
Shield of Faith

A Primitive Baptist Publication

March 2005

Now Shall The Kingdom Return

"And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan" (1 Kings 12:26-29).

Our minds can scarcely conceive of the glory of God revealed to Israel at the dedication of the temple. Who can even envision the praise for God that must have gone up from the people? Can you imagine the rejoicing of the people? "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD" (2 Chronicles 7:1-4).

It is equally mystifying to consider how quickly Solomon lost his God given wisdom and led Israel astray. How can we explain the rapid decline of the nation from its heights under the leadership of David and the early reign of Solomon to the division soon after the death of Solomon. How could this happen?

Could it be that the temple became a source of *pride* to Israel? "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom" (Proverbs 13:10). Did Israel pride themselves on *their* accomplishments? Did they begin to worship the *house* rather than the True Builder of the house? We can only speculate, but the answer is probably *yes*.

Because Solomon brought idolatry to Israel, God caused the kingdom to be divided. "And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes"(1 Kings 11:31-35).

God gave ten tribes to Jeroboam with this promise: "And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee" (1 Kings 11:37-38).

The Lord promised Jeroboam that He would "build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee" if he would hearken to and obey the Lord. Jeroboam, however flatly rejected the word of the Lord when he "said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem..." He even feared that he would be killed by his own subjects. Jeroboam devised means by which Israel would remain divided. In just a few generations, the ten tribes that made up the nation of Israel would so turn from the true and living God that Elijah would lament, "... the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). He learned that God had left "... seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him," (1 Kings 19:18) yet Elijah had not seen them nor their influence in Israel.

In the account of the reign of Jeroboam, the Lord has painted for us a vivid picture of how Satan leads the people from the living and true God to serve idols.

Jeroboam, as well as Satan, seeks to establish and maintain division among God's people. "And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days" (1 Kings 14:30). Satan knows that if he can keep us fighting *each other*, we will either destroy ourselves or weaken ourselves to the point that he can easily overcome us. The Old Baptist people can claim growth in very few areas but one, the growth of divisions. How pleased Satan must be!

Another great fear of Jeroboam, and also of Satan is the fear of God's people worshipping in the house of God. "If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the

(Continued on page 2)

Now Shall The Kingdom Return

(Continued from page 1)

heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam.” Jeroboam was concerned with the people returning to Rehoboam, the king of Judah. Satan fears the return of the people to Judah’s True King, Jesus Christ. “The kingdom” shall “return to the house of David” when the people seek to worship in the house of God.

Just like Satan, Jeroboam sought to keep people from the house of God and was very ingenious (and successful) in his efforts. Paul warned the church at Corinth, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11). “We are not ignorant of his devices,” yet we are caught in his snare again and again. Why? Simply because he makes it *so easy* to go the wrong way.

Jeroboam made it easy for Israel by introducing a *counterfeit* religion to Israel. He “made two calves of gold,” calling them “thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” God’s command was clear: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Exodus 20:4). How could Israel so blatantly disregard God’s command? The generations before had failed to completely drive out all the idolators, so they had gradually become accustomed to them. They had seen a great leader, Solomon, tolerate and later embrace idols, so idolatry was not so repulsive to them.

There is a desire in us all to be accepted and approved by others. Fallen man desires the acceptance and approval of their fellow man above that of God. Israel wanted to be like those nations around them. They had demonstrated that when they had first desired a king. “And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us **like all the nations**” (1 Samuel 8:5, emphasis added). The worship of the true God made them *different* from all other nations. The golden calves made them *like* other nations.

For a counterfeit to be accepted, it must have some appearance of genuineness. Not long ago the news media reported of a grocery clerk who accepted and gave change for a \$200 bill bearing the picture

of president Bush. We ask how anyone could be so foolish, yet we often as readily accept Satan’s counterfeits that appear even less genuine. In the case of the \$200 bill, it was likely the right size and color, so it had *some* appearance of genuineness. The con man probably chose the clerk that appeared the least attentive, possibly one that was very busy and showed signs of frustration. He probably made small talk to distract her mind. Inattentive, busy, frustrated, describe many of God’s children today, easy prey for Satan.

Jeroboam gave his counterfeit religion some of the characteristics of the genuine. He had a priesthood, though made up of the lowest sort of men, an altar where sacrifices were offered, and feast days very much like the genuine. “So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense” (1 Kings 12:33). Note the origin of Jeroboam’s religion: “**devised of his own heart.**” “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts” (Psalms 10:4).

Note the timing of Jeroboam’s feast: “the fifteenth day of the eighth month,” *some-what* like God had commanded. “Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath” (Leviticus 23:39). God said in the seventh month; Jeroboam said in the eighth month. The people would not as likely want to go to Jerusalem in the seventh month when they had their own feast in the eighth month. They also had an easy way to justify in their minds their not obeying God. God’s feast was to be held “when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land.” Human logic says “**Yes, but** our land is in the north, and crops are a little later. It is only reasonable to wait another month!” Jeroboam thus gave a Israel a way to disobey God and still to convince themselves that it was alright.

How many people today have allowed Satan to provide for them “reasonable” excuses as to why they “cannot” serve the Lord? As a pastor, I have heard people

offer excuses for absence from the meetings of the church that were, quite frankly, ridiculous, yet those who offered the excuses apparently felt justified in their absence. I feel sure that none would have dared to offer such excuses to their employer for absence from work. When excuses are made to our pastor or our church, they are actually made to the Lord, Who knows the thoughts and intents of our hearts. We may feel that our excuses justify us at the time, but I am sure that at some point God will show us that He accepts *reasons*, but not *excuses*.

Finally, Jeroboam made the counterfeit religion convenient. Of the golden calves, the Bible says, “And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.” (1 Kings 12:29). Dan lay at the northern extremity of Israel. Bethel was near the southern end of the kingdom. Jeroboam may have chosen Bethel as the place for one of his golden calves because of the sacredness *previously* attached to it. In any case, almost every one in Israel was closer to one of these cities than to Jerusalem and thus more convenient. Is convenience wrong? When one compromises truth and disobeys God for the sake of convenience, it is *very* wrong! God has never said that serving Him would be convenient or easy, but He has promised that faithfully serving Him would be *blessed*.

What was the result of Jeroboam’s counterfeit religion? “Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now. For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger. And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin” (1 Kings 14:14-16). Not only was the house of Jeroboam cut off, but Israel also was rooted up out “of this good land”

God’s words to Israel, I believe, holds true for *spiritual Israel* in every age, “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isaiah 1:19-20).

Bible Quiz

The first day of Jesus' resurrection was a busy one. Fill in the blanks about the resurrection with the proper persons.

1. _____, and _____ were the first people to visit the tomb on Resurrection Sunday (Mark 16:1).
2. _____ rolled back the stone and sat on it (Matt. 28:2).
3. _____ told the two Marys to tell the disciples to go to Galilee and there they would see Jesus (Matt. 28:9).
4. _____ were given money to say that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body (Matt. 28:12-13).
5. Jesus found _____ in the garden crying (Mark 16:9).
6. _____ ran to the sepulcher to see if the women had spoken the truth about Jesus being alive (Luke 24:12).
7. _____ outran Peter to the sepulcher (John 20:4).
8. _____ mistook Jesus for the gardener (John 20:15).
9. _____ and another person walked with Jesus and did not know Him (Luke 24:18).
10. Jesus found the frightened _____ in an upper room (John 20:19).
11. _____ said unless he could see and touch Jesus, he would not believe the news of His resurrection (John 20:25).

Answers on page 4.

The Pathway Of life

From the cradle to the grave
He watches over me,
And makes a path for each step I take
Wherever that may be.
The path is not an easy one,
There are pitfalls to endure,
But as long as He guides my way
I will be secure.
Though snares may make me stumble
And take me off my track,
I only have to call to him,
And He will guide me back.
Each snare I face along the way
prepares my soul for that far off day,
Where faith will be replaced with sight,
When I reach the land of eternal light.
There with my heart and soul made pure
By the cross that Christ endured,
I will sing with the angels around the Throne,
And praise God forever for my heavenly home.

*Max Phillips
12/16/04*

INTEGRITY AND STEDFASTNESS

(Please read the entire book of Daniel)

Although the word "integrity" is not used in the book of Daniel, we find the word meaning embedded in the life of Daniel. Proverbs 11:3(a) gives us the advantage of those who walk in the integrity of their heart; "The integrity of the upright shall guide them:--" in the simplest term for "Integrity" shows sincerity, dedication, determination in keeping a form of living which is pleasing to God and gives leadership to the people who follow. Daniel possessed these traits of character and is expressed in Daniel 1:8; "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank:" Daniel showed that sincerity, dedication, determination to be true to God in spite of what others might partake of or do with their lives. We need more Daniels among God's people today who will lay their lives on the line in service to God. We find a breakdown in the lives of people today concerning the sincerity, dedication, determination which proved such an asset in the life of Daniel. Failure to maintain these values lead to deceit. Deceit leads to compromise, and compromise changes not only our values; it changes our action toward others. It will surely be admitted that this has taken place among people in our society. There is a great need to return to a more sincere and dedicated quality of life in our nation.

Daniel was among the first of the Jews to be deported from Jerusalem to the land of Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. He was one of those chosen to be taught in the ways of the Babylonians. They, in turn, would teach their fellow Jews. The hope was that the Jews would fall into the ways of paganism and thus defile the religion and ways of the Israelites. Had it not been for the determination of Daniel to retain his "integrity", there would have been a great failure in the whole of Israel to retain that quality of their religion which taught of the "One God, Jehovah" who had led them through many troubles. But Daniel "purposed in his heart" that he would not defile himself by partaking of that which God had forbidden. God brought Daniel into favor with the one who was assigned to keep them and thereby provided a way in which they could keep themselves from the rich diet of the king. At the end of the set days for this diet, Daniel and the three Hebrew children were ten times wiser and fairer than the others. Daniel was made an adviser and ruler and continued in this capacity during the reign of four kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. Daniel remained steadfast and sincere to the values of his life with God and his integrity toward all men throughout these years. Daniel 6:3 tells us this was because "an excellent spirit was in him,"

By His Grace,
Elder Charles Taylor

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:3).

But they found the angels! It was a typical adventure. We seek one treasure and discover another. Columbus was looking for a passage to the West Indies, but he found a new world. One man digs for water, and finds oil; another, for building stone, and finds gold. Keep looking. You may not find what you seek, but you will find something better, - it may be a thousand times better. Was it not better to find two living angels than one dead body? A risen than a buried Lord? They sought for death, and found life.

He Giveth More Grace

(James 4:6a) "But he giveth more grace."

God gives more grace. If we would take the time to prayerfully study the book of James, we would discover why more grace was needed, and also discover our own need of more grace. May our blessed Lord give us an awareness of our need of more grace.

This letter is addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. These were "scattered abroad" first because of persecution. God had not forgotten them in "the trying of your faith." Note the personal care of each one: "**your faith.**" Your God is more than a casual observer of all you are experiencing. If you have trouble understanding "the trying of your faith," if any "lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." The favor of God to His children, by their asking of Him wisdom comes under what this writer believes to be the theme of this letter, "But he giveth more grace." The condition into which we have gotten ourselves can be solved by asking our faithful Lord in faith for grace to help us.

Chapter 4, verses 1-5 identifies other reasons for the Lord's people being scattered. It is said that many people believe "the church" is the great enemy to mankind; even though our Lord teaches us the judgment was shortened for the "elect's sake."

To this writer these of the twelve tribes had gotten away from the assembling of themselves together, had become friends of the world, thereby becoming enemies of God. All their energy was spent in lusting and envying. What a terrible condition! Is there yet hope? Yes!

After setting forth the things that brought about this condition, God speaks to them and us "but he giveth more grace." How do we get "more grace"? Would it not be foolish for anyone to say "I don't need more grace"? They, as we, have an abundant and never diminishing supply of grace from the God, our God, of all grace. We cannot breathe without favor of God. Acts 27:25, 28.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." I know what it is to

be proud. From God's word humility is defined. Isaiah 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

(James 4:7-12) "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (11) Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. (12) There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" Submit means to yield to power or authority. The resurrected Lord said to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore..."

If the body doesn't yield to the head, there is an unbalance, which results in instability.

These are actions that should be taken by children, men, and women saved by grace. Submit to God. Resist the devil, Draw nigh to God, and in His presence we are able to do things (things pleasing to Him) we would not otherwise be able to do, such as cleanse your hands and purify your heart.

"Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep," (James 4:9). To this writer *be* is a very strong command, the strongest in the holy writ. Our Lord never commanded us to *be* anything, any state of mind or heart, without giving us the grace to do what He commands. "But he giveth more grace." Thank God. Paul speaks of this grace (II Corinthians 9) with these words, "the exceeding grace of God in you," (meaning their liberality in giving and the grace of God that led them to give.)

(2 Corinthians 9:8) "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Utilize the grace He gives us. He won't run out. He will just give us "more grace."

Elder Wallace Johnson
Woodcrest Primitive Baptist Church
Ashland, Missouri

*Take ye heed, watch and pray:
for ye know not when the time is.
(Mark 13:33).*

A traveler in Italy arrived at the Villa Areconati, in the "beauty spot" of the Italian Alps, and was conducted through the exquisite garden by the gardener.

"How long have you been here?" the traveler asked.

"Twenty-five years."

"And how often has the owner been to see the estate?"

"Four times."

"When did he come last?"

"Twelve years ago."

"He writes to you, I suppose."

"Never."

"Who comes, then, to look after matters?"

"I am left pretty much alone; very seldom do I see even a stranger."

"Yet you keep the garden so spic and span and in such apple-pie order that one would think you were expecting the owner tomorrow."

"Today, sir, today," was the reply. All men should live as if expecting the return of the Savior today. "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Answers to Bible Quiz

1-Mary Magdalene, Mary, and Salome; 2-the angel of the Lord; 3-Jesus; 4-Soldiers; 5-Mary Magdalene; 6-Peter; 7-John; 8-Mary Magdalene; 9-Cleopas; 10-disciples; 11-Thomas

Devotions:

Psalms In Reflection

From the book of the same title by Elder Len Dalton

Hymns and Hymn Writers

Though Troubles Assail Us

THE FIRST PSALM

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like 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. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

It has well been said that the law of Jehovah is the master thought of this psalm. It is very interesting to notice how the words "obedient" and "disobedient" are placed in sharp contrast in the psalm. In order to vividly bring out the contrast so that it may quickly, be seen, we have but to call attention to the first and last words--"blessed," "perish." The former word brings to light the results of obedience, while the latter word reveals the results of disobedience.

Please take notice of the fact that the conditions of blessedness are stated both negatively and positively. Negatively, there must be complete separation from such as are disobedient. This can most clearly be seen by observing these words: "walketh," "standeth," "sitteth," "counsel," "way," "seat," "wicked," "sinners," "scornful."

The positive condition stressed is twofold: delight, and meditation in the law of God both day and night. Please do not miss the thought of the experience of blessedness as it is expressed or described by the figure of a tree planted by the rivers of water, bearing much fruit, and well coated with green leaves. Note also that such a man prospers in the things which he does.

In order to see the contrast, simply let the words, "The wicked are not so" be considered in the light of all that has been said concerning the righteous or blessed person. Instead of the wicked being like the tree planted by the waters, they are like the chaff driven by the wind. They will not be able to stand in the judgment. The psalm ends with a summary. "For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish." What a marvelous psalm for meditation!

The hardest work in the world is doing nothing! The lightest work in the world is pulling a load with one's neck in the yoke of love. Rest, real rest, ease of soul in the path of duty, is found in doing what one ought to do in the service of the one most loved of all. This is a rule of universal application - from the little child to the mightiest of earth's great ones.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." (Genesis 22:14)

When he quit the seafaring life, John Newton worked in the docks of Liverpool as a surveyor of tides from 1755 to 1760. During these years he settled down spiritually and began to mature. He came into contact with the great evangelist, George Whitefield, and was energized by thoughts of preaching the evangelical faith. Encouraged by his godly wife, Mary, he began studying Hebrew and Greek and preparing for the ministry.

At age 39, he was ordained, and shortly thereafter appointed to the Anglican church in Olney, England. He labored there fifteen years, during which he and the great British poet, William Cowper, developed a lasting friendship. The two men met virtually every day in the garden between their homes, and together they produced a volume of hymns.

In 1779, Newton was appointed rector of St. Mary's Woolnoth, a quaint church in the heart of London's financial district. Here he preached for 28 years until his death at age 82.

Late in life, when his mind began failing, he told his friend William Jay, "My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things, that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a Great Savior."

"Amazing Grace" is Newton's best-known hymn, but its popularity has obscured some of his other compositions. He wrote with incredible insight, yet his words are simple enough for children. Here is Newton's hymn based on Genesis 22:14:

*Though troubles assail us and dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail us and foes all unite,
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,
The promise assures us, "The Lord will provide."*

*The birds without garner or storehouse, are fed;
From them let us learn to trust God for our bread.
His saints what is fitting shall ne'er be denied
So long as 'tis written, the Lord will provide.."*

*When Satan assails us to stop up our path,
And courage all fail us, we triumph by faith.
He cannot take from us, though oft he has tried,
This heart cheering promise, "The Lord will provide."*

The story is related of an old deacon who was leading in prayer in a prayer meeting. One of his stereotyped phrases was this, "Oh, Lord, touch the unsaved with Thy finger." As he intoned this phrase in this particular prayer, he stopped short. Other members came to his side and asked if he were ill. "No," he replied, "but something seemed to say to me, 'Thou art the finger.' "

The Ten Primitive Persecutions

The Eighth Persecution, Under Valerian, A. D. 257 Began under Valerian, in the month of April, 257, and continued for three years and six months. The martyrs that fell in this persecution were innumerable, and their tortures and deaths as various and painful. The most eminent martyrs were the following, though neither rank, sex, nor age were regarded.

Rufina and Secunda were two beautiful and accomplished ladies, daughters of Asterius, a gentleman of eminence in Rome. Rufina, the elder, was designed in marriage for Armentarius, a young nobleman; Secunda, the younger, for Verinus, a person of rank and opulence. The suitors, at the time of the persecution's commencing, were both Christians; but when danger appeared, to save their fortunes, they renounced their faith. They took great pains to persuade the ladies to do the same, but, disappointed in their purpose, the lovers were base enough to inform against the ladies, who, being apprehended as Christians, were brought before Junius Donatus, governor of Rome, where, A. D. 257, they sealed their martyrdom with their blood.

Stephen, bishop of Rome, was beheaded in the same year, and about that time Saturninus, the pious orthodox bishop of Toulouse, refusing to sacrifice to idols, was treated with all the barbarous indignities imaginable, and fastened by the feet to the tail of a bull. Upon a signal given, the enraged animal was driven down the steps of the temple, by which the worthy martyr's brains were dashed out.

Sextus succeeded Stephen as bishop of Rome. He is supposed to have been a Greek by birth or by extraction, and had for some time served in the capacity of a deacon under Stephen. His great fidelity, singular wisdom, and uncommon courage distinguished him upon many occasions; and the happy conclusion of a controversy with some heretics is generally ascribed to his piety and prudence. In the year 258, Marcianus, who had the management of the Roman government, procured an order from the emperor Valerian, to put to death all the Christian clergy in Rome, and hence the bishop with six of his deacons, suffered martyrdom in

Let us draw near to the fire of martyred

Lawrence, that our cold hearts may be warmed thereby. The merciless tyrant, understanding him to be not only a minister of the sacraments, but a distributor also of the Church riches, promised to himself a double prey, by the apprehension of one soul. First, with the rake of avarice to scrape to himself the treasure of poor Christians; then with the fiery fork of tyranny, so to toss and turmoil them, that they should wax weary of their profession. With furious face and cruel countenance, the greedy wolf demanded where this Lawrence had bestowed the substance of the Church: who, craving three days' respite, promised to declare where the treasure might be had. In the meantime, he caused a good number of poor Christians to be congregated. So, when the day of his answer was come, the persecutor strictly charged him to stand to his promise. Then valiant Lawrence, stretching out his arms over the poor, said: "These are the precious treasure of the Church; these are the treasure indeed, in whom the faith of Christ reigneth, in whom Jesus Christ hath His mansion-place. What more precious jewels can Christ have, than those in whom He hath promised to dwell? For so it is written, 'I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in.' And again, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' What greater riches can Christ our Master possess, than the poor people in whom He loveth to be seen?"

O, what tongue is able to express the fury and madness of the tyrant's heart! Now he stamped, he stared, he ramped, he fared as one out of his wits: his eyes like fire glowed, his mouth like a boar foamed, his teeth like a hellhound grinned. Now, not a reasonable man, but a roaring lion, he might be called.

"Kindle the fire (he cried)—of wood make no spare. Hath this villain deluded the emperor? Away with him, away with him: whip him with scourges, jerk him with rods, buffet him with fists, brain him with clubs. Jesteth the traitor with the emperor? Pinch him with fiery tongs, gird him with burning plates, bring out the strongest chains, and the fire-forks, and the grated bed of iron: on the fire with it; bind the rebel hand and foot; and when the bed is fire-hot, on with

him: roast him, broil him, toss him, turn him: on pain of our high displeasure do every man his office, O ye tormentors."

The word was no sooner spoken, but all was done. After many cruel handlings, this meek lamb was laid, I will not say on his fiery bed of iron, but on his soft bed of down. So mightily God wrought with his martyr Lawrence, so miraculously God tempered His element the fire; that it became not a bed of consuming pain, but a pallet of nourishing rest.

In Africa the persecution raged with peculiar violence; many thousands received the crown of martyrdom, among whom the following were the most distinguished characters

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, an eminent prelate, and a pious ornament of the Church. The brightness of his genius was tempered by the solidity of his judgment; and with all the accomplishments of the gentleman, he blended the virtues of a Christian. His doctrines were orthodox and pure; his language easy and elegant; and his manners graceful and winning: in fine, he was both the pious and polite preacher. In his youth he was educated in the principles of Gentilism, and having a considerable fortune, he lived in the very extravagance of splendor, and all the dignity of pomp.

About the year 246, Coecilius, a Christian minister of Carthage, became the happy instrument of Cyprian's conversion: on which account, and for the great love that he always afterward bore for the author of his conversion, he was termed Coecilius Cyprian. Previous to his baptism, he studied the Scriptures with care and being struck with the beauties of the truths they contained, he determined to practise the virtues therein recommended. Subsequent to his baptism, he sold his estate, distributed the money among the poor, dressed himself in plain attire, and commenced a life of austerity. He was soon after made a presbyter; and, being greatly admired for his virtues and works, on the death of Donatus, in A. D. 248, he was almost unanimously elected bishop of Carthage.

Cyprian's care not only extended over Carthage, but to Numidia and Mauritania. In all his transactions he took great care to ask the advice of his clergy, knowing that unanimity alone could be of service to the Church, this being one of his maximus. "That the bishop was in

(Continued on page 8)

PEACE MEETINGS

The word "peace" signifies a wonderful state of being, and is applicable to nations, to groups of people in the numerous organizations of the world, to Churches, and to individuals. It is a Bible term, and emanates from Him whose "written word" declares Him to be "the God of Peace." Paul uses the expression, "the God of peace," about five times in his letters to the various Churches and individuals. This same God once said by the mouth of one of His prophets, "I will give peace" and through His Son Jesus He informed His followers, just before Jesus' departure from this world, "My peace I leave with you."

This is the genuine, the REAL, the supreme peace which ALL His followers must possess, and display, if they "follow in His steps." This peace comes to His people in only one way, and that is "Through our Lord Jesus Christ"-for "He is our peace." Yet, in all that is recorded of Him in the New Testament, I fail to find where He at any time made a "Peace Proposition." Yes, we have read of "Peace Propositions," but not in God's word. There is a vast difference in proposing peace, and in giving peace. "Peace Propositions" usually contain many "whereases" and "wherefores," and if you'll do this, and I'll do that, et cetera, which necessarily involve a compromise on the part of each party concerned. There cannot be a compromise between the TRUE and the FALSE. When truth has compromised error it ceases to be TRUTH. When the Apostle Paul admonished the Thessalonians to "be at peace among themselves," he did not suggest any form of compromise with that which had disturbed them; nor when he admonished the Corinthian brethren to "be of one mind, and live in peace" did he suggest any compromise with error. This is the very principle upon which the Church must stand if we are to continue our building "UPON THIS ROCK."

But we must not confuse those who "err from the truth" with those who err in judgment but whose deportment conforms to the apostolic rule of conduct. Repentance on the one hand and forgiveness on the other is what is required of a congregation of "baptized believers" to properly qualify them to "live in peace with one another." This rule applies not only to individuals, but to Churches and groups as well. Fault-finding is condemned by God's Holy Word, which commands us to "Confess your faults one to another." If we would heed and apply this "remedy," we would soon discover it to be a

specific in the "cure" of "old sores," and a quick healer of the fresh wound.

In a recent issue of one of our exchanges, I have read the suggestion of a brother for a "Peace Meeting." While I do not call in question the sincerity and good intentions of the brother, my honest opinion is that such a meeting would not result in any lasting good to our strife-torn and divided people. That is, if we are to judge by the results of the many "Councils" and "Peace Meetings" that our people have held within the past fifty years. In my fifty years among the Primitive Baptists, I have had occasion to observe the effects of many of these "Councils" and "Peace Meetings" here in the state of Texas, and have likewise learned of the havoc such meetings have wrought in other sections of our country.

Now please do not misunderstand me. There is absolutely nothing that would afford me more genuine pleasure than to learn that ALL the different groups of Primitive Baptists who are fundamentally agreed on the teachings of God's Holy Book had reunited or come together as one band of "Old School" or Primitive Baptists. May the dear Lord hasten that day, for I long to see at least some strong indications to that effect before I go hence.

Only a genuine and sacred desire, prompted exclusively by "the God of peace," to "live in peace with one another," will bring about a lasting union of our people. A man-made peace will not suffice.

Our group of Baptists which the Primitive Baptist Advocate represents subscribe to the doctrine set forth in the London Confession of Faith, as well as that set forth in the "Fulton Address" and its footnotes, all of which is fully set forth in our "Articles of Faith" printed on the inside cover of each issue of this magazine.

The meeting at Fulton, Kentucky, held 53 years ago, and commonly referred to as "The Fulton Address," was designed to be a "Peace Meeting." But, notwithstanding the great number of able and God-fearing ministers that constituted this vast assembly, representing every portion of this great nation of ours, it proved to be a failure. It was supposed to bring about peace and reconciliation among those represented by the great assembly, but it failed. I do not think it failed because of the design, the efforts, and the principles for which it contended, but because many of its members failed to carry out the

agreement to which they had subscribed. Scarcely had the ink dried on the agreement which they had signed before many of them were back home denouncing the very thing they had subscribed to at this "Peace Meeting."

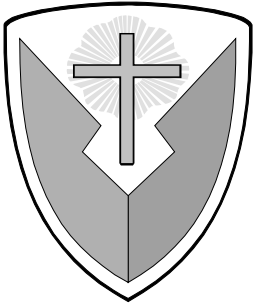
I have no panacea or "cure-all" to offer that I think might produce a "cure" for the afflictions of our distressed and soul-sick people as a whole, more than to say with the Psalmist, "Let, us look to the hills; from whence cometh our help," or to adopt the language of the Prophet Isaiah to National. Israel when he said, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

I note, from perusing our exchanges, representing the various and sundry groups of our divided people, that there seems to be a better feeling existing among the different groups, one toward the other, and that there are not so many signs of resenting or "fighting back" at those with whom they chance to disagree on what we usually term the "nonessentials." This spirit is commendable, and if it is cultivated will do more to bring about reconciliation of the different groups than anything I could suggest.

If I should hazard a suggestion, it, would be this: Where there have been lines drawn by designing men in the past which have separated good brethren, Churches, and associations which are agreed on the essentials and fundamental principles of the Gospel, let our ministers among these various groups begin visiting each other; and each other's Churches and congregations; and where there is no vital difference, let all just FORGET there have ever been "lines drawn," and treat each other as though nothing had ever occurred to mar or disturb their fellowship or association. In all sincerity, I believe this the most effective way in bringing lasting PEACE among our divided and subdivided people, at this time. Remember, this is merely *my* suggestion, and it does not cost you anything to consider it.

Lastly, let us pray that God's holy and divine Spirit may guide us in all our undertakings in His great cause.

A. H. Roden from *The Armor of God*
April, 1953



Shield of Faith
Elder Greg Phillips, Editor
807 Ashwood Lane
Chattanooga, TN 37415

feedback@shieldoffaith.us

The *Shield of Faith* is available without charge to any who request it. Request for subscriptions or donations should be directed to the editor at the above address.

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, Hebrews 10:24

The Ten Primitive Persecutions

(Continued from page 6)

the church, and the church in the bishop; so that unity can only be preserved by a close connexion between the pastor and his flock."

In A. D. 250, Cyprian was publicly proscribed by the emperor Decius, under the appellation of Coecilius Cyprian, bishop of the Christians; and the universal cry of the pagans was, "Cyprian to the lions, Cyprian to the beasts." The bishop, however, withdrew from the rage of the populace, and his effects were immediately confiscated. During his retirement, he wrote thirty pious and elegant letters to his flock; but several schisms that then crept into the Church, gave him great uneasiness. The rigor of the persecution abating, he returned to Carthage, and did everything in his power to expunge erroneous opinions. A terrible plague breaking out in Carthage, it was as usual, laid to the charge of the Christians; and the magistrates began to persecute accordingly, which occasioned an epistle from there to Cyprian, in answer to which he vindicates the cause of Christianity. A. D. 257, Cyprian was brought before the proconsul Aspasius Paturmus, who exiled him to a little city on the Lybian sea. On the death of this proconsul, he returned to Carthage, but was soon after seized, and carried before the new governor, who condemned him to be beheaded; which sentence was executed on the fourteenth of September, A. D. 258.

The disciples of Cyprian, martyred in this persecution, were Lucius, Flavian, Victorius, Remus, Montanus, Julian, Primelus, and Donatian.

At Utica, a most terrible tragedy was exhibited: three hundred Christians were, by the orders of the proconsul, placed round a burning limekiln. A pan of coals and incense being prepared, they were commanded either to sacrifice to Jupiter, or to be thrown into

the kiln. Unanimously refusing, they bravely jumped into the pit, and were immediately suffocated.

Fructuosus, bishop of Tarragon, in Spain, and his two deacons, Augurius and Eulogius, were burnt for being Christians. Alexander, Malchus, and Priscus, three Christians of Palestine, with a woman of the same place, voluntarily accused themselves of being Christians; on which account they were sentenced to be devoured by tigers, which sentence was executed accordingly. Maxima, Donatilla, and Secunda, three virgins of Tuburga, had gall and vinegar given them to drink, were then severely scourged, tormented on a gibbet, rubbed with lime, scorched on a gridiron, worried by wild beasts, and at length beheaded.

It is here proper to take notice of the singular but miserable fate of the emperor Valerian, who had so long and so terribly persecuted the Christians. This tyrant, by a stratagem, was taken prisoner by Sapor, emperor of Persia, who carried him into his own country, and there treated him with the most unexampled indignity, making him kneel down as the meanest slave, and treading upon him as a footstool when he mounted his horse. After having kept him for the space of seven years in this abject state of slavery, he caused his eyes to be put out, though he was then eighty-three years of age. This not satiating his desire of revenge, he soon after ordered his body to be flayed alive, and rubbed with salt, under which torments he expired; and thus fell one of the most tyrannical emperors of Rome, and one of the greatest persecutors of the Christians.

A. D. 260, Gallienus, the son of Valerian, succeeded him, and during his reign (a few martyrs excepted) the Church enjoyed peace for some years.

From *Fox's Book Of Martyrs*