figure. Then the word of the Lord came unto the prophet, saying, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter! saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." In this very declaration is the sovereignty of God presented, that as the clay was in the hand of the potter and he could form and fashion it as it pleased him, so Israel was in the hand of the Lord to do with them as was good to him, yet nothing was done to or for them contrary to the law.

To reach the essence of the subject of the potter and the clay we shall have need to go back to the beginning, when the great Potter formed and made a vessel of earth. That vessel was made in the image of the Potter, was good and blessed far above all other vessels of the Potter, so that he had dominion over all others, yet was the first to be marred, but in his fall all other vessels were marred also, and death and decay of all things and beings are in evidence. Shall we say that the chief vessel was marred in the hand (purpose) of the Potter! Most assuredly.

"Life, death and hell, and worlds unknown,
Hang on his firm decree;
He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be.

Chained to his throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel's form and size,
Drawn by the eternal pen."

The marring of that vessel was to make known the power and purpose of the Potter to make of the same clay one vessel to dishonor and another to honor. Had not the first vessel (Adam) been marred, nothing more than vessels of earth could ever have existed in this world, and not one of them in heaven. But now there are vessels of mercy, vessels of salvation, vessels of righteousness and vessels to honor according to the purpose of the Potter, wrought, not on the wheels, but by Him who was made of the same clay (flesh and blood), yet holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

“Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.” Christ must come of that nation, according to the promise to Abraham, therefore the new wine was in the cluster, and the Lord would not destroy that people (clay), but make through Christ, of the same clay, a spiritual Israel who worship him in spirit and in truth, keeping the law not written upon tables of stone, but in their heart, and put in their mind. In which is made known to the vessels of mercy the pleasure and anger of the Lord.

Paul, in his letter to the church at Rome, presents the doctrine of the Potter and the clay to prove the doctrine of election, and says there is no unrighteousness with God, though he did make one vessel to dishonor and another to honor. It was his sovereign right as the Potter to make and endure vessels as seemed good to him. It is not the right therefore of the thing formed to say to him who formed it, “Why hast thou made me thus!” The question, Why are we so blessed! or, Why are we so punished! was not the right of the Israelites; they knew by the law why both came to them. Why the Lord chose and blessed Abraham alone and his seed after him, no man has right to ask. Why he hides the things of the gospel from the wise and prudent and reveals them unto babes, is answered by one man only, the man Christ Jesus: “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

Jeremiah delivered the message of the Lord to Israel, and by reading the chapter in which is our text, the result will be seen. We therefore shall state but briefly that which follows the text, and in conclusion try to show its application now in the church. The people said to the prophet, “There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.” They either looked upon God, or his law, as a hard master, requiring that which was impossible for them to perform, or that there was no profit in serving the Lord, as is recorded in the book of Malachi; at any rate it was more agreeable to serve the lusts of their flesh than the law of the Lord. They dishonored God in rejecting his prophet and seeking his life through treachery and falsehood. When Jeremiah was made acquainted with their desire to kill him, he went to the Lord, asking that death and disaster be sent upon them; not that

malice or hatred was in his heart, but because of their further rebellion and transgression against the law. Let it be remembered that the words of the prophets to Israel were the words of the Lord, and as true and powerful as though He had descended the heavens and spoken to them as he did from Mt. Sinai when the earth trembled because of his presence and the people feared and quaked because of the dreadfulness of his voice; but many would not hear the prophets.

When the church in the years prior to 1832 departed from the spiritual law and ordained order of the house of God, messengers were sent declaring the word of the Lord, and they beseeched Israel to repent and do the first works. But the messengers were despised and their messages rejected. The Lord had a people, however, among them as in the days of old, who feared him, leaned upon him and stayed upon their God. Hence the work of those servants in those perilous times was not altogether vain. To-day there is again discord, division and declension, every one going his own way or serving the imagination of his own heart, refusing to be warned, hating exhortation, denying the God who bought them, backbiting and devouring one another. True servants of the Lord are continually upon the walls of Zion, sounding the alarm, beseeching the people to flee from “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,” and from highmindedness, which exalts man above all that is called God. But instead of hearing and turning from their evil ways, they persecute the servants of God and would take their lives, in the church, if they could; death and destruction seem to be in their wake; and the only comfort and stay one can find is that we are the clay and God our Potter, he will fashion us as his wise decree determined before time began. This is our only hope and salvation.

We now leave this feeble effort for the consideration of brother Wilson and our readers generally. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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JOHN VI. 44; JOHN XII. 32.

THESE Scriptures read as follows: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men “unto me.” The first may seem narrow in its application, while the second may seem exceedingly broad. There is connection between all Scripture, both that of the Old Testament and that of the New, and often the subjects of grace are given understanding of some portion of the word by comparing it with some other. The text in the sixth chapter of John is full of marrow and fatness, as is also the one in the twelfth chapter, the doctrine of Jesus being set forth. The Jews had been with Jesus the day before the words in the sixth chapter were spoken by him, had seen the miracle of feeding the live thousand with five barley leaves and two small fishes; they had gone over the sea because they expected him to be there, but his preaching did not suit them. Jesus told them that they sought him, not because of the miracles, but because they had eaten of the leaves and were filled. This shows that they did not recognize in him the Godhead – the Savior of the world, and that their discipleship was for worldly gain rather than the glory of God. The wonderful miracle did not cause them to believe, but did create in them greater amazement. That man, lowly in heart and meek in spirit, had miraculous power; even the dead lived again at his word. But when he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven, whereof it a man eat he shall never die, they marveled more than ever, and said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?” Really their astonishment is not to be wondered at. Had any of us lived in that day and had known Jesus as a boy, as a man, carpenter, then witnessed his mighty power and influence, we would have not only marveled at his works, but would have doubted his statement that he was the Son of God. To us this very thing shows the impossibility of man, in nature, to believe that Jesus is the very Son of God. When the Jews asked him, What shall we do to work the works of God? he replied, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. Paul, in speaking of his faith in Jesus, said he believed by the working of the mighty power of God which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead; hence the work of God that he believed on him whom God sent into the world to save sinners, and it required the same power to cause Paul, a dead sinner, to believe that Jesus was the Christ, that it did to raise Christ from the dead. How few believe this doctrine to-day, how few in the days of Jesus in the flesh; only twelve men in a company of five thousand believed him to be the true bread of life which came down from heaven. When the Jews murmured among them selves at these sayings of Jesus he said, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. He meant by this that they need not be specially concerned about him and his doctrine, inasmuch as he and his doctrine were for a special purpose :and people, and such would be made manifest by the Father in due time by drawing men unto him. The drawing did not mean force, as a train of bears is drawn by

the locomotive, but in being taught of him, according to the Scriptures, they would be drawn to Jesus in love, reverence and fear. Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto him, and him that cometh he will in no wise cast out. The Father reveals the Son in his love, mercy and power to save. This is teaching the sinner of Jesus, and feeling his absolute necessity, his need of just such a Savior, he is drawn' to him, and pleads in the language of the publican, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. The cry is heard, the oil and the wine poured in, the wounds bound up and he finds himself in possession of the secret of the Lord, the Lord having shown him his covenant. Those Jews had been with Jesus on several occasions, had followed him across the sea, were then listening to his voice and asking him questions, but not one of them had "come" to him in the sense of knowing him and his power to save. When he said, Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye have no life in you, they were offended, and said, These are hard sayings, who can hear them? Who can understand such things? Who will listen, to such things when they come from a man whose father and mother we know? Then they, the professed disciples, turned and followed him no more. Then Jesus addressed the twelve apostles and asked, Will ye also be offended? Will ye also go away? And Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of God. All men then who professed to be the disciples of Jesus were not, neither are they now, but twelve among a multitude were true believers, and perhaps about the same average now will be found. The very words which were hard sayings and turned the Jews away were to the apostles the words of eternal life. Just such preaching to-day turns men away from their manifested discipleship; they will not hear Jesus exalted a Prince and a Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins, but there are a few new in the world who love the doctrine of grace, the free, unmerited favor of God, and know that without such favor they must forever perish. Hence the work of the Father in drawing men and women to Jesus is still going on, and will until time shall be no more; then when time and time things pass away, this truth of God will stand to his honor and glory, and his taught, called, redeemed and justified children will join in the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the Lamb: Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This Jesus said, signifying what death he should die. In the purpose and plan of the Father he must die upon the accursed tree, he must be numbered with the transgressors. The manner of his death was as sure as the place and time of his birth. Every word and every step of the blessed Son of God was ordained of the Father; all the work given him to finish was done by him, no more, no less.

In many of his sermons to his disciples he had intimated that the Jews were not the only people of God's love and choice, and that mercy and grace should be extended to them. This text is only another of those sayings. In the lifting up of the Son of man the middle wall of partition, which had always separated the Jews and Gentiles, was removed, and the secret of God, hid from the beginning of the world, was revealed to his holy apostles, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs through the gospel. Therefore, instead of the covenant of God and the sure mercies of David being confined to the Jews, "all men," both Jews and Gentiles, were drawn by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Godhead, to the Savior of sinners. And now, as in the ease of the first text, when no man could come to Jesus except the Father draw him, no man, Jew or Gentile, can come to the Lamb of God, who took away the sin of the world, except he be drawn by him who loved us and gave himself for us. This does away with the old and familiar error, "Whosoever will may come." But when the Spirit and the bride say, "Come," there is a coming to the water of life, an entering in through the gates into the city, a keeping of the commandments of God, a supping with him and he with them, a walking in newness of life and at last triumphant death, through faith, to live forever with the Lord and the Lamb.

The above article is written at the request of brother G. W. Townsend, of Gainesville, Ga. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Editorial

Signs of the Times
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JOHN X. 9.

"I AM the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

In this chapter the Savior is contrasting between himself and those who came before him. All who preceded him, claiming to be the shepherd of the sheep, were thieves and robbers, dishonest, deceivers, hypocrites and everything contrary to the truth of God; but Jesus was the good Shepherd of the sheep, and embodied every principle of right. He was the Door through which every sheep must enter into the sheepfold – no other way, no other means. There is no condition here suggested, but on the contrary a positive declaration: By me if any man enter in he shall be saved. The figure is very striking, and we should not lose sight of it. Sheep in a sheepfold are protected from all enemies, hence

are saved from the attacks and assaults of beasts, whose nature it is to destroy them. The people of God have entered into the sheepfold (church) through the Door, Christ Jesus, and are saved from the world, its delusions and enemies, as Noah and his family were saved in the ark, being separated from the world. The word “saved” in the Scriptures does not always mean redeemed, saved with an everlasting salvation, but often it means care, protection, safety, &c., here in the sheepfold of God. Those mentioned in the text were already sheep, or, in other words, children of God, and because of that fact entered into the sheepfold prepared by the good Shepherd for their comfort and protection.

“And shall go in and out, and find pasture.” This clause of the text carries the figure further: sheep are not kept always in the sheepfold, but they go in and out. The pasture literally is not inside the sheepfold, but shelter and protection are found therein. The pasture is outside. When in the sheepfold the walls serve as salvation to them from harm or injury; when outside in a pasture the shepherd is with them, hence always protected, and the pasture is sure. The certainty of a resting-place, safe from the ravaging wolves often in sheep’s clothing, is presented in the parable, and also the certainty of pasture for the children of God. The saints are seldom in the same place long at a time – led here and there, in and out, up and down, but all confess that places of safety and green pastures are theirs in all the journey. Children of his love and care, sheep of his pasture.

Written at the request of D. P. McCauley, Lipan Texas. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs of the Times

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JOHN XIV. 2,3.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

At the request of Mrs. W. S. Johnson, of Kingston, N. Y., we shall offer a few thoughts upon the above Scripture, which are the words of our High Priest to his disciples in one of the most trying periods of their lives. In this discourse the Savior had told them he was going away and they, then, could not follow. After having been with him three years

and a half during his ministry in preaching the gospel of the kingdom, raising the dead and healing the sick, their love for him and their hope in him of the restoration of all things pertaining to national Israel were deeply seated, and his words regarding his departure from them fell upon them with mighty force, and sorrow filled their heart. He, fully understanding their grief, said, "Let not your heart be troubled." It is understood by some that the word "troubled" does not mean sorrow or sadness, and not long ago we heard a very learned gentleman define the word "troubled" by saying, It has no reference to sorrow or sadness, if so, Jesus was asking an impossibility of the disciples; but it means, he said, Do not be troubled about my going away, it is all right, it is for the best, therefore do not be concerned about it. Job said, "Great men are not always wise," hence are liable to mistakes as are others. In this same sermon, recorded in the sixteenth chapter of John, Jesus said, "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." And after he had gone and they supposed forever, he appeared to two of them and asked, "What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? We readily see the three words, troubled, sorrow and sad, used with reference to the same experience; therefore our conclusion is that the disciples were indeed "troubled" when Jesus told them he was going to leave them. He spoke encouragingly, however, by saying, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

It seems necessary first to establish what the "Father's house" is. If we say heaven, the question immediately follows, Was there ever a time when the realms of immortal glory were imperfect! All God-fearing people answer, No. Then the Savior did not mean that he was going to heaven to add to its glory and perfection in building mansions when he said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Moses made a tabernacle in the wilderness, in which God was worshiped in offerings and the burning of incense. Solomon built a temple and dedicated it unto the Lord. Jesus recognized this house when in the flesh, under the law, but said to the money changers, "Ye have made it a den of thieves." The tabernacle and the temple both passed away, because they were of earthly material; hence we cannot look to either of them as "my Father's house." David being a prophet, and by faith seeing a house not made with hands, said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." A house made without hands bears no mark of earthly architecture, and when this house is seen it is always recognized as the work of God. The writer of Hebrews, in contrasting between Moses and his house and Christ and his house, gives us as good a description of it as mortal man has ever had, when he said, "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we." This brings us to look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, neither shall her stakes be removed nor her cords broken. Jesus said, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer;" not a house to pray in, but

“a house of prayer,” which house is the church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth; composed of lively stones, men and women, built of God upon the rock, revelation, and shall never be overthrown, but abideth forever.

At the time Jesus uttered the words of our text the church or house of the Father was not in actual existence, but with God all things are present and in his purpose “were finished from the foundation of the world,” yet the Savior said, Upon this rock I will build my church, not yet done, but I will build it. He, seeing the house complete, said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions,” or places to be occupied.

Having now tried to establish the fact that “my Father’s house “is the church of God, we shall turn our attention to the “mansions.” What mistaken ideas many hold regarding this point, thinking that in heaven every one shall have a mansion, decorated according to their works for the Lord here, and the more the works the grander the mansion, and the fewer the works the more modest the mansion. If, as we have endeavored to show, “my Father’s house “is the church of God, the mansions will be found there. They are particularly the offices or places to be occupied therein, and each one occupies the mansion or office according to his gift. Gifts were given to men; to some were given apostles, to some prophets, to some evangelists, to some pastors and teachers, then the gift of deacons and also that of healing. These are the most prominent places in the church, but the eye, ear, hand and foot fill their respective places. “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy, according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” The Lord hath placed each member (gift) in the body (church) as it hath pleased him, therefore each one occupies his own mansion or place in the house of God. “Were it not so, I would have told you.”

“I go to prepare a place for you.” He was then about to go to that place prophesied by Isaiah: “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation! for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” Yes, in a little while we find him in the garden, sorrowful even unto death, treading the wine-press alone, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground; his three disciples asleep, dead to his agony. He prays to his Father, “If it be possible, let this cup pass.” But it was not possible, he must prepare a place for his people, and it must be done in the appointed way. We now see him before the kings and rulers who had taken counsel against him, the

Lord's Anointed; he is spit upon and mocked, a scarlet robe is put on him and on his holy head a crown of thorns is placed. Now before Pilate he stands, where many murderers and thieves had stood to be sentenced; but how strange this sentence, never one similar before nor since: "Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him." Now he is being led as a lamb to the slaughter, but he opens not his mouth. His holy hands and feet are pierced with rugged nails, he is lifted from the earth, dying for the sins of his people. He is dead; the earth quakes, the rocks rend, the graves of many of the saints which slept are opened. He is taken down from the cross and buried, a great stone is rolled to the door of the sepulchre and sealed, and the watch is set. The third day, very early in the morning, he comes forth from the dead a conqueror; death has lost its sting, the grave its victory. The "place" is "prepared:" the church brought up from condemnation and death. The Conqueror cries, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." He has now returned, (I will come again) giving his disciples a lively or living hope of immortality by his resurrection from the dead. He receives them unto himself into the spiritual kingdom or house of the Father. The King reigns in righteousness and princes (apostles) rule in judgment, sitting upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes (all the elect) of Israel. He is now in the house of his Father, or in his own house, where all nations are, through his work of redemption. He is the door, the way, the truth, the life and the resurrection; no man cometh unto God except by him.

The clause, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself," is interpreted by some as referring to the end of this material world, but a careful investigation of the chapter will perhaps convince them that it means no such thing. For instance, Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." This he did after his resurrection. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." Again he said, "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." This is very different from taking men out of the world that they make their abode with the Father and the Son. Christ our blessed Lord comes now in the person of the Holy Ghost to comfort all his saints, and to guide them into all truth. His first coming was "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin." His second coming is in "the image of the invisible God," without sin unto salvation, and to all who look for him he will appear. Paul says, The righteous Judge shall give a crown of righteousness to all who love his "appearing," which is his coming again in the Spirit in the experience of each one of his children. No mortal who has experienced the forgiveness of sins will deny that Jesus has appeared to him, and it is always as the end of the law for righteousness, hence without sin unto salvation.

What an easy thing it is to forget that the church or house of God is the body of Christ, and that where the body is the Head is also, and where he is there are his children.

Where is he? The Bible answers thus: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

It has been a pleasure to grant the request of our esteemed friend, Mrs. Johnson, and we hope that she as well as others may be able to glean a little here and there from the things we have tried to present in the fear of the Lord and in good will toward men. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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JOHN XVIII. 36.

"MY kingdom is not of this world."

The words of Jesus are spirit and life when applied to the subjects of his kingdom; every one of this kingdom is subject to the King of kings. All power and authority are his, his word is law and verily truth. When he says, "My kingdom is not of this world," we are not to question what he says, but believe his kingdom is not of this world, whether we can understand it or not.

The apostles in their first acquaintance with Jesus, as a man, thought he would set up an earthly kingdom; two of them, James and John, desired to be prominent in such kingdom by sitting the one on the right and the other on the left hand of Jesus. He answered, "Ye know not what ye ask." They had to be taught by many sorrowful lessons, in drinking of the cup that Jesus drank and in being baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with, that his kingdom is not of this world. The apostles had no prominence in the world, we mean religious world, or among men, because of being the servants of God, but were considered "the offscouring of all things," accused of most every evil because they preached Christ and the resurrection; they were prominent, however, in the kingdom of God, where believers in Christ and his power to save are only found. These men did not seek the applause of the world, they did not love the world, nor did they seek to please men. Paul said, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." A most serious question arises here: Are we who profess to be the servants of Christ seeking to please men? If so, we are not the servants of Christ; he is our King and Master, to him alone are we accountable for! our stewardship. Do we sometimes round the corners in

presenting the gospel, or desire to speak “smooth things,” lest some one of the world be offended? Do we fail to talk of Christ and his loving-kindness when in the parlor because some are present who do not believe the truth? What is this but denying Christ and pleasing men? The conversation of those of God’s kingdom in the early ages of the church was, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever;” they were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. A command was once given to “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.” Should not the gospel of the grace of God be so set forth to-day? Should we not be bold in the defense of the truth to speak in such a way that all who hear may know where we stand in this matter of salvation!

There is no place in the army of God for a coward; in ancient times those who were afraid were not numbered with those who fought the battles. The doctrine cannot be preached too plain nor too strong for those who believe it; if unbelievers are offended at the truth it will be no more than they were when Christ preached his own power, the efficacy of his own blood and God’s eternal purpose in preparing him a body. Hundreds were offended at this kind of doctrine at one time, twelve only in that great company heard with comfort and said, “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Jesus did not shun to preach the truth just as it is because it would not be received by unbelievers. Why should we attempt to build up this kingdom of God (which he alone builds) with worldly matter? Why, if it is not of this world? John, when in the isle that is called Patmos, saw, in vision, the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven; this is God’s kingdom, and the fact that it comes down from God shows conclusively that it is not of this world; it is in the world, but no part of it, it is of God. It is a peaceable and quiet habitation, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” God’s kingdom is spiritual, heavenly and divine, because he reigns in it without a rival, he is one Lord and his name one, therefore there can be no such thing as division in his kingdom. The question might be asked, Does not the strife and war in the church to-day prove clearly that there is division, and that all of his kingdom is not spiritual? No, unless the words of our text, “My kingdom is not of this world,” can be proven untrue. If we say there is division in God’s kingdom, we say that in part his kingdom is of this world; we also say the Zion of God is not a peaceable and quiet habitation. In our ideas of the kingdom of God we must not deny his word, his word is true, and all things must be tested by it. How can there be division in a kingdom when there is but one power? There is no power in God’s kingdom except his own almighty power, therefore no division, no strife. Now the question, What means all the strife in the church of God to-day! “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” If there is division in God’s kingdom or house what will be the result? “It shall not stand.” Who would dare say the kingdom or house of God shall not stand? “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” If there is division in it it cannot

stand, but the fact that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it proves conclusively that in it there is no division. The fighting of Satan against it does not make Satan a part of the church; he may be transformed into an angel of light, “so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,” but it is all false, this is only one of his ways of fighting against it; he is still Satan, a liar and a deceiver. Would God work against himself? No. Satan cannot work against himself. “How can Satan cast out Satan?” Why should we imagine that God is divided against himself, or that there is division in his kingdom? God is God, Satan is Satan, truth is truth, error is error. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not; and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” Does not James make the distinction clear between these two principles! They are set forth as being opposite in every sense of the word; the one of the earth, the other from above; the one working every evil, the other all good. These principles cannot be blended, therefore are not divided against themselves. When trouble, war, strife and confusion are manifest we have no authority to say the kingdom of God is divided, but the two principles are made manifest, the one of war, strife, error, unrighteousness and every false way; the other of peace, truth, righteousness and every good work. In this we see the word of God still maintained, “My kingdom is not of this world.” The precious is often separated from the vile, but the vile has never been a part of the kingdom of God. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” When the apostles speak of division, a careful reader will observe that the idea of division in the kingdom of God is not set forth, but carnality was ever manifest, and we know that carnality is not a part of that kingdom which is “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Should wolves, in sheep’s clothing, get into the visible kingdom of God, they are no part of his house any more than a goat would be a sheep if clothed in a sheepskin. God will cast out all such, because no worldly material can have place in his heavenly kingdom. When we say visible kingdom, we mean church organization, nevertheless “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” Mortal eye cannot behold it; the Holy Ghost guides and teaches, but by faith we see the house of God eternal in the heavens.

The saints of God do not differ in form and appearance from those of the world, but there is something within them that identifies them with God; “it is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” They do not love the world with its follies and delusions, they hate the commandments of men when preached as the gospel of God, they hate all sin, yes, even

the appearance of evil, they hate their own life; this shows also that the kingdom of God is not of this world.

The bondwoman and her son were cast out, because her son could not be heir with the son of the freewoman; it was impossible that there could be division in the inheritance. This casting out of the bondwoman's children is still going on, and will continue; this is one of God's ways to make manifest the heirs of promise. Paul did not claim relationship with the children of the bondwoman, but said, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." The children of God need not be disturbed with regard to his kingdom, he builds the house and keeps the city. In Christ was chosen a definite number before the world began; this number composes the kingdom of God, hence having been chosen in Christ it is not of this world. Neither has it nor can it diminish, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." This kingdom cannot be divided on earth nor in heaven. May the Lord give us to see by faith its spiritual completeness and perfection. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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JUDGES XVI. 29.

“SAMSON took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up.”

For some time past I have had a desire to write a few lines to the pilgrims and strangers scattered abroad throughout the east, west, north and south, many of whom I have met personally, and others I am acquainted with through their writings in the SIGNS. My desire has been hindered by a lack of spiritual thought; this lack is still as great as ever, and I fear it will never be brighter or better with me. I remember however of receiving comfort many times from the writings of those who were, as they felt, not exercised by the Spirit, so perhaps we are not capable of judging our own feelings or writings, but rather should follow our impressions, and leave the matter with the Lord to bless or not as it may seem good to him. The above text is somewhat in my mind, together with a few thoughts which I will give for your consideration. While the world stands the

Scriptures will be unfolding to the people of God, but while the seal is broken in one place another portion that we have had light upon will be closed from our view. The ways of God will never cease to be mysterious, and his judgments we can never find out. The Scriptures are a testimony of Jesus, and in reading them we should desire to see him. He is seen in different characters as well as in their word. In the types it requires in some instances several figures to complete (he shadow. For instance, Saul, David and Solomon make a complete figure of Jesus. Saul who was king over Israel was from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people; this places the head above the body; thus he was head over Israel in all things, being their head or king. Christ is Head over all things to the church, which is his body, he being their Head and King. David was the warrior who met and slew Goliath (death) and delivered Israel. Jesus in the battle against sin conquered death and delivered his people from fear of death. Solomon was the builder of the house unto the Lord, and reigned in his kingdom in judgment and wisdom. Christ builds the spiritual house an habitation for God through the spirit, and reigns in righteousness. Sampson also is in many respects a figure of Jesus, he was Israel's judge; Christ is the judge of his brethren, and he judges not according to the sight of his eyes, nor after the hearing of his ears, "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor." What a blessing, should he judge us according to our conversation and our deeds, who could stand in his presence? all would surely be condemned. When Peter cursed and swore and denied him, Jesus did not judge Peter as man would have done, he knew Peter's heart and that he loved him and believed in him as the Son of God, but to save his own life he denied him. Man's judgment would have been, Depart, thou cursed, but our righteous Judge only looked upon him, and the look caused Peter to remember, and he wept bitterly because of his sin. Sampson took a wife of the daughters of the Philistines, because none of the daughters of Israel pleased him. So with Jesus none of the daughters of Israel pleased him, and he took his bride from among the Gentiles. Sampson was betrayed into the hands of the Philistines by one whom he loved; Jesus was betrayed into the hands of his enemies by one whom he had chosen and sent out to preach the kingdom of God. Sampson's eyes were put out, and he was brought into the presence of his enemies to make sport for them. Jesus was blindfolded, spit upon and mocked. The Philistines believed Dagon their god had delivered Sampson into their hands, but the God of Israel had done it. The Jews believed that Pilate had delivered Jesus into their hands to be crucified, but "he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Sampson, to avenge and deliver Israel, and Jesus for the forgiveness of the enemies of God. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The house into which Sampson was brought to make sport was tilled with men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there, and upon the roof there were about three thousand men and women, and all beheld while Sampson made sport. We would not be safe in saying what the nature of the sport was, but I think we may well say it was

something as humiliating to him as their evil minds could conceive of. Sampson had indeed been their enemy, but he was doing the work (Jod ordained for him, many of their country he had killed by his mighty strength. When he was brought in from the prison, they set him between the pillars, he said to the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth. Then Sampson called unto the Lord, and said, “O Lord God, remember me I pray thee, and strengthen me I pray thee, only this once.” Mow strange it is to see the experience of the chosen of God the same in all ages of the world. When in need or distress they know no time but the present; whatever the trial of yesterday was it seems to be forgotten, and the cry goes up, Lord, help me and strengthen me to-day. “As thy day so shall thy strength be.” Sampson prayed for strength that he might remove the two pillars upon which the house stood. Had the desire been from a heart of malice and rage that the natural passions should be satisfied, the petition would not have been answered, but in that it was answered, we are assured it was indited of God, and his holy purpose was accomplished in the pulling down of the two pillars and the fall of the house. Jesus also prayed in the garden when he sweat as it were great drops of blood, saying, Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. In this he prayed for strength, and “an angel came and strengthened him.” After Sampson had prayed he took hold of the two middle pillars and said, Let me die with the Philistines, and he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon all the lords and on all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Thus their power was overthrown, their government unhinged, and their courage daunted. Sampson’s brethren took his body and buried it in his father’s burying place. The greatest battle ever fought was in the death of Jesus, the greatest victory ever won was in his resurrection; he also was numbered with the transgressors, his body was also buried by his brethren (Jews). In his death the two pillars on which the house of Israel stood were removed and the house fell. The law and the prophets were the two pillars that upheld the house or church under the law. In the death of Jesus every demand of the law was satisfied, and the prophecies fulfilled. No more does Moses and Elias appear, Jesus alone is seen, and the voice from heaven says, “This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.” In fulfilling the law and the prophets they were taken out of the way, so that the church to-day is not under the law but under grace. The house that the children of God now inhabit hath foundations whose builder and maker is God, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of her stakes shall be removed, nor one of her cords be broken. In the ministry of Jesus he overcame every enemy, confounding and putting them to flight with his wisdom and might in the Spirit; he also healed hundreds of afflicted ones, but in his death he healed more than in his life, his entire body being made whole, he conquering their every enemy, death, hell and the grave, and now hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. What a blessing we have the

gospel preached unto us, and that we are given to obey it in its ordinances and precepts. May we be found in the way, asking for the old paths. No change in doctrine or order since the days of Jesus and the apostle is warranted, since we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. If we are enveloped in darkness and sorely tried by temptations we must wait upon the Lord. This was the life of the Savior, and if the saints could avoid these afflictions they could never know the fellowship of his sufferings, without which they could never know the power of his resurrection.

Respectfully submitted,
H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times
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I KINGS XIX. 13.

“What doest thou here, Elijah?”

Elijah the prophet was blessed with faith in God, and by faith wrought many wonderful works. He prayed that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. He said to the widow of the city of Sarepta, who was gathering sticks to bake the last cake for herself and her son, then die, Fear not, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. So it was. When the son of the widow died, Elijah stretched himself upon the child and prayed God to let the Soul come into him again: the Lord heard his prayer, the child revived, and the prophet presented him to his mother alive. He prayed to the Lord to send fire down from heaven to consume his offering in the presence of the prophets of Baal, and fire came and burned up the altar, the offering, the stones on which the altar was built, and licked up the water in the trench. He slew four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. These ate a part of the works, by faith, of Elijah; but when Jezebel sent a messenger to him saying, “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy

life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time,” “he arose, and went for his life.” When in the wilderness he prayed that he might die, but instead, an angel fed him, after which he went to Mount Horeb (desert), where all of us must go when faith is not in exercise. There he dwelt in a cave (bondage); here it was that the Lord said unto him, “What doest thou here, Elijah!” Where is now thy faith in the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? Where is that confidence in God which you had when you met the prophets of Baal and all other dangers through which you have been called to pass? Is Jezebel greater than your God? Is not the Lord able to deliver thee and to preserve thy life? Why didst thou doubt? Why was not the Lord thy refuge and high tower, wherein is safety? Was he not with thee in the dangers, temptations, persecutions, to deliver thee, in the days and years of thy pilgrimage? Elijah must answer these questions as we do now (in heart), “The fear of man brought a snare;” I had forgotten thy power, thy mercy and the many deliverances in days past. All this fear and doubt is but the fruit of unbelief: in this condition we all are compelled to offer the prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” How precious is our fellowship with Elijah: first in faith, confidence and holy trust in God; afterwards fear, doubt, temptation, trial and bondage to the law of sin which is in our members. The rending of rocks and mountains, the earthquakes and fires distress us because the Lord is not hi them; but they must first appear and pass away without hurt to us, before we hear the “still small voice” which brings peace to the troubled mind, light to the benighted Soul, liberty to the captive and faith to the unbelieving. Then we with Elijah wrap our face in our mantle to hide our shame in departing from the living God. How often we seek refuge in some earthly place or thing, when pressed by danger or trial. O that we might ever look to the Rock from whence cometh our help. Helpless, weak and faint we must ever be receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, though we be often carried away, tossed upon the billows of fear and unbelief. But though we be tossed the promise is, at last we shall be brought to our desired haven, where rest and peace are found.

Written by request of brother Donald McKay, of Scotsville, Nova Scotia.

H. C. KER.

Middletown, N. Y.

Signs Of The Times

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LAW AND GOSPEL.

It seems strange to us when natural reason is in exercise, how such a wonderful revolution could take place in God's dealings with his people under the gospel, from that of his dealings with them under the law, without God himself changing. But when faith is in exercise we understand. The old covenant was not made over, nor does it still remain with the gospel added, but an entirely new covenant and kingdom have been established. "Behold, I make all things new." – Rev. xxi. 5. The same King reigns in righteousness that reigned in the old covenant and kingdom, which was natural, and only a pattern of the spiritual kingdom, but no part of it whatever. The new covenant has better promises, an ever abiding Priesthood, commandments written in the heart, spiritual repentance and forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, rest that remains to the people of God, spiritual love and fellowship. It is a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But God is the same yesterday, today and forever, without variableness or shadow of change, but an entirely new government is seen and felt. Under the law God dealt with Israel upon legal principles. The law said they should do certain things, and also said they should not do certain other things, and prescribed punishment for every transgression. It was the punishment inflicted upon Israel that caused them to turn from their wickedness. There was no such thing as gospel (spiritual) repentance under the law, no such thing as godly sorrow for sin. Law and gospel are as separate and distinct as night and day, therefore we should always endeavor to rightly divide the word of truth. Good and evil, life and death, were ever kept before Israel; the prophets were continually telling them to turn away from idolatry and other wickedness, and said, If ye do well ye shall be blessed, but if ye do wickedly ye shall be killed by the sword, go into captivity, serpents shall be sent into your camps, &c. Thus we see the legal principle of government. The words repent and repented as they appear in the Old Testament should not be thought of in the same sense as used in the gospel. There is a vast difference between turning away from sin because of punishment, and yet have the same love for it, and in turning from it because we hate it, and because of love to God and his righteous law. While, Israel did repent from time to time, it was not because of hatred of sin and idolatry, they loved those things as much as ever, and did return to them, thus manifesting their love for them rather than love to God. There was no heart work, but rather sorrow because they could not continue in those things. We are not justifiable in saying that repentance under the law was the gift of God, or of grace. The judgments of the law caused Israel to repent, and not the Spirit of God, or the gift of grace. They were a carnal people, their blessings were temporal, the commandments given them were carnal, their sanctuary was worldly, and the afflictions of the law were felt externally. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Legal repentance and legal obedience belonged to the old covenant, and were rendered

for reward, and from fear of punishment. Grace did not come until the manifestation of Christ in the flesh. Under Moses it was the law that demanded service, and all service was according to the law. But under Christ, our spiritual Law-giver, grace reigns, and the service of spiritual Israel is according to grace; God working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. We do not understand the apostle to mean (even though our bodies be the temple of the Holy Ghost) that it is God, in the man, doing the works, but that he works their works in them, as it is said in another place, “He hath wrought all our works in us.” The command to repent that came by John the Baptist when he preached in the wilderness of Judea, was different from any word of the prophets, who said repent, because the law demands it. John said, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Jesus also preached, not saying, Repent and obey the law, but, Repent and believe the gospel. John speaks of the kingdom of heaven, and Jesus speaks of the gospel; these are found together, and Mark tells us this preaching was “the beginning of the gospel of the Son of God.” “Of his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace.” In him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily, therefore of his fullness have we received, for by the Father we received natural and spiritual creation, blessed with all temporal and spiritual blessings, by the Son we received redemption and everlasting justification, by the Holy Ghost we receive teaching and guidance into all truth. Grace therefore is given by which God is served in this gospel (gracious) dispensation, as the writer of Hebrews says, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” The worship under the law consisted in ordinances, forms and ceremonies, and “never could make the comers thereunto perfect.” Under the gospel those rites, forms and ceremonies are not observed or enjoined upon spiritual Israel, “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.” – Acts xv. 25. No longer is the Lord worshiped in the mountain of Samaria or at Jerusalem; “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” God is not served by his redeemed people today for reward nor from fear of punishment in this life, or in the world to come. The very moment we think of serving for reward, or from fear of punishment, we manifest the legal idea of God and of worship. Such service in the gospel kingdom *cannot* be rendered, because it is not acceptable to God, the legal day having passed away. But, says one, did not Paul say, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live”! Yes, but is Paul presenting a reward service, and telling us that we can exercise the Spirit? or is he showing the nature of man to live after the flesh, and the work of God in causing men to walk after the Spirit? because the next verse reads, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Does Paul mean

here to contradict his statement made concerning himself in the same letter, chapter seven, verse eighteen, when he said, “To will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is *good* I find not”? Would he tell the brethren at Rome to perform good works by exercising the Spirit, when he says of himself, “*how* to perform that which is good I find not”? Does not this prove conclusively that the mortifying of the deeds of the body is because of the leading of the Spirit of God? Is not this blessedness instead of reward, and is not such service rendered in love and praise to God, rather than for reward or from fear of punishment here or hereafter? God “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Can any service we may render (even though our works be wrought in us) add one blessing to those already bestowed upon us in Christ before the world began? On the other hand, can the lack of service (when not led by the Spirit) make the blessings less in number, or in joy? If we say yes, that very moment we present the law, because when Israel rendered the required service they were blessed, but when they did not, blessings were withheld, and punishment inflicted. Their blessings were bestowed because of service, but our blessings come because of the riches of God’s grace, through Christ. Will not the Spirit of God cause his children to do his will? Is God deceived in man? Is God mistaken in his works? Are there more blessings than man will receive? Has a manifested heir of God more ability to perform good works than our blessed Savior had when in the flesh? Remember that he said, “I can of mine own self do nothing, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” Did he not give praise to the Father for all the works he did? Is he not our example in all things? All good works are of God, and men walk in them because of God’s ordination that they should, being led by the Spirit, rather than by the power or will of man. Repentance in the gospel dispensation is not wrought by judgments, such as the sword, fiery serpents, captivity in Babylon, &c., but by the purging of the conscience by the blood of Jesus Christ from dead works to serve the living God. (Heb. ix. 1-21.) Repentance under the gospel is a gift of God, through Christ, gently turning spiritual Israel individually and collectively away from the law, from all hope of justification by its deeds, from the life and righteousness that we thought were in it; also turning us away from sin and the love of it; not only from the overt acts of ungodliness, but from the thoughts of sin which proceed from our depraved heart. Spiritual repentance is the hating of our own life because of indwelling sin; this hatred is turning away from it; also it causes us to desire to shun or turn away from the very appearance of evil. What a blessing is godly sorrow for sin, and a desire to present our bodies, through the Spirit, a living sacrifice, (a living death) holy, acceptable to God. Under the law if Israel did not actually steal, kill, lie, commit adultery, worship idols, &c., they were not transgressors. This was the understanding of “Saul of Tarsus” (Paul) of the matter, therefore he said, “As touching the righteousness which is in the law I was blameless.” – Phil. iii. 6. But when the commandment came in the Spirit, “Thou shalt not covet,” he knew that he was

a sinner within. It is by the law, spiritually applied, that we, like Paul, have the knowledge of sin, but by its carnal deeds “shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.” In the gospel, Christ tells us, as Paul was taught, that to desire and think evil is sin. How many more are the transgressions of the child of God with the carnal mind than by the deeds of his hands or the words of his mouth. We are just as dependent upon God for repentance or the turning away from acts of sin, as we are for repentance from our wicked and depraved thoughts. We must be “kept by the power of God.” “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

“Once by the law I vainly thought
Salvation to obtain,
Till under Sinai’s thunder bronchi.
And there my hopes were slain.

I saw the law the strength of sin,
Which filled my soul with fear;
The legal works I trusted in,
Mont wretched did appear.

My tattered rags aside I threw,
That linsey-woolsey dress,
For that best robe forever new,
The Savior’s righteousness.”

This at his hands did I receive,
Which angels never wore:
A God-like spotless vest, and weave
The spider’s web no more.”

We feel willing to submit the thoughts presented in this article for the consideration, and we hope comfort of the household of faith.

H. C. KER.
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LOVE - OBEDIENCE.

“LOVE is the fountain, whence
All true obedience flows;
The christian serves the God he loves,
And loves the God he knows.”

What a vast field for thought and consideration is couched in the above verse! Often in reading such hymns we wonder how the writers must have felt when, undoubtedly, under such influence of the Holy Spirit. Preaching, praise and prayer are embraced in the songs of Zion, hence their writers were made to love God and to know his power to save. Each vessel of mercy is prepared to honor and glorify God as it hath pleased him, he working in them to will and to do. All men are not prophets nor apostles; all men are not pastors and teachers, nor are all evangelists; all men are not poets, nor have all men the gift of prayer, nor of healing, nor can all the children of God sing, but the whole body, the church, has every gift necessary to the praise and glory of God and for the edifying of the body of Christ until time is no more. These are among the spiritual blessings in heavenly places; these are the talents given by the Master of the house, and all who have them are required to use them well while He is in the far country. We know of no gift in the church which does not increase in the exercise thereof, therefore let none be buried in the earth.

Love is the fountain whence every blessing flows, and so deep is it that with all our powers we utterly fail to fathom its depth, yet what a mercy to feel it at times shed abroad in our poor, sinful hearts; yes, the very love of God. While “there is nothing impossible with God,” were it not that he is “Love” we cannot conceive how he could love such rebels as we all are by nature. We often think the truth that he does not love men because they are sinners, should be emphasized. He hates sin, and cannot look upon iniquity; then how is it that he loves sinners? might be asked. In this way: He loved the fallen sons of Adam, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, and their transgression and death by sin had no effect upon his great love wherewith he loved them. Their absolute need of him, because of sin, did not increase his love for them, but caused the manifestation of his love in the gift of his Son to die in order that they might live. In the gift of Christ all other gifts were embraced, and are brought into manifestation in due time. In this explanation of why God loves sinners is presented the faithfulness of Him who promised eternal life before the world began. Not one promise has he ever broken, nor will he ever, because he cannot deny himself. Men quickened into divine life love God, because he first loved them, and with the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them. Natural love and affection are in nowise acceptable to God; all such belong to earth, and are only a part of the Adamic nature, which in every sense passes away, being of the earthy man. How

foolish, then, to try to teach men, women and children to love God and one another. “As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.” Hence the poet shows forth his love to the Father and brethren in his poetry, the minister in his ministry, the singer in his songs and the man of prayer in his prayers. Others manifest their love in assembling themselves together for the worship of God. Paul called upon his brethren to show forth their love by presenting their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto him. Paul lived just such a life himself, counting all things but dung, that he might win Christ. He coveted no man’s gold and silver, but his own hands ministered unto his necessities, and died in honor to the worthy name of Jesus Christ. Other incentive than “love” to obey the righteous law of God could never be acceptable to him. Thousands in the world to-day are making vain attempts at obedience through fear of eternal torment, and were not this horrible punishment constantly before them there would be no thought of obedience to the law of the Lord. This slavish fear is, however, among the all things that work together for the good of them that love God, as it has a tendency to morality, making better men than they would otherwise be. Yet with all their morality there is most positively no service or worship of God by them. Often the tender minds of children are so wrought upon by the horrible picture of hell, with its lake of fire and brimstone, that many wakeful nights are spent, and if, through weariness, sleep overtakes them, the most dreadful nightmares torment them. O how different the teachings of grace, love and mercy! How comforting, how soothing, how pleasant the dreams of free grace; how refreshing the calm sleep under its influence; how peaceful the waking to behold the glory of God in the forgiveness of sins. By these things the church discerns “between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.” Then again many are endeavoring to serve the Lord in order to bring him into their debt, so that they, in their vain imaginations, can demand entrance into heaven. All such as say, We have done many wonderful works in thy name, shall be turned away with the abiding words of the great Judge, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you. O how blessed to become as a little child – helpless, dependent upon the Lord for life, walk and being, for “in him we live, move and have our being.” Still further, many who profess faith in the Giver of every good and perfect gift, claim that spiritual blessings are conditional upon the part of the saints of God, and are laboring to that end, viz., to obtain the blessings. Along this line we have sometimes wondered how a natural father would manage, with reference to laying up in store comforts and blessings for his children, if he did not know beforehand how much obedience, and by whom, it would be rendered to his will, or law, regulating the members of his family. If only a few comforts and blessings were stored and much obedience rendered, there would be a scarcity of blessings. On the other hand, if be stored many blessings and little obedience was rendered, there would be a surplus, or more blessings than needed. Would not the result

be exactly the same with the heavenly Father if spiritual blessings are conditional? But, says the brother laboring for the blessings, we admit and also believe that God foreknew just how many blessings would be needed, or necessary, for his children while here below. Now if it be true that God did foreknow exactly how many blessings would be necessary for his children, does it not follow that all spiritual blessings in heavenly places were given in Christ before the world began, and that not one son or daughter will ever be short one blessing? If this be true, every blessing flows from him because of his predestinated mercy and purpose in this direction. Hence all the obedience-of the whole family can never add one blessing to the foreknown number, nor will all the disobedience of the family ever make the number one less. Therefore it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is our example in this doctrine. No man ever suffered as he did; no man ever felt the weight of sin as did he, nor did ever one of the Lord's children suffer the darkness and fear that he did, yet obedient in all things, even unto the death of the cross. All his obedience did not bring for him one more spiritual blessing than the, Father had in store for him. If such were the case with him, why should any one now think that by certain obedience to the law of Christ he will receive blessings he would not otherwise receive? This doctrine of fixed blessings to and for the children of God does not in any sense license them to live as they list, nor could any one with the grace of God in the heart so live, neither could any give the slightest encouragement to crucify the Son of God afresh and trample under foot the blood of the new testament as an unholy thing. "To fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man;" not for reward, but for the love he bears to the God of his salvation. "If ye love me keep my commandments;" "and his commandments are not grievous." All the law and the prophets are hinged upon "love." To deal justly, love mercy and walk humbly is to keep the law of God, and salvation for time and eternity is of him through Jesus Christ our Lord. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Editorial

Signs of the Times
Volume 82, No. 23
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LUKE IX. 62.

“No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

When Jesus was on earth he called men as soldiers of the cross and pressed them into service. The Father determined beforehand how many, who they should be and where they could be found. Hence Jesus Walked by the sea and called from the fishermen's boats Peter, James and John. Not one of them offered the slightest excuse, nor manifested the slightest rebellion, but followed him, feeling in their souls the power of his word. When he desired others they were in the right place at the right time, and he continued to call and send forth until the entire number was made up. Those men left homes, their wives and children to serve in the kingdom of God, and not one ever turned back. One said when called, Let me first go and bury my father, but Jesus answered, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. The request was very reasonable, and that one felt it very important, yet his hand was put to the plough and he must not look back. In this is presented the greatness of the work, the glory of the kingdom, the importance of the gospel and the power in the word “go.” Men dead in sin can bury dead bodies, but they cannot preach the kingdom of God. No man taketh this honor unto himself, save he that is called, as was Aaron. We have often thought of the apostles in their early ministry, going from place to place and from house to house saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, and, Peace be unto this house, whenever they discovered the Son of Peace there. It to them must have been most wonderful, and in great measure incomprehensible, nevertheless they obeyed the Captain of their army and served in his strength. No price was agreed upon for their service, nothing was ever said about such a thing except the question asked: We have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? And Jesus answered, Ye that have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. How many of the carnal wise today would want to serve for such reward? Gold and silver seem the only incentive, and thousands are hungering more after money than after righteousness, and hence are seeking it first, rather than the kingdom of God. The needs of the apostles were supplied, and the promise: Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, is as good and sure to those called now and pressed into service. We cannot think that the love of money ever prompted a man of God to preach the gospel of Christ. Love to him and his cause, and the power felt in his own soul, move him to leave father and mother, wife and children, to “go and preach the kingdom of God.”

In reading the few preceding verses to our text it will be seen that a certain man came to Jesus and said, “Lord, I will follow thee.” He would be called “a volunteer,” and while thousands of such have been accepted by our government from time to time, no such

thing was ever known in the kingdom of God. Hence Jesus told him, as is recorded in another place, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. This settled the matter in the mind of the volunteer, and we never hear of him again. Those who volunteer service in any army do so with selfish motives, sometimes for the actual pay, sometimes because of failure in every other direction, and sometimes hoping to attain unto some honorable rank. Were it known to them that nothing but poverty and distress would ever attend their lives, not one would volunteer to serve. Such was the life of the apostles, and such has been the life of all ministers of Jesus Christ. Doubtless the man who said, Lord, I will follow thee, was ambitious, expecting to be benefited in different directions, but when assured that Jesus was poorer than foxes and birds, and that no gain could be reached by becoming a disciple, it required very little time for him to decide not to follow the "Lord." To follow him means "the loss of all things," sorrow, cross, temptation, burden-bearing and everything that goes to make up a life of woe. It has not seemed to us that poverty alone is suggested in the expression: Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but no place of rest as well. And this does not mean that Jesus had no bed upon which to rest his often weary body, but until the work given him of the Father was accomplished there could be no rest for him no discharge in that war.

The figure of a man ploughing is very striking, and easily understood by all of experience along that line. A man engaged in such work has his work before him, and is not expected to look back; if he does he may be fit for some other place on the farm, but is not fit for the plough. So it would be with a disciple or minister of Jesus, having put their hand to the plough, "and looking back, is not fit for the kingdom of God." This means that the business of the kingdom is first of all things, and that the King demands undivided service. Not even the burying of dead relatives was allowed by the Savior, and the same faithfulness is required to-day, not only of those called to preach, but those called to be disciples, followers of Jesus. All churches expect the minister to be present at each appointment, and such excuses as having company, getting in hay, digging potatoes or visiting friends would not be accepted at all by the churches of his care, but he is expected to accept all such excuses from the members. If faithfulness is to be reckoned at all, the pastor has a right to expect each member present at every appointment, as well as the members to expect the pastor. So many things in this day occupy the attention of the people of God so much looking back. Jesus on one occasion reminded his disciples of Lot's wife, the example of her looking back. She received commandment when leaving Sodom not to look back, but she, remembering her children and all her earthly possessions, did look, and immediately became a pillar of salt. Some have said, O, she was salt, and associate her with "the salt of the earth." We would not dare say she was not saved, because there are good reasons for believing she was, but we feel safe in saying" she was "not fit for the kingdom of God," and will ever be a

monument of disobedience for the children of God to behold. “Remember Lot’s wife.” The “looking back ” of the Lord’s people is not always in forsaking the doctrine, denying the faith and becoming subjects of exclusion, but in longing for the leeks and onions of the land of bondage, in looking to gold as the god of deliverance, &c., and while in the kingdom we are not fit for it when in such condition. The unfitness for the kingdom of God is most always known better by those who realize it in their own souls than by any one else. The man who knows what he really is by nature is ready to confess his unworthiness and unclean heart, and feels that the kingdom of God would be absolutely, pure without his presence. But Paul said, In every great house there are not only Vessels of gold and silver, but some of wood and some of earth, some to honor and some to dishonor. Such was the condition then, and such continues to this day. May we all watch and be sober and hope to the end. K.

Elder H. R. Ker
Editorial

Signs of the Times
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LUKE XVI. 9.

“AND I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”

It is encouraging to know that the mind of brother Hartsough is exercised to know the import of this parable. He speaks of darkness and wanderings of mind. How pleasant to find now and then a companion in the journey – two so agreed that they can “walk together.” These experiences unite the children of God in love and fellowship, and cause them to long for the company and companionship of each other.

This parable, like all others, has a hidden import from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes in Christ. Parables, because of the hidden treasure, should never be handled literally. The term, “a certain rich man,” was used often by the Savior, but we hardly think meant the same thing always. Whatever the saying may mean in this parable, the lesson, or instruction, to the apostles was very important, and meant much to them in after years. This instruction, like many other sayings of Jesus, had to be sealed to them by the Holy Ghost. It really seems almost strange that the understanding of the disciples was so limited during the years Jesus was with them in the flesh, yet in the wisdom of God it was far better so. They, like the prophets, knew just enough for the time, and the Lord’s people know just enough now for their needs. The fullness of the revelation

awaits those who are still on this side of the river. This rich man had a steward, and having all confidence in him entrusted all his goods to his care, but the steward wasted his goods. When the rich man heard of the unfaithfulness of the steward he called him and told him what he had heard of him and required of him an accounting of his stewardship, saying he should no longer be steward. He seemed to understand that the decision was final hence offered no excuse, nor did he offer an apology, but began to plan within himself further dishonesty. He seemed very much opposed to work, and to beg he was ashamed, yet either would have been much better than what he decided to do. In shrewdness, however, he won the commendation even of his master. He had sold grain and oil, and knew perfectly well to whom and how much; therefore he went to his lord's debtors and said to the first, How much owest thou my lord? And he answered, One hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another, How much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said, Take thy bill and write fourscore. This Wisdom reminds us of the lawyers whom Jesus said would bind burdens upon others that they would not touch even with their finger. The debtors had no idea what they were doing when they were changing their bills from their original amounts, but the steward knew perfectly, having planned it all in his mind for his own benefit. The debtors no doubt thought the steward was a real friend, when indeed he was an enemy, which had to be made manifest later. Just how long before his design was known to them we are not told, but when put out of the stewardship he made it his business to see these men again, and doubtless said to them, I will now make my home with you, and as I cannot work shall live in ease. Astonished they began to say, How is this? Under what obligation are we to you? Why should you expect us to take care of you, you to live in pleasure and at ease while we labor to support you? Ah, said the steward, do you not remember your indebtedness to the rich man to whom I was steward? Do you not remember that when you owed him one hundred measures of oil you defrauded and wrote fifty, and when you owed one hundred measures of wheat you wrote fourscore? Yes, they answer, but why does that bring us under obligation to you? The steward answers, You are in my power; no one but myself knows of your dishonesty, and should I inform upon you you would be sorely punished and your reputation be lost. I have nothing to lose, I have been put out of the stewardship, my standing among men is gone. In order not to be punished and lose your good names you must take me into your homes and support me; I hold your secret. Now let us remember that the lord of the steward did not commend him for the dishonesty that seemed to fill his very being, but for his wisdom, saying "he had done wisely." In the Savior's command to his disciples to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, he did not mean for them to imitate the wickedness of the unfaithful and dishonest, steward, but that they should "be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves," making to themselves lasting friends. The word "yourselves" should

be emphasized in reading this text, much depends upon it. As the steward knew he was to be put out of the stewardship and must make provision against the day of failure, hence made friends who would take him into their homes when cast out, so do you, said the Savior to the apostles. They were to be gentle, kind, longsuffering, honest, harmless and pure in all their dealings with men. Such a life would manifest that they had been with Jesus and learned of him. The term, “the mammon of unrighteousness,” should also be read with special emphasis, in order to connect things previously said. Unrighteous men, through the wisdom of the steward, had become his lasting friends, and as failure was ahead of the apostles, in a certain sense, they would need friends to receive them “into everlasting habitations.”

We are aware that the word “mammon” is generally taken to mean money, or riches, and it has been suggested often that the Savior meant for the apostles to lay by all they could against the day of need, but this idea seems rather strange when they were cut off from every avenue to wealth and strictly commanded to take no thought for tomorrow, but let tomorrow take thought for the things of itself. When Jesus said, No man can serve God and mammon, he meant, as it seems to us, that no man can serve God and unrighteousness at the same time, Paul in his letter to the church at Rome said they were once servants of sin, yielding their members unto unrighteousness, but that they had obeyed the gospel and become the servants of God. This shows the impossibility of serving two masters. The Gentiles were in the eyes of the Jews and according to the law, though not under it, a “mammon of unrighteousness,” living in idolatry and sin of every conceivable kind, yet God knew the heathen, had chosen their inheritance and would justify them through faith. The cutting off of the Jews, their failure as a nation, was couched in the three little words, “when ye fail.” That people had been for centuries blessed of the Lord, but as a figure, or pattern, were soon to have the kingdom taken from them and given to another nation that would bring forth the fruits thereof in their season. Therefore as the church of God with all her branches was to be established among the Gentiles, the apostles should dwell with them and be faithful in all their stewardship of the manifold grace of God. When Paul and others preached in the synagogue the gospel of God they and their testimony were rejected, and they said, It was needful that the gospel first be preached unto you, but seeing that ye will not hear it, and deem yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles and they will hear us – receive us into everlasting habitations. The making of friends among the different nations was not a mere work upon their part, but wrought through the operation of the Spirit, God working in the apostles love, gentleness, kindness and power and ability to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and working in the hearts of the Gentiles to receive the apostles and their testimony of Jesus, making both “wise unto salvation.” When the Lord appeared unto Cornelius and prepared him to receive Peter and the gospel, he also appeared unto Peter, giving him the vision through

which he was taught God's mercy and purpose toward the Gentiles, and also assured him of the friendship he should find in Cornelius. It seems to us that the real import of the text is as follows: Make to yourselves friends of the Gentiles, that, when the Jewish nation fails, they may receive you in love and fellowship into the dwelling-places of God. As suggested already, the time had not yet come when they should mingle with all nations, nor did it come until after the resurrection of Jesus. Had he meant riches by the term, "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," it hardly seems that he would have said, "that they may receive you into everlasting habitations," when riches perish with the using, and neither can they purchase anything "everlasting."

We hope brother Hartsough may consider what we say in the light of truth. We are always glad to give such views as we have, and it is right for every man to think for himself and ask God for wisdom and understanding. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Signs of the Times
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LUKE XVIII. 17.

Will Elder H. C. Ker kindly give his views through the Signs Of The Times on the words found in Luke xviii. 17?

Hoping the friends remember me at the throne of grace,
DONALD MACKAY.
Scotsville, Cape Breton, August 29, 1908.

The text reads as follows: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein."

We are glad to comply with the request of our friend, Mr. MacKay, as best we can. We are sorry to know of his affliction: paralysis, but glad his mind is clear and stayed upon the Lord. We also hope the spirit of reconciliation to the will of God may ever be with him. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

The text to which our attention is called is in the midst of many sayings of Jesus which seem to clearly show its import. The chapter begins with the parable of the unjust judge, and while it was spoken to the end “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint,” the character opposite to that of a little child is clearly shown. The unjust judge was strong and opinionated, fearing neither God nor man. The second parable in the chapter was spoken concerning those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and who prayed with themselves. This is also contrary to the dependent child.

While Jesus was speaking these things they brought unto him infants, the most helpless and dependent of all living creatures, that he might touch them. The bringing of infants to Jesus was not by mere chance or accident, but in the purpose and plan of God to more fully establish the lesson in the minds of his disciples, who needed to be thus taught. Jesus had not before dealt with infants; it therefore being a new thing the disciples rebuked those who brought them, but Jesus said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” This saying was no doubt a surprise to the apostles, and they wondered what it could mean. They themselves had manifested a spirit and disposition of importance in more ways than one. The very act of rebuking those who brought the infants said, We are the important and needful ones, Jesus has no time to devote to children. At another time the apostles were disputing among themselves as to which of them should be greatest in the kingdom of God. James and John desired the most prominent places in the kingdom, and the ambition of their proud mother desired it also. Under the old covenant some men held prominent places and were reckoned as superior to others. As leaders, judges, kings and priests, it was their right to demand of others what they would, and to command the people as it pleased them and fulfilled the law, but no such thing should exist in the gospel day. No one should be above another; equality, fellowship, must be the order. Therefore Jesus sought such means of teaching his disciples as would be most effectual. On one occasion he presented himself as an example, saying, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” Notwithstanding that in him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead, his entire life, in the flesh, was that of childlike simplicity and humble-mindedness. He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.” He, the King of kings, washed the feet of men; was the friend of sinners, dwelling with the poor and needy. He never manifested the slightest feeling of anger, malice or revenge. He confessed time and again his dependence upon God. Every word he uttered, every step he took and the works he did were all of God. His dependence upon his Father brings us to consider the infant, which is utterly helpless. And except men receive the kingdom of God as little children they shall in no wise enter therein. How severe this lesson Peter must learn! He was sincere in his boasting, but was not manifesting that childlike trust and dependence. Jesus told him that at Jerusalem many things should come to pass; the Son of man must suffer and be put to death and rise again on the third day. Peter then

rebuked the Lord. Again Jesus said to his disciples, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night.” “Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.” And, “Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.” In the first place Peter boasted of his power to prevent those things Jesus said should take place at Jerusalem. How strong he must have felt; how unlike an infant. In the second place he boasted of his ability to be more loving and faithful than any other one of the disciples. He felt sure he could keep alive his own soul and do whatsoever he pleased. How different from the poor, humble-minded child of God; how different from Peter himself after he had been sifted by Satan. Instead of preventing the sufferings of Jesus at Jerusalem he forsook him; instead of loving him more and being more faithful than the other disciples, he denied him even with cursing and swearing. He must have felt ashamed of himself when he realized he was doing the very opposite from what he had said he would do; but how much more ashamed and debased he felt when Jesus turned and looked upon him, not with a look of anger or disappointment, but with pity and compassion. This was Peter’s conversion from a proud, boastful man, to that of a weeping child. He then entered into the kingdom “as a little child,” which kingdom is righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost, and is entered only through tribulation. After this he could out of his own dependence and nothingness strengthen his brethren. Each vessel of mercy must have just such a sifting by Satan as Peter had, to convert them from pride, self-righteousness and arrogance. “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

In the midst of these sayings of Jesus, a certain ruler came and addressing him as “Good Master,” asked, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life! And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good! none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these things have I kept from my youth up.” In this assertion is manifested the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, which was in the law, and which must be shown to the children of God as not the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Savior. Saul of Tarsus was taught this lesson in such a way that he never forgot it, neither do we, nor did that “certain ruler.” The Savior told him he lacked one thing: “Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.” That “one thing “(riches) kept him out of the kingdom of God. The poor are made rich through Christ; the poor have the gospel preached unto them; the poor are with us always, and we can do them good; the poor inherit the kingdom of heaven. The rich are independent, as was the unjust judge, having need of neither God nor man. Such self-righteous souls can no more enter the kingdom of God than can a camel go through the eye of a needle.

The law of commandments was given by Moses, not that Israel could keep it, for none but the Lamb of God could keep that law; it was given to prove them sinners in the sight of God. Likewise, Jesus did not say those things to the rich ruler that he should do them and thereby enter into the kingdom, but in order to prove him a transgressor of the law he so assuredly said he had kept from his youth up. The law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” and when Jesus told the rich man to sell all he had and distribute unto the poor, that man saw for the first time that he was guilty of the whole law because he had offended in one part. He was covetous, and could not therefore bear the thought of selling all his possessions and giving it away, hence he went away very sorrowful. Paul said, “I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, [Thou shalt not covet] sin revived, and I died,” to self-righteousness, riches. In that death he was made alive unto the righteousness of God, and from that moment he hoped to be found having it rather than the riches or righteousness which was of the law.

Except we receive the kingdom of God as little children we can in no wise enter therein. By no effort of our own can we become little children in this peculiar sense, but the Lord makes us all little children in teaching us our utter dependence upon him, and our nothingness in the flesh, for in it dwells no good thing.

We now leave the subject for the consideration of our friend, and brother we believe, hoping he may find a little here and there to encourage him that he is taught of God. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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NOVEMBER 15, 1908.

LUKE XIX. 7.

“AND when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.”

The publicans and harlots in the eyes of Pharisees were despised of all creatures among the Jews, hence they marveled and murmured whenever Jesus, who claimed to be the Son of God, dined with or had dealings of any kind with them. Simon, the proud Pharisee, felt fully convinced that Jesus was an impostor when he allowed the poor, sinful woman to touch him in washing his feet with her tears and wiping them with the

hairs of her head. The Jews could not understand why or how a holy man, a clean Jew, could keep company with sinners. Hence Jesus was condemned for so doing, but in visiting such characters, eating and drinking with them, was God's condescending grace made known. Paul tells us that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom he was chief; yet he was not a publican nor in any sense a sinner in the eyes of the Jews, nor in the eyes of the law, but in his own feelings of soul he was more guilty than any other man, and presents himself an example of the saving grace of God, suggesting that if it were sufficient to save him it is equal to the sins of any other man. He as a zealous and proud Pharisee condemned Jesus for the strange things he did and said; not only so, but he condemned and persecuted all them that called upon his name. No man among the Jews was more zealous of the traditions to the fathers than was he; no man kept the commandments of the law more perfectly than did he, yet in that condition of nature he knew not Jesus as the Christ, but had to be taught by divine revelation. When the knowledge came his eyes were Opened to behold the plan of God in salvation, and his purpose in Jesus keeping company with publicans and harlots, eating and drinking with them. How wonderful it is that when the revelation of Jesus as the Savior of sinners comes, all our proud waves are stayed, all our mountains brought low, all our pools dried up and all our beauty by nature fades as the flower of the grass. As was said of Him, There shall be no comeliness in him that we should desire him. According to the flesh that was so, yet as a man he was faultless. So all quickened children of God see the same in themselves: no comeliness, no beauty, no glory, nothing to commend them to God, but everything to separate between them and God.

We have made mention of the above things to show why the Jews murmured because Jesus went with Zaccheus the publican. This man desired to see Jesus, but being little of stature knew he could not for the people, so ran before them, knowing that Jesus must pass that way, and climbed up into a sycamore tree. There he had a view of him that no other man had at that time. No doubt Zaccheus thought he would be unobserved, but the thought to climb the tree to see Jesus was not of himself; Jesus had planned the whole affair to demonstrate the truth that he came "to seek and to save that which was lost." The record is that Jesus saw Zaccheus, though he thought himself concealed, and said, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide in thy house. Perhaps, notwithstanding all the surprise of the Jews, no man was as much astonished as was Zaccheus. first that Jesus should see him at all; more than that to tell him to come down from the tree, because he must abide in his house that day. Why Jesus should abide in the house of a man who was a sinner and yet claim to be the Son of God, was beyond the comprehension of those who rejected him. It seems to us that he had already taken up his abode in the heart of the rich publican, and because of that the great desire to see him. The mercy of God in Christ was made manifest in abiding in the house of the man hated by the world because of his sins, and this same thing made Jesus hateful to the

people. Had he always kept company with the self-righteous Pharisees and scorned publicans and harlots as they did he would never have been hated by them, but such was not the purpose and plan of God. All can see therefore that Jesus was hated for the sins of God's elect.

The appearing of Jesus to sinners and his words to them always had a peculiar effect upon them. The poor woman condemned by the law and the people, who wanted to stone her to death, was commanded to "go and sin no more." The man at the pool was commanded in like manner, and we have no record that either was ever guilty of wrongdoing again. "My words are spirit and they are life" – a living law in the hearts of the redeemed of the Lord. The grace of God teaches all men that, denying ungodly and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. This lesson was taught Zaccheus in the appearing of Jesus to him, and in the assurance that Jesus would abide in his house. That dishonest and sinful publican by nature was made honest, merciful and upright by the grace of Christ Jesus. Immediately he said, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Jesus answered, "This day is salvation come to this house." He was then dead to sin, and could no longer live therein. This is always the fruit of salvation; a man saved desires to depart from the snares of death, manifesting, as did Peter and John, that he has been with Jesus and learned of him. In this sense the children of God are not of the world, because he hath taken them, translated them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, and manifests them the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, zealous of good works.

The people of God in this age of the world are reckoned as the most unredeemable characters the world holds; not that they are guilty of wilful transgressions, either against the laws of our land or the laws of society, but because they love, preach and believe the doctrine of God, salvation by grace, just as it came to Zaccheus, without works. How often we all have heard it said, The world would be better off were every Old School Baptist dead. Yes, and they have by calculation of their own appointed the time when all would be gone, but still they live to tell the story of grace, and while the world stands there will be witnesses of God and his truth, and it is just as true that they shall be hated and called sinners to the end. But if Jesus abides in their house, which he surely does, the victory is theirs through him. There is not one quickened child of God in all this great world who does not confess that in Jesus abiding in his house, or heart, that He has become the guest of a sinner. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

MARK XVI. 15, 16.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

The above words were among the last spoken by the Savior before his ascension to the Father. It is wonderful to behold the perfect order in which the Lord has done all things past, and with which he is now accomplishing his purposes in the earth, among kings and rulers as well as among the most humble of mankind. There were reasons why the words of our text could not possibly have been spoken before, hence the order of God. Sometimes it has seemed almost impossible to convince churches that everything should be done “decently and in order,” Order seems, in the minds of some, “too much like other people,” yet when we think soberly about it the world has never, with all its advancement and attainments, been able to compare any part of its order, or systematic movements, with that which God has ever governed all things.

When the Lord called Abraham he blessed him, and made promise to him that he would multiply him; that his children should be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore for multitudes, and that in his seed all nations should be blessed. While by faith Abraham saw the day of Christ and was glad, it scarcely seems credible to think that he conceived the vastness of God’s promise and purpose in the salvation of an innumerable host unto eternal blessedness in the realms of glory. However, the promise was made and the purpose purposed in himself, and every detail thereof was carried out in perfect harmony. To Abraham was born Isaac, and to Isaac Jacob, and to Jacob the twelve patriarchs, and to these the twelve tribes. Beginning with Abraham, the Lord dealt with man as never before, and this dealing was confined to Abraham and his descendants. To them was given the land of Canaan; they had the best land of Egypt, Goshen, during the time they were “strangers in a strange land,” they were not affected by the plagues visited upon Egypt, were delivered from bondage across the Red Sea, were blessed and provided for during the forty years journey in the wilderness, crossed the Jordan (judgment) in safety and inhabited their land that flowed with milk and honey. To these

children of Abraham the Lord sent prophets declaring his Word, renewing his promise, telling them to wait for it, it was for an appointed time and should surely come, and at the appointment of God a virgin conceived and the child Jesus was born for the redemption of Israel. Be it remembered that the Lord was still dealing with the children of Abraham, hence Jesus called Peter, James, John and others, all Jews, to be his followers and ministers. These he sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, positively commanding them to go not in the way of the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritans. Their labor being confined to the Jews, they preached to them the kingdom of God, cast out devils and healed the sick, Jesus having given them the power. In the promise to Abraham the death of Jesus was embraced, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, and when the appointed time came he was found at the appointed place, “for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.” Now while the dealings of the Lord, the ministry of Jesus and his disciples had been confined to the Jews, let us not forget the fact that the salvation of the Gentiles was also embraced in the promise made to Abraham: “In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.” Therefore in some wonderful way these opposing nations, Jews and Gentiles, must be made one, the lamb and the lion feed and lie down (rest) together. The handwriting of ordinances, which pertained only to the Jews, must be taken out of the way. The wall of partition which separated between Jews and Gentiles must be removed. In the death of Christ the handwriting of ordinances was forever removed and the Gentiles “blessed” equally with the Jews in the promised Seed of Abraham, so that now we are one in Christ, no longer under the law, but all under grace.

In the beginning of this article we said there were reasons why the words of the text could not possibly have been spoken before the time uttered by our crucified and risen Lord and Savior. The first reason is the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile must absolutely first be removed. Second, the apostles had to tarry in Jerusalem until visited from on high by the Holy Ghost and endued with power, light and understanding regarding God’s promise to Abraham embracing all nations in the salvation of Jesus Christ. This all having been done, Jesus appeared into his disciples forty days after his resurrection from the dead, and just before his ascension, and gave them the command embodied in our text. Now, instead of being confined in their labors to the Jews and the Roman Empire, they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, men and women, of every nation, kindred and tongue, declaring the gracious promise of God and the fulfillment of it through Jesus Christ. From that day to the present this same Jesus has been preached from the housetops, openly, publicly, and such will continue until time shall be no more. To establish the fact that the command of Jesus to his apostles: to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, was obeyed, we call attention to Col. i. 23: “Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under

heaven.” Learned men of to-day, as well as those of the past, for some cause fail to see and declare that the apostle spake of this matter in the past tense. How vain therefore for men in this age of the world to try to accomplish that which was done nearly two thousand years ago; yet they do make the attempt, saying, Jesus said, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” In this Scripture Jesus foretold what should be, then in our text commanded his apostles to do it: preach the gospel to every creature, or all nations, and as quoted above, Paul declared it had been accomplished. The “end” referred to by the Savior was not the end of time or of this material world, but of the legal world, or law dispensation, and the destruction of Jerusalem was the end of all things pertaining to the law. Now instead of the Jews only worshiping God at Jerusalem in rites, forms and ceremonies, all nations worship him in “his holy mountain “ in spirit and in truth. Wherever the gospel is preached it finds believers, these having been baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, which, as John the Baptist declared, is verily the work of Jesus. These, both men and women, were also baptized by the apostles by immersion, which was right then and is right now. All unbelievers were then condemned, not eternally lost, set aside as not suitable subjects for the church of God. But then, as now, a man might rail on Jesus one hour and the next call on him for mercy. This the thief on the cross did. No man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, hence until operated upon by the Spirit of God all men are unbelievers. Such was the state of all of us when in nature’s darkness, but having been washed, having been called with an holy calling, we are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Signs of the Times
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MATTHEW V. 3.

“BLESSED are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Gracious the words, but seldom do they come home to the tried and weary children of God. All the words of Jesus are full of mercy, love and encouragement, and man must live by every word that proceedeth out of his mouth. Just a little while before he uttered

the Words of our text he had sanctioned the preaching and work of John the Baptist by being baptized by him, and after his temptations in the wilderness began to preach the same doctrine, using at times the identical words, thus showing by what power and authority John preached repentance in the wilderness of Judea and baptized in the river Jordan. Not only was John to comfort the people by preaching to them the coming and work of the long expected Messiah, but the blessed Jesus began his ministry in the flesh by declaring comfort, hope and encouragement to the comfortless, helpless and weary pilgrims. Many in that day knew well that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in the sight of God, hence felt without hope and without God in the world. And none can imagine their sorrow of soul because of sin, nor the rejoicing of heart because of the blessed words of comfort of Jesus, except as they have experienced the same. Not only did he speak comfortingly to the disciples in the mount, but instructed them concerning himself and things of grace, We have often associated this scene with the giving of the law from Mt. Sinai. The same God who spoke with an audible voice from Mt. Sinai, when the earth trembled and the people feared and quaked, now sat down with his chosen disciples in the mount and gave them a spiritual law by which their lives in his kingdom should be governed to the praise of his grace. At Mt. Sinai there were fire, smoke and tempest, a time of fearfulness, but in the mount with Jesus there were peace, comfort and joy. Having to deliver the things given him of the Father to the chosen out of the world, he called them unto him and opened his mouth and taught them. Just how to reconcile this particular, exclusive and discriminating work of the blessed Son of God with the popular idea of the day: that he wants to speak to all men and persuade them to become the sons of God, is so far beyond our ability that we shall not make the attempt, nor can the ablest advocates of such doctrine reconcile grace and works. Now as we approach the text the beautiful picture of Jesus and his disciples seated together, secluded, as it were, from the world in every sense, and Jesus talking to them of eternal things and things of earthly blessedness, presents itself. How glorious the picture! “The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Yes, God with men in the mount, and let us with all our powers remember that it was God who uttered the gracious words of our text – words everlastingly true, sure, ever abiding, spirit and life: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Yet the saints of the Lord are prone to feel that their greatest blessing here below is to be made happy and to rejoice in him, to feel rich in his righteousness; but, dear brethren, very little is said of such an experience in the Scriptures, even of Jesus and the apostles. Much more poverty of spirit, longing for his appearance, hungering after righteousness, thirsting after the waters of salvation, has been the condition of the saints in all ages of the world, and the Scriptures abound with evidences that such will be the case to the end. The path of the just lies along this road, and our assurances of acceptance in the Beloved are found in this way cast up for the

redeemed of t-he Lord to walk in. “I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.” This means that the afflicted and poor people shall abide, continue, and shall always trust in the name of the Lord. Then “blessed are the poor in spirit,” yes, such poverty his one of the greatest blessings bestowed upon the children of God. Nothing, absolutely nothing of their own to present to him, no price in their hands have they to bring, all their righteousness is as filthy rags, all their wisdom is folly, all their strength weakness, blind, halt, lame on both feet. Poor in spirit, a blessed condition, through which we are brought to trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon our God. In this experience the sons and daughters of the Lord are brought into fellowship with Jesus, who said by David, “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” Again, “I am a worm, and no man.” No subject of grace ever felt more keenly the poverty and humiliations of the flesh than did the incarnate Son of God. With all its weaknesses and depravities he was fully acquainted, and cried out in anguish of soul with groaning, in that he feared. Now, while this life of poverty of spirit, leanness of soul, is distressing, it brings to the heirs of glory the assurance that the kingdom of heaven is theirs; yes, the King in his beauty, the kingdom with all its glory and authority, the temple with all its holy ordinances, all belong to the poor in spirit. On the side of riches these believers, though poor, are the richest of all heirs of earth and heaven. Having Christ they have all things; through his blood they are kings and priests unto God and the Father, and though cast down are not destroyed, though forsaken, not alone, but live and shall continue to live in him whom to know is eternal life. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” K.

Elder H. C. Ker
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MATTHEW V. 25, 26.

Will Elder Ker please give his views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, when convenient, on the text recorded in Matthew v. 25, 26: “Agree with thine adversary quickly,” &c.? and oblige one of the least, it one at all,

WM. F. SLOAN.
Lexington, Ky., June 2, 1908.

Not long since, we were requested by sister Mary Hill Terry also to write upon this text. The Scripture reads as follows: “Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”

The two preceding verses to those of the text are the key to the subject, and show the impossibility of offering gifts upon the altar when enmity exists between two brethren. The gift in itself may be right, but the man with ill feeling toward his brethren is not in the proper spirit to worship God in the offering of sacrifices. On the other hand, if a brother who desires to offer a gift remembers that his brother has “ought against” him, while he may have nothing against the offended brother, his gift in the eyes of his adversary would not be spiritual. Therefore the gift must be left at the altar, and the presentation of it delayed until reconciliation is made between the two brethren. No worship can be rendered to God except in the spirit, and while a man may sing the songs of Zion, pray and even preach eloquently, nothing reaches the altar of God if he has hatred or malice in his heart against his brother for whom Christ died, or while one remembers that his brother has aught against him.

The language, “Agree with thine adversary quickly,” does not mean that the devil is the adversary, and that we must fall in with his evil and sinful designs and therefore be one with him, nor that we shall agree to anything wrong regardless of its source, but the brother who has “ought against” us is the adversary. Hence to “agree with thine adversary” “is to become one with or reconciled to the brother offended with us because of something done or said, or it may be only an imaginary wrong; but whatever it is, while we are in the way (church fellowship) with him become reconciled to him. If we have wronged him, confess the wrong, ask his forgiveness; if there be a misunderstanding on his part, explain if possible to his satisfaction that no wrong or insult to him was meant in our conduct. Some men feel it too humiliating to confess a wrong, and many have died without doing it, but no principle in man is greater than that which prompts him to confess a transgression. This is the proper and only way to avoid more serious trouble. If a matter of difference continues, it grows until the offended brother feels that he must have justice, and at last the matter is brought into the church, then when the accused brother is brought before the church (judge) he must pay the uttermost farthing; that is, he must then make whatever confession and amends the church demands; should he fail to do so he is “cast into prison,” “bound,” (excluded) until he does as the judge demanded.

We have now given what we understand the text to teach, and hope at least we have not abused the Scripture. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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AUGUST 15, 1908.

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

(Matt. xxv. 11-30)

“A VOICE from the wilderness” asks that we give our view upon the above subject. We are willing to comply as best we can. The parables are dark sayings, and were not understood by the apostles only as their true import was revealed to them by the Savior. Generally they are intended to show the just condemnation of the carnal Jew or pharisee and the blessing of the gospel to the spiritual Israelite. This one teaches, however, several things, among them is that the kingdom of heaven had not as yet come, but that its coining was sure, though it should be delayed (note Luke xix. 11-26). The nobleman called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds, saying, “Occupy till I come.” He goes into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself, and *return*. The delivery of the ten pounds assured the servants of his return to them, though his absence should be long. The Savior taught his disciples to pray, saying, “Thy kingdom come.” He said also to them, If I go away “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” In the coming of the kingdom it was not, only with glory, but with justice and judgment, which are the habitation of God’s throne. The apostles had received an earnest of the kingdom of heaven in the appearing of Christ to them in the flesh; this assured them the certainty of its coming, hence they continually looked for it. In our understanding, the application of the parables, generally speaking, to the church experimentally, is secondary. Let us bear in mind that the Scripture docs not say the kingdom of heaven is like unto talents, nor like unto servants, but rather “as a man traveling into a far country,” who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods; therefore much importance should he attached to the “man “and what he did and said. This parable is found between the parable of the ten virgins and of that of the sheep and the goats, “when the Son of man shall come in his glory,” and like all other Scripture has its connection or bearing upon that which precedes and that which follows.

In the parable of the virgins the statement is positive that all ten were virgins, five were wise and five were foolish. The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps, but the foolish took no oil with them; this was because of a lack of wisdom in them, hence they are called foolish (not fools). Paul said his brethren after the flesh (Israelites) had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, hence were foolish, being *ignorant* of the righteousness of God, and went about to establish their own righteousness. (“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles become in. And so all Israel shall be saved.”) Paul was found among the wise, and entered with them into the marriage with the Bridegroom.

When the man spoken of in the parable under consideration took his journey into a far country, he called his *own servants* unto him and gave them talents (money); to every man he gave according to “his several ability,” which is as much a gift as the talents. To one he gave five, to another two and to another one. The servant who received one talent was as capable of using it to profit as were the others who had received the five and the two; therefore we can make no excuse for him upon the ground that he was not competent to use that which had been given him. Let us remember that all who received were servants, the same as in the case of the virgins. The two faithful servants made good use of that which was given them, but the other one did not; he was slothful, hence an “unprofitable servant.” He had knowledge enough to know what should be done, and wisdom enough to do it, nevertheless he acted unwise in the neglect of his duty.

After a long time the man (lord) of these servants came and reckoned with them; the one who received the five talents brought other five, which he had gained in trading (proper use) with the five given. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy lord. The other servant who had received two talents came also and had made gain of two other talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Each of these servants received the same blessing, namely, entered into the joy of their lord. The third servant who had received the one talent said to his lord, “I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.” He also accused his master of being hard and unjust, reaping where he had not sown and gathering where he had not sowed. Having this opinion of his master he should have put the talent (money) to the exchangers, that his lord might have received his own with usury when he came; this his lord tells him. We see his unfaithfulness, hence slothfulness, and his wickedness in accusing his master of being hard and unjust. His lord asked nothing unreasonable of his servants, and least of all did he exact anything dishonest on their part. In a sense, shall we not class this “unprofitable servant” with the foolish virgins? They entered not with the bridegroom, neither did this servant enter into the joy of his lord. And shall we not

class the faithful servants with the wise virgins? They entered in with the bridegroom to the marriage, so did the two faithful servants enter into the joy of their lord.

We have no thought that “outer darkness” means eternal destruction, but rather chastisement. “That servant which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.” “Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” He is still a “servant,” but unprofitable.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew the Savior tells his disciples (servants) of various signs by which they might know of his coming, (in his glory) and the end of the world (legal dispensation). “But of that day and hour knoweth no man.” Then adds, “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh. Who then is a *faithful* and *wise servant*, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord del ay eth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The above quotation helps us to grasp the subject more fully. The Savior was about ready to go to his Father, and before leaving his apostles, appoints their labor or stewardship, and gives them to understand that each one of them shall give an account of their stewardship or ministry when he comes again. “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.” – Heb. xiii. 17. “Be ye also ready,” means, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; be faithful, diligent in the office to which you are appointed; watch unto prayer; do not sit down to eat and rise up to play, but continue ye in my love, keep my commandments; preach the gospel to the poor and thereby “feed my lambs “and my sheep. Such a servant, at his coining, says the Savior, shall be blessed or made ruler over all his goods. This blessing does not only imply more service, but honor; faithful servants are to “be counted worthy of double honor.” When he comes in his glory (Spirit) the blessing is given, viz: “Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” (Enter into the joy of thy lord.) We do not understand this kingdom to be the realms of immortal glory, but the kingdom that should come, the place prepared in the going away of Jesus, the spiritual kingdom, the heavenly Jerusalem, the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Now all nations are gathered before him, but the faithful servants who feed, clothe, visit and minister unto the brethren of Christ, and thereby minister unto him, are those, and those only, who are thus blessed. (Note Matt. xxv. 31-46.)

Where much is given, much is required, and where little is given, little is required. This is as true now as it ever was, and that each one of God's "servants" is accountable to him for their stewardship, is as true as ever it was. (See Romans xiv. 4.) Of the servant or minister of the Lord who is blessed with a clear, able gift to expound the word of God, much is required, either in preaching or writing, but where the gift is small little is expected, but that little is *required*. He must not, because his gift is smaller than his fellow servants, or for any other reason, bury it, which would be unfaithfulness and be become "unprofitable." The improvement of the one "talent" is all that is required of him, and his "ability" is equal to that which is given him, according to the parable. We have no reason to think that Timothy was as able a minister as the apostle Paul, hence Paul admonished him to neglect not the gift that was in him; he also tells him *how* to improve his gift (talent): "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy *profiting* may appear to all."

Each child of God is endowed with some gift, either great or small. To one is given the gift of healing; to such an one we would say, Use the gift faithfully. To another is given a hand; then whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do with thy might. To another is given an ear to hear; then give attention to what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To another is given a heart to meditate; then think upon the things that are pure, honest and of good report.

We, the children of God, are looking for him to appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation. "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." – 1 John ii. 28.

We have now given such thoughts as we have upon this subject, and leave them for the consideration of our inquiring friend and all who may read them. If no comfort or instruction is found in what we have written, we hope that at least the pure minds of our readers may be stirred up to meditate upon the word of God, and may his Spirit guide us more and more in all truth. K.

Editorial – Elder Ker

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FEBRUARY 1, 1906.



PROVERBS VI. 20-22.

THE Proverbs of Solomon are speeches of wisdom, and much profit is gained by reading them and in meditating upon them. Many of them have a literal meaning good to observe, yet there is a spiritual application to each one far more important to the church. The children of the Israelites were instructed in the law, and there was special reward to the children who honored their father and mother. This would seem the literal application of the text under consideration. Special things are mentioned as abominable, and the son exhorted to refrain from those things, which under the law were forbidden. But it seems more necessary, in trying to answer our brother's request, to make mention of what seems to us the spiritual import of the text. First, we will call attention to the fact that a "son," a child, an heir, is addressed, and is reminded of his father's commandment and of the law of his mother. The commandments of our Father are given to none save his sons and daughters, and the law of our mother (the church) is the rule of life only to those born of her. Verse twenty-three says: "The command is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." It is indeed wonderful to behold the perfection of the Scriptures. The command a lamp and the law light; these perfectly united. No lamp without the command, no light without the law. These are found in the church of God, therefore having the lamp and light the children of God are not ignorant concerning the commandments of God the Father and the law of their mother in the gospel dispensation. We have no hesitancy in saying that the law of Zion, the church of the firstborn, was in the mind of Solomon when he wrote the words of the text. A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and the sowing of discord among brethren, are an abomination unto the Lord, hence are enumerated in the command of the Father and in the law of the mother, and reproof is sure if we depart from the lamp and light governing the department of all who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord in this respect is no respecter of persons, but rewards every man according to his works.

Hoping this explanation may be satisfactory to brother Smith, we leave the subject. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
Signs of the Times
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PSALMS CL. 4.

“PRAISE him with stringed instruments and organs.”

Will Elder Ker give his views upon the subject of having organs in gospel churches?

DONALD McKAY.
Scotsville, Nova Scotia.

We quote the above Scripture as a basis of such remarks as we may be enabled to make concerning the request of brother McKay. We want to be sincere in all that we do, and withhold nothing that we may have from those who want to know the truth and order of God's house.

Doubtless, in the minds of some, the text above mentioned would establish their idea of having musical instruments in the house of God. Such was the case in olden times, therefore such Scripture is recorded. But the house of God that had instruments of music in it was the house which was made “a den of thieves” by those who worshiped with such things, but knew nothing of worship in spirit and in truth. That people could not sing one of the Lord's songs in a strange land, neither could they use their harps outside of their own country, because their worship was to be performed there.

When God commanded Moses to make the tabernacle in the wilderness, he told him to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount. That tabernacle was constructed in sections, convenient for the time that then was; it was put up and taken down as the Lord commanded; its stakes were often removed and its cords often broken. That tabernacle was not the spiritual house of God, but “a worldly sanctuary.” It had its own peculiar furniture, and in it God was worshiped in the burning of incense; in it the blood of beasts was offered by the high priest, once a year, for the sins of Israel. After this, David desired to build an house for the Lord, but could not because he was a man of war, but Solomon, David's son, built an house to the Lord. The house was magnificent; that temple, its furniture and instruments of music all filled their place as shadows of better things to come. Therefore that house was not the spiritual house of God, neither was the worship in it spiritual. The temple Solomon built was the pride of Israel, but the time came when they went into captivity, and their beautiful house with all its instruments of music was destroyed; thus was shown that that house, like the tabernacle in the wilderness, was not to abide; it was rebuilt, however, by Zerubbabel, but at last was destroyed in the final destruction of Jerusalem, never to be rebuilt again, because in Christ all types and shadows are fulfilled. And *now* instead of the tabernacle Moses made, or the house Solomon built, or the house rebuilt by Zerubbabel, we have

the spiritual house of God, built by our antitypical Solomon and Zerubbabel, the Lord Jesus Christ, upon the rock (revelation), “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Our High Priest does not enter into the tabernacle, made with hands, once a year to offer for our sins, but he has entered heaven itself, not with the blood of goats and calves, which could never take away sin, but by his own blood, “having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

The spiritual house of God is not built of such material as was used by Moses and Solomon, which required the work of men’s hands, but it is built of “lively stones,” (men and women) “for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

As the temple, under the law, was a figure, it was right and according to that law to have musical instruments in the *church* which *then* was. But “the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” The *law* therefore of *this* dispensation demands no such things as were commanded and observed under the old covenant.

The text at the head of this article was in place, literally, as a commandment of the old covenant. The worship of God in the temple was not complete without instruments of music, but let us remember that all such things were destroyed with the temple in the destruction of Jerusalem.

The church of God *now* would be as justifiable in building altars and offering sacrifices to God, or in establishing a priesthood of men, or in burning incense, or in adopting any other form or ceremony of the old covenant, as it would be to put into service stringed instruments and organs, and call them a part of our worship or a *help* in *any* sense of the word.

The harmonious strains of musical instruments in the temple, under the old covenant, were only a figure of the prayers, and praises of thanksgiving of the spiritual stones. These all sing the same song in perfect harmony of voices, saying, “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

The nations round about could not enter into the worship with Israel under the law, neither can the unregenerate now enter into the spiritual worship of God, or learn the *new* song.

Some say the children of Old Baptist parents go elsewhere to preaching because there is nothing to attract them to Old Baptist meetings, and to counteract this let us have organs in our churches and train our children to sing; this will make it interesting for them. The idea that organs in our churches would attract our children and young people, and thereby give us larger congregations and help to increase our membership, is but a

notion of the natural mind; this is conclusive, since everything pertaining to it is *natural*. If this be the kind of interest it requires to bring them in, would it not be better for the church to have them remain outside! In the training and culture of our children, we should take them with us to meeting, beginning in their infancy and continue to take them while they are under our care. This cannot make them the children of God or cause them to love his doctrine, but it will cause them to *respect* the house of God and also the religion of their parents. If a child, even though grown to manhood or womanhood, respects its parents as it should, it will go occasionally to hear the doctrine they love, even though for the child there is nothing of interest in it. In this, we are glad to say, we speak from experience as well as from observation.

If Christ, the truth, the life and the way, who is preached, is not the attraction which brings men and women into the church membership, it is better off without them. Is God as able now to add to the church such as shall be saved, as he was in the days of the apostles? If so, why not trust in him! believing that every plant must be planted by him, and that he waters them every moment lest any hurt them. Surely every plant that he “hath *not* planted, shall be rooted up.” Do, brethren, let us be consistent, and not attempt to remove the ancient landmarks, but let us “ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.” O the pride of the heart of man to desire largo congregations to preach to; if we should think for a moment we would *know* that unless the Lord brings them in *prepared* to hear, we had as well talk to as many trees in the forest.

Naomi was a beautiful figure of the church, and Ruth was a perfect figure of all who are brought to love the church of God. Naomi told Ruth that there was nothing to be gained in following her, she was poor, had no sons, was a widow empty and desolate, she had no stringed instruments or organs to attract her, and that if she followed her she could only expect poverty and affliction. This did not turn Ruth away, but instead, her *devotion* for Naomi caused her to say, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” Thus is the work of God made manifest. (Moses was likewise blessed: he was made to forsake all the riches and advantages of Egypt to suffer affliction with the people of God.) Such was not the case with Orpah, she did not follow Naomi when she learned there was no attraction, nothing to be gained by going with her; no stringed instruments, no organs, no trained choirs where she could make a display of her knowledge and ability. We rather think Naomi was better off without her; what do you think? If you agree with us, then you must also acknowledge that the church of God is better off without those who are brought in by the attraction of the organ.

May the dear Lord enable us to look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; here we shall see a *quiet* habitation, here we shall see our High Priest, his table spread with his

flesh and his blood. Under the law, if a man ate of the flesh of the sin-offering or drank of its blood, that man should be put to death, but *now* Jesus, the great sin-offering, says, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” When we look upon Zion we do not see, or hear the sound of the organ or stringed instruments; the attraction there is the “glorious Lord,” who is “unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, [creature works] neither shall gallant ship [worldly attraction] pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us.”

The apostles entered into these glorious and spiritual things, hence we find no example or authority in the New Testament for instrumental music in the church of God. Without a “thus saith the Lord,” we could as well adopt any other notion or idea of man and establish it in the house of God, as we could the organ.

If we abide in the apostles’ fellowship we must abide also in their doctrine and practice; to forfeit one means to forfeit *all*. Therefore if the church should institute the organ, sooner or later it would be swallowed up with error; then wherein would we differ from the nations round about?

Our heritage here is affliction, poverty, persecution, hated of all men for Christ’s sake, a little flock, our name cast out as evil, not reckoned among the nations of the earth, a peculiar people, doubts, fears, temptations. But the promise is that we shall at last come off more than conquerors, through him that loved us and gave himself for us.

If we could, by changing the order of the apostolic church, become like other people, where would we find evidence that we are the church of God, children of the heavenly King?

In our thoughts of trying to steady the ark, let us not forget the experience of Uzzah, who met death in attempting to *help* the Lord. May the Lord enable us to worship him in spirit and in truth, and to be satisfied with the goodness of his house.

We are glad to say that in our eastern associations the subject of having an organ has not been mentioned by any *church*. May God keep us in the faith, and show others who have been overtaken in the fault, their error.

The church is not to sing *now* “with stringed instruments and organs,” but with the spirit and with the understanding also. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times
Volume 74, No. 5
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REMARKS ON BROTHER J. M. DULEY'S LETTER.

We are glad to hear of brother Duley's visit to Kentucky, and of the goodness of the Lord in visiting him and the brethren with an heavenly shower of blessing. How good his glorious presence to revive our drooping spirits and cause us to receive the gospel in power, in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance; at such times it is pleasant both to speak and hear. We have enjoyed brother Duley's letter, and feel sure many will be comforted in reading it. There are a few statements in it, however, which we think well to comment upon for the consideration of brother Duley and the brotherhood. It has been much in our mind the last few months to offer some thoughts upon these very points. We feel sure that brother Duley will not be offended; his love for and interest in the cause of Christ is equal, no doubt, to our own. It is well for us all to understand each other in matters pertaining to salvation.

Brother Duley says, "There is much letter preaching, concerning which there is no objection to the words, but the spirit is not in it." We have often wondered if it can be possible that there is "letter preaching" in the church of God, by the servants of Jesus Christ? Before this question can be answered we must first ascertain what "letter preaching" is. Paul says the apostles were made "able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit;" he also tells us "the law is spiritual." Surely the gospel, which is the power of God, is spiritual; where then do we find "the letter?" We have thought more particularly in the ceremonial law; Christ blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." The following Scripture, with brief comment, may answer to make clear our position upon this point: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held: that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." "In the flesh" signifies, we think, an unregenerate state, which was the condition of Israel under the covenant of works. (Such was also the condition of the Gentiles who were without law.) Hence "the motions of sins, which were by the law," did work in them to bring forth fruit unto death. But now, being delivered from the law wherein they were held, Paul says, "We should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Now being dead to the law (ceremonial) by the body of Christ, they were to serve God, not in circumcision, meats, drinks, divers washings, &c, but "in spirit and in truth."

“Circumcision [now] is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.” – Rom. ii. 29. The service of the apostles therefore was not to minister in those things (the letter) which had been observed under the covenant of works, which had men appointed specially for such service, but were to minister in spiritual things. Therefore, said Paul, we are made able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit. To preach “the letter” is to preach the doctrine of works, which is the direct opposite of grace. The apostles did not preach “the deeds of the law” (ordinances) as means of salvation, but Christ and him crucified. There were some, however, who did preach “the letter” (deeds of the law), saying, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” It is said of them they “would pervert the gospel of Christ.” When the apostles were in council at Jerusalem they said with regard to such “letter preaching,” it would “put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.” This was called preaching Moses. The apostles wrote a letter to the brethren, who had been disturbed by the preaching of those letter preachers, telling them how to walk and from what things to abstain, and also assured them that they (apostles) had given no commandment to those men to preach circumcision, or to command that the law of Moses be kept in order to be saved. They assured the church that the only means of salvation was in the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God. “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.” If indeed the preaching of “the deeds of the law” for justification before God is “the letter,” (and we believe it is) can it be said now, or since the resurrection of Jesus, that his servants preach “the letter?” Some of our very ablest ministers have been accused of preaching “the letter” because they are not experimental preachers. Did the writer of Hebrews preach “the letter” when he presented Christ in contrasting the priesthood of Aaron and Melchizedek with the priesthood of Christ? or when he contrasted the blood of goats and calves with the blood of Jesus? Surely he was not preaching or writing the experience of the children of God nor anything that would excite their emotions. Read Paul’s sermons as recorded in the Acts of the apostles, and also Stephen’s sermon; see if they were preaching “the letter” when they declared the wonderful works of God in salvation, beginning with the promise to Abraham and tracing Christ through the different generations until manifest in the flesh, then to the cross, to the tomb and to the right hand of God. The gospel is “the power of God,” not tears, frames or feelings. It is true that men and women are often brought to tears when under the sound of real gospel preaching; this is godly sorrow, and it worketh repentance. It is also true that men and women are more often brought to tears when some sad experience, of an earthly nature, is being related in the pulpit. If we are blessed at all with the spirit of discernment, we have not as yet found the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, in that; it is worldly sorrow, and it worketh death. There is no such thing in the dispensation of grace as the

gospel being preached in “the letter;” there is no such gospel. The gospel is always the same (the power of God), but it does not always affect the children alike; the preparation of the heart is as necessary as the answer of the tongue; when we are thus prepared it always comes in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. If there were more sound, fearless, faithful doctrinal preachers, the church generally would be better established in the doctrine of grace; could readily detect heresy when preached, hence less confusion and disorder. Peter thought it well that the brethren be established in the truth; Paul thought it necessary that they be established in the principles of the doctrine of Christ.

We have no thought or intention of criticising the experimental gift, it fills its place in the purpose of God; neither is it proper to belittle the doctrinal gift, which also fills its place. That God has given both to the church we have no doubt; the Lord gives each gift of the ministry for the edification of the body of Christ.

Again, brother Duley says, “I have heard men preach smart, systematic sermons, when I knew full well that there was no gospel in it; God’s children have no time to sleep when the gospel is coming to them in the power of the Holy Ghost.” If system in preaching is an evidence of “no gospel,” we will have to do away with Christ’s sermon on the mount; the mind of man cannot conceive such system as he manifested. The sermon of Stephen in Acts vii. 2-5,3, will also have to be cast one side, for no man, save Jesus, was ever more systematic in preaching than he. Some true servants of God have been accused of preparing their sermons, because they deliver them in an orderly or systematic way. We should not be too harsh in our judgment of our brethren; it is as natural for some men to speak orderly as it is for others not to do so. This is due to the mind of the man; some men are orderly at home and at business, a place for everything and everything in its place, while others are the opposite. An orderly mind is a “good gift,” therefore it is of the Lord.

With regard to the children of God going to sleep during preaching, if this is an evidence of “no gospel,” but “letter,” we shall be compelled to examine the preaching of Paul and the prayer of Jesus to see if the power of God, or the Holy Ghost, was present. During the preaching of Paul on one occasion a certain young man went to sleep “and fell down from the third loft.” During that agonizing prayer of Christ in the garden, Peter, James and John went to sleep; they could not watch with him one hour. If the preaching of Paul and the prayer of Jesus did not keep the children awake, why should we feel disturbed or doubt the presence of the Holy Ghost when some go to sleep under the sound of our preaching? Jesus said to the disciples who slept, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The spirit is as willing now as it was then, and we feel confident that the flesh is as weak now as it was then. Should the entire congregation go to sleep it would not evidence that the gospel was not being preached. We imagine that brother Duley has

preached as good gospel sermons when no one was in sight or hearing as he has ever done before congregations, and perhaps better if he has attempted to use those sermons before assemblies. We feel sure he was not depressed and so discouraged that he stopped preaching because no one was there to hear him; why should he feel so in the pulpit, if all were asleep, if it be the same gospel he preached when entirely alone? No doubt it has ever been the same.

Brother Duley says, "It is an injury to the cause of God to continue to drag along when one sees that he has no liberty, and the brethren are not edified." We feel very certain that one can judge when he has no liberty to himself in speaking, but we question the judgment, at such times, of the speaker concerning the edification of the hearers. They all appear to him just as he feels, but they do not always feel as they appear to him. It is often easier to stop than to go on, but it is not always best; it is easy to get into the habit of stopping after a fifteen or twenty minute talk, but this is very unsatisfactory to the brethren; often they make special effort to be present, and feel disappointed when the minister stops after a very brief discourse. Gospel ministers frequently preach their most able sermons when, to them, they are in utter darkness.

We leave these remarks for your consideration. We hold our dear brother Duley in high esteem, and have no intention of wounding him in commenting upon his letter; if mistake is made in so doing, we assure him it is not of the heart. Faithfulness, charity and longsuffering toward one another are essential to the well-being of the brotherhood which we are commanded to love. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

Volume 74., No. 17.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1906.

DULEY'S ORIGINAL MESSAGE

THE GOSPEL.

Paul says, 1 Thess. i. 5: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." And in 1 Cor. ii. 4, he says, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of

power.” This was for no other reason than “that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” He declares, in verse two, that he was with them in weakness. He felt his weakness and inability to preach such a Savior to lost sinners, but in this he learned the lesson, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” When we feel our weakness then we are made willing for God to take us and use us according to his own will. When we are willing for our God to hold the reins in his own hand, then we are strong, because then there is a power behind us directing our thoughts and words.

While I was back in old Kentucky, my native home, I was with one of my dear brethren, and he had been so comforted under my feeble effort at preaching that he exclaimed, “O you have come to be a big preacher.” I knew that it came from his heart, for I read it in his very countenance while I was preaching. While this was comforting to me, I said, “O John, don’t say that.” Then he repeated it again. I said, “Well, I know that it is not in myself.” He said, “James, I know that it is not you.” At this very time, while in prayer, before speaking, I felt that I could not get low enough before God, and if I ever felt my need of his help it was then. My feeling was, Poor little one, what am I to speak in such a great name! But, bless the Lord, I had not been speaking a great while before the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and all were partakers with me of the fountain of living waters. It does me good to think and write about it now, here in my far away home. As Paul said, My gospel did not come in word only, but in the power of the Holy Ghost. Bless the Lord for his gift to the sons of men. Each time I tried to preach I did not know but it would be the last time I would ever try to sound the glorious news abroad. This was the case with some that heard me that day. They have not heard me since, and perhaps never will again. God sent me back to those dear brethren, and he knew what he wanted of me there, and he did the dictating, else there would have been no preaching.

There is much letter preaching, concerning which there is no objection to the words, but the spirit is not in it. I have heard men preach smart, systematic sermons, when I knew full well that there was no gospel in it. God’s children have no time to sleep when the gospel is coming to them in the power of the Holy Ghost, but if it comes in word only it does not reach the power of that eternal life which God has given unto them in the work of regeneration. One effort after another to present the gospel in the letter only, always has the same result. It is sad to hear preaching and to see all around asleep. Gospel preaching and sluggishness do not go together. I do not feel like continuing to speak when the people are sleeping. Perhaps the cause of their sleeping is the absence of the power of the Holy Ghost. A brother asked once, What would I do if the people should go to sleep? I replied that I would stop speaking and wait on the Lord, trusting that he would be with me another time. I have tried to preach when I knew that none felt like

sleeping; but it is an injury to the cause of God to continue to drag along when one sees that he has no liberty and the brethren are not edified.

The gospel tells of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. While the above is true gospel, yet it does not edify unless it comes from the heart. If one was to tell the people that they were near kin to John D. Rockefeller, and heirs, and convince them that it were true, how many such heirs would sleep while it was being told them? I am sure that I would not sleep if some one should tell me such news if I believed it to be true. But O, what is all the estate of John D. Rockefeller compared to the gospel inheritance! We inherit it by heirship. We are said to be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, we are as much heirs as is our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and what is Christ's is also ours. The gospel tells of a oneness between Christ and his people; it says that Jesus loves his people as the Father loved him, and then adds that the Father loved him before the foundation of the world. Is not this consoling, dear child? Just think that the Father loves us just as he did Jesus, and that he loved him before the world was. There was a poor man who united with the Old School Baptist Church, and the minister asked him if he loved Jesus. He said, "O no! This poor negro cannot love him, but Jesus loves this poor negro." And that love goes back to the Father.

He "that loveth is born of God." Being born of God we are partakers of the divine nature, which is love, and so we love God, and one another. Thus we come to esteem our brethren better than ourselves; we see our own hatefulness and cannot see that of others. I know that if my dear brethren knew me as I know myself they could not have the confidence in me that they have, but, bless the Lord, he has covered our sins so completely that even he himself says that he beholds no sin in us, because of his imputed righteousness. He was made "sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." What a glorious gospel is this!

"Jesus paid it all;
All to him we owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

The rich can have what they desire, but the poor cannot afford it. But Jesus said to the disciples of John, whom John sent to him when in prison, Go and tell John again, that the lepers are cleansed, the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. The gospel of God's dear Son is for the poor, it is as free as are all the rest of the gifts of God unto the sons of men. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread I and your labor for that

which satisfieth not?" "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price." The poor are needy, and the needy are those who feel themselves ten thousand talents in debt, and without one farthing to pay. The gospel is sweet to such characters as these poor, needy, penniless ones. They thirst but have no money to buy with. But the gospel says, Come and buy, without money and without price. Thus, dear child, it all costs you nothing, yet you were bought with a price, and the price was the blood of the dear Lord Jesus Christ. We were his and we sold ourselves for naught. Then we were left in a destitute condition indeed. But needy is we were, Christ laid aside his crown and died for us, according to the Scriptures, and he was raised again the third day, according to the Scriptures. But for how many of our sins did he die? He "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." This means all of our sins in all our life from the cradle to the grave. What did dying for our sins amount to? The wrath of an unflinching justice was appeased. Mercy and truth have here met together and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Why could this union and peace exist between them? Because justice could ask no more; it was perfectly satisfied. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." It was not one (?) late; and he was just on time when he arose from the dead for our justification, he became the first-fruits of them that slept.

But I seem to find no stopping-place, I must cease this writing, it is already too lengthy. I am but fifty-nine years of age, but still do not expect to be here much longer. I will soon be sixty years old, and many years ago it was presented to me so that I have believed it, that I should live to the age of sixty. But whether it is the purpose of God that I shall be soon taken away I must wait and see. Hezekiah had fifteen years added to him, but not to the Lord's days. Of one thing I am sure, that I shall live out all the time allotted to me on earth.

Remember a poor sinner at the throne of grace. May God's blessings rest upon Zion in her distressed condition, is the prayer of a poor sinner saved by grace alone, if saved at all,

J. M. DULEY.

Kiowa, Kan., July 5, 1906.

Signs Of The Times

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SEPTEMBER 1, 1906.

REPLY TO BROTHER DULEY.

We are very glad to give brother Duley space to explain himself. In his explanation, however, we are confirmed that we understood him perfectly in his recent letter headed "The Gospel," and published, with our remarks, in the Signs for September 1st, 1906. We still assert that "there is no such thing as letter gospel," hence no such thing as preaching the gospel in the letter. If a man is bright enough to repeat a gospel sermon, the repetition of it does not change the gospel to letter, though the man has no spiritual knowledge of what he repeats. We heard, a little while ago, the hymn "Rock of ages" reproduced by a phonograph; every word was distinct and every note full and perfect. The reproduction of this hymn did not change it into a popular song of the day; it was as much the hymn "Rock of ages" as though an angel had sung it, though the phonograph had no knowledge of what it was doing. We use this illustration to prove that the reproduction of a gospel sermon would not make that gospel sermon "letter preaching." The expression, "the letter," appears in Romans ii. 27; ii. 29; vii. 6; 2 Cor. iii. 6. We hope that brother Duley may carefully examine these Scriptures and their connections, and perhaps he may be convinced that the expression, "preaching the gospel in the letter," is not according to the word of God. In Philippians i. 15-18, we have the following: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the (?) of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then! notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." This also proves that Christ is preached, whether it be of envy, strife, pretence or good will. Can Christ be preached without preaching the gospel? Paul called the above preaching Christ, and rejoiced that he was preached, although some had no spiritual knowledge of Christ who preached him.

We think from brother Duley's first letter that he referred more particularly to the servants of God in speaking of systematic preaching, because he spoke of the children of God sitting and sleeping under it. The children of God, manifestly, seldom hear the ministers of the world preach. With regard to some of the children of God going to sleep in meetings, we still say such has always been the case, and the same will no doubt continue, and it is seldom if ever the minister is to blame for it. We admit that short sermons are better than those of "two hours," unless the man has something to say; yet no servant of God can judge his own preaching.

We acknowledge our youth, which is forty-six years, and our lack of spiritual understanding, but hope that years and experience may not fail to teach us what we

should know when we have reached the age of a man: threescore and ten. We have no recollection of ever imagining a congregation before us (as brother Duley says) in our early exercises regarding the ministry; Christ and him crucified for poor, condemned sinners, was all our thought.

We may be “mistaken” with regard to godly sorrow, produced when the Spirit fills the heart and tears are shed; there are not many tears of rejoicing, however, if we have the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings; not much rejoicing in this bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus; but rejoicing shall come when the night is past and all tears are wiped away.

We assure brother Duley that our little correspondence shall not affect our fellowship and christian regard for him. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

Volume 74., No. 22.

NOVEMBER 15, 1906.

DULEY’S SECOND LETTER

CORRESPONDENCE

Kiowa, Kansas, Sept. 19, 1906.

Elder H. C. Ker – Dear Brother In Christ: – I have just read my article on the gospel, with your remarks on the same. I assure you it is with no ill feeling toward you that I want to notice some things you say which do not do my views justice. I love the brotherly manner in which you have written. You criticise my words, “letter preaching.” What I meant by letter preaching is for one to merely speak from knowledge, and not from the Spirit; a servant of Christ is indeed in a doleful condition when that is the case with him, as it is from time to time. You think that a called preacher never preaches the letter of the gospel, to say nothing of designing men who have crept in unawares, to satisfy their desires. You know, dear brother, that the doctrine of the Bible has a spiritual meaning, which must be revealed to the understanding of any one who understands it at all in its spiritual meaning. You also know that a shrewd man can watch you, and other able ministers of the new testament, and can remember your strong points, and can use the same arguments that you use, and yet have no real knowledge of the things that he advances; his knowledge is simply head knowledge. I understand this to be letter

preaching, and such preaching I am sure is in the church now. Do you not think so? I also believe that God withholds spiritual liberty from his servants at times now, for their good and his own glory. You also refer to systematic preaching. What I meant by this is ear tickling to please the fancies of men, as though systematic preaching was all divine. You know that the fine preachers of the world all deliver their false system in perfect order, yet that does not prove them to be the servants of Christ. Our God has to-day, I know, great men in the church, such as I could name, who are yet sometimes comforted by those of small talents; but the people of God are all upon an equality; no big ones, and no small ones; all are for the edifying of the body of Christ.

You also criticise what I said about preachers preaching their congregations to sleep, and then refer to Christ and Paul. I also believe that all of the servants of God, at times, will see some one fall asleep while they are preaching, but is there not something very wrong when under one who is preaching almost invariably from one to a half-dozen of his audience are sleeping, and that of members of the church? Do you not think so! I think so indeed. Then you criticise me for telling of the sweet tears shed while the good Lord was pouring his love into the inmost soul of myself and others while I have been trying in my weakness to magnify his grace. You know that God has said he will preserve all the tears of his people in a bottle; and I would be willing to leave it to any hearer, as to whether I was telling some worldly, sentimental anecdote.

My dear brother, I am back here in old Kentucky, among the Baptists of my native land, and I see the same results that I saw when I was here before. I am badly afflicted in body, yet I hope the dear Lord is using me in my afflictions for the good of his humble poor and for his own glory. If I were not afflicted I would not feel, and see his dear presence by the eye of faith. I trust that my feeling arises from that heart of flesh which God has promised that he will give his children. Some of my friends try to persuade me to rest awhile, and cease going among the dear Old Baptists until I get better, but that is not the way I am impressed. I do not feel my afflictions while I am trying to proclaim Jesus as the sinner's all. As I said above, I am perfectly satisfied to leave it to my brethren as to what I preach that reaches the hearts of the children of God. Ask brethren in the ministry who were present at the O. L. River Association what it was I preached that brought tears to the eyes of God's humble poor. I am among the so-called "absoluters" and "can't help its." I am associated with such men as Elder J. M. Perkins. I have not been among those who, like the friends of Job, are miserable comforters; and miserable comforters are such men to me. In your criticism you seem to think that one ought to talk an hour or two because some one came a long way to hear him. It is no trouble for a gifted man to talk for an hour or more, even if he does have to preach head knowledge. But I had much rather preach twenty-five or thirty minutes to the hearts of the children of God than to a lot of sleepy people for two hours. I do think it an injury,

rather than a benefit, to drag along in a dull, lifeless manner, lifeless to the humble poor. What if some have come a long distance to hear the preaching, if it has not sufficient charms to keep them awake, what benefit is it to them? Why preach when the larger part of the church is asleep, and the rest using every effort to keep themselves awake? I feel as though the preacher had better be asleep with the rest, than to be preaching to a sleepy congregation.

We learn by experience, and that is the best way to learn; and you, my dear brother, are young, and will learn much as you grow older in the ministry. One who is sailing on a smooth sea does not know how to sympathize with that poor man whom the billows have well-nigh overwhelmed; but let the same rough waves run over the first one, then he is in touch with the other poor pilgrim. I am not, my brother, saying that you are sailing on a smooth sea, for I do not know how rough your seas are.

I have written enough, and hope that it will not be a check to our brotherly love. I hope that you will throw the mantle of charity over all my imperfections, and, as you have said, if I have said anything wrong, lay it to the head and not the heart.

I am to be at the Bethel and Soldier Creek associations, and am expecting a great feast; but God rules in heaven and in earth, and among men, and in all deep places. Long life to the dear Signs Of The Times, and may its editors and correspondents be guided by that Spirit which enables one to preach, is the prayer of a poor old sinner, who lives in hope of a blessed immortality.

September 24. – As I have not sent my letter, I will add a few more thoughts. In your letter you ask if I should stop preaching because all were asleep? How would it have been in those early days when all alone, I was doing my best preaching with no one present? Now, my dear brother, you have been there yourself, and I am satisfied that the tears ran down your cheeks while those sweet thoughts were pouring into your inmost soul, and you in imagination were standing before an interested congregation. Do you suppose that if at that time you had had a congregation of a thousand people while you were preaching those sweet sermons, any of them would have been asleep? I do not. Why? Because it was the very spirit of the gospel, and not head knowledge, or merely the letter of the gospel.

Then, in regard to shedding tears, you say there is no doubt many a tear shed while the pure gospel is being preached. I do not remember your exact words. There are more tears shed under Old Baptist preaching than under any other class of preachers. I mean the tears that God will put in his bottle. They are tears of rejoicing, and not of godly sorrow, as I understand you to say. Godly sorrow produces repentance, deep, heartfelt repentance, and none have ever repented of being brought here. If I understand you, you say that the many tears which flow while the sweets of the gospel are being set forth are

the tears of godly sorrow; if so, I think you are much mistaken; I think they are the tears of rejoicing, and not of sorrow. I do not think there is any difference many times among brethren if they understand each other's meaning. I hope I have not written in a resentful spirit. I know you do not think that you are infallible; many views you entertain now you will see in later years you entertained wrongly; I know that has been the case with myself. You are right, I believe, with regard to the main principles of the doctrine of the Bible, but I know you will not claim all your thoughts are right.

I will close. I may not write many more articles for publication; God only knows.

Your

brother,

J. M. DULEY.

Signs Of The Times

Volume 74., No. 22.

NOVEMBER 15, 1906.

REPLY TO BROTHER DICKENS.

WE are glad of the good letter from brother Dickens on page 44; we also admire the humble spirit in which it was written. It is brother Dickens' right to differ with us concerning our view of Matt, xviii. 8, 9; it is also right that he should be heard upon the subject. Many differences and sometimes declarations of non-fellowship between brethren occur because of some misunderstanding. It is right that brethren should be plain and faithful with each other, and should never allow bitterness to arise between them because of different views of some Scripture. If we are united upon salvation through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, grace and grace alone for time and eternity, we should walk together in peace. It is right to exchange views, but it is not the right of any man to set himself up as a standard to which all others must bow. We are all fallible, finite creatures, and at best, in this life, our knowledge and sight are only in part; we know nothing as we ought. Let us not, therefore, be unreasonable with each other, but forbear one another in love.

We are very sorry that brother Dickens misunderstood our view of the hand, foot and eye in Matthew xviii. We long thought, as he does, that these figures were applicable to the most important members of the church. We have learned that it becomes each one of God's children to read the Bible for himself with prayerful desire and with all care possible. In our view of this special Scripture we are not justifiable in applying it to the members of the body of Christ. Please read verses C> to 17 carefully, weigh every word,

and we think, brother Dickens, you will see what we mean by our remarks to Elder W. W. Polk. We did not mean to say that the “world” is a part of the church, nor do we mean to say the church has power to deal with the “world or man of the world “as it deals with its own subjects. The Jews were the brethren of the apostles after the flesh, and at the time and for years after these words in Matthew were spoken, they were the only people to whom the apostles were to preach. In a natural sense (not spiritual) the Jewish nation was the hand, foot and eye of the apostles, because they were members one of another, but if any of that nation received not the gospel, and offended the saints or apostles they (little ones) were to separate themselves from them. This word “separate” means, in our view, to “cut off,” have no fellowship for them, do not *walk* with them, do not *handle* the things they handle, do not *see* like they see. Brother Dickens quotes: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.” This is exactly what we mean when we say “cut off” that which is unholy or offensive. When the disciples were sent out to preach they were commanded to shake the very dust off of their feet as a witness against those who did not receive them and the gospel they preached; in other words, “cut them off.” When Paul and Barnabas, on one occasion, preached to the Jews, they were made angry and would not receive them or the doctrine they preached. Then said they, “It was necessary that the word of God should just have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us.” This is another instance where “the world or men of the world “(unbelievers) were “cut off,” the apostles separating themselves from them because of offence. We should also remember that in the days of the apostles when these words in Matthew xviii. were spoken to *them* there were kings, governors and others of authority who did not believe in Jesus. The apostles were taught to fear them not, nor to do after their works, but rather fear God and keep his commandments.

We agree with brother Dickens when he says, the Scriptures are written for the children of God, but our brother is well aware of the fact that the children of God are not always described or meant in Scripture where *men* are named. “Woe unto the ‘ world’ because of offences.” – Matt, xviii. 7. This is not speaking of the children of God. “It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that *man* by whom the offence cometh.” – Matt, xviii. 7. This does not mean a babe or little one, but a “man.” The Savior is not, in our understanding, teaching that little ones will offend little ones, but that offences should come from the “world,” or unbelievers. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Paul tells us, “The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.” If, as brother Dickens thinks, the hand, foot and eye mean the most important members of the church, and we cut them off or pluck out the eye, do we not say in such action, We have no need of you? Is not this contrary to the

teaching of Paul? We must indeed keep the house clean, and we cannot be too faithful in the discharge of our duty along this line. Every disorderly member should be dealt with according to the New Testament law, neither should discipline in matters of disorder be delayed. The turning over to Satan, however, of a member for the destruction of the flesh is not, in our view, cutting off the hand or foot, or plucking out the eye. If so, how can it be said of the bride (church), “Thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, thou hast dove’s eyes.” “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee”? Or how shall it be said, “How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince’s daughter “! We understand by the expression, “It is better for thee to *enter* into life [new and living way] halt or maimed, rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire,” that it is better as a “little flock” to receive the kingdom, than to have great numbers and be in confusion and strife. It is better that “two or three” be gathered together where the Lord will manifest himself, than for thousands to *come* together where the God of salvation is not. If God be for us who can be against us?

Another point in favor of our view is, Jesus commands, “If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off” without any intimation whatever of trying to save or heal them, but verse 15 says, “Moreover, if thy *brother* shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” Here is taught the lesson of trying to save or heal the brother, and if the offended one fails in this he is then to call upon other brethren to assist in the healing of the brother, instead of cutting him off.

The import of brother Dickens’ question concerning the resurrection is, Do we believe in the power of God? We answer, Yes, we hope, with all our soul, mind and strength. With God all things are possible, and with him nothing is impossible.

We will now leave the subject, hoping that brother Dickens, and all who may read what we have here written, will be able to grasp our meaning. May we all in all things desire the mind of Christ. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

Volume 74, No. 2

January 15, 1906



REPLY TO BROTHER DICKENS, No. 2.

While brother Dickens seems glad that I was a little more explicit in my view of Matthew xviii. 8, 9, in my reply to him, than I was in my remarks to Elder W. W. Polk in the Sums for Nov. 15th, 1905, he yet fails to understand how I can say the Jewish nation was the hand, fool and eye of the apostles without joining the world or unbelievers to the church. I am glad, however, of his confidence: that he does not believe I intend to do so, but he says if he understands language I certainly have done so. Did the Lord mean to join believers and unbelievers together when he said to the church, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate"! Certainly brother Dickens will say, No. Then neither do I when I use the term "cutoff," if cut off means to separate. There must have been some connection between believers and unbelievers, or (he Lord would not have said to believers, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" coming out was the separation or cutting off.

When I associate the apostles with the Jewish nation, it is not in the sense of christian union, but national union; that nation was the hand and foot in the sense of power by which the apostles as men the seed of Abraham and members of that nation, moved and acted: "The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." From a legal standpoint they were the eye because in a sense they had the oversight of all who heard Moses read in that day.

Christ himself was subject to the law; he was not made above the law, but under the law of sin and death, consequently the whole law had dominion over him as a man, he being the seed of Abraham. He was obedient in all things, even unto death, the death of the cross, therefore he fulfilled the law in every jot and tittle, magnified it and made it honorable.

Our nation, in the same sense, is our hand, foot and eye; it supports us in the sense of strength, it acts for us, it sees for us. Brother Dickens says he wants to notice a few things in my reply to him and weigh them by the meaning of language and a "thus saith the Lord." This is his privilege; no man should write or preach who is not willing that what he says should be investigated.

Brother Dickens says, "I never have yet seen an eye or a foot or a hand in its proper size larger than the body, and the Jewish nation was a larger body than the apostles; my suggestion is that the apostles were the eye for the Jewish nation, or the hand or the foot; the eye is the thing to see with, and the apostles had more light and could see deeper into the truth than the whole Jewish nation." Regarding beast, bird and man he is right, that the body is larger than the feet, eyes or hands, but he will, I am sure, acknowledge that the feet, hands and eyes are the strength of the body, man would be a weak and helpless creature indeed without them.

Therefore, I hope brother Dickens will see that the hand, foot and eye in Matt, xviii. 8, 9, represent powers rather than members of a natural body. He makes the apostles and Jews pretty close kin when he says “the apostles were the eye, hand and foot of the Jewish nation.” Naturally, this presents the same relationship that I have tried to present all the time: that they (apostles and Jews) were all members of one body. I hope brother Dickens will see this, if so, it may explain my position better than I am able to do. Our brother says, “The apostles had more light and could see deeper into the truth than the whole Jewish nation.” If we are to “weigh language” then brother Dickens says the Jewish nation had some light into the truth; if so, it was not blind, but he asks, “Can it be possible that the blind, unbelieving Jews were the hand, foot and eye for the people of God?” The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” This light is synonymous with truth, and the Jews comprehended it not, because they were blinded. I do not believe that Elder Dickens means to present the idea that the Jewish nation could see or understand the truth, but “if I understand him, according to his language he certainly does.”

Brother Dickens now leaves the things spoken to the apostles nearly two thousand years ago and speaks in the present tense, saying, Can it be that such as these (unbelievers, defiled Jews,) are the eye, hand or foot for the saints of God? We should remember that many things were said to the apostles which are not applicable to any other men who ever lived. The Jewish nation to-day is not the power of the land, neither are the children of God under the law, but under grace, hence they are not to obey those who sat in Moses’ seat, but rather be subject to the powers that be, our nation or government. We should, if we can, apply Scripture in its place and time. Brother Dickens says, “If I should say to a man, Thy hand is bleeding, would he look at my hand to see if it were bleeding, and think that it was his hand? No, he would look at his own that was connected to him.” No one would deny this, but if the Jewish nation, the strength and guide, according to the law, should have suffered loss or calamity in any way, the apostles would have suffered with it, being members of it. In the same sense we of the United States would suffer should our nation suffer disaster, since we are members of the union or nation.

Brother Dickens now calls upon the readers of his letter to begin with the first of Matthew xviii., and tells them that they will see that Jesus was addressing the apostles, whom he says represented the church, and to them he said, If thy hand or foot offend thee cut it off and cast it from thee, &c. I will quote a few verses just here to show that Jesus had others, as well as members of the church, in his thoughts and words: “Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the

same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee.” – Matthew xviii. 2-8. “Little children “represented the church, or characters of the church, these enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoso should receive such little ones would receive Jesus, but whoso should offend or not receive the little ones who believed in Jesus, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea. Is this character a little one? is he a member of the body of Christ? is he an “orderly upright walking member “Ms he “a bright light in the church “? What does the Savior say? “Woe unto the world because of offences!” “Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.” What shall be done with him? it was not the right of the apostles to drown him in the sea; Jesus did not so command them, but did command them to cut him off, regardless of station, and cast him from them, or in other words, separate yourselves from all who offend in denying Jesus to be the Christ, and therefore receive not the little ones in his name.

Brother Dickens calls attention to what Jesus said in Matt. v. concerning the offender being a member of the body. I do not see any material difference in his language there from that in Matt, xviii. 8, 9. The Savior was giving the new law in Matt, v., and tells his disciples, in substance, that whoever of the Jewish nation lived according to the sayings of olden times would manifest that they were not of his, therefore if the eye or hand, members of their body (Israel), should offend, it should be plucked out or cut off, or in other words, the apostles were to separate from all who claimed to be “Moses’ disciples.”

Our brother says, Paul was speaking of the church or members when they were in an humble and unoffended feeling, when he said, The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you, nor the eye to the hand, I have no need of thee. Paul does not tell us that this is his meaning. According to this, few were the times in the apostles day that it could be said, but rather a cutting off and a plucking out would have been almost continually the work of the church, according to brother Dickens’ understanding of the terms pluck out and cut off.

I am glad that brother Dickens tells us Webster says separate means to cut off. Again, brother Dickens says, “I presume that Elder Ker thinks that to cut off any of the members, there would be a spot in the bride. When her Husband said, There is no spot in thee, he was looking at her through his own atoning blood, that he had cleansed her from all sin, for the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin; therefore he could speak the

above loving words, and not that he looked at her while she is tabernacling here in the Mesh.” I ask, is the church now perfect through Christ, or is it looking for another sacrifice by which it can be cleansed from all sin? Let the word of God answer: “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” If this does not absolutely establish the fact that the church of God is now perfect in Christ, I am deceived.

Brother Dickens speaks of Paul serving the law of sin with his flesh; let us not forget what Paul said of himself: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” When the Husband said to the bride, There is no spot in thee, he saw her just as she stands to-day, in him, delivered from sin, death, hell and the grave. Our experience of conflict between the flesh and the Spirit should in no wise give us to think that sin has dominion over us.

Brother Dickens admits that the Savior said nothing in immediate connection with Matt, xviii. 8, 9, concerning healing the member that offended, whether it be hand, foot or eye, but says, “In the same chapter, after telling Peter what to do with a brother who trespasses against him until it gets to the church, then if the offending brother will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. What does this mean I To withdraw or cut him off, or in other words, he is considered no more a member of the church, having no more right nor privileges in the church than if he had never joined.” I want to call attention to the fact that Jesus first mentioned brotherhood in Matthew xviii, in verse 15, by saying, “Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee.” From this on to the end of the chapter he is speaking of what we call church order, and how to proceed in cases of transgression. Peter does not imply in his inquiry, How many times must I cut my brother off? but rather, How many times can he be healed? and Jesus told him until seventy times seven, meaning times without number. Please bear in mind that no mention here is made of hand, foot or eye, but brother. Jesus said, “If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind [not cut off] on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” Is there not a difference, between cutting off and binding?

From unbelievers the apostles were to separate themselves, but the brother who acted disorderly should be bound. I am willing, however, that brother Dickens should say cut off if he likes that better. No brother should be allowed to sin at the expense or sanction of the church, but when he repents of his sin he should be restored to the privileges of the house as a brother. You know, brother Dickens, that it is a brother who offends, (in

this connection) it is a brother who will not hear the church, it is a brother who is to be as a heathen man and a publican, it is a brother who is bound, it is a brother who is loosed. In the case of the hand, foot and eye they were to be cut off and cast from the apostles, signifying they had no place in the body of Christ. It is different with a brother, we may separate ourselves from him, we may exclude him from the privileges of the house, cut him off in the sense of separation in christian walk and conversation; but does this affect the fellowship that we had for him before as a child of God? We cannot fellowship his ungodly deeds, but if we believe before his exclusion that he is a child of God, we love him as such afterward, notwithstanding his sins. Christian fellowship that can be put on and taken off at will is not worth much. I understand that the fellowship of saints (like faith) controls the man, rather than the man controlling fellowship.

I feel sure that brother Dickens and I would be agreed if we could talk together a few moments. From his standpoint of church order, as he understands Matthew xviii. 8,9, he is right, but I do not understand that portion of the word to refer to church order in the sense of discipline. He is right, that we should withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly. I should not like to think that brother Dickens or any other man is more favorable to good order in the house of God than I am. My opinion is that the church should deal with every member who walks contrary to the gospel, regardless of age or standing socially or financially. Elder Dickens is, I am sure, viewing the church from the standpoint of order, while I am viewing the perfect church or bride, and it is in the sense of vital unity that I say a member, hand, foot or eye, cannot be cut off or plucked out. This body is gloriously perfect, but it would not be perfect if any member could be cut off. Therefore, to this body Paul says, “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Elder Dickens seems to think that I misunderstood his question concerning the resurrection; the original question and connection is as follows: “Do you believe in the resurrection of our vile Adamic bodies that die and are buried in the earth where men dig holes with picks, hoes and shovels! If so, you certainly believe that Christ is able to replace all the limbs and eyes that his people have been so unfortunate as to lose in this life. If he can do this, which I believe he can, then he can replace a member of his body or kingdom in this life.” If this is not to the end, Do I believe in the power of God: then I am frank to confess that I do not understand plain English language. In this question and connection brother Dickens makes quite a distinction between the body and head, or Christ and the church; he says in his letter that the church should cut off disorderly members, but plainly says, in substance, the church cannot replace the members cut off, but Christ can, and if he does not, then brother Dickens does not want them replaced.

How does this correspond with what Jesus said to the apostles (whom brother Dickens says represented the church) in Matt, xviii. 18, “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven “? This power is given by the Savior to the church, hence we have no more right to say that Christ replaces than to say he cuts off the member.

I will now answer the question of brother Dickens concerning the resurrection the best I can, and hope not to be misunderstood. Just what he means by saying, “Do you believe in the resurrection of our vile Adamic bodies?” I do not know, but his language means, Do I believe in the resurrection of the same identical, vile, Adamic body that goes down in the earth! This would bring up the same body that went down, without change. If this is what he means, then I say no, because it is contrary to the word of God; but if he means that our vile body is changed, if he means it is sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body, if he means this mortal must put on immortality, if he means mortality is swallowed up of life, if he means that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, then I say yes, with all my mind and strength. We have no record of any change taking place after it is raised, “it is raised a spiritual body.” If there be no resurrection, then every son and daughter of Adam are without hope, but “as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Hence it is conclusive that in the resurrection we shall not appear in the image of Adam, or in other words, in our vile Adamic bodies, but in the image of Jesus. What this image is, or what we shall be, “doth not yet appear “to any man who lives on the earth.

Brother Dickens says he is anxious about the matter of the hand, foot and eye, because he considers it a vital point of discipline, and he hopes the Lord may bless our controversy to the good of the church. I hope also that our little correspondence may do no harm. He says if he is right he hopes the Lord will bless it to his people, and if I am right he hopes “the Lord will open the eyes of the blind to see it.” Just who brother Dickens refers to when he says, open the eyes of the blind, I do not fully understand. He tells us that the Jews and unbelievers are the blind, I therefore hardly think he refers to that class. If he means the people of God (manifest children) then I fail to understand why he should say “eyes of the blind.” The church of God is not blind to the truth, the eyes of their understanding having been enlightened; the sight may not be perfect, but sight at all is not blindness. I think the blindness which is most against us is blindness to our own shortcomings, faults, sins and weakness, but our sight is acute concerning these things in our brethren. I wish we might watch over each other for good and not for evil.

I have tried to reply to brother Dickens as the different points appear in his letter, and I have tried to be plain and pointed that I may be understood, but with no intention of being sarcastic or unkind. I fully believe brother Dickens is sincere in this matter, and I hope that I am equally so. We both have now given our views of the subject as well as

we can perhaps, and they stand for the investigation of the readers of the Signs. One thing is sure, viz: whatever the Savior meant by the language, stands unchanged to-day and forever, regardless of what any of us may think, speak or write; our opinions will never change the true import of God's word. I am perfectly willing that brother Dickens shall have his view of the matter under consideration, and I am also sure that all others are willing, and that many stand with him I have no question, but this does not change my opinion, even though I should stand alone; my understanding of the Scriptures is not a matter between myself and man, but between God and me.

No man is infallible save those who were inspired of God and mentioned in his word by name. To God is all praise due for spiritual knowledge, wisdom and revelation. I ask no man to believe what I try to preach or write only as it is supported by the word of God.

I am not favorable to controversy, it seldom works to the glory of God, but often to an estrangement between brethren; it often makes the difference of opinion wider, it often confuses the minds of God's children, rather than to comfort them. I want, however, to stand firm in the truth, if it be God's will, and earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, but this does not mean fighting our brethren; many men have done this in their daily life more effectually than they ever did in the pulpit or through the press.

I now hope that brother Dickens may be willing to let this question of discussion cease with this number of the Signs. I appreciate his desire that God may bless brother Chick and me in our connection with the Signs, and I want to assure him that I desire God's blessing upon him in all his labor in the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Editorial – H. C. KER.

Signs Of The Times



REPLY TO BROTHER JACKSON.

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga., Oct. 18, 1915.

DEAR. BROTHER KER: – The SIGNS, so far as I know, is the oldest Old Baptist paper now being published, and I suppose it has, from the beginning until now, contended for the same gospel principles, and I hope it will never

change. It has been the same during the few years I have been taking it. I have never seen any wrangling or fighting in it as in some others, and for these reasons I want to continue to take it as long as I can, though I cannot read it much. Please pardon me, but I am writing this to express some of my thoughts, and for you to see if we agree, and as I have been accused of being rough, and object to the Bible way, I will say that what I write is in good feeling, and not to fight. I suppose you know that those who advocate the principles set forth in the SIGNS are called by some “absoluters,” but I do not believe you advocate a “can’t help it” doctrine. The “can’t help it” people hide behind predestination for an excuse for their sins, but you, I believe, feel accountable to God for your sins. A brother wrote me he saw these words over your signature: “When men and women are brought into the church through a sound and faithful ministry they are established in the doctrine of absolute predestination of all things, and will not therefore tolerate for one moment the idea of ‘permissive decrees.’ They are also rooted in the truth of salvation by grace, hence when some Ishmaelite comes along preaching ‘conditional time salvation’ they refuse to receive him into their houses or bid him Godspeed.” Sound Old Baptists here believe the same concerning predestination as most of the SIGNS’ readers, but have a different form of expressing it. I do not believe you believe in the absolute predestination of all manner of evil in the same way as the good that comes to pass. If God predestinated sin he would be the author of sin. I believe he predestinated all good, and if we must use predestination in connection with sin, he predestinated to allow or permit sin, which is nothing more nor less than permissive decrees, as I understand it. As sin dwells in the human heart, it is by nature ready at any time to do anything it craves when allowed to do so, does not have to be predestinated. Wicked people wanted to kill Christ as soon as they heard he was born, but could not lay hands on him until God’s appointed time, and he did not have to predestinate the act, but permitted it. I asked the brother where he found those words, but he only said he saw them over your signature. I do not believe in conditional time salvation as some people preach it. They say our time blessings are stored away for us and we get them by obedience. If this were the case these blessings would be given because we worked for them and God owed us for our works. We might work a million years, but would be the same weak, sinful, dependent creatures, and still owe all our time and service to our Lord and Savior. We can never pay what we owe. He has done for us what we never could do, and now for gratitude and love we are to obey his commands, not to gain rewards, but because it is our duty; not expecting blessings nor deserving them, but feeling that we owe a life of consecration to his service if

we should never receive another blessing in time, and when the blessing comes the humble christian receives it as a gift, not a debt, with rejoicing. The lives we live do not make us christians, but if we are christians we should honor the gift by an “orderly walk and godly conversation,” and when we have done all we can we are unprofitable servants, for we have not done more than our duty. If a child of God obtains blessings by obedience, why does He allow them sometimes, and some more than others, to grovel in darkness, sorrow and afflictions so much? It seems that the most obedient sometimes suffer the most. We are taught to not add to nor take from the word of God, under penalty of punishment, then why use the word “absolute” when it is not in the Bible? Predestination itself is strong enough, and the word “absolute” does not make it any stronger than God made it, and I am sure if he had intended for us to have used it he would have had it put on record. Paul said if eating meat made his brother to offend he would eat no more meat, and as “absolute” is offensive to some of God’s dear people we should leave it alone. I agree with Elder Chick in volume 81, page 216, I do not believe a person who loves God and wants to obey him will use “absolute predestination of all things” as an excuse for his sins, but I do know such expressions are used to turn people from the, SIGNS, and many who have heard of these things, or have read only one article containing such expressions, will not subscribe, but would do so if they knew what the SIGNS advocates, or if “absolute” was left out. We are commanded to not add to, nor take from, the things written in “this book,” which I suppose means the Bible. You use the word “absolute,” which is not in the Bible. Is this not adding to? Why use it? It is absolutely unnecessary, does not belong there, and is offensive to many sound Old Baptists. Brother Ker, I inclose a stamp for reply as soon as you can, and I want to know if you can tell where those words quoted from over your signature can be found, if you remember having written them. I want to read all the article. My SIGNS are scattered. It was written in Elder Chick’s lifetime.

This is for your disposal. Hoping it will not offend, I beg to be remembered at the throne of grace.

Unworthily,
GEORGE W. JACKSON.

REPLY:

THE letter from him, inclosing stamp for reply, and now published in this number of the SIGNS on page 49, was duly received, and the delay in replying thereto has not been neglect, but because we thought it better perhaps, lest in writing we misunderstand each other and brother Jackson become farther separated from us in his feelings. A five minute talk on any subject, where disagreement exists, is better than weeks of writing; however, as we cannot have that opportunity, and as we feel an open reply better than a private letter, we shall endeavor to answer some of his questions and also make some comment upon a few ideas suggested by him.

Before entering into the matter we want to assure brother Jackson of our love and fellowship for him as a subject of divine grace, and that what we may say will be done in the very best of feeling, with desire for mutual understanding and agreement.

First, he says he supposes the SIGNS has from the beginning contended for the same gospel principles. "It has been the same during the few years I have been taking it." We are glad of the statement above that nothing but gospel principles have been published in the SIGNS during the time brother Jackson has been a subscriber. We have dear and aged brethren who have read its pages for more than fifty years who say the same thing, hence in the judgment of a few at least the SIGNS has never published anything contrary to sound doctrine. This is the highest tribute that could be paid the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and we fully appreciate it. Brother Jackson says: "I suppose you know that those who advocate the principles set forth in the SIGNS are called, by some, 'absoluters,' but I do not believe you advocate a 'can't help it' doctrine. The 'can't help it' people hide behind predestination for an excuse for their sins, but you, I believe, feel accountable to God for your sins." Yes, we are aware of the fact that genuine Old School Baptists are called "absoluters," and so far as we are personally concerned we do not object to the term, but so far as hiding behind predestination as an excuse is concerned, we have never known a genuine Old Baptist to do it, and our acquaintance extends throughout the States and Canada. Predestination of all things never licensed a man to sin, nor does it in any sense excuse a man for his sin, and should the most faithful member of any church of our acquaintance fall into temptation and sin, then come to the church saying, "I could not help it," such statement would not be for one moment accepted or credited. Man has ever been accountable to the law of God for his transgressions, regardless of predestination. No, brother Jackson, we do not advocate the doctrine of 'can't help it' as an excuse for sin, but we do most emphatically advocate that the children of God do and have always done thousands of things contrary to their plans, purposes and intents because they could not help it, God overruling their plans and purposes for their good and his declarative glory. For example, going back over the history of men called to leadership, called to prophesy, called to preach, who ever did

any of these things because he wanted to? Hence if not because he wanted to it must have been because “he could not help it.” David said, “I will keep my mouth with a bridle, * * * my heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.” The burning within caused him to speak, hence he spake because he could not help it. This is the kind of ‘can’t help it’ doctrine the SIGNS has ever advocated, and we should feel sorry indeed to think it would depart from this principle of Bible doctrine.

Further, brother Jackson says: “A brother wrote me he saw these words over your signature: ‘When men and women are brought into the church through a sound and faithful ministry they are established in the doctrine of absolute predestination of all things, and will not therefore tolerate for one moment the idea of permissive decrees. They are also rooted in the truth of salvation by grace, hence if an Ishmaelite comes along preaching conditional time salvation they refuse to receive him into their houses or bid him Godspeed.’” We do not remember whether the above quotation embraces our exact words or not; however, we fully believe the statements therein embraced, and have presented both by pen and from the stand the same things over and over again, if not in the same language. Absolute predestination of all things whatsoever come to pass was one of the principles upon which the SIGNS OF THE TIMES was founded; this can be seen by the prospectus published in 1832. It has ever been advocated by every editor of the paper, though many things take place in the world that none of us understand, nor do we know how they can work for good to them that love God, but we must believe they do if we credit the divine record as being true. David tells us the steps of a man are ordered of the Lord. The word “good” in that text is supplied, showing that it was not in the original manuscript. Jeremiah tells us, It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. The Savior, speaking of lesser things, tells us the very hairs of our head are all numbered; and even though two sparrows are sold for a farthing, not one of them shall fall to the ground without our heavenly Father. These are phases of “absolute predestination” as we believe it. With reference to “conditional time salvation,” we are frank to say that we do not believe in salvation at all that is conditional upon the part of the sinner. Salvation is salvation, nothing more, nothing less, and the blessings of grace come to the children of God because of salvation, not because of any obedience or other works rendered by them. Spiritual blessings were given the elect in Christ Jesus according as God had chosen them in him before the foundation of the world. If therefore because, or according, as he had chosen them in Christ, it surely is not because of obedience rendered by the subject of grace. If according to the latter, and much obedience should be rendered, there would be a possibility of a shortage of blessings. On the other hand, if little obedience be rendered there might be a surplus of blessings. Surely all quickened sinners know that God does not work that way. There were exactly enough blessings treasured in Christ for the family of God while sojourning here, and

every one of them will be experienced by the household of faith; not one shall be left over, nor shall there be one short. Certainly sound and faithful churches would not receive, the second time, into their houses, nor bid God-speed to those who preach unsound doctrine.

Further, brother Jackson says: "If God predestinated sin he would be the author of sin. I believe he predestinated all good, and if we must use predestination in connection with sin, he predestinated to allow or permit sin, which is nothing more or less than permissive decrees, as I understand it. * * * Wicked people wanted to kill Christ as soon as they heard he was born, but could not lay hands on him until God's appointed time, and he did not have to predestinate the act, but permitted it." In tracing sin to its origin all will find that by the transgression of one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law," hence the sinner is the author of sin. Did God permit Satan to be self-existent, or did the Lord make him? Did the Lord make him upright, and through his own will and doing he became subtle? No, God by his own hand formed the crooked serpent. (Job xxvi. .13.) The Lord did not make him straight and he became crooked, but he made him crooked, and "who can make that straight which the Lord hath made crooked?" Did God choose a people in Christ Jesus unto salvation with any uncertainty about the fall of Adam? By no means; then it follows that sin, and death by sin, were in the plan, and that salvation must come through that link in the chain. Again, Christ, according to the purpose of God the Father, must be the seed of the woman, and had not Adam transgressed the law and brought sin into the world there never could have been any development or multiplication of Adam, human family, hence no Jesus the son of Mary. It will be noticed that we have not used the word "predestination" in what we have just said about sin entering into the world. We have used the words "purpose" and "plan," but who is the man that can make a distinction between God's purpose, plan and predestination? If he purposed it, he planned it, hence without question predestinated it. "Permissive decrees" have no place whatever in the purposes and plans of God, and we think our dear brother Jackson will agree with us, and he can readily see that his own language establishes this assertion. He says, "Wicked people wanted to kill Christ as soon as they heard he was born, but could not lay hands on him until God's appointed time." If wicked people can do wickedly at will, and wanted to kill Christ, why did they not do it? Brother Jackson answers the question very correctly: "They could not until God's appointed time." Then it follows that they could not be wicked in that one thing, at least, until God's predestinated time. Is there any difference, brother Jackson, between "God's appointed time" and his predestinated time? We think not. Surely in this we are agreed. We understand brother Jackson not to deny predestination, but he objects to the word "absolute" in connection with the word predestination, and says as long as it is not in the Bible, why use it when it offends some brethren? The word predestination is not in the Bible either, and as long as it is not why

use it? might be asked. We admit that the word “absolute” adds nothing to the strength of the word predestination, but it was used by the Elders and brethren when the division took place in 1832, we think to simply emphasize what sort of predestination they, as original Baptists, believed in. For this same reason we have used it during our ministry and connection with the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. A little further on brother Jackson says, “Why use it (absolute)? It is absolutely unnecessary, does not belong there and is offensive to many sound Baptists.” We ask, Why did brother Jackson use the word “absolutely” in connection with the word “unnecessary”? Does it add to the strength of the word “useless,” which the word signifies? We imagine he used it in the same sense we stated above: to emphasize the word “unnecessary.”

Brother Jackson tells us that God did not have to predestinate the killing, crucifixion, of Christ, but permitted it. What does the Bible say about it? Listen: “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Now, if delivered and slain by wicked hands, according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, was it by “permissive decree”? If God had no purpose in the death of Christ his Son, but simply permitted it because wicked men wanted to do it, might not Christ have died a natural death had God not permitted it, hence no salvation, had not wicked men wanted to slay him? God hath created all things, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil; therefore when the day of evil comes the wicked will always be on hand as the sword of the Lord, to do his will. Surely all Old School Baptists will admit that the death of Christ was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, therefore absolutely predestinated of God. Now a most important question, brother Jackson, confronts us all: If God predestinated the death of his Son Jesus Christ, which was the vilest of sins ever committed, and in predestinating was not the author of that sin, could he not with equal glory predestinate all sin and yet not be its author? Those who crucified Christ were held just as accountable to God for that sin as though God had not predestinated, purposed, planned it. They could not hide behind predestination to cover their sin, nor could they say they could not help it, in the sense of giving excuse for their wickedness.

With reference to leaving off the word “absolute” in our writings and preaching, we would have no serious objection to doing so, and especially if it is so objectionable to our brethren, but never can we modify the doctrine of “predestination of all things whatsoever come to pass.” It is Bible truth, Bible doctrine, and we shall earnestly, yet lovingly, we hope, contend for it; but be it understood once for all, that neither the SIGNS OF THE TIMES nor the Old School Baptists of our acquaintance excuse a man upon the ground of predestination for his sins, be they what they may. One man might take the life of another, and the act be predestinated of God for some wise purpose known only to himself, yet the church would exclude the man and the law deal with him.

Did not Moses slay an Egyptian and hide him in the sand? To what purpose? That he should leave Egypt for forty years, become the herdsman of his father-in-law, and at the appointed, predestinated, time be at the right place where God would speak to him out of the bush that burned with fire yet was not consumed, that Moses might be prepared to lead the children of Israel out of bondage, according to the promise of God made to Abraham four hundred years before. All was unquestionably predestinated of God. Did not David, king of Israel, put Uriah at the head of the battle that he might be killed, in order that David have Uriah's wife? If the Lord predestinated that David should be the father of Solomon, did he not also predestinate that Uriah's wife should be his mother? If so, how could the birth of Solomon come except through that channel of wickedness? David was held accountable for his sin, and suffered in consequence of it all the rest of his life. Did not the Lord in days of old send lying spirits into men when it fulfilled his purpose and plan? Did he not purpose the wickedness of Peter in his denial of Jesus, to the end that Peter should be prepared to strengthen his brethren? Did he not purpose the training and life of persecution of Saul of Tarsus, to the end that he might magnify his grace in his salvation? Time and space forbid that we continue along this line on the subject of predestination, for really there is no end to the grand theme.

Now in conclusion, we want to say to our dear brother Jackson that we hope he may read and receive what we have written in the same spirit in which we have set forth our views. We have nothing but the very kindest feeling toward him, and would not intentionally hurt his feelings, much less his usefulness among his brethren. We have tried to be as clear as possible and as kind as we know how to be in expression. We now leave the subject for him and all who may read to consider and try with the "thus saith the Lord." K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs of the Times
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REST.

IN all ages of the world "rest" has been the hope of the Lord's people, and thousands have talked of it and written upon it, yet the theme is still of comfort to the weary. In the beginning of the world, after the Lord had created and made all things, he rested from all

his works, and as he rested, so also do all his saints rest. The old testament saints rested in faith and hope, according to the promise the Lord made them, and died in faith to enter into everlasting rest. But there were many in those days who did not believe, therefore could not enter into rest by faith. The promise of the Lord to Israel that they should possess the land of Canaan, the place of peace, was as sure to come to pass as any other promise made them, yet they believed not, and rebelled against him and against Moses. How strange it seems that of all the host that left Egypt only two, Caleb and Joshua, reached the land of promise. All others who went over Jordan were born in the wilderness during the forty years travel. The death of so many thousands, however, did not make the promise void. The promise made to Abraham was as much for Isaac as for him, and the promise made to Isaac was as much for Jacob as for him, and just as sure to embrace their children. Caleb and Joshua went over Jordan into the promised land as witnesses of God's faithfulness and mercy. Those born in the wilderness knew nothing personally of the Lord's dealings with the Israelites in Egypt, nor of his faithfulness to his promise to deliver them after four hundred years of bondage and slavery, hence could not enter into the "rest" that the two living witnesses knew. It is true that those born in the wilderness had many demonstrations of the Lord's power and faithfulness, but it seems to us that they, like children, could not enter into the fullness of the wonders of God, therefore could not rest in hope of the glory of God. Notwithstanding all of Job's afflictions and torments of mind he could "rest" in the Lord. Yes, his confidence was implicit, knowing that even though worms should destroy his body, yet in his flesh should he see God. He knew his Redeemer lived, and for the glorious rest of all his people should stand in the latter day upon the earth, whom Job should see for himself, and not another. David said, As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. His faith in the Lord brought rest to him which the world could not give, though at his command, neither could the world take it away. The work of Jesus was to give rest, joy and peace to his people, and when he said, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, that rest so longed for by the weary was glorious. Their faith and hope were, as it were, swallowed up in fruition. They found indeed that his burden was light and his yoke easy. This rest remains to the people of God. When they believe in Jesus they cease from their own works, as God did from his, never to engage in them again. This means rest forever from the deeds of the law and all human efforts to save the soul. Christ Jesus the Lord, the Anointed of God, the Savior of sinners and the God of the whole earth, finished all the work and cut it short in righteousness, satisfied the demands of both law and justice. Hence there is no work to be done by the subjects of grace except to deal justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God. The Lord ordained good works, the works of Christ, that we should walk or live in them, be established in them, settled, fixed, rooted and grounded in them. In this the saints find "rest," absolute rest

from all their works. As God promised this rest he also ordained that some should enter therein. Here, as everywhere, his ways are equal. Paul exhorts that the saints be steadfast in believing that they enter this rest. A heart of unbelief in departing from the living God robs the children of this rest. To depart from God means to turn from him, his law, his precepts and promises, and to depend upon our own works, forgetting at least for a time his faithfulness and tender mercy. Paul presented this thought in his letter to the churches of Galatia when he asked them if after having begun in the Spirit did they expect to be made perfect through the flesh? Peter exhorted the saints to be steadfast in faith, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior. But unbelief is “the sin that doth so easily beset us.” It causes us to be restless, to question all things, yea, doubt all things, even the existence of God, and we find ourselves often framing up some way by which all things that appear could exist without a Creator – without God. What a miserable state, yet the church could not be the antitype of the church under the law were it not so with the saints now. The condition also shows the children of God how weak they are of themselves, and how prone to go astray. Yes, like lost sheep they wander far from the fold, and were it not for the Shepherd’s knowledge of them in all their wanderings, and his faithfulness to save, they would never return to the sheepfold. There is certainly no “rest” to the wanderer, no refreshing springs of water, no wholesome food in the desert of unbelief. Rest is not only for this life, but for the life to come, and we have often thought and felt during the past two or three years that “to die is gain;” yes, better than anything this world holds for man. Even salvation is only in part here, rest but for a season now and then. Hope passes away, faith fades like a flower, all is over in a moment, as it were, and we fly away. Where? To that blessed “rest” that awaits all who love His appearing, there to receive the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give each weary saint. Weary of self, earth and sin, weary of the long journey to the land of rest and peace. When natural forces fail and a grasshopper becomes a burden we long for rest. Why then weep for those who have entered into the glorious rest? Why sorrow as those who have no hope? Why not rejoice for them that the last battle is fought and the victory won? While we should we cannot; selfishness in our hearts wants the treasures back. Sometimes we are reminded of the poem:

“Gone where there are treasures of beauty untold,
Rivers of silver and mountains of gold.
Weep not to miss one from earth’s weary shore –
Earth has an angel less, heaven one more.”

Rest, peaceful rest. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

RESURRECTION

It seems necessary at this time that the editors of the *SIGNS OF THE TIMES* reaffirm their faith and hope in the resurrection of the dead, as we see and hear from some quarters false statements and accusations of us regarding this subject. But of two things we assure our readers: we absolutely refuse to be drawn into unpleasant controversy on the subject, and to adopt the phraseology used by some in expressing themselves. Our objection to controversy is because the resurrection is a mystery known only to God, hence it is foolish for men to fight and try to kill each other about it. The prophets, when testifying concerning the coming of Jesus, did not understand how such things as they declared could be, nor did they know when those things should take place. (1 Peter i. 10-12.) That glory, or knowledge, was reserved for those who lived and now live in the gospel dispensation. So also the resurrection being glory beyond this life, all men must wait until it is experienced by them before they can understand how it shall be.

Our reason for refusing to use the language adopted by some of our brethren is because such language is unwarranted by the Scriptures. We cannot therefore consistently nor conscientiously use it in expressing our views of the resurrection. It does not seem enough to some for the editors of the *SIGNS* to constantly affirm their belief in the resurrection of the dead, but our false accusers want us to declare that we believe in the resurrection of a “natural” or “mortal body.” This we now, once for all, refuse to do, let the result be what it may. Whatever the resurrection is, or shall be, it is entirely spiritual, nothing natural or mortal about it, if the Scriptures be true, and we believe they are, and shall stand unmovable by them, regardless of what any man since the apostles' day has said, does say or shall ever say. The “body is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body.” “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.” “It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.” These statements are by Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ by the will of God the Father. He makes the distinction very positive between the natural body and the spiritual, saying, “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.” There is no connection, or relation, between the natural body and the spiritual body. There is no relationship between corruption and incorruption nor is there likeness between dishonor and glory. While the editors of the *SIGNS* object to being told over and over again that

the dead are raised natural, both in body and form, (which assertion cannot be sustained by the Scriptures) they make no fuss about it, never make the slightest reference to it, except when driven to do so by persecution and false accusations. We do not like to fight, but when there is no way out of it we can and shall, and our enemies may depend upon it. We do not propose to sit idle always and allow ourselves to be misrepresented and slandered to the sacrifice of ourselves and our subscribers, who love us and the SIGNS for the truth's sake. We are glad to say to our readers that most of the bard and hateful things said of us are said by those who are either very friendly toward or editors of some other paper published in defence of the Old Baptist cause, so said. These are enemies of the *SIGNS OF THE TIMES*, and would gladly sacrifice it and its editors in building up the publications with which they are associated. This is the underlying principle that is prompting much of the persecution of the SIGNS and its editors, and not that they care so much as to what the editors believe, preach or write. The *SIGNS OF THE TIMES* has lived longer than any medium of correspondence of its kind in this country. Many others, like gourds, have sprung up, as it were, in a night, and been cut down in about the same length of time. The chief reason we have for believing the Lord is with the SIGNS is that it stands and has ever stood all the assaults of its enemies. There are some at the present time who are connected with other Baptist papers, either as editors or often contributors in different parts of the country, who have never stood for the declarations of the Black Rock Convention in 1832, nor have they stood with the "SIGNS Baptists," but are known as "Clark Baptists," who would now champion the doctrine advocated by Elder Gilbert Beebe on the resurrection of the dead, but they are quite silent on the doctrine of "absolute predestination of all things," "eternal vital unity of Christ and the church," "the new birth," &c., as Elder Gilbert Beebe believed, wrote and preached. Their leader, Elder John Clark, of Virginia, long since dead, and Elder Gilbert Beebe declared nonfellowship for each other because of differences of opinion on such points of doctrine long before some of these, now wise men, were born. Bars of nonfellowship were raised by these people many years ago against the Beebe or SIGNS Baptist because of the wide differences on doctrine not one of these men would be received, nor put up to preach, in what are call by them Beebe Baptist churches, anywhere from Virginia to Maine. How strange that they should persecute the editors of the SIGNS when they have no use for them nor for the principles of doctrine they advocate! One of these men, now located in California, wrote us last spring, asking if we subscribed to a certain editorial written by Elder Gilbert Beebe on the resurrection of the dead. We, in reply, asked him if he subscribed to the views of Elder Gilbert Beebe on "absolute predestination of all things," "eternal vital unity of Christ and the church," "the new birth," and so on, and remarked that when he answered us we would answer him. When he acknowledged our letter he said if we did not care to answer his question we need not do it, and that he was not alone in the desire to know, but he failed to make

mention of our questions, much less to answer them by saying one thing or the other. He never has stood with the “SIGNS Baptists,” though now, strange to say, is preaching for some of them. We wonder how long they will stand “Clark Baptist doctrine.” We have no pleasure in writing such things, and have tried our best for several years to avoid it, but when pressed, repressed and trampled upon we have to defend ourselves, and shall endeavor to do so in such a way that there will be no mistake as to where we stand and what we believe.

Regarding the resurrection of the dead, all men should remember that it is but one point of doctrine, and if all who do not use Elder Gilbert Beebe’s words in presenting their view are heretics, let it be remembered that all who deny other fundamental principles of the doctrine advocated by him, and sustained by the word of God, are heretics also, hence why should one heretic denounce another. “Consistency, thou art a jewel.” Why should men declare nonfellowship for each other because they cannot see and understand the unfathomable mystery. Another thing that should be remembered is that because a man preaches the resurrection of the natural bodies of the saints, it is no reason that he should be regarded as being an overly sound Old School Baptist, because the rankest Arminians in the world believe it and preach it. If the resurrection is a literal thing, in other words, if a natural body is raised, then the Armenians are not dead in sins and to the doctrine of God, for they have sight to behold what Paul and John did not see, therefore must be regarded as the children of God with special revelation.

We, the editors of the SIGNS, object to the expressions, “this identical body” and “this mortal body” in speaking of the resurrection of the dead, and absolutely refuse to use them in expressing ourselves on this subject, for the reason that the Bible nowhere uses them when speaking of the body that shall be raised. The word “identical” means “the same not different;” hence the resurrected body is not the identical body that is sown, because it is changed and raised spiritual. The word “mortal” means “subject to death, destined to die; as, man is mortal.” Therefore the body after death is not mortal, for the reason the life that made it mortal, subject to death, has taken its flight. The definitions of the above words are not a fancy of the mind of a heretic, but that of authority on the English language. When Paul in Romans viii. 11, speaks of the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead quickening the mortal bodies of the saints, if so be that God dwells in them, he had in mind an experience in time, as it seems to us, more than the resurrection of the dead at some future time. None of us should forget his statement in chapter seven, verses eighteen to twenty-five inclusive. Here he speaks of the two men, inward and outward man; that he, according to the flesh, and with the flesh, served the law of sin, but with the mind (of Christ) he served the law of God. He longed to be delivered from the body of death, or, in other words, “the dead body because of sin.” The body of Paul and the bodies of the Romans were then dead because of the sentence

of death upon them, and the bodies of the Saints now are no less dead for the same reason. When a man is condemned and sentenced to die by the law, in the eyes of the law he is already dead; so also the sentence of God's law being upon sinners, their bodies are dead (yet mortal) as Paul said, because of sin, condemnation and judgment of the law. But he said the Spirit is life because of righteousness, and by the Spirit those dead bodies should be quickened that they should serve God and rejoice, as Paul did from time to time, in the hope of the glory of God. David in his day realized the deadness and nothingness of the flesh, and asked the Lord to quicken him that he might be quickened and run after God.

It is because the editors of the SIGNS do not use the expressions, "identical body" and "this mortal body," as being raised, that we are accused of not believing in the resurrection of the dead. We do, however, believe most firmly and assuredly in the resurrection of the dead, for without it there can be no salvation; but we much prefer the use of Bible language in expressing ourselves. Such language will stand all the assaults of our enemies. If some of them dared they would accuse Paul and John of being nonresurrectionists, inasmuch as they use the "identical" language we adopt. The resurrection was a mystery to Paul, and it is to the editors of the SIGNS. John saw and handled the resurrected body of Jesus, yet he said, It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; not as when he saw and handled him. It has not appeared as yet to the editors of the SIGNS as to what we shall be, hence we must leave it to those to whom it has been revealed to tell the people how the dead are raised. Paul however, stamped the man who would ask such a question as a "fool."

It has been and still is, our desire to give our readers a clean sheet of unadulterated gospel, not one of strife, contention and bloodshed. The SIGNS is about the only paper of its kind in the United States today that is free from controversy, backbiting and murder. We desire to continue along the same lines of love, peace and unity. Truth always condemns error, and to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints, means to continue in the doctrine, to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, preach the truth, write the truth and stand pat on Bible language and proper definitions of language; and inasmuch as our Bible is written in the "English language," let us at all times give to the people what the language means regardless of men's notions and ideas, let them be what they may.

Elder H.C. Ker
Signs of the Times
August 1, 1920

REVELATION III. 20.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

In the first chapter of this book we read the revelation to John of seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like unto the Son of man. In his right hand he held seven stars. These things were wonderful and mysterious to John, therefore further revelation of them was made to him. The candlesticks were the seven churches of Asia. He in the midst of them was Christ, who upholds the entire church, represented by the number seven. The stars were the angels or ministers of the seven churches, or in other words, all ministers of the gospel of the grace of God, all are in his hand (under his control) and are accountable to him only for their stewardship. A message was sent to each angel or pastor of the seven churches by Him who is in their midst. Our text is embodied in the message to the angel of the church of Laodicea. Five of the churches were in disorder and were sharply rebuked. One had left her first love; another had those who held the doctrine of Balaam; another suffered that woman Jezebel to teach; another had a name as though she lived but was really dead; another was right and needed nothing, while indeed she was poor, miserable, naked and blind. To each church the Lord said, “I know thy works.” The works were then described and the remedy for each transgression given, which was repentance. If they did not repent, the candlestick should be removed out of its place. The church of Philadelphia was commended for its steadfastness, and blessing was pronounced upon it.

If we note the time and circumstances under which the writings of the Bible were penned it will give us a more proper conception of their import. This book, Revelation, in which is recorded the seven messages to the churches of Asia, was written in the gospel day, therefore sets forth gospel order and discipline, not legal commandments and legal obedience. While the church is freed from the law, it is under law to Christ, and he demands gospel obedience, hence order in his house must be maintained or the candlestick will be removed out of its place. He is fully acquainted with all our works, we therefore should be careful to keep his house clean. None of us should forsake our first love for gold and silver. We should not hold the doctrine of Balaam and put a stumbling-block in our brother’s way. We must not suffer a woman to teach and usurp authority over the man. None of us must manifest false zeal, thereby giving others to think we are alive when we are in reality dead.

The church of Laodicea seemed to be in a deplorable condition, notwithstanding they thought they lacked nothing, being rich and full. The message says they were “lukewarm,” and because of such condition the Savior would “spew “them out of his mouth. This lukewarm condition seems to be the state of many of us in this age of the world. If such condition was distasteful to the Master of the house in the days of the churches of Asia, is it not equally so now? There seems to be much indifference in all the world toward church privileges; if everything is favorable we will go to meeting, if not we remain at home quite satisfied. This was not the case with us in our first love. If a man comes along bringing the doctrine of Balaam, some one will say, O he may have been embarrassed, we should be charitable toward the poor fellow. Such was not the case with us when we lived upon the sincere milk of the word, and would not even for a moment tolerate anything that gave a shadow of Ashdod. We do not seek the society of each other as we once did when the relation of the experience of the sheep and lambs was precious to us. The Scriptures seem old and we read less than in former years. Do we who are pastors visit our flocks and thereby keep up that warmth of feeling between pastor and people, as we once did! Do we render all the service we can to the church! or do we render as little as possible! Is our conversation seasoned with salt, that the hearers may be edified thereby! or is it upon worldly topics mingled with levity! Is our walk before men such as commands respect and has influence for good! Do we seek to have variety in our preaching that the interest of the church and congregation be kept up! If we, together with the churches, are neither hot nor cold, we surely must be lukewarm.

This knocking at the door by the Savior is not at the heart of the dead sinner for admittance, as many imagine, but each knock is a revelation to the church in disorder, whether individually or collectively. To the church or individual who says, I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, the revelation from God that they are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” is the knocking at the door. To be shown that we must buy of Him gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich, is to reveal to us that our gold is not refined or purified. To be shown that we need white raiment that we may be clothed, that our barrenness and destitution appear not, is to reveal our righteousness as filthy rags. To make known to us that our eyes need anointing with eyesalve that we may see, reveals our blindness to spiritual things. When He thus knocks the door opens and the poor sinner or church sits down with him in his kingdom which cometh not with observation. In his light they see light; in his righteousness they are clothed; in his riches they are rich. Through this operation of the Spirit order is restored; true zeal and warmth of love are again given. Is not this supping with him? Is not communion with God and with his Son Jesus Christ supping with him and he with us! It is because of his love to the church that he rebukes and chastens it. He deals with us as with children; we overcome through his strength the powers of evil and

sit down with him in his throne, even as he overcame and is set down with his Father in his throne. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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REVELATION XXI. 27.

“AND there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Either in speaking or writing upon these wonderful things in the book of Revelation it should always be remembered that they were shown John for the benefit of the people of God, and while the sayings generally are dark, there are some things clear, and these can be considered the same as any other Scripture. Two or three chapters preceding the twenty-first, and the one following, all seem peculiarly connected, beginning with the conjunction “and,” which shows a continuation of the revelation to John. In the twentieth chapter the victory of the saints, through death, over their enemies and the enemies of the cross of Christ, is shown; also the fleeing away of the old heaven and the old earth and the appearing of the new. The great white throne and He that sat upon it established forever the reign and judgment of God. The binding of Satan for a season simply means that the church should have peace and quietness for awhile, and the loosing of Satan after that season, represented by the term, “a thousand years,” means that the church should again have tribulation and persecution at the hands of other religious monarchs and those who had their mark – “mark of the beast.” In the twenty-first chapter John describes the new Jerusalem as he, in vision, saw it descending from God out of heaven. Here is seen the marked contrast between old Jerusalem, which Paul says was represented by Agar, the bondwoman, and her children, and new Jerusalem. The bondwoman was in bondage with her children; that is, all were in bondage together, which of course could not have been otherwise, as a bondwoman cannot bring forth free children. Hence old Jerusalem was in every sense of the word of the earth, and all that pertained to her was carnal. It is worthy of special note that old Jerusalem never became the new – the bondwoman and her children never became the freewoman. All through

this revelation John was being shown the passing away forever of things pertaining to the legal dispensation and the bringing in of spiritual, heavenly and divine things – things that abide, durable, everlasting. Therefore he tells us he saw new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This is the opposite of that which was all of the earth, earthy. Could we all behold the sight as John beheld it, how convincing it would be that all things are become new, and that all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by the death of his Son. Yet John was only a looker on – no part whatever of the holy city in his own view or feelings. In this surely we all have fellowship with him. In this tabernacle of God all tears are wiped away; there is no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, because former things are passed away. This is now a time of rejoicing, a time of gladness of heart, a time to bless and praise God from whom all blessings flow, for surely he hath done great things for us.

In verse nine of this twenty-first chapter John says an angel came and talked with him, saying, “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” and he carried him away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed him that great city, the holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God. We do not understand that John meant the angel carried him bodily or led him by the hand to the great and high mountain, but that in spirit John was carried away, forgetting self, surroundings, the desolation of the isle of Patmos and the persecution of the enemies of Christ; mortality swallowed up of life, as it were, in the revelation of the glory of God. Perhaps there are some who may read this that can well remember such times, when there was a refreshing season from the presence of the Lord, an outpouring of that Holy Ghost, a carrying away in the spirit to the great and high mountain of the Lord, thereto behold his glory in the holy city. The city that John saw had a great and high wall, and twelve gates. In this part of New York State there are perhaps miles of what is called stonewall, stones gathered from the land by those long gone the way of all flesh, and placed one upon another about four feet high and two feet wide, yet it is not a wall at all, only a fence. To build a wall cement or mortar must be used, in order to cause the stones to cleave together, so that when the work is done the wall is, as it were, one body. Such was the wall John saw. In olden times cities had walls round about them for protection, and the safety of such cities depended upon the strength of their walls. So this holy city has a wall great and high; salvation for walls and bulwarks God hath appointed, hence the safety of new Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb’s wife, is absolute. So high it is that it cannot be scaled; so compact that no natural eye can penetrate it; so strong that the arch-enemy with all his angels cannot batter it down. This is the kind of wall round about the city of God, and he is the glory in the midst. The twelve gates, three on either side of this four-square city, are for the entrance of those who keep the commandments of the King. They have right to the Tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city, in which there is no need of the

sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God and the Lamb is the light thereof. When the Lord says to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, there is no need of a journey by those called from either point of the compass, because the entrance is immediately in front of them – three gates on either side. Yes, they enter this city where there is but one street, and that pure gold, in perfect keeping with the holy city. Now, inasmuch as this city is holy, there shall in no wise enter into it anything unholy. Nothing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, shall enter this place of perfection of beauty. Perhaps there is a twofold meaning here worthy of our consideration. When it says, In no wise shall anything enter that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination it appears that everything in the way of inventions of men is excluded. The Lord’s train fills the temple, so that there is no room for “Judson’s” train saved by him, nor is there place for any saved except by the blood of the Lamb, who is the temple of it, and the glory is his. No works of the creature shall ever be mentioned in the city of God, much less enter there. An ungodly man must be justified, guilt removed; the liar must have his lips touched with a live coal from off the altar, the sinner made clean before he can enter the holy city; every one entering there must be in perfect keeping with the holy place. By nature and by works, therefore, all men are cut off; not one can enter simply because Abraham was his father, nor because his father and mother were christians, nor because he may pray twice a day and give alms of all he possesses. A man must be “a new creature,” “God’s workmanship,” a partaker of the divine nature, a son of God, in order to enter the place where God’s honor dwells. All such have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life. These names were written before the foundation of the world – not one written since. This most wonderfully presents election, salvation by grace, yes, God’s unmerited favor. The book of life is a peculiar one, not such as where ordinary records are made and kept, but the book is “life”. The names of all the household of faith are written in God’s record of “life,” eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began, and this life is in his Son. When Paul said the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him a crown of righteousness, he did not mean a crown of something else, but “righteousness” itself was the crown he received. Again, when James said, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life, life is the crown. This means life to the one who endures temptation, instead of death because of sin in yielding thereto. Yes, we say again the book is “life,” and the names of the Lord’s people having been written therein shows clearly His decree: predestinated unto final glory by Jesus Christ our Lord. It matters not what our achievements and attainments are here, nor how wonderful the revelations nor that the devils are subject unto us, through God’s word, our greatest reason for rejoicing is that our names are written in heaven, in the Lamb’s book of life. This unbounded mercy will cause us to ever sing in the holy

city, the church of God, “redeeming love,” and when called home to enjoy the fullness of the glory of God, that infinite Being: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there to see Him face to face, the song shall echo still: “Saved by grace.” Amen. K.

Elder H. C. Ker

Signs of the Times

Volume 82, No. 9

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ROMANS XI. 29.

DEAR EDITORS: – I would like to have your views on the eleventh chapter of Romans. It is a puzzle to me, but I know all Scripture will harmonize if we understand it. It looks to me that the Writer talks two ways. I have been wanting to ask some of you to give your views for several years, but hated to bother you.

I am sincerely yours,
J. E. BUCKNER.
PINE HILL, Texas.

As will be seen by the request of brother Buckner, he desires us to write upon the whole eleventh chapter of Romans, and while it is impossible to do so in one article, we have named the twenty-ninth verse as the foundation of what we may be given to write, which reads as follows: “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

By careful reading of the two preceding chapters it will be seen that the apostle had in heart and mind his brethren (the Jews), with longing desire for their salvation and spiritual welfare, saying, “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Thus in writing to Gentiles at Rome he preaches the doctrine of God by calling attention to his dealings with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all Israel, then concludes with the words of our text as being the foundation of his hope for his brethren according to the flesh: “The gifts and calling of

God are without repentance.” Hence as God had begun the work by giving gifts, calling and making promises to Israel, he would perform that work in his own way and time, but the result was sure: “All Israel shall be saved.”

In the first verse of the eleventh chapter he asks the question, Hath God cast away his people? Then answers the question by saying, “God forbid.” His desire for his brethren’s salvation and his faith in God’s faithfulness seem perfectly linked together, hence he could write with all assurance that their salvation was sure, even though they as natural branches were cut off that the Gentiles might be grafted in and therefore saved. If the Lord was able to graft wild branches in and they became a part of the tame Olive Tree, is he not able to graft in the natural branches, that their life and salvation be sure? seems the argument of the apostle. Then, as the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, or in other words, not to be turned away from, will he not keep all his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Most assuredly so, hence “all Israel shall be saved.” It seems to us that the apostle in this chapter has two salvations, so to speak, in mind. He says the Jews had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. They were very zealous, as he himself had been as Saul of Tarsus, of the law and the traditions of their fathers; from these things he wanted them saved. This is clearly shown by verses thirteen and fourteen: “I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.” They had, as Abraham’s seed, received the law and the promises as the earnest of their greater salvation, but were blinded for a season, the time thereof known only to God. Hence God’s promise is sure to all the seed, even though cut off, their eyes blinded, their ears heavy, and possessing the spirit of slumber. When the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, then the Lord will send out of Zion a Deliverer, who shall turn ungodliness away from Jacob, and they shall return and come to Zion with joy and everlasting songs upon their, head.

Since the Jews were cut off, the Lord has been dealing with the Gentiles, taking out of them a people for himself; they are called the bride, the Lamb’s wife. According to the statements of Paul in this chapter, the Lord will, when through dealing with the Gentiles, restore the kingdom to Israel, or in other words, establish the gospel church with and of them. The Lord did not deal with the Gentiles while he was dealing with the Jews; now he is not dealing with the Jews, nor will he until his dealing is through with the Gentiles, but Gentiles have no reason to boast over the Jews, because they bear not the root, but the root them. This shows that whether it be Jew or Gentile it is all of “mercy” through Jesus Christ, to the good of all men and for the glory of God the Father.

The fall of the Jews, as spoken of in verse twelve, simply means their cutting off, diminishing. If their fall be the riches of the world, or all nations, how much more their (the Jews’) fullness. In speaking of salvation coming to the Gentiles through the fall of

the Jews, the apostle does not mean that the Jews were in any way instrumental in the salvation of the Gentiles, but that through their fall, or being cut off, the salvation of the Gentiles, embraced in the promise made to Abraham, was made manifest. "Salvation is of the Lord " to all men, irrespective of nationality.

We, like brother Buckner, confess that some expressions in this eleventh chapter of Romans are confusing, yet when the Spirit breathes upon them all are clear and show forth that which all the children of God have in their own lives: the wonderful works of God in the redemption and salvation of his people.

Verse twenty tells us that the Jews were broken off because of unbelief, and that the Gentiles stand by faith, but they should not be highminded, but fear, for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not the Gentiles. We have already shown that the cutting off of the Jews did not mean their everlasting death, or separation from God, because of his faithfulness to his gifts and calling. Even so with the Gentiles, should they be overtaken with a heart of unbelief in departing from the living God it would not mean their eternal condemnation, but another demonstration of the truth that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Salvation is absolutely sure to all embraced in the promise. Hence Paul says whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's. The Jews to-day, as for centuries past, are concerning the gospel enemies for our sakes, because we are benefited thereby, but as touching election they are beloved for the fathers' sakes; in this sense they are benefited by the fathers.

The Gentiles, being wild branches and grafted in the tame Olive Tree, have been taught that salvation is by grace; even so when the Jews shall be grafted in again shall know that salvation is of grace. Being cut off, severed, from the olive tree, they are as separate from it as though they had never been a part of it, hence the receiving them again shall be life from the dead. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" But we all know he is faithful to every promise and every work. He does not repent or turn away from that he begins, but rather performs it until the day of Jesus Christ. Vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor are now and ever have been in his house, but his promises and calling embrace them, and their inheritance is sure, reserved in heaven for them.

In this very brief way we have tried to give what we have concerning this most important chapter, and hope brother Buckner may receive some light or comfort from it.
K.

Elder H. C. Ker

SIN

THIS subject has been dwelt upon since the beginning of the world, and we are sure that we shall say nothing new about it. It is good, however, to be reminded now and then of the things we know. Knowing that we had to make another attempt to write, a few moments ago just the one word "sin" came into our mind, and with it came some reflections, some experiences and revelations, as we hope, of the past. There was a long time that we did not know sin, inasmuch as we were without the law, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Thousands have lived and hundreds of thousands are living to-day without the slightest knowledge of either sin or righteousness; yet this class verily believes it has decidedly more understanding of sin and holiness than the poor and despised Old School Baptists. There are many things which can be learned by man in the schools of men, and by giving time and attention to investigation. Many men have become exceedingly wise by such course, and have shone as lights in the world; but there are some things not attained unto that way. Children are taught not to sin, or not to do bad things nor say bad words, and that if they abstain from such things they are not sinners, and that God will love them because of their goodness. Their teachers are as blind as they, having utterly no knowledge of sin. If the Lord loved only those who are good, his love from the beginning of the world would never have been bestowed upon man, save the man Christ Jesus. "There is none good, no, not one." The apostle tells us that sin is the transgression of the law. We must accept what he says. Hence when Adam transgressed the law sin entered the world, and from that day to the present time not one son or daughter of Adam has been born free from the sting or poison. The child does not have to grow to manhood or womanhood and commit some crime before it is a sinner. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Such testimony shows man up in his true light and condition. The babe is not long in the world before the disease, sin, is made manifest, and in some of these little creatures there seems more devil than angel. This statement is true, whether believed or not. The smallest sprout of a poison tree is as poison as the large tree, because it had its life in the seed, hence is sure to bring forth the same poison fruit. It is not what the man or child does that makes them sinners, but they are sinners because of the transgression of the law in Adam, hence their

deeds only manifest the disease and are the effects rather than the cause of sin. How then can man be just with God? How can the guilty be clean? When the Ethiopian can change his skin and the leopard his spots, then they who are unholy can make themselves holy and the guilty can justify themselves in the sight of God. But this Bible statement removes forever the very shadow of possibility of their ever doing such a thing. If the Ethiopian could change his skin he would no longer be an Ethiopian, and if the leopard could change his spots it would no longer be a leopard, but because of the utter impossibility to make such change the Ethiopian remains an Ethiopian and the leopard remains a leopard. Taking this scriptural doctrine of the matter we conclude that man can no more change his nature from sin to holiness than he could make a world. Really man is much more helpless than he realizes, even from a natural standpoint, though he boasts great things. This sort of doctrine is credited as making man a mere machine, having to be acted upon at all times in order that he perform the works of God. It is also claimed that it does away with “free will.” If the Lord tells us by the apostle that he works in his children both to will and to do of his good pleasure, shall we dispute it? If he tells us it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, shall we insist that the will of man is free to accept or reject the works of God? Let God be true and every man a liar. That the children of God are sinners by nature, and that sin continues to manifest itself while life lasts, will be affirmed by the heirs of glory until time shall be no more. In the days of Job the devil always presented himself with the children of God, and if we know, experimentally, anything about the matter, there is never a time when sin is absent from the children of God, except in the sense of having been redeemed from it by the blood of the Lamb. We are acquainted with a man who not long ago related an experience to which every subject of grace can testify. The story was about as follows: A certain thing, absolutely wrong, had been in his mind for some time, and he knew that he could accomplish that thing if he would. In a sense it meant much to him; on the other hand, he knew it would mean disaster and ruin should not everything turn out as he had planned. For weeks, he said, I traveled night and day with, as it were, the virgin purity on the right hand, and sin or Satan on the left. “Sin” prompted him to go on and do that which would gratify and please his carnal appetites, such as covetousness, greed and desire. Purity, on the right hand, would say, Why sell yourself for naught? Sin would say, What is this life without the things your nature desires? Why be a fool and deprive yourself of the very things you so much desire? Purity would say, What would you be profited if you should gain the whole world and lose your own soul, or be a castaway? This man answered sin at every suggestion, I will do that which will gratify me and satisfy my natural propensities. I am fully persuaded to go on in this matter. Immediately he would turn to the promptings of purity and answer, I know you are right, what you tell me is good and true and best for me, even though I die as I am. I will heed your words, your warning, and live. This fight kept up for weeks, the man just

hanging in the balance, when at last purity asked, What is of more real value, comfort, satisfaction, joy and peace than the fellowship of the saints, a clear conscience before God and man? Would you take chances of sacrificing all this and your standing as a citizen for all that could be gained by the course sin suggests? Just at this point, when sin was about to prevail, there seemed, he said, some unseen power felt within which made clear the power of God over “sin,” and that power reigned in the deliverance of the man. That man knows “sin” and its power perhaps better than ever before, and no mortal, having never experienced such warfare between the flesh and the Spirit, knows anything of “sin.” The lusts of human nature are the besetting sins of the redeemed, and such evil longings make one feel unfit for the company of the children of God and unworthy a name and a place in his kingdom. Sin, the horrible monster, has caused all the sorrow, sickness, disgrace, war and death that the world has ever known or will ever know, but thanks to the grace of God, by it all his children shall come off more than conquerors and at last shine in the righteousness of God and the Lamb. “Sin” shall forever be left behind, and purity reign in all eternity. - K.

Elder H.C. Ker
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SOLOMON’S SONGS IV. 12.

“A GARDEN inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”

Solomon is among the holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, of whom Peter speaks. Holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost, wrote holy things, therefore there is something in their words deeper than that which appears in the letter of the word. Paul says we are made “able ministers” of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. By the term “able ministers,” we do not understand the apostle to mean great or wonderful, but prepared by revelation and experience to use the mattock in God’s word, and thus bring out for the comfort, encouragement and instruction of the people of God the hidden “things from the wise and prudent,” but revealed unto babes. In this Song of songs we have a dialogue between the bride and Bridegroom, each expressing their love for and mutual interest in the other. We have no doubt that in these characters are represented Christ and the church. A woman in figure is many times in the

Scriptures used to set forth the church; at one time barren, and afterwards the mother of many children. This figure is seen in Sarah, the wife of Abraham. She was a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; but in God's purpose and time, according to his promise, she brought forth the son, Isaac, the father of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, of whom the fourth part could not be numbered. Thus Sarah, who was a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, is the mother of all the seed of Abraham. The apostle speaks of this in his letter to the Galatia church, when He said, We are not the children of the bond woman, but of the free woman. Sarah was the figure of Jerusalem, which is free, and the mother of us all, while Agar is in bondage with her children. In Isaiah, chapter fifty-four, we have another figure; there is a woman who had been barren and desolate who is called upon to "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: * * * enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither He thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood anymore." "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and u wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." In the above quotations we see another garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain scaled. For she who had been barren breaks forth on the right hand and on the left. The place of the tent must be enlarged, and the cords extended, and the stakes strengthened. She who had been barren becomes the mother of many children, and all of them shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace. What a blessing to be taught of God in the school of experience; indeed this is the way God reveals himself and makes his power known. In experience the children are taught their need of God and his salvation; yes, taught that they are sinners utterly polluted, justly condemned by God's righteous law, separated from God by wicked works. Thus being taught, they come to Christ for forgiveness and justification, and being drawn by the Father, Jesus will in no wise cast them out.

Great shall be the peace of these children. This does not mean that they shall always be upon the mountain lop, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, but great is the reconciliation; the children were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. "Great peace" indeed, never again to come into condemnation, but have passed from death unto life.

The text under consideration is another figure of the church of God. Under the law “my sister, my spouse,” was indeed a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Only a type could be seen in that dispensation, the bride was not yet manifested. But after the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there was no more sea (law), John saw the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Hence in the gospel the bride appears and the type is passed away. Now she who had been “a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed,” breaks forth on the right hand and on the left. “A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.” In her manifestation and development we see God’s purpose, which was shut up and hid from the beginning of the world, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with the Jews of the glorious things of God, partakers of the only salvation, and children of the free woman. If we are Christ’s, then are we Abraham’s children, and heirs according to the promise. The church in God’s sight has ever been the same in number, not one added nor one taken away since the choice was made in Christ before the world began. But now the garden inclosed, the spring shut up, the fountain sealed, is opened, and “my sister, my spouse,” the spiritual church, is the mother of a host which no man can number.

The question is asked in this Song of Solomon, “What will ye see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two armies.” The name Shulamite is feminine to Solomon, and signifies queen of peace, therefore if Solomon represented the bridegroom, the Shulamite represented the bride (church). The two armies now seen in the church are Jews and Gentiles, but remember *all* compose *one* company, “all one in Christ.” In this beautiful figure we see the meaning of the language of Isaiah when he said “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.” These opposing nations, Jews and Gentiles, are made one, and dwell in peace and harmony. The lying down together signifies rest, rest in the work of Christ; they feed together upon the broken body of their Lord and Master, with no more enmity between them. To this woman who was once inclosed, shut up and sealed, but now delivered, the Bridegroom says, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.” Arise from under the curse and condemnation of the law, and come away, it has no dominion over you, for the debt is paid. “The winter is past,” that barren and desolate time when no fruit could be manifested; the dark, rainy and “cloudy day” is over and gone; “the flowers appear on the earth,” the manifestation of life; the plant so barren and naked in “winter” is now bearing beautiful flowers; the Unit; of singing is conic. “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud.” This singing is done by the church collectively, and is found in the individual experience of each member of the body of Christ. I love they sing for joy when called upon to “awake “and put on their beautiful garments, in which they appear before God clean and

white, and without which no man can see the Lord. There is a sense in which the church is inclosed, shut up and scaled now. Isaiah said, "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." The day referred to is the gospel day; therefore the church sings the song of praise to God for his salvation, which is walls and bulwarks, and that which incloses, shuts up and seals the holy city. The ungodly cannot enter, the unrighteous are kept out, no worldling or hireling can enter there. The gates are opened, however, to the righteous, to the redeemed, to the sanctified of God. This is the invisible kingdom, therefore "a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." The Lord is the Husbandman, and not one plant that he hath planted shall be rooted up. A spring shut up; yes, shut up to the world of antichrist, but opened to the thirsty, and they drink without money and without price, from time to time, during this journey to the laud of rest. A fountain sealed, yes, sealed, and none but the Lamb of-God can loose the seal that the weary and tried soul may find a home and kindred. How often they are made to cry,

"Here my best friends and kindred dwell,
Here God my Savior reigns."

All these things in the experience of the child of God are seen and felt.

H. C. KER.

Middletown, N. Y.1901.

Signs Of The Times

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SOLOMON'S SONG VI. 8.

"There are threescore queens, and foursquare concubines, and virgins without number."

By request we shall endeavor to suggest a few thoughts upon the above text, and first of all shall call attention to the fact that this Scripture, like all other does not stand alone, hence not independent, but has its immediate connection, as well as other bearings, throughout the Scriptures. The testimony of Jesus is an unbroken chain. By this we mean that the entire Old Testament in its testimony of his coming and the glory that should follow is as a chain, one link linking into another, and as each link of a chain fills its

place, and is a part of a chain, so every part of Scripture has its bearing upon another, and is not complete without each and every part. The text above quoted would therefore be without meaning should it be considered alone.

This song called Solomon's is a dialogue, and its language highly figurative, declaring divine things. Because of this its spiritual import is hid from the wise and prudent; they therefore not seeing its beauty and perfection have said it never should have been compiled as a part of the Bible. But as in the days of Jesus, some men strain at gnats and swallow camels. Those to whom the Spirit and the bride have said, Come, are seeking to find the hiding-place, as it were, and the dwelling-place of this altogether lovely One. They long for his gracious presence, which dispels the gloom of the soul, and fills the being with wonder, praise and adoration. Such desire is expressed in the first verse of this sixth chapter of Solomon's Song. Those seeking, asked "the fairest among women" whither her beloved had turned aside, that they might seek him with her. Herein are most strikingly presented Christ and his bride, and in all that we shall write it is our desire to keep him and the church before the eyes of the living.

In answer to the question in the first verse, the bride said, "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." This garden of the Lord is inclosed, these sweet spices grow and send forth their fragrance, and the lilies flourish in beauty and purity to the praise of their Husbandman. He only of all men has access to this fragrant and beautiful garden. He accepts the sweet savor of his spices and rejoices in the perfection of his lilies. He feeds there, and there only; no perfumes nor lilies outside of his garden are acceptable to him. There he feeds among the lilies of his grace. The bride said, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." How graciously true that the church is Christ's and Christ is hers. The union is vital – eternal. Amen. The Bridegroom describes his bride as being beautiful, and addresses her as his "love." She is as comely as Jerusalem and without spot or blemish before her husband. After these affectionate expressions of each other and preceding other wonderful declarations are the words of the text: "There are threescore queens, and foursquare concubines, and virgins without number." The queens, concubines and virgins suggest the thought of numerous women of all classes, but not one of them had the slightest attraction for the Bridegroom. All these women, doubtless, represent all false churches throughout the whole world. The church of God is set forth in figure of a woman, not only in the Song of Solomon, but in many other places in the Scriptures, and other churches are represented by women. Mark the singular number with reference to the church of God, the bride, the Lamb's wife, and the plural as regards the churches of the world. They are without number, while the true church is but one. A speckled bird (just one) against which all other birds are arrayed, yet its salvation is sure, because the Lord is with it to keep it, and in that he is for it he is against all other birds or women (false

churches). In verse nine the Bridegroom speaks in contrast and says, “My dove, my undefiled, is but one.” Queens, concubines and virgins are without number, but his dove, his undefiled, is but one. Here is set forth the doctrine of unity – one woman, or church, many members, but one body, his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. There are many branches, so to speak, but after all there is but one church, and its Builder hath established it upon a rock, and said the powers of darkness, or hell, shall not prevail against it. It is undefiled through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, complete in him. “She is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.” Her children rise up and call her blessed. She provides well for her house, and her virtue hath gotten her the name of names: “The Lord our righteousness.” She shall be called by my name, saith the Lord.

Now, after writing the above to the praise and glory of God, it is good to remember that all who have faith in the blood of the Lamb of God compose this beautiful and undefiled woman, the church of the firstborn, and though “black” in their own sight, in the righteousness of their heavenly Husband all are as fair as the moon, as clear as the sun, more beautiful and more precious to him than all things else, either in earth or heaven.

“Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He, whose word cannot be broken,
Formed thee for his own abode.”

Elder H.C. Ker
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THE RESURRECTION

(Correspondence with Elder L. H. Hardy, of North Carolina)

REIDSVILLE, N. C.,
June 22, 1909

DEAR BROTHER KER: - I especially request your views, in a private letter to me, on John v. 28, 29. I hope you may be blessed of the Lord to write soon, for I shall be anxiously awaiting to hear. I hope that you and family are well. We are as well as usual.

Yours in a blessed hope, L. H. HARDY

MIDDLETOWN, N. Y.,
June 29, 1909

ELDER L. H. HARDY - DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST: - Your letter asking my views on John v. 28, 29, was duly received. I appreciate your confidence in me as being able to elucidate this portion of holy writ, yet frankly confess you are mistaken in the man. I have often acknowledged through the Signs, as well as from the pulpit, that there is much in the Bible I do not understand, and this text you suggest is one of the many I have no satisfactory light on, hence am sure it would be a waste of time to try to explain that which has not been revealed to me. Should any one say, The text means just what it says, I would be compelled to reply, If that be true, then the fact stands without argument that there is at least one portion of inspired testimony which the Holy Ghost has no need to shew unto us. This I could not reconcile with Paul's statement: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: *** neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If the Scripture you mention is in any sense a part of the things of the Spirit of God, and Paul was correct in his statement, it cannot be comprehended by the carnal mind, hence its import must be spiritual and understood by divine revelation. Further, if it means just what it says literally, no man can enlarge upon it, and it stands open to the comprehension of the infidel as well as to the quickened sinner. The older I grow, and the longer I am in the ministry, the more I realize my lack of understanding in divine things, and the more careful I become with regard to the Scriptures. I used texts in my early ministry that I would not dare touch now without clearer light than I have ever had. Indeed, I often question my knowledge of the most simple text, if there be such a thing as a simple text. Some brethren in different sections of the country seem to be disturbed regarding the doctrine of the resurrection, and all manner of evil things are being said of those who do not use their language when speaking of the subject. But I must confess, dear brother, there is one thing that concerns me and troubles me more, viz., "Am I His, or am I not?" If I am, then all will be well at last. I have never made the subject of the resurrection a hobby, and hope to be kept from ever making any subject a hobby, and especially one that the apostles did not understand nor try to explain. Paul considered the resurrection "a mystery," and John was satisfied with the assurance that "now are we the sons of God;" he was willing to leave the rest until Christ, who is our life, shall appear. Then

“we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” I have never taken the resurrection of the bodies of the saints as a direct subject to write upon, and only a few times have I ever tried to speak of the deep and hidden mystery: resurrection; the omission has been due to lack of understanding. My faith, however, as “the evidence of things not seen,” embraces the truth of the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; the one to life eternal, the other to “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” But to describe the glory, joy and peace of the first is as far beyond me as it is to describe the eternal woe of the second. We have descriptive powers, and often use them to advantage regarding things we have seen, but I do not understand how a man can describe that which “doth not yet appear.” The attempt to do this, both of the glory and the punishment, has caused all the trouble on the subject that now exists. Do you not think, dear brother, it wise to adhere strictly to Bible language when preaching, writing or conversing upon this deep yet sublime subject? Would it not be better to say, “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body,” than to say, These Adamic, sinful, vile, mortal bodies shall be raised? Would it not be better to say, “That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be,” than to say, This very identical body will be raised? Instead of saying, In the resurrection we shall appear just as we do now, except our bodies which are natural shall be spiritual, would it not be better to say, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly”? Instead of saying, In the resurrection there will be fathers, mothers, husbands, wives and children, would it not be better to say, “In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven”? This mortal must put on immortality; this corruptible must put on incorruption. “When” this is done, “then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” Is it not better to say “when” this is done, than to say where and how it is done? On the other hand, would it not be better to say of the wicked, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” than to say, The wicked shall go away into everlasting literal fire, and there suffer forever and ever? Is it not better to say they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” than to say, The nonelect shall be punished with everlasting conscious punishment through the endless ages of eternity? Would it not also be well to get the actual understanding and views of a brother and know exactly how and where he stands before publishing him abroad as a heretic? A man lays himself liable, in every sense of the word, when he so accuses a brother, and also disregards every principle of love, brotherly kindness and forbearance.

I have not asked the above questions to call out a reply from you, but merely as suggestions for your consideration, and that you might know my position on the subject of the resurrection. I believe firmly and absolutely in the resurrection as the Bible speaks about it, for without it there can be no such thing as salvation and final glory, but I do

not accept the additional phraseology of uninspired men, notwithstanding the qualifications and attainments of some of them, and the age of others. One man may say, This is absolutely true, because the text implies it. Paul knew fully as well what his language implied as we do, yet to him the resurrection was “a mystery.” Therefore what this or that may seem to imply does not warrant me, at least, to conclude that this or that must be so, or this or that way, and preach it and call it “the doctrine of God our Savior.” I am particularly desirous while in this "tabernacle" of clay to know the power of the resurrection and “of the world to come,” to be a partaker of the heavenly gift, and to realize in my own soul the holy calling. I have not yet attained unto the resurrection, therefore it must be in the future, and my hope is in it through Christ the Lord.

Now, dear brother, I have written you quite a letter in length, with all the sincerity of my being, but before I close I want to assure you, as I have other brethren, that I shall not be brought into any controversy whatsoever on this subject. I have given in this my belief and faith in the resurrection, and hope what I have said may be satisfactory to you; if not, the matter ends here. This letter is your property to do with as you deem best.

I am, I hope, your brother in hope and faith,
H. C. KER

REIDSVILLE, N.C.,
August 21, 1909

DEAR BROTHER KER: - Your letter written June 29th and postmarked July 14th, reached here July 15th, but by some means or other it was mislaid here at home, and I have just got to read it. I am glad to read that letter. Now I have heard from all to whom I wrote, to wit: Elders Ker, McConnell, Lefferts and Vail, and I feel just as I expected I would: to have sweet fellowship for them; I have always had this, and believe I shall while we live. I do not see anything in your letter that I do not receive. There were a few things in Elder Lefferts' letter that were not just according to my mind on the same subject, but I know I am not perfect, but that I am a very poor sinner, and needing the mercies of God (it appears to me) more than any man, therefore I have just the same fellowship for Elder Lefferts as though we fully agreed.

On each point on which you ask a question I would have to answer in harmony with you, therefore there would be no room for controversy, unless it be like some are by their dressing, just want something a little bit different from “the other fellow.” You have seen my version of the text, and I feel sure that you will not declare nonfellowship for me because I hold those views. I

do hope the grace of God will keep all controversy out of Zion, but there has to be a broom and a winnowing to cleanse the house.

The Lord bless you and yours. Remember me in love to them.

Yours in hope,

L. E. HARDY

[The above correspondence is published for the benefit of those who, like brother Hardy, have heard all sorts of reports, and therefore wonder how some brethren stand on & subject of the resurrection of the dead. We have no desire to hide or cover any thought we have ever had concerning this mysterious subject. On the other hand, we believe it honorable to confess our ignorance of such a great deep. For argument's sake one might say, Paul does not say the resurrection is a mystery, but the "change." He says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This change embraces ALL, both asleep and alive, and in the change and after the change he puts no difference between them, consequently the "change" embraces the resurrection of the dead, which is beyond all question a part of the "mystery." To believe in the resurrection is a matter of faith, but to declare how the dead are raised up, and with what body they come except it be a spiritual body, is another thing altogether. The letters received by brother Hardy from those mentioned in his letter to us have settled his mind that we all believe in the resurrection of the dead, even though we may express our views a little different from him, and he expresses "sweet fellowship" for us all. How good it is to have an understanding one with another, as well as to confess our faults one to another. The man who has reached the place where all who do not agree with him are "heretics," is on a dangerous "pinnacle," and is more likely to destroy himself than any one else. The publication of the above is by the mutual consent of all concerned. - K.]

ELDER H. C. KER

Delmar, Del.



THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

(Luke xvi. 19-31)

It has been suggested by several brethren that we write upon the above named parable. Many in days gone by have written upon this subject, yet there is room, we hope, for a few suggestions from us.

The Savior spoke in parables, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. * * * that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Many, however, who claim to be the servants of God apply them literally, and teach many false lessons from them. Sometimes they are applied experimentally, but we feel that much of the hidden treasure in them is missed in so doing. If the parables are to be applied literally, how can there be any obscurity in them! If applied experimentally, where is the instruction! For many years we have felt that some deep truth is hid in each one, and that we are not warranted in applying every detail in order to reach their import; our desire should be to know the truth contained in them; this can be done by the Spirit's teaching only, as natural men do not understand the things of God better to-day than when Jesus spoke to them in parables. His disciples then were given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and none but such now understand.

The rich man in the parable before us was the Jew, and represented national Israel in all their riches and splendor. Paul asks, "What advantage hath the Jew?" then answers the question by saying, "Much in every way:" to them were given the promises, the law and the oracles; these things constituted the riches of the Jew. God recognized them as his people, he watched over them, guided them, fed them, sheltered them, and they were the only nation on earth, before the coming of Christ, that had a God-given form of worship.

Lazarus (poor man) was the Gentile, and represented all Gentile nations in their dire poverty and distress, being without the promises, the law and the oracles, or in other words, without "hope and without God in the world;" the lack of those blessings made them poor. The Gentiles were idolators, but occasionally one would be found with the Jews, and was called "a stranger." They observed a difference between their gods and the God of Israel, in that He guided, protected and fought their battles for them, while the gods of the Gentiles could neither hear nor help them. The king of Babylon recognized this when Daniel had interpreted his dream and said, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets." Yet none of the Gentiles had the knowledge of God, but there seems to have been a hope in the Gentile that he might be blessed through the Jews. This is seen in the desire of Lazarus to be fed with the crumbs (lesser blessings) which fell from the rich man's table. Again, the Syro-phenician woman, who had no right to claim anything from that nation, asked help of

Jesus. He first told her it was not meet to take the children's bread and give it to dogs. She answered, Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. She, a Gentile, manifested her hope of help through the King of the Jews. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "Salvation is of the Jews."

We are told in the parable that the poor man died, (but was not buried) and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. This is not heaven, and should not be represented as such; neither was the death literal, but experimental: death to all hope of heavenly blessedness coming through nations or idols. The angels were the apostles, ministering spirits, sent to minister to the heirs of salvation; they carried the poor Gentile into Abraham's bosom in preaching salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. The preaching was, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, [children] and heirs according to the promise." This relationship between Abraham and the Gentiles did not come through Abraham, but through Christ, the promised Seed; "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Abraham is the "father of the faithful," and with him, Isaac and Jacob, the Gentiles sit down in the kingdom of God.

The rich man also died and was buried. This death was not literal, nor was his body deposited in the earth, neither did he descend into a lake of literal fire. He died to the favor of God in that the kingdom was taken from him (Jews) "and given to a nation [Gentiles] bringing forth the fruits thereof." The natural branches were broken off that we Gentiles, contrary to nature, might be grafted in and be partakers of the fatness of the tame olive Tree. In the work of Christ the law was fulfilled, justice satisfied and all types and shadows done away; the Jews therefore who had answered the purpose as a figure of spiritual Israel were cut off and cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, scattered among all nations, and to this day have no country of their own. This condition of the Jews is represented by the word "hell," a terrible state indeed for those to be in who had been so blessed and prospered. It was in the fullest sense of the word "torments." This part of the parable is often used to frighten people into getting religion, (as it is called) being presented or set forth as a literal fire wherein sinners are to burn eternally. The word "hell" in the Scriptures is not as carefully examined as it should be; in many places it means no such thing as a place of literal fire. For instance, when Jesus said by the mouth of the prophet David, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," he meant no such thing as a lake of fire and brimstone, but that God would not leave him in the grave or state of death. Again David said, "The pains of hell gat hold upon me;" immediately he explains by saying, "I found trouble and sorrow." When Jonah said, "Out of the belly of hell cried I," he referred to the condition he was in: "For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me

about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.” How well acquainted are all of the Lord’s children with this condition called hell by Jonah.

We have thought of the Scripture in John v. 28,29: “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life: and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation,” as referring to this condition of the Jews as a nation, and to the blessedness of the elect, both Jews and Gentiles. The words “grave” and “graves” are used in a figurative sense, and very seldom are we permitted to give them their literal meaning when speaking of them from a scriptural standpoint; almost invariably they signify condition rather than location, as is taught by the “vision of dry bones.” The Lord commanded Ezekiel to say unto the bones, “Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.” Not one bone was buried in the earth, but all of them appeared on the surface of the earth. This Scripture in Ezekiel is intended to show the condition of Israel at that time. It seems that John v. 28, 29, is explained in Matthew xxv. 31-46. In that parable is seen a resurrection or coming forth of two classes, and judgment is passed according to John v. 28, 29. To those on the right hand it was said, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” They had “done good “in that they had ministered unto the brethren of the King (Christ). To those on the left hand it was said, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” (Jesus told the Jews on one occasion that they were of their father the devil) condemnation, torment, cut off, cast out. These had “done evil” in not ministering to the brethren of Christ. Remember that the rich man (Jew) did not minister to the poor man. There is a sense in which this separation takes place every time the gospel is preached, for the gospel always separates between the righteous and the wicked, saying to one, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, while to the other it says, Depart, ye workers of iniquity.

In this condition of torment (house left unto them desolate) the rich man or Jew sees “Abraham afar off,” and Lazarus in his bosom. He addresses Abraham as father, and Abraham calls him son. This very thing establishes the fact that the “rich man “was a Jew, and that the “poor i man “was a Gentile, as the son of Abraham claimed no relationship to him. It is worthy of note that the rich man did not call upon God for mercy, but upon his father Abraham, asking that he would send Lazarus that he might comfort him. Abraham called his attention to the good things (blessings) he had enjoyed in his lifetime (while God wa9 with them as a nation); his attention was also called to the former condition of the poor man, and said, “But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would

come from thence.” The great gulf did not come by chance, but was “fixed “between the Jew and the Gentile and remains unto this day; it is unbelief, in the Jew, of the sonship of Christ the Son of God. A Jew and a Gentile may live in the same house and labor side by side day after day, yet this gulf is fixed, and in faith they are as far apart as the east is from the west; it is as impossible for the believing Gentile to come to the Jew religiously as it is for the unbelieving Jew to come to the Gentile, hence no passing from one to the other.

When the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his father’s house to warn his brethren that they come not into that place of torment, Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” None but the Jews had Moses and the prophets, and they believed them not. Jesus said to them, “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” But the rich man continued by saying, “Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.”

Abraham replied, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” How true these words are; Jesus, the crucified Lord, did rise from the dead, and his gospel was preached in all the world for a witness, but the Jews rejected the testimony, persecuted the apostles and put them to death, but the Gentiles believed on Jesus and rejoiced in the salvation of God, hence “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,” while the Jews still refuse to speak the name Christ Jesus, manifesting that their terrible condition: “hell,” remains to the present day.

We have now given such as we have upon this subject, and have tried to be clear and as brief as possible that our view be fully understood, and leave it for the consideration of our readers. K.

Editorial – Elder H. C. Ker

Signs Of The Times

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“THE WORD.”

THIS subject is not only infinitely deep, but sublimely glorious, and we shall only be able to give a hint here and there in calling attention to “the word” from several standpoints. The apostle John tells us that “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” From this statement we understand “the word” to mean the sovereign, invisible power off God, displayed in the creation and formation of the world and all things in it, for immediately John said, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” It is too much for us to separate between the Father and the Son in the two above statements from the apostle John. Hence in speaking of the Word, “in the beginning,” we have always had in mind the unity of the Father and the Son as the Savior put it when on earth: “I and my Father are one.” Really we have never been able to separate between them, except in the different offices occupied by them: the three one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Therefore in speaking or writing of the Word, in the beginning, we always mean the one sovereign, omnipotent God, who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast. The infinite power of the Word therefore was made manifest in the creation and formation of the world.

Now that we have ascribed power and wisdom to the Word as mentioned by John: “In the beginning was the Word,” we desire to present the same Word in the person of the Son, or “Word made flesh.” The same Word, or one God, who in the beginning so wonderfully and unquestionably displayed his almighty power, in the days of those men who should afterward be his witnesses, took upon him flesh and blood, being born of a woman. This Word was “God manifest in the flesh,” called in that office the Son of God. First, in the beginning, all power was in him, the Word, to create, or bring into existence, this world, with all its glory in nature. Second, as the Word made flesh, the incarnate Son of God had power to make the dead live, and to give salvation to all the chosen of God in him before the world began. As no sacrifice of earth could take away sin, God, the Word, became a man, the God-man, that he might, by the sacrifice of himself, pay all the debt (once for all) the elect of God owed to both law and justice. He was justified in the Spirit, believed on in the world, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, received up into glory. The above was the complete and glorious work of the Word made flesh. Third, the same three one God, “the Word,” in the person of the Holy Ghost, is the Comforter and teacher of the Lord’s `people to-day, and shall ever be while the world stands.

We have now tried to present “the Word,” or one God, in three different offices, or persons, but we desire to make further reference to the terms “word “ and “word of God.” Often when the expressions “the word” and “the word of God” are used there is no direct reference intended to the incarnate Word, power and Godhead, but rather to the written word, or Scriptures. The Scriptures are the word of God. In this written word the Lord spake by the prophets to his people of his love for them, making many precious and gracious promises to them of salvation through the Seed of the woman, the Branch, the Blessing in the cluster, and so on. The New Testament Scriptures are God’s word to his people now, declaring that his love was made manifest in the gift of his Son when all were dead in sins, and that all promises are fulfilled in Christ. There is still another “word” we shall mention before closing, and that is the “preached word” by the called servants of the Lord. This word, or gospel, was designed by the Lord to comfort his people, and to establish them in the truth of the word; to separate them from Babylon with all her abominations, saying unto them, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.”

We felt impressed to write briefly upon the different phases of “the word,” and hope it may help to avoid confusion sometimes when the terms “the word” and “the word of God” are used. We do not need to be told that the subject is too deep for us, and that we have only touched it here and there, but we know · that along these lines, as touching the mysteries of God, a hint to the wise unto salvation is sufficient. K.

Elder H. C. Kerr

Signs of the Times
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1 TIMOTHY V. 3.

“HONOR widows that are widows indeed.”

Not long ago We were asked to give our view of this subject, and shall now attempt to do so with such ability as may be given of the Lord.

The apostles were very careful in setting things in order not to omit anything commanded them of God. The ordinances seemed first in importance, and they were established in order and each church directed to observe them as commanded. Nothing

should be added, nothing taken from them, they being perfect in the plan and purpose of the Master of the house. The rule of life, in the church, was kept before the people of God always by the apostles; not only individual members, but ministers were taught how they should behave themselves in the house of God. Paul particularly instructed Titus and Timothy with regard to their conduct toward all classes and sex. Each was to be an example of good works, holding fast the profession of their faith. In the beginning of this fifth chapter of Timothy Paul instructed him not to rebuke an elder, but entreat him as a father. The word “elder” as used here does not mean a minister of the gospel, only as he may be included with the aged, for an old man is meant by the word “elder.” It would not have been becoming in Timothy to rebuke an old man in years and experience, he being a mere boy in the way, even though a minister of the gospel; hence Paul told him to entreat him as a father; yes, a father in Israel, who had traveled long the rugged way of the pilgrim. Should there seem a difference between them in understanding of Scripture or some point of order, Timothy should think of the old man as a father, and respect him as such rather than feel that he knew all that could be known, and rebuke the old man for being less informed. If young men, sometimes young ministers, could only realize that it will require years of suffering, temptation, crosses and losses for them before they know as much as old men, it would be a great help to them and a comfort to their brethren. Not only was Timothy instructed as to how he should treat old men, but how he should treat younger ones: treat them as brethren, equals, fellows; then the elder women as mothers, giving them reverence, bestowing attention as a son should do. The younger women were to be treated as sisters, with all purity. Just as a brother would and should feel toward a sister in the flesh, so should he feel and act toward his sisters in the church – kind, gentle and thoughtful, desirous of their spiritual as well as moral welfare. After this the apostle gave, as it seems to us, what might be called the law of the church regarding the care and support of widows indeed. The word “indeed” designates the class of widows to be cared for by the church. A widow who has children to care for her is not a widow indeed. A widow who has nephews and nieces able to care for her is not a widow indeed. But a widow desolate, alone, without means, with none to assist her, and her years, “threescore,” prevent her from earning a living, is “a widow indeed,” These are the class to “be taken into the number” for care and support by the church. To meet the question sure to be asked: But suppose a church is not able to take care of such widows? we will say that the churches so commanded by the apostle must have been able to care for their widows “indeed,” else the instruction would not have been given; We know of no point of law, either of God or men, impossible to be kept. Every point of the Mosaic law could be kept and was kept by some. Saul of Tarsus, for instance, kept it strictly in the letter, so that he was blameless as touching the righteousness (obedience) thereof. It is possible to keep every point of law governing our country, though there be thousands of transgressors. Our

government would not recognize as law any enactment that was impossible for its subjects to obey. Such law would make men involuntary transgressors. Therefore in considering these matters of the church we should understand that the apostles in giving such instructions were not binding impossibilities upon the churches. On one occasion Paul wrote the brethren at one place to take a collection for poor brethren in another. Because of the different circumstances he could not have reversed the matter and had the poor take a collection for the more able brethren. Along this line we should consider these things. A church able to care for widows indeed should do so, but on the other hand, those not able cannot be expected to do it, and Paul's instruction is not applicable to them at all. There are many "widows indeed" in different parts of our land worthy of this honor, who are members of churches able to care for them, yet often no attention is paid to them at all until the sad cry of want is heard directly or indirectly. When God gave his Son to die for us, and the Son shed his precious blood for the sins of his enemies, it really seems a very small thing for the followers of Christ to minister to his body in giving his brethren bread, water, clothing, shelter, and to visit them when sick and in prison. Now, as in the days of James the apostle, there is decidedly too much distinction made between the rich and the poor children of God. James rebuked sharply the rich for their treatment of the poor, and his rebuke is as good and needful now as then. In some places there seems to be an idea that a little mite of this world's goods adds greatly to the standing and dignity of the children of God, when indeed it is not the case at all. If children of God, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, ten thousand worlds like this would be less, if one possessed the whole, than the smallest mote that floats in the air in God's account. Then why should any of us think for a moment that a few dollars make us more important in the church or in our daily lives than the poor, "rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom"? Yet it is so, and as in the apostle's day, the good clothing and the gold ring get for those who wear them the best seats in the house, while the poor brother or sister may stand, or sit under the footstool of some one. We have no record that Jesus ever acted or intimated that he felt better socially than the poorest offcast of that age of the world. He associated with the most humble of mankind. He, the King of kings and the Lord of glory, washed the feet of men, giving the example of humility, not high-mindedness, and said as he did, so should his followers do. Have no man's person in admiration, do nothing by partiality. We have now given such as we have on the subject, and leave the matter for the consideration of our readers. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
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VITAL UNITY

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.” – Genesis ii.23.

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” – Luke xxiv. 26.

Having been requested to write upon the subject embraced in the above Scripture, we shall endeavor to do so with such ability as the Lord may give us. The subject is vast, sublime and of the greatest importance to the Lord’s children, though many of his children have failed to see clearly this vital relationship between Christ and his people, so wonderfully set forth in the Scripture at the head of this article. That lack of sight, however, does not make them less the children of God, nor does it make this point of doctrine less God’s eternal truth. The truth of God is an endless chain, so to speak, taking in every point of doctrine, order and practice. Anything, therefore, outside of this chain cannot be connected thereto, nor can anything of the chain be taken from it. It is just as the Lord made it, and will

stand as made.

Adam was created and made according to God’s purpose and plan, regardless of desire, willingness or objection upon his part. He was “the figure of him that was to come” – Christ. It is perfectly understood that Adam in his creation and formation knew nothing of Christ, hence it was not by choice upon his part that he was the figure of Christ. It should be remembered that the definite article (the) is used in that record of him; not a figure, as one of many, but “the figure.” “So God created man in his own image, in the likeness of God created he him; male and female created he them,” “and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.”

There has been much discussion with reference as to the image of God in which man was created and made, but there seems no room for debate on that subject, as the Scriptures just quoted declare plainly that the union between Adam and Eve was the likeness of God, and in that union, or unity, was Adam, male and female, the likeness of Him that was to come. In their creation they were one, and their name one – “Adam.” In formation they were one, male and female, or, in other words, Eve was in Adam; hence one life, making separation between them impossible, either in life or death. Eve being

in Adam when the law was given, received that law and was as much accountable to the law as was Adam. When she, therefore, ate of the forbidden fruit she transgressed the law. The unity between Adam and Eve, his wife, was so complete that her sin was his sin, and had not Adam partaken of the fruit personally he would have been responsible for her sin and one with her in the transgression. The union between Adam and his posterity was such that his sin was their sin, or, in other words, when he transgressed all his children transgressed in him and all were under the same curse. Adam and Eve were one in creation, one in formation, one in life, one in receiving the law, one in transgression and one in death, hence the figure of Him that was to come. God, the eternal Spirit, had chosen in Christ his people, or bride, before the world began, unto salvation, that they should live with him glory, rather than in Eden. The choice of God of his people in Christ, thus giving them to Christ in union, to be his bride, made them one. In order that the world be peopled and the choice of God be manifested, the creation of Adam and Eve was necessary. In order that those ordained unto eternal life be saved and become manifestly the sons and daughters of God, sin must enter the world and death by sin. Hence the law was given, temptation came, the law was transgressed and in consequence the bride, or God's chosen people in Christ, were condemned and the children of wrath, by nature, even as others.

These things are all links in that endless chain mentioned already. The unity of Christ and the church (bride) as between Adam and Eve, was so complete, inseparable, that her sin was his sin, though he personally sinned not, and was responsible to the law for her debt. This we have shown in "the figure," that had Adam not partaken of the fruit himself, he would have been responsible for the sin of Eve. The law demanded perfect satisfaction for the transgression. That satisfaction meant perfect obedience to the law, even unto death. Adam transgressed and brought death to his race, or children; Christ was obedient even unto death, the death of the cross, and brought life and immortality to the chosen of God. He was made of a woman and made under the law of sin and death, to redeem them that were under the same law. In the coming of Christ the love of God was made manifest, yes, love to sinners, not because they were sinners, but because he loved them in Christ before the world began, and his love changed not when they were dead in trespasses and sins. Inasmuch as the children of God were sinners, the law demanded the life of Christ, the husband. Paul, in speaking of the unity of Christ and the church, calls attention to the union of husband and wife, the two being one, then adds, This is a great mystery, but I speak of Christ and the church. We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. At the appointed time of the Father, Jesus came to do the will of him that sent him, and that will was that of all which he had given him he should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day. Therefore because of the unity of Christ and the church, and in obedience to the law, Jesus died upon the cross, paid the debt his bride owed to both law and justice with his own life, or blood, was buried and

arose for their justification, and presented them without spot, blemish, wrinkle or any such thing to God the Father. “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” it was his obligation as the husband of the church, it was the Father’s purpose, plan and will. Inasmuch therefore as it was according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the whole church must answer his question and say, Yes, Christ ought to have suffered and to enter into his glory. The church is the glory of Christ, and in the midst of her he sings praises to God for the gift and for the purpose he purposed in himself before the world was, that through his blood she should be holy and without blame before the Father in love. These glorious matters of redemption were not revealed to Moses, the Israelites and their children, but were secret things known to God in that age of the world. They had the law, and legal things were revealed that they should do all the works of that law, but the redeemed bride has the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It was because the old covenant did not have and reveal gospel things that the disciples were fools and slow of heart to believe what the Scriptures declared, in prophecy, of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. The term “fools” means without understanding. After saying these things to them, Jesus began with Moses and opened the Scriptures, which had been hid from the beginning, to their understanding. In this he made darkness light, crooked things straight and rough places smooth.

Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways. How good it is to see the life-standing of the Lord’s people in Christ, while in Adam they die.

Elder H. C. Ker

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“WHO IS A LIAR?”

(1 John ii. 22)

THE above question may seem a strange one, yet it is very significant. The apostle John, that beloved disciple, had been exalting the name of Jesus in testifying to his Sonship, and Lordship over all things, yet a man, the son of Mary. In his wonderful testimony of

Jesus the brethren were confirmed in their faith and hope and made to rejoice in God their Savior. Such firmness of faith in the Son of God was a blessed gift in those trying days, when so many believed not on him, nor did they reckon the apostles as men of God. But Jesus said to them, “Ye are my witnesses,” and they testified unto the truth, because they knew it, in the face of all opposition and persecution. When Peter and John were whipped, cast into prison and commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus, an angel came by night, loosed their fetters, led them out and said, “Go stand in the temple and preach all the words of this life.” This was done, as it seems to us, first to show that the powers of earth could not prevent Jesus in his work, through his disciples, of preaching his everlasting gospel. Second, it was for the confirmation of the faith of those called to preach, that he would be with them alway, even unto the end of the world. Such blessed tokens of God’s power and mercy made the apostles bold in the Lord to testify to the grace of God, saying, “He hath delivered, and he doth deliver, and he will deliver.” Such demonstrations built up the churches on their most holy faith and caused them to triumph over the enemies of Christ and of the cross of the Lord Jesus. No man can testify to the truth unless he knows the truth; no man can receive such testimony except he be born of God. In the revelation of Jesus Christ the whole truth is made known in the same power and fullness to each one alike. The minister in this sense has no advantage over the feeblest of the flock – knows no more of the glory of God in the salvation of sinners than the most illiterate son or daughter of God. He is given power of expression, perhaps, in a greater degree than private members, but never tells them anything they do not know. It is now as John said to his brethren: “I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it.” Therefore there is a sense in which all the children of God are witnesses of him and to his truth. One who testifies that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, the only way to God, bears witness unto the truth, hence is not “a liar.” Now, if all these be true witnesses of God, “Who is a liar?” Surely there must have been such in John’s day, or he would not have alluded to them in this most wonderful letter, Yes, there have always been liars in the World since the day Cain preached, by his offering, that favor with God depends upon works – fruits of the ground. It does not seem to us that John was finding fault with the liar for his lie in the sense that he might have done better, but merely making the statement that any man who denied that Jesus was the Christ was verily “a liar,” and the truth was not in him. It was just as impossible then for a man to bear testimony unto the truth who had not the truth in him, as it was for Cain to offer an acceptable offering, by faith, unto God, when he had no faith in him. Hence when writing along this line or preaching along this line Old Baptists do not mean to find fault with a man because he is blind, nor because he is “a liar,” but, like John, simply call attention to the fact that such are in the world, and without the revelation of Jesus Christ will continue to lie in presenting false doctrine. The name “Christ” means “anointed” and by referring to Isaiah

lxi. 1, it will be seen what he was anointed for: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” This anointing was different from that of Aaron, who was anointed with ointment that he might minister in the worldly sanctuary. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit of the living God to do the will of the Father in bringing many sons unto glory. The witness of God testifies that Jesus was anointed of the Lord God, given power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life unto as many as the Father had given him; that to these subjects he preached glad tidings; that these were all brokenhearted because of sin, and that he bound them up; that he proclaimed liberty to the captives and opened the prison to them that were bound. Herein is the full work of Jesus in the salvation of sinners presented, and he himself read this Scripture and said, This day is it fulfilled in your ears. The man who speaks the truth tells of Jesus, his power and Godhead, and that he did all that the Father sent him to do. Yes, to-day Christ Jesus, the anointed Savior, is the theme of all gospel preaching, and the adoration of all the saints of God. But, “Who is a liar?” is the question of John the apostle. To confess Jesus Christ is to give him all glory, power and dominion, thus crowning him Lord of all. To preach Jesus is to preach life from the dead and the final glory and peace of all the saints. To sing such songs as “Jesus, lover of my soul,” is to render praise to him for his loving-kindness and tender mercy. To pray in his name is to acknowledge, confess him as the Mediator between God and man, which means that all our righteousness, all our worthiness, all our peace, is in him. This excludes all merit in man, and brings Jesus to view as the only name in which men can ask favor of God, and the only access to the throne of grace. To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to verily believe that he was God manifest in the flesh. If a mortal believes this it is with the heart unto salvation, and confession is made with the mouth of all such witnesses that Jesus is the Christ, to the glory of God the Father. But, “Who is a Liar?” It seems almost unnecessary after what we have already said to comment upon the question, yet to make the matter more complete we shall give a slight description of the man John calls “a liar.” We have listened to preaching from time to time for about forty-five years, and can well remember many things that far back; have heard most every denomination give their opinion of Jesus, and with all due respect to all, have never heard one, except an Old School Baptist, or those in sympathy with them, exalt Jesus a Prince and a Savior to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins. To preach Jesus as wanting to accomplish something, yet not able to perform it without the help of man, is to limit him in power, which is contrary to his own declaration: “All power in heaven and earth is given into my hands.” To preach that Jesus opened a way through which men can be saved if they will, is contrary to his last words: “It is finished” – salvation for time and eternity. To preach that there is a spark of eternal life in every man, and that by a little

effort on his part he can produce a flame, is to deny the word of God when he said by his apostle, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." To preach that Jesus was only an example of the highest type of manhood, and that all men can be as divine as he if they will live right, and that the best citizen is the best christian, is to deny the Sonship of the only begotten Son of God and assert that morality is religion. To proclaim that men, women and children can be taught the way of life and salvation by earthly teachers, is in direct opposition to the Scripture which declares: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." To say a man's prospect of salvation and everlasting happiness depends upon his own volition to accept the terms, is to deny flatly Paul's testimony: By grace are ye saved, not of works, lest any man should boast. To affirm that children that die without being baptized (sprinkled) are lost, is to deny the blood of the Lamb, saying it has no efficacy, but sprinkling is salvation. To say a man can reform and he a child of God to-day and to-morrow go back into his old habits and be a child of the devil, denies absolutely the unity of Christ and his bride.

Now, after calling attention to these few of the many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth, we will give John's answer to his own question: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." What a blessed favor to have the Father and the Son, and what a privilege to acknowledge, confess them in all their glory and Godhead before men! This same Jesus whom the enemies slew and hanged on a tree, God hath made both Lord and Christ. Though placed in the tomb, and a watch set to keep him there, God raised him from the dead and sit him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Unto him his children look, in him they trust, with him they commune and with him shall they ascend the skies to ever be with the Lord. K.

Elder H. C. Ker
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ZECHARIAH XIII. 7-9.

ELDER H.C. KER – DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST: - Will you please give your views through the SIGNS on the text recorded in Zechariah xiii. 7-9? “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.” Do you understand this to mean God’s protecting care over the little ones, as it is the will of the Father that not one of these little one who believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shall perish?

Yours in hope,
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In the first verse of this thirteenth chapter of Zechariah the declaration, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness,” is found. The expression, “In that day,” is often used in the Old Testament Scriptures, and no doubt had reference to the gospel day. For instance the word says, “It shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which are ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts of the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” Here it seems evident that the trumpet signified the gospel, or glad news to those ready to perish and to the outcasts of Israel. In the days of old at a certain season there was a silver trumpet blown in the camps of Israel. It never gave an uncertain sound, but always the same sound, which was known and understood by the Israelites. It declared liberty to the captives, freedom to those who were bound, and that the debts of those who were in debt were canceled. A beautiful figure of the gospel of the grace of God: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” This is the sound of the gospel trumpet, declaring liberty tot he captives, freedom to them bound by the fetters of sin, and that the debt they owed both law and justice is forever canceled. In Malachi iii. 17, we have the

following language: “And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.” By referring to the first two or three verses of this chapter of Malachi it will be readily seen that the seventeenth verse, just referred to, declared the work of Christ during his ministry in the flesh and in the Spirit, rather than the end of all things, when the redeemed of the Lord shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. His work in the flesh was to redeem and justify his bride, and beginning with the calling of the apostles, the making up of the jewels began, and has continued until the present hour, and will continue until the last jewel is gathered from among men. Even to-day the church is a royal diadem in the hand of her God. We have called attention to these two places in the Scriptures where the words, “In that day,” are used, to show that the same truth is presented in the first verse of the chapter before us. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had promised to visit their seed with redemption and salvation, and that in his own way and time. Here in this chapter he renews his promise by saying, In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness. It might be asked, If the fountain was opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, how can Gentiles be benefited by it? It seems to us this way: that inasmuch as Christ was the house of David, and the Gentiles are children of God by adoption in him and have their life standing in him, that they are the children of God, both Jews and Gentiles, are of the house of David and therefore the inhabitants of Jerusalem. All the works of the Lord are known unto him from the beginning, and as sin entered the world there must be an end of sin, a cleansing, a washing, a purifying of his chosen people, and this could be done only in the fountain opened for that special purpose. There seems to be presented a distinction in this first verse between sin and uncleanness, and the fountain was opened for both. Sin must be forever washed away by the one offering, and, as it seems to us, uncleanness, embracing all vile and evil speeches, all ungodly acts, must be purged away in the one fountain while the church sojourns here in the wilderness of sin. This fountain is nothing less than the shed blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, which “blood can cleanse the foulest stain and can avail for me.” The faith of the church has ever been the same in all ages of the world. Abel saw this fountain in his day. The harlot Rahab saw it in her say when she bound the scarlet line in the window, knowing that it meant salvation to her and her house. The dying thief rejoiced to see it as he was paying the just penalty for his crimes, and the poet saw it when he said, May I there, though vile as he, was all my sins away. When the Lord’s appointed time came for the fountain to be opened he called upon the sword to awake and smite his Shepherd. This reminds us of the words of Jesus to Pilate: Thou couldest have no power against me at all except it were given thee from above. How wonderful that the Lord endured sin to reign just so long, then called upon the sword, or offended law, to awake and smite the Shepherd. The sword had slumbered, as it were, from the day of Adam’s transgression, a period of thousands of years, but was in

no sense dead, and its demands must be met before the guilty could be justified with God. The law did awake with all its fury, demanding the death of the transgressor, and as the sinner could not undo what he had done, the Shepherd took his sins upon himself and was smitten by the sword, or law, thereby fulfilling its demands in every jot and tittle.

We should all remember that the shepherd here spoken of was God's fellow as well as his Shepherd. The term "fellow" means equal. Yes, the Son was equal with the Father, and thought it not robbery, yet made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and became obedient even unto death. Well can it be said of Jesus that he was God manifest in the flesh, and well could Jesus say, I and my Father are one. The term "my Shepherd," signifies that the flock belonged to the Father, and that he appointed the Son overseer or Shepherd. This is in harmony with what Jesus said to the Father: Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, hence he could by right redeem them.

Brother Sloan wants to know if the hand over the little ones means God's protecting care over all his people? To this we answer yes, but in a secondary sense. He will remember that Jesus said, This night all of you shall be offended because of me, and shall forsake me. Peter replied, Though all men forsake thee, yet will I not. But the words of the Lord are ever true, and there must not be one exception when he said, All shall forsake me. Peter was sincere, and verily thought he could do what he had promised, but like all of us failed and denied the Lord of mercy and salvation. When Jesus was betrayed into the hands of wicked men, according to the determinate counsel of God, all the disciples forsook him and fled, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled which said, Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. This, then, is of course the first application of the text. The Lord had called and ordained the apostles to the work of the gospel ministry, and their mission must be accomplished, hence he turned his hand over them, protecting them from death, but delivered Jesus unto death because of his purpose and plan. Nothing could take his life until the appointed time, neither could any take the life of the apostles, witnesses of the Lamb, until their words were heard in all the world by all nations. It is verily true that the hand of the Lord is over all his sheep, and that nothing shall separate them from him, and that no cross, no loss, no burden shall ever overtake them that strength is not given to bear. Faithful is our God to all eternity; bless his holy name.

"And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die, but the third shall be left therein." It seems to us that the "land" spoken of here was that portion given to Abraham and his seed for a possession. If so, those therein were Jews, hence the cutting off of the two parts signifies the cutting off of the "natural branches of the tame olive tree," or in other words the rejection and overthrow

of the Jewish nation as a body, the Lord taking the kingdom from them. As branches separated from a vine or tree wither and die, so the Jews became dead to the “true Vine,” and remain spiritually dead to this day, with an exception now and then, in fulfillment of the word of God as embraced in the text. “The third part.” This signifies a smaller part, or “remnant according to the election of grace.” The church, spiritually, was composed at first of thirteen, the Head and the twelve apostles, but on the day of Pentecost the Lord added three thousand souls, and, as we understand, all Jews. These practically composed the “third part” left in the land, and they were brought through the fire, persecutions, severe trials, losses and crosses for their faith in Jesus and his blood. In such fire they were refined as silver is refined and tried as gold is tried. As the refiner’s fire is very hot in order to consume all dross, so the persecutions of the early church were severe to prove and try the faith of “the third part,” but the Lord brought them off more than conquerors through Him that loved them and give himself for them. The expression, They shall call on my name and I will hear them, is very significant, and Peter expressed the feeling of all saints when he asked Jesus, saying, Lord, unto whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. Such faith and confession the Lord always hears and blesses in saying, “It is my people,” and in return they say, “The Lord is my God.” All this is true now of the Lord’s people experimentally, and will continue the same while time lasts, and they are just as sure to brought through, not left in, the fire as were the Jews and early church.

We now leave the subject for the consideration of brother Sloan and others who may read our views. - K.

Elder H.C. Ker
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