
Shield of Faith

A Primitive Baptist Publication

May 2005

Happy Are Ye

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:17)

Jesus, in His earthly ministry, taught in both word and deed. Jesus said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15 KJV). His words have immediate reference to His example of washing the disciple's feet but could as well apply to Jesus' entire life. The apostle Peter wrote, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:" (1 Peter 2:21-23).

John recorded the events of the evening: "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:1-7).

The Lord and His disciples had taken off their sandals according to custom. They sat down to the table with dry and dusty feet, but no one brought water to wash their feet, a duty of hospitality in

their society. None of the apostles had volunteered to attend to this, the duty of the lowest slave.

When David sent to Abigail, to inform her that he had chosen her for wife, she arose and said: Behold, let thy handmaid be a servant, to wash the feet of the servants of my lord (1 Samuel 25:41). Abigail demonstrated great humility before her king. The disciples were ambitious and envious, and had engaged in strife right at the Lord's table. "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke 22:24). Here we see no humility demonstrated.

The Lord, fully conscious of His divinity, arose, girded on the towel, and began to wash the disciple's feet. This action was a rebuke to their ambitious strife far more powerful than words could have spoken. His action said, "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." (Mark 10:44).

Jesus in this instance gave *one* example, and admonished *one* action. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). Note carefully, though, Jesus' words. If ye know *these things*, happy are ye if ye do *them*. (John 13:17, emphasis added). It is my understanding that Jesus did emphatically command the disciples to actually wash one another's feet, "ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Some say that Jesus set an example of humility and that we should, in like manner, have the humble spirit of a servant, being *willing* to serve. This is true, but we also must have the spirit of obedience to *do* what Jesus said do. As we follow Jesus' example and wash one another's feet, we are reminded in a powerful way of the humble spirit we each must have in order to be true disciples. At the same time, the wording seems to imply that more is under consideration than this one act: If ye know *these things*, happy are ye if ye do *them*. *These things* refers to all that Jesus had been

teaching them.

John says of Jesus, "... having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). It is vital that we know the love Christ has for *His own*. What a wonderful expression is *His own*! Many pride themselves in "being his own man," but the believer rejoices in being "a peculiar treasure" unto the One Who purchased us. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

"He loved them unto the end." Unto what end did He love them? Certainly unto the end of His earthly ministry; but His love had ended there, where would we be? He loves His own to the end of our deepest need. He Loves to the fullest extent of our need of His grace.

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God: He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself" (John 13:4). As Jesus laid aside His garments, we are reminded that He laid aside the outward glory of His divinity. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). Christ's taking the form of a servant is wonderfully illustrated in Exodus 21. "Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if

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Happy Are Ye

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he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever" (Exodus 21:1-6). Jesus Christ has plainly said, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free."

"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:6-8). Peter, no doubt, felt his own unworthiness, and thought he acted out of humility. He had not yet learned to simply submit himself to the Saviour and to learn from Him.

"Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." What did the Lord mean when He said "no part with me"? He had reference to fellowship. Without the washing, there could be no fellowship.

"Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (v. 9). Peter, at the thought of having no part with his Lord, goes to the opposite extreme. He is ready now to be washed all over. "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (v. 10). "He that is washed," could be rendered, "He who has been *bathed*," that is, his whole person cleansed: "needeth not only to wash his *feet*," then is he completely fit for communion with the Lord. There is a washing which believers have in Christ that needs not be ever repeated. In Him there is to be found a cleansing which is never lost. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). The believer has been purged from *all* sin, and *made meet* to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light (Colossians 1:13).

This purging needs no repetition. But there is another truth of great practical importance: "He that is bathed needeth not save to *wash his feet*, but is clean every whit." There is a *partial cleansing* which the believer still needs, a daily washing to counteract the defiling effects of this world. Our daily contact with the evil all around causes defilement. We need to come afresh into the presence of Christ, surrendering ourselves to His judgment in everything and submitting to His purging.

"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13:12-13). *Master* means *teacher*. The word translated *Lord* is applied to one who rules, and is often given to God as being the Proprietor and Ruler of all things. It is given to Christ many hundred times in the New Testament He was their Teacher and Instructor, and he was their Sovereign and King.

Servants ought to imitate their masters, and subjects to obey their Lord and king. Christ is a Master to teach and direct; a Lord to govern and protect. As he is a Master, we are to learn from Him: as Lord, we are to serve in his house: he must be submitted to as a Prince, as well as relied upon as a Saviour. Another argument which our Lord makes use of to press his disciples to imitate his example, is drawn from his dignity and superiority over them: The servant is not greater than his Lord.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). We are to wash one another's feet both literally and figuratively. We are to humbly submit to one another in whatever service is needful regardless of how menial it might be. We are also to wash one another's feet from the defilement of the world. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2). "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of

sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

Jesus bases this happiness on two things, knowing *and* doing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). It is not enough to simply know the teachings of the Lord. His teachings must be put into practice. There can be no proper *doing* without proper knowledge.

The followers of Jesus Christ were called *disciples*. A disciple was one who *followed* a teacher to learn from him and to imitate him, to live as the master lived. If we are to be His disciples, we must learn and follow His example.

The result of *knowing* and *doing* is happiness. The Greek word translated *happy* means *supremely blessed, well off*. Our English word *happy* has reference to favorable circumstances. To be blessed is to enjoy the favor of God regardless of the outward circumstances we may be in. I have been privileged to observe many whose outward circumstances were anything but favorable and yet they had great peace and joy in their lives. In poverty, in sickness, even in sorrow, they could still praise the Lord and find joy in Him.

On the other hand, I have observed some who seeming had the most favorable of circumstance, good health, prosperity, etc. and were most miserable. What made the difference? A proper relationship with the Lord—knowing *these things* and doing them.

Notice

All ministers of the gospel who embrace the doctrines of Sovereign Grace are invited to gather at Fairview Primitive Baptist Church at Chattanooga, TN on Thursday evening, June 2, 2005 at 7:00 PM EDT to join ourselves in fervent and united prayer for the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

For directions or more information, contact the pastor, Elder Greg Phillips at (423) 875-3652 or e-mail eldphil@bellsouth.net.

Bible Quiz

Few mothers and daughters are named in the Bible. Answer the following questions with the proper mother or daughter.

1. Who was the mother who instructed her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head (Matt. 14:6-8)?
2. Who became mother to her daughter-in-law (Ruth 1:16-19) ?
3. Who were the mother and daughter Paul commended for proper rearing of a son (2 Tim. 1:5)?
4. Who was the daughter who watched her baby brother in a basket boat made by her mother (Ex. 2:3-4;15:20)?
5. Who was the daughter of Leah and Jacob (Gen. 30:21)?
6. Who was the prophetess whose mother was unknown (Judges. 4:4)?
7. Who was the mother, later memorialized in salt, who fled with her two daughters (Gen. 19: 15)?
8. Who was the daughter-in-law picked by a servant (Gen. 24: 1-4,15)?
9. Who was the mother who left her daughters many times for other lovers and was forgiven by her husband each time (Hos. 1:3; 2:1-5)?
10. Who was the mother who chose her daughter-in-law (Gen. 21:17-21)?

Answers on page 4.

A Sermon

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day!
 I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.
 The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear.
 Fine counsel is confusing but example's always clear.
 I soon can learn to do it, if you'll let me see it done;
 I can watch your hands in action,
 but your tongue too fast may run.
 And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,
 But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do;
 For I might misunderstand you
 and the high advice you give,
 But there's no misunderstanding
 how you act and how you live.

Edgar A. Guest

"A persecuted church has a repelling power as well as an attracting power. The great awakening's of the past have not been begun by the gathering in of the many, but by the deeper consecration of the few."

--Vance Havner

Prayer- secret, fervent, believing prayer- lies at the root of all personal godliness.

--Carey's Brotherhood

The Call to Humiliation

With Christendom we are sufficiently identified by a common profession of Christianity, and by personal participation, alas! in its sins, to feel the sentence of excision pronounced on it, to be a loud call on us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. It was when Josiah was informed that nothing could cause the sentence to be revoked which had gone forth against Jerusalem and Judah, personal exemption indeed being promised to him, that he still further humbled himself before the Lord, and set about promoting a reformation, which had till then no parallel in the nation's history. The judgments could not be averted, and they were not; but Josiah's penitence was fully owned of God, and the reformation he was used to bring about was a bright testimony for God on the very eve of the nation's overthrow. Oh for something of his spirit! "Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest His words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humblest thyself before Me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before Me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and upon the inhabitants of the same." (2 Chronicles 34:27, 28).

We, my brethren, are not comforted by the assurance of being gathered to the grave in peace, but by the hope of being gathered to meet the Lord in the air: so that when the judgments come, we shall not be amid the scene on which they are poured, but in the heavens whence they issue. But surely the effect of such a hope is not to make the heart indifferent to the dishonor cast on Christ's name by the sins of those who bear it, whether really or in profession only. We are identified with that to which Christ has, in His absence, so to speak, entrusted His glory; we cannot refuse to bow our heads, and, by confessing our sin, and bearing the shame and sorrow of it before Him, justify Him in those judgments by which, ere long, He will vindicate His despised and dishonored claims; and make manifest that however we may have forgotten His glory, He remembers it, and knows how to assert and manifest it, to the glory of His Father, the joy of His saints, the confusion of His adversaries, and the deliverance of an oppressed and groaning creation? To His name be glory forever!

-Doom of Christendom, W. Trotter

Two Christians were once speaking of their experiences, and one said, "It is terribly hard to trust God and realize His hand in the dark passages of life." "Well, brother," said the other, "if you cannot trust a man out of your sight, he is not worth much; and if you cannot *trust God in the dark*, it shows you do not trust Him at all."

-- Courtesy of *Moody Monthly*.

On Whose Foundation?

The suggestion has been made that a wrong tendency would appear to have entered into our professed Christian life during the past fifty or sixty years—that there is a building up of the professed Christian Church on the experiences of men of a past day more than on those vital truths which find their place in the Scriptures. If such is the case, can we wonder that there is a growing weakness in our "denominational" life.

The true Church of Christ is not founded on the things of men, but on those great truths which find their place in the divine Scriptures and on the experienced power of the inworking of the Holy Spirit. God molds the experiences of His people in accordance with His own will, but He does not make them to be the foundation whereon His Church is to be built up and established. The Word of God and those vital truths which find a place therein form the only true foundation whereon the Church of Christ can find a true resting-place.

God gives to every man severally as He will and sovereignly as to His own purpose but it is on no man's experience that the true Church of Christ can be built up. We must ever come back to the only vital touch-stone and test of our life and that is the experienced power of the work of the Holy Spirit in our inmost soul which brings us to rest wholly and only on that Rock foundation set forth in His ever-living Word. It is on Christ—and on Christ alone—our hopes are to be built and our faith founded. Every other foundation can but be sinking sand. God, by His quickening grace and the teaching of the Holy Spirit and by the empowering of His Word can alone lay the foundation and build up the Church. All other ground is, and must be a false foundation.

At the present day there is a most solemn need for us to examine ourselves as to the true foundation of our hope. Does it lie in the experiences of other men, or in that which by God's grace has been done for us in bringing us into a vital relationship with

Christ? Can we each and all truly say through the witness of the Holy Spirit within,

"On Christ, the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand?"

This question is one of most vital importance, and never more so than at the present day.

-Ben A. Warburton

GOD BEATS THE TIME

There is no music in a rest, but there is the making of music in it. In our whole life melody, the music is broken off here and there by "rests" and we foolishly think we have come to the end of time. God sends a time of forced leisure — sickness, disappointed plans, frustrated efforts — and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives, and we lament that our voices must be silent, and our praise missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator.

How does the musician read the "rest"? See him beat time with his unvarying count and catch up the next note true and steady as if no breaking had come in between. Not without design does God write the music of our lives. But be it ours to be slurred over, not to be omitted, not to destroy the melody, not to change the keynote. Look up, God Himself will beat the time for us! With the eye on Him, we shall strike the next note full and clear.

-John Ruskin.

Surely all that He sends and permits in the lives of His people has a meaning; happy are we if we trust Him in all things and at all times.-A. G.

Answers to Bible Quiz

1-Herodias, 2-Naomi, 3-Eunice and Lois, 4-Miriam, 5-Dinah, 6-Deborah, 7-Lot's wife, 8-Rebekah, 9-Gomer, 10-Hagar

SINCERITY

Christianity produces the highest order of civilization; because it checks effeminacy, waste, extravagance, hypocrisy, idleness, oppression, and builds up industry, honesty, economy, and all morality and robustness of thought and action. Christ teaches him neither to waste his time nor his substance; and that it is much his duty to provide an honest living as it is to be baptized.

A great many so-called Christians, think they may go to meeting weeks at a time and neglect their business, and that God approbates such idleness because it is religious, as if religion consisted in going to meeting and ended when meeting was over. But the truth is that Christ's religion is as much in the field, the store room, the work shop, as it is in the church house. A Christian does not go to meeting as if he conferred a favor on God by going, but the privilege of going he esteems a favor of God to him. The mere outward profession will fail in time of trial and persecution, whilst the profession in Spirit will be intensified by trials and persecution. He who merely goes in form can give it up without regret, whilst he who goes in Spirit has no rest in disobedience. The one is a mere convenience while the other is a necessity.

Elder John R. Respass in
The Collected Writings of John R. Respass,

<<A Song of degrees of David.>> I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good. (Psalms 122:1-9 KJV)

Devotions:

*Psalms In Reflection**From the book of the same title by Elder Len Dalton**Hymns and Hymn Writers**MORE LOVE TO THEE, O CHRIST*

THE TWELFTH PSALM

<<To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.>> Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted. (Psalms 12:1-8 KJV)

Because the singer is deeply conscious of the terrible evil of the times, he cries to Jehovah for help. He realizes that such conditions as prevailed always present the gravest peril that can threaten a nation or an age. Such conditions gravely afflict the heart of a trusting soul.

It is interesting to compare this psalm with the tenth. There is, however, one notable difference. In this psalm there is a cry for help, but there is no suggestion that Jehovah is indifferent. In this psalm, there is an immediate expression of confidence in the interest and interference of God.

It is beautiful and very impressive to notice how Jehovah, in answer to the cry and the affirmation of confidence so that the singer hears Him, is able to announce His declaration even before the song ceases. The answer of Jehovah is very precious, because it promises the preservation of the trusting.

The song then breaks out into praise of the purity of His words, and the singer declares that Jehovah will "keep them" and "preserve them." The "them" here of course refers to the words of Jehovah. While there is no promise of any particular and widespread renewal or revival, it is the salvation of a remnant of the faithful and the preservation of His own words that Jehovah promises.

The psalm ends with a description of the same conditions as were described at the beginning. It is the cry of a godly soul amidst prevailing ungodliness for the help of Jehovah. This cry is answered with a definite promise of help. Well, then, we may still sing:

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

"Why should this happen to us, of all people?" asked Mrs. Elizabeth Prentiss of her minister husband, as her tears flowed.

"Maybe we should ask ourselves why a thing like this should not happen to us? Are we better than any of the other families who have lost loved ones in this epidemic?" he asked, sympathetically. "Does God play favorites with anyone?"

Mrs. Prentiss dropped her face in her hands and wept for a long time. She thought of all she had done up to that time when death had come to claim her loved ones. Born in Portland, Maine, the daughter of a devout clergyman, she had early displayed unusual literary talent. When a young girl of sixteen she was a regular contributor to one of the nation's leading magazines, "The Youth's Companion," published in Boston. After completing her education she had taught school for several years. At twenty-seven she became the bride of Rev. George L. Prentiss, and moved to New York City where he was pastor of the Mercer Street Presbyterian Church.

It was after eleven years of marriage, in 1856, that tragedy struck and took away the precious loved ones from the family circle. For weeks she was almost inconsolable, despite the sincerity of her Christian faith.

"George," she said one evening when they had returned home from the cemetery, "The night is dark and I am far from home. What are we to do now? Just sit silently, passively by while our home is broken up, our lives wrecked, our hopes shattered, our dreams dissolved?"

Her husband replied, lovingly, "This is our opportunity to show forth in our lives that which we have been preaching and teaching and believing together for so many years."

Mrs. Prentiss looked up and said, "I remember so well one phrase you used in last Sunday's sermon. It has helped me very much during these trying days. You said several times, 'Love can keep the soul from going blind.'"

"And it is true, my dear. The more we love God as we know Him in Jesus, the more His healing miracle takes place in our own hearts. The less we love Him, the less chance there is that we will be able to stand the agony and pain of our loss."

When he went out to make pastoral calls before supper, she sat in the living room, thumbing through the Bible, reading several selections. Then, laying the Book down, she looked through a hymnal, seeking light and consolation from the hymns which reflected the sorrows and triumphs of other Christians in similar circumstances. When she came across "Nearer My God to Thee," she read it aloud several times, praying in her heart that her own experience would parallel that of Jacob, who met God at the least likely time and place, but who was a new man from that day on. The rhythm of the stanzas stayed with her as she meditated and prayed. Then, without too much conscious effort, she began to write down some lines of her own in the same metrical pattern that Sarah Adams had used in writing her poetic version of Jacob at Bethel. Her poem began: More love to Thee, O Christ, More love to Thee; Hear Thou the prayer I make, On bended knee. This is my earnest plea, More love O Christ, to Thee; More love to Thee.

She completed four stanzas that same evening, but did not show them to her husband until thirteen years later. The hymn was first printed in leaflet form in 1869, and in a hymnal the next year, 1870. Although she wrote five books before her death in 1878, in her sixtieth year, one of them, "Stepping Heavenward" becoming a best-seller, she lives on in the hearts of Christian people because of her hymn, "More Love To Thee, O Christ."

The Ten Primitive Persecutions

The Tenth Persecution, Under Diocletian A. D. 303... Under the Roman emperors, commonly called the Era of the Martyrs, was occasioned partly by the increasing number and luxury of the Christians, and the hatred of Galerius, the adopted son of Diocletian, who, being stimulated by his mother, a bigoted pagan never ceased persuading the emperor to enter upon the persecution, until he had accomplished his purpose.

The fatal day fixed upon to commence the bloody work, was the twenty-third of February, A. D. 303, that being the day in which the Terminalia were celebrated, and on which, as the cruel pagans boasted, they hoped to put a termination to Christianity. On the appointed day, the persecution began in Nicomedia, on the morning of which the prefect of that city repaired, with a great number of officers and assistants, to the church of the Christians, where, having forced open the doors, they seized upon all the sacred books, and committed them to the flames.

The whole of this transaction was in the presence of Diocletian and Galerius, who, not contented with burning the books, had the church leveled with the ground. This was followed by a severe edict, commanding the destruction of all other Christian churches and books; and an order soon succeeded, to render Christians of all denomination outlaws.

The publication of this edict occasioned an immediate martyrdom, for a bold Christian not only tore it down from the place to which it was affixed, but execrated the name of the emperor for his injustice. A provocation like this was sufficient to call down pagan vengeance upon his head; he was accordingly seized, severely tortured, and then burned alive.

All the Christians were apprehended and imprisoned; and Galerius privately ordered the imperial palace to be set on fire, that the Christians might be charged as the incendiaries, and a plausible pretence given for carrying on the persecution with the greater severities. A general sacrifice was

commenced, which occasioned various martyrdoms. No distinction was made of age or sex; the name of Christian was so obnoxious to the pagans that all indiscriminately fell sacrifices to their opinions. Many houses were set on fire, and whole Christian families perished in the flames; and others had stones fastened about their necks, and being tied together were driven into the sea. The persecution became general in all the Roman provinces, but more particularly in the east; and as it lasted ten years, it is impossible to ascertain the numbers martyred, or to enumerate the various modes of martyrdom.

Racks, scourges, swords, daggers, crosses, poison, and famine, were made use of in various parts to dispatch the Christians; and invention was exhausted to devise tortures against such as had no crime, but thinking differently from the votaries of superstition.

A city of Phrygia, consisting entirely of Christians, was burnt, and all the inhabitants perished in the flames. Tired with slaughter, at length, several governors of provinces represented to the imperial court, the impropriety of such conduct. Hence many were respited from execution, but, though they were not put to death, as much as possible was done to render their lives miserable, many of them having their ears cut off, their noses slit, their right eyes put out, their limbs rendered useless by dreadful dislocations, and their flesh seared in conspicuous places with red-hot irons.

It is necessary now to particularize the most conspicuous persons who laid down their lives in martyrdom in this bloody persecution. Sebastian, a celebrated martyr, was born at Narbonne, in Gaul, instructed in the principles of Christianity at Milan, and afterward became an officer of the emperor's guard at Rome. He remained a true Christian in the midst of idolatry; unallured by the splendors of a court, untainted by evil examples, and uncontaminated by the hopes of preferment. Refusing to be a pagan, the emperor ordered him to be taken to a

field near the city, termed the Campus Martius, and there to be shot to death with arrows; which sentence was executed accordingly. Some pious Christians coming to the place of execution, in order to give his body burial, perceived signs of life in him, and immediately moving him to a place of security, they, in a short time effected his recovery, and prepared him for a second martyrdom; for, as soon as he was able to go out, he placed himself intentionally in the emperor's way as he was going to the temple, and reprehended him for his various cruelties and unreasonable prejudices against Christianity. As soon as Diocletian had overcome his surprise, he ordered Sebastian to be seized, and carried to a place near the palace, and beaten to death; and, that the Christians should not either use means again to recover or bury his body, he ordered that it should be thrown into the common sewer. Nevertheless, a Christian lady, named Lucina, found means to remove it from the sewer, and bury it in the catacombs, or repositories of the dead.

The Christians, about this time, upon mature consideration, thought it unlawful to bear arms under a heathen emperor. Maximilian, the son of Fabius Victor, was the first beheaded under this regulation.

Vitus, a Sicilian of considerable family, was brought up a Christian; when his virtues increased with his years, his constancy supported him under all afflictions, and his faith was superior to the most dangerous perils. His father, Hylas, who was a pagan, finding that he had been instructed in the principles of Christianity by the nurse who brought him up, used all his endeavors to bring him back to paganism, and at length sacrificed his son to the idols, June 14, A. D. 303.

Victor was a Christian of a good family at Marseilles, in France; he spent a great part of the night in visiting the afflicted, and confirming the weak; which pious work he could not, consistently with his own safety, perform in the daytime; and his fortune

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NOTES ON JOHN 3:14-16

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"The people spake against God and against Moses" (Num. xxi. 5) and by the way of punishment "the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." "The sting of death is sin" (I Cor. xv. 56), and to my mind the deadly bites gave all those bitten a very painful knowledge of the awful consequences of their sin against God. The bitten Israelites typify sinners made painfully conscious of their sinful and lost condition. The "serpent of brass" typifies Jesus Christ. Moses (the law) lifted up this serpent on a pole. Its brightness made it easily seen by the remotest in the camps of Israel, and all those bitten, looking thereon lived. Their natural life was saved to them. This cure was effectual and certain in every case. While they may have suffered pain after they looked, they certainly did not die, though bitten with death. To my mind not one Israelite died from the sting of those serpents after the brazen serpent was raised up, for it was the gracious Lord's express purpose to save the lives of those bitten by such means. And so I fail to see where there is any real ground to conclude that any of those bitten sulked in their tents and refused to look and died through such refusal. The souls that are really pained with a stinging sense of guilt against God are always willing to look, though sometimes their faith may be weak and much clouded with darkness and errors.

The brass serpent possessed all its virtue to cure and preserve life through God's appointment. And for a like reason Jesus Christ, the great Physician, possesses such wonderful sin-healing and life power. In this present life the believer retains a feeling sense of sin, but he shall live eternally and not die, for the everlasting faithfulness of Almighty God to His purpose in Christ makes this certain. "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." That the Scriptures be fulfilled there was a positive need that the Son of man be lifted up, and I believe that just as certain as He was so raised, just that certain also will all His people be raised up from their awful condition in sin and spiritual death to that blest state of salvation and eternal life.

Unbitten Israelites may have very stoutly ridiculed the idea that looking unto a brass serpent, bearing the image of the hated serpents, would positively and effectively save the lives of those bitten by such deadly serpents; but those actually bitten no doubt

gladly embraced the opportunity to live by looking, for they were given faith to look to the remedy that God had in His rich mercy for them provided. To all such it meant life; but as it was not raised up for the unbitten, it meant nothing to them.

Moses made the brass serpent (quite harmless in itself) in the form and appearance of those fiery serpents. So Jesus Christ (who was so holy and harmless in Himself) was made in the likeness and to bear the hateful image of sinful flesh, for He was made to be sin and a curse, and all that look to Him by faith will certainly be saved; for the believer in Him is most graciously promised eternal life, and our merciful God will surely make this promise good. "This is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life"-1 John ii. 25, and remember it was made by Him "that cannot lie." (Tit. i.2.) The believing world shall not perish but have eternal life through such gracious provisions.

And simply looking to that brazen serpent, or the natural eyes of the bitten Israelites, did not give it that efficacy to preserve life; for God had already provided it with that power on purpose to save their lives. So likewise looking to Jesus Christ does not give Him power to save, for nothing that any man can do can possibly add to His saving and life-giving power. But the blessed subjects of His redeeming love are given faith to believe that which in His amazing mercy for them is already provided. So it is not the act of believing (which so often seems to be erroneously considered as some great effort of the mind) but the thing believed. It is not faith itself at all, but the great and glorious object which faith embraces, and this is Jesus Christ, whose blood alone possesses the power to cleanse from all sin, and save from eternal death, the penalty of sin.

"For God so loved the world," etc. Our minds call only faintly conceive of the wonderful strength of this love, for it "passeth knowledge."--Eph. iii. 19. And surely it is not faith in such redeeming love that supposes that any included in this blessed number will or may be lost. True faith in God believes that His purpose in sending Christ (who was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God") into this world cannot in the least degree be thwarted; for "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. xv. 3. This redeeming love is the moving cause of His wonderful salvation. And this believing world, which Jesus Christ is here speaking of, embraces a large multitude, and they, every one, will be given eternal life, for His words are so positive to that end. I believe that Jesus has reference to the same world as John when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away

the sin of the world."-John i. 29. And it should be noticed that this sin is absolutely taken away. So a full salvation must be the certain result. To the same effect is Christ declared to be the "Savior of the world."-John iv. 42. Also, 1 John ii. 2 and iv. 14. What right and how dare any one declare that any part of that blest world will be lost? It is but little short of blasphemy to so contradict the positive words of our blest Redeemer.

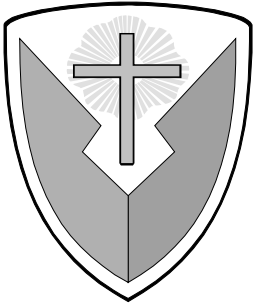
While Universalism has a very pleasing appearance, it is deceptive in that it cannot be true, because the Bible declares some are lost. Believers should rest perfectly assured that the blessed Bible does not contain any contradictory statements, but is always harmonious when correctly interpreted. And it should be noted that it speaks of two different worlds and this fact should be kept in mind. It is God's sovereign, redeeming love which spreads out the bounds and limits of His salvation. But does this love embrace the whole race of Adam? Surely not if there be any lost. The Bible plainly declares that some are lost, and as not one drop of the precious blood of Jesus Christ was shed in vain, we can only consistently conclude that none of it was shed for those not benefited thereby.

The word "many" is often used in connection with the work of our blessed Redeemer, (Is. liii. 11, 12; Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark x. 45; Heb. ii. 10; ix. 28,) and from this word it is only reasonable to conclude that His work has some limitations. It should be carefully noted that universal terms are not to be stretched beyond that with reference to which they are used.

Also universal terms are used with reference to those who are not the subjects of God's mercy: John viii. 23; xiv. 17; xv. 19; xvii. 9, 16; 1 John iii. 1; iv. 5; v. 19; Rev. vi. 15-17; xvi. 14, etc.

There is a vast difference between the expressions "all without distinction" and "all without exception." That Jesus Christ died for all manner and classes of people and that without distinction, as regards their nationality and condition in life, I believe and rejoice in; but where is the comfort or sweetness in believing that He died for any of those lost? It is surely that element of certainty which gives His redeeming blood that assuring sweetness which believers rejoice in. And as no one has the least right to try to empty the blessed gospel of its saving declarations, I can only logically conclude that those not saved will simply be left in their sins to perish under divine justice. While this may seem very hard to many, but those who are really reconciled to God dare not call in question the sovereign right of the Almighty to do as "seemed good in His sight."-Luke x. 21; Rom. ix. 15-24.

*Elder W. S. Craig in
Primitive Baptist Faith and Practice*



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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)

he spent in relieving the distresses of poor Christians. He was at length, however, seized by the emperor Maximian's decree, who ordered him to be bound, and dragged through the streets. During the execution of this order, he was treated with all manner of cruelties and indignities by the enraged populace. Remaining still inflexible, his courage was deemed obstinacy. Being by order stretched upon the rack, he turned his eyes toward heaven, and prayed to God to endue him with patience, after which he underwent the tortures with most admirable fortitude. After the executioners were tired with inflicting torments on him, he was conveyed to a dungeon. In his confinement, he converted his jailers, named Alexander, Felician, and Longinus. This affair coming to the ears of the emperor, he ordered them immediately to be put to death, and the jailers were accordingly beheaded. Victor was then again put to the rack, unmercifully beaten with batoons, and again sent to prison. Being a third time examined concerning his religion, he persevered in his principles; a small altar was then brought, and he was commanded to offer incense upon it immediately. Fired with indignation at the request, he boldly stepped forward, and with his foot overthrew both altar and idol. This so enraged the emperor Maximian, who was present, that he ordered the foot with which he had kicked the altar to be immediately cut off ; and Victor was thrown into a mill, and crushed to pieces with the stones, A. D. 303.

Maximus, governor of Cilicia, being at Tarsus, three Christians were brought before him; their names were Tara-

chus, an aged man, Probus, and Andronicus. After repeated tortures and exhortations to recant, they, at length, were ordered for execution.

Being brought to the amphitheater, several beasts were let loose upon them; but none of the animals, though hungry, would touch them. The keeper then brought out a large bear, that had that very day destroyed three men ; but this voracious creature and a fierce lioness both refused to touch the prisoners. Finding the design of destroying them by the means of wild beasts ineffectual, Maximus ordered them to be slain by the sword, on October 11, A. D. 303.

Romanus, a native of Palestine, was deacon of the church of Ceasarea at the time of the commencement of Diocletian's persecution. Being condemned for his faith at Antioch, he was scourged, put to the rack, his body torn with hooks, his flesh cut with knives, his face scarified, his teeth beaten from their sockets, and his hair plucked up by the roots. Soon after he was ordered to be strangled, November 17, A. D. 303.

Susanna, the niece of Caius, bishop of Rome, was pressed by the emperor Diocletian to marry a noble pagan, who was nearly related to him. Refusing the honor intended her, she was beheaded by the emperor's order.

Dorotheus, the high chamberlain of the household to Diocletian, was a Christian, and took great pains to make converts. In his religious labors, he was joined by Gorgonius, another Christian, and one belonging to the palace. They were first tortured and then strangled.

To be concluded next month.