
Shield of Faith

A Primitive Baptist Publication

May 2006

Discouraged Hearts

“And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land. For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them. (Numbers 32:7-9)

Discouragement can be a powerful tool in the hands of Satan, as the following fanciful story illustrates. It was advertised that the devil was going to put his tools up for sale. On the date of sale the tools were placed for public inspection, each marked with its sale price. They were a treacherous lot of implements. Hatred, Envy, Jealousy, Deceit, Lying, Pride, and so on, comprised the outfit. Laid apart from the rest was a harmless looking tool, well-worn, and priced very high. “What is the name of this tool?” asked one of the purchasers, pointing to it. “That is Discouragement,” tersely replied the devil. “Why have you priced it so high?” “Because it is more useful to me than the others. I can pry open and get inside a man’s heart with that, when I cannot get near him with the other tools. Once I get inside, I can make him do what I choose. It is badly worn because I use it on almost everyone, since few people know it belongs to me.” The devil’s price for Discouragement was so high that it was never sold. Discouragement is still the devil’s tool. and he is using it today on God’s own people.

A real, historical account demonstrates that men recognize the dangers of discouragement. In the Boer War, which pitted the British against the Boers at the end of the 1800s, the town of Ladysmith in northern Natal in South Africa was held

by the British and besieged by the Boers. The town was under martial law. A civilian was arrested, court-martialed, and sentenced to a year’s imprisonment because he was a discourager. He would go along the lines and say discouraging words to the men on duty. He struck no blow for the enemy. He was not disloyal to his country. He was a discourager, and that in a critical time. The fortunes of the garrison of the town hung in the balance. The court-martial adjudged it a crime to speak disheartening words in an hour like that.

In Numbers 32, children of Gad and the children of Reuben came to Moses with a request: “Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan” (Numbers 32:5). Moses feared that their words would be a discouragement to the children of Israel as their fathers’ had had been when Israel first came to the borders of the Promised Land. “And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. And

Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Numbers 13:25-33).

At a critical time in their history, ten of the twelve spies discouraged the people to the point that they would not go into the land. As they heeded the discouragement of the ten spies, Israel lost sight of their goal, the land God had promised them for an inheritance. They looked to their present circumstances and judged their condition by sight rather than by faith. But most importantly, they failed to consider God, Who had promised to bring them into the land He had given them.

Satan uses the same tool (perhaps his favorite), discouragement, in the same way today. He will turn our minds away from the goal to our present circumstances, lead us to walk by sight, rather than by faith, and will try to make us forget the power of God and the promises of God.

If anything positive can be said of discouragement, it is the fact that it shows that the discouraged one *cares*. He has a *desire* for something he has not obtained, but is discouraged in his quest. That is better than those who are apathetic, those who have

(Continued on page 2)

Discouraged Hearts

(Continued from page 1)

grown indifferent and disinterested. Apathy often comes when discouragement has run its course, and many today have fallen into apathy's firm grasp. It is much easier to encourage one who is discouraged than to stir up the apathetic. Discouragement, if left unchecked, will eventually lead to apathy. For that reason, we must carefully watch for signs of discouragement and encourage ourselves and our brothers and sisters.

As we have already seen, Satan will seek to draw our minds away from our goal. He made Israel believe that they could not take the land of promise. The spies witnessed that the land was just as God had said it was. "And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan" (Numbers 13:27-29). Their minds were quickly turned from the richness of the land to the inhabitants of the land. Instead of focusing on the goal, they focused on the obstacles they faced.

The Apostle Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). His goal was communion and fellowship with Christ and all the blessing associated with that relationship. He set his eyes on that goal and would not look away from it. We must likewise focus on that goal if we are to please God. The goal may seem to high for us, but it is attainable.

As Israel looked at their present circumstances, they saw themselves as too small to take the land. "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their

sight" (Numbers 13:33). If they had only their own strength to rely on, they likely could not have taken the land. Their enemies were indeed formidable. However, God had before made a wonderful promise to Israel. "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off" (Exodus 23:20-23). Had Israel walked in faith, believing God and the promise He had made, the children of Israel would have had no fear of giants.

If believers today look at the situation in the world around us and consider only our own power and ability, we will always be discouraged. It seems that the land is held by the giants of sin, corruption, and ungodliness. From all appearances, we are greatly outnumbered. Many believers, in my opinion, have tried to face the world in their own strength, have been defeated, and simply surrendered to the enemy.

I, and probably most preachers, have at times considered our efforts in preaching the gospel, and seeing little result, have wondered if we are fighting for a lost cause. We must remember that such thoughts are Satan's attempts to discourage us. We are called to be faithful to God; He is responsible for results. Faith goes far beyond sight, "seeing him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27).

In all of Satan's efforts to discourage us, his main objective is to cause us to forget God, His love and care for us, and His power working for us and in us. The words Moses spoke to Israel are true and applicable to us today. "And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with

thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8). For emphasis, he repeated the thought: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Verse 6). Moses then spoke personally to Joshua: "And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Paul prayed for the church, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:17-20). He turns our minds to the goal, "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Rather than seeing the obstacles before us, Paul would have us to know, "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Paul prayed that God would make us truly aware that His mighty power was "...wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

The hymn writer Helen H. Lemmel expressed a wonderful antidote for discouragement:

*Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion
For more than conquerors we are
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth
will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Bible Quiz

Names beginning with the letter "Z" were not uncommon in the Bible. Match each name with the proper identification.

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|--------------|---|
| 1. Zacchaeus | a. father of fifteen sons (2 Sam. 9:10) |
| 2. Zachariah | b. the Naamathite, friend of Job (Job 2:11) |
| 3. Zadok | c. daughter of Jethro (Ex. 2:21) |
| 4. Zebedee | d. a duke of Edom (Gen. 36:29) |
| 5. Ziba | e. porter of the door of the tabernacle (1 Chron. 9:21) |
| 6. Zilpah | f. a fisherman, father of James and John (Matt. 4:21) |
| 7. Zedekiah | g. prince of Midian (Num. 31:8) |
| 8. Zipporah | h. the scribe treasurer (Neh. 13:13) |
| 9. Zur | i. Leah's maid (Gen. 30:9) |
| 10. Zophar | j. king of Judah (2 Kings 24:17-18) |
| 11. Zibeaon | k. a short, rich publician (Luke 19:2-4) |

Answers on page 4.

Adversity

[PROVIDENCE] SHOULD NOT BE USED as a license to laziness or neglect, but should be used as a check to our pride in prosperity. We should remember that if we are advanced in life that we are favored of God; it should produce humility. David was humbled before God when he was advanced to the throne of Israel. Jacob was greatly humbled before God when he recounted his wealth, for he felt that he had it from God. And so we should, if we are blessed, ever remember that it should produce humility. How often do we see wealth and prosperity fatten pride and starve humility. We should know that it is a sad state of things if we are made proud and high minded by the mercies of God; they should humble us. If we are made honorable among men, or if we are blessed with a degree of usefulness above others, these things should bring us to the feet of the Lord in thanksgiving and humility.

But wealth and worldly honor are not always best for us. Sometimes God sees and knows that adversity is best for his people--the furnace purifies the gold, and so afflictions sometimes remove our pride and undue attachments to this world. Therefore this doctrine is encouraging to God's people amidst affliction of every kind. David says: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word." "It is good for me that I might learn thy statutes." Psalms 119:67,71 and in verse 75: "I know, oh Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hath afflicted me" Here he ascribes his afflictions to God, and feels that they are good for him. See 2nd Cor. 1:4-7.

In James 1:1-12, we find it is good to have our plans crossed, our objects defeated, as it tends to fix our minds on eternal things. Oh, how much better to be tried and made to suffer here than to be left proud and haughty? When you see others made proud by prosperity and filled with the vanities of sin, you should be glad that you are so highly favored of God as to be kept humble. Our sins are our worst enemies; in curing these a severe treatment is often necessary; the amputating knife is often used to remove a diseased member, which alone will preserve the life of the patient; marines often cast valuables into the sea to save the vessel, and so God often removes from us our idols that we may be saved from sinking in the whirlpool of pride.

How often have we prayed for humble hearts, that God would make and keep us humble. This end is often best - accomplished by the rod of affliction. The rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, while Lazarus was conveyed to Abraham's bosom. Only see how different their states after death. The apostles were conveyed to heaven from scenes of martyrdom, while many have left high places on earth for low ones in hell. It is far better to have our sins curbed by adversity while we stay here than to have them run headlong with us to hell. Therefore, oh man of affliction, you may have reason to kiss your disease or affliction, you may have reason to praise and adore the lord for his cross providence that now fills your body with pain or Your heart with disappointment. Oh, Christian, you may sing with Kent:

'Tis well when joys arise;
'tis well when sorrows flow;
'Tis well when darkness veils the skies
and strong temptations blow.

from James H. Oliphant, "The Providence of God".
From *Principles and Practices of Regular Baptists*, (1885).

Encouragement

When our souls are much discouraged
By the roughness of the way
And the cross we have to carry
Seemeth heavier every day.

When some cloud that over-shadows,
Hides the Father's face from view,
Oh 'tis well to remember
He hath blessed us hitherto. --Selected.

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. (1 Samuel 7:12)

The Cause of Discouragement

If you are counting on your own strength, I am not surprised at your discouragement, but "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." We ought to be humbled, yes, humbled to the dust, but never discouraged. A truly humble man is not discouraged; the discouraged man is not a humble man, for he has trusted to something beside God.

Simple faith rises above circumstances to Christ. Does Christ love the Church less? Is He less powerful? Faith has constant unflinching confidence in Christ. I know what sorrow is, because of our failure, but discouragement I do not know. -J. N. D., in *Scripture Truth*.

Grace Primitive Baptist Church

Grace Church in Loudon, Tennessee will be holding her Annual Spring Meeting at on May 19-21. Elder Larry Wolfe will preach our meeting. Services will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Friday p.m. and refreshments will be served following the Friday p.m. service. A covered dish lunch will be served following our Sunday a.m. worship at 10:45 a.m., May 21st.

EXCITEMENT

"The influence or power of excitement is great. Under the influence of excitement we laugh with those that laugh, whether we know what they are laughing about or not. Under the excitement of joy it is said that some have died; while the excitement of anger is so great that it often leads men to take the life of their fellow-men. The excitement of worldly, godless ambition has plunged the nations of Europe into the most gigantic and terrible war in the annals of human history.

"We have different sorts of excitement, political, financial and religious, and under these people are greatly agitated at different times and in various ways.

"Religious excitations have greatly affected mankind in different ages and dispensations of the world. In modern times the leaders of many sects have resorted to it to increase or augment their numbers. Some religious excitement is no doubt a product of the spirit of God, and is therefore honoring to God, and beneficial to men, leading the recipients to praise God and shout aloud sometimes. But that religious excitement which is produced by appealing to the superstition and fleshly sympathies of men and women is not good for anybody, but very harmful and demoralizing to human society. By means of excitement usually produced in protracted meetings the people of this generation are proselyted.

"Whenever you find people over anxious about adding to the church, people that are more zealous for members than they are for the purity and good order of the church, there you will find a people that are ready to resort to questionable or unlawful means to build up outwardly.

"People that will not unite with the church quietly and orderly, where they are best known and without excitement or undue pressure, are not likely to be consistent members afterwards, and hence the church or churches that resort to excitement, undue pressure or unlawful or imprudent means and schemes to get more members, will have to lower the standard of church discipline to re-

tain them, and this they usually do, and so in this way they forsake the old landmarks.

"Do you ever hear of preachers that resort to these Arminian methods of securing members turning any away, like John the Baptist did, and demanding of them fruits meet for repentance? Hardly, for generally, the practice is to get all they can and keep all they get.

"There are three times when it seems to me that people should be quiet, calm, unexcited, duly sober and deliberate, to wit: when they marry, when they unite with the church, and when they die."-- Elder G. W. Stewart in Gospel Messenger. December, 1914.

How true is the above! In this day in which the world is making such a very loud and flaming display of its religion, it seems that many preachers in their protracted meetings work on the natural feelings and sympathies of the people all they possibly can, and very often influence their hearers to do things they would not if let alone. Surely many people are often to be pitied. Scary "death bed tales" seem to be a favorite whip to drive people into joining church. This is surely very wrong, for people who are driven to make a religious profession under the pressure of such excitement, of course cannot be using calm, sober judgment as they ought at such times.

This "taking the kingdom by storm" is altogether wrong and can only have bad results for all concerned. For certainly people ought to use all the good, sound sense and sober judgment they have in religious matters, but the weight of undue excitement is surely calculated to warp their reason, mislead them into error and deceive them. People who do not in their hearts really feel their need of the sinner's Friend should not join church while in that condition, and it is very wrong during such time to urge them to do so. For it is possible for them to be sadly deceived, when their natural feelings are so strongly wrought on,

into believing that they actually have true religion, when at the same time none of the fruits of the Spirit may be in their hearts. It is often seen that when the excitement disappears, their religion is gone also. Surely there is a vast difference between natural and spiritual religion; or the religion of the world and the flesh, and that religion from above. The apostle Peter foretold the time in which false teachers would make merchandise of the people (2 Peter ii. 3), and how truly is his prophecy fulfilled!

The supposition that the Spirit is begging, wooing and beseeching sinners to become Christians, but because of weakness is so dependent upon man for success, as often seems to be pictured out, is certainly dishonoring to Almighty God. The powerful hand of the Lord is generally entirely overlooked in this vain and fashionable showing of too much use for the weak, puny hand of man. The apostle Paul writes the Thessalonians (I Thess. v. 19) to "Quench not the Spirit," but as they were already church members, such exhortation must have been intended along the line of obedience suitable to them in that position. Paul was not addressing alien sinners. While I think it possible for regenerated persons to quench the promptings of the Spirit, at least to some extent, I fail to see how the unregenerate can do so, for they are "sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19), and of course can have none of the Spirit in them to quench.

Many errors arise from a wrong application of the Scriptures, because they are (with very few exceptions) addressed, and should be applied, to the people of God, those "quickened" or "born again," and so given an ear to hear and a heart to understand. Man's power can reach no farther, in a spiritual sense, than to instruct, comfort, cheer up and encourage the weak, wounded and needy sheep and lambs of Jesus Christ. And while we should always try to carefully shepherd these, we positively have no command to make sheep, nor to assist the Lord to do so. The church should not be con-

Answers to Bible Quiz

1-k, 2-e, 3-h, 4-f, 5-a, 6-i, 7-j, 8-c, 9-g, 10-b, 11-d

(Continued on page 7)

Devotions:

Daily Devotion

By Elder Bill Taylor

As Gold from the Fire

March 14, 2006

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10

Gold is one of the most highly desirable of the "precious metals," and men have always sought to find and possess it. To prove the purity of gold, men take it and test it by fire. God's Word often equates the child of God's trials of life as "going through the fire," meaning that God sees us as precious "metal" and such trials are to prove our purity as it is in Christ Jesus.

An assayer does not set out to prove the impurity of gold, instead he tests it to show the purity of the metal. In the Book of Job, we find a man who had been very conscientious in maintaining his integrity (purity) in the ways of God; yet trials - severe ones at that - came upon Job. In the verse we're considering today, Job has made an appeal to appear before the Righteous Assayer and submit himself to the test. Job does not fully realize that he is in the middle of the test as he speaks! He is, however, confident that he can submit himself to God and that God will judge him with a righteous test. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on this verse, says, "...like gold, I shall lose nothing in the fire; I shall come forth more pure and luminous. If that which is reputed to be gold is exposed to the action of a strong fire, if it be genuine, it will lose nothing of its quality, nor of its weight. If it went into the fire gold, it will come out gold; the strongest fire will neither alter nor destroy it."

Those trials through which each one of us go are not to prove our impurity, but our purity in the eyes of God. It is not as though He does not know we are pure - the test is not for His benefit, it is for ours. The parallel is that Job had godly confidence to believe that the One who "knoweth the way that I take," also knew the result of the test. That is why Job could say, "when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Can we say the same? Do we believe that the trials of life are to prove that God sees us as precious metal, and as such we will "lose nothing in the fire?" James, in the New Testament, says this: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4). Today, may we see our trials as the Righteous Assayer's means of proving our purity in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Elder Bill Taylor

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Hymns and Hymn Writers

God Moves in a Mysterious Way

William Cowper is one of God's gracious gifts to those suffering from depression. Like the Psalmist who cried, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?" (Psalms 42:5), Cowper shows us that our emotional struggles often give us heightened sensitivity to the heart of God and to the needs of others.

Cowper (pronounced Cooper), born in 1731, was the fourth child of a British clergyman and his wife. William's three siblings died, then his mother died while giving birth to the fifth child. William was six when he lost his mother, and it was a blow from which he never recovered.

God Moves in a Mysterious Way is found in Olney Hymns under the title, "Conflict: Light shining out of Darkness." The word *majestic* best describes this hymn. It reveals at work in the world a God who preserves the grandeur of the ancient Jehovah and the personal concern of the Christian's Father.

We do not know under what circumstances Cowper wrote this hymn. It is somehow connected with his mental breakdown in 1773 when he made an attempt upon his life. Cowper had an awful sense of sin, a conviction that he was doomed to a place in hell lower than Judas, and that God demanded that he kill himself and hasten to his final doom. He attempted suicide a second time. But the cloud lifted and Cowper enjoyed twenty years of comparative health.

God Moves in a Mysterious Way was probably written about six months afterward in 1774 when the cloud had lifted somewhat. An unverified story has it that, resolved to drown himself in the river Ouse at a spot about three miles out of town, he called a cab and told the driver to take him to the place. For some reason-perhaps because of fog, perhaps purposely-the driver could not find the spot, and after coursing about for an hour deposited the poet again at his own door. Even though the story may be fiction, the title of the hymn holds true, "Light shining out of darkness." This is the last hymn Cowper ever wrote.

The main thesis of the hymn had already been documented more than once in the poet's own life. His first fit of insanity had landed him in St. Albans Asylum; yet that misfortune was what led to a Christian brother's visits and his own "conversion." That was "light shining out of darkness." Again, happily established in the Unwin home, he was crushed by another disaster -the death of Mr. Unwin and the threatened break-up of that providential haven. But this calamity brought Mr. Newton upon the scene, and the new home, happiness and creativity at Olney.

Still other incidents in his life justify his conclusion that faith and confidence are better than despair. Since Jesus believed in a God who cares and who works unceasingly to accomplish His purposes, we too are justified in believing that a thousand times in human history God has directed the course of events toward His own ends.

RIBBAND OF BLUE

WE would draw the attention of beloved friends to the instructive passage with which the fifteenth chapter of Numbers closes; and may GOD, through our meditation on His precious Word, make it yet more precious and practical to each one of us, for CHRIST our REDEEMER'S sake! The whole chapter is full of important teaching. It commences with instructions concerning the burnt-offering, the sacrifice in performing a vow, and the free-will offering. It was not to be supposed that any one might present his sacrifice to GOD according to his own thought and plan. If it were to be acceptable — a sweet savor unto the LORD — it must be an offering in every respect such as GOD had appointed. We cannot become acceptable to GOD in ways of our own devising; from beginning to end it must be, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." Then, from the seventeenth to the twenty-first verse, the LORD claims a first-fruits. The people of GOD were not to eat their fill, consume all that they cared to consume, and then give to GOD somewhat of the remainder; but before they touched the bread of the land, a heave-offering was to be offered to the LORD; and when the requirement of GOD had been fully met, then, and not till then, were they at liberty to satisfy their own hunger and supply their own wants. How often we see the reverse of this in daily life! Not only are necessities first supplied from the income, but every fancied luxury is procured without stint, before the question of the consecration of substance to GOD is really entertained. Next follow the directions concerning errors from heedlessness and ignorance. The people were not to imagine that sin was not sinful if it were unconsciously committed. Man's knowledge and consciousness do not make wrong right or right wrong. The will of GOD was revealed and ought to have been known. Not to know that will was in itself sinful; and not to do that will, whether consciously or unconsciously, was sin — sin that could only be put away by atoning sacrifice. GOD dealt in much mercy and grace with those who committed sins of ignorance; though, when the sin became known and recognized, confession and sacrifice were immediately needful. But, thank GOD! the sacrifice was ordained,

and the sin could be put away.

It was not so with the presumptuous sin. No sacrifice was appointed for a man, whether born in the land or a stranger, who reproached the LORD by presumptuous sin. Of that man it was said, "that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." This distinction is very important to make. We are not to think that our holiest service is free from sin, or can be accepted save through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. We are not to suppose that sins of commission, are looked lightly upon by GOD; sins of forgetfulness and heedlessness or ignorance are more than frailties — are real sins, needing atoning sacrifice.

GOD deals very gently and graciously with us in these matters; when transgression or iniquity is brought home to the conscience, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Even when walking in the light, "as He is in the light," we are not beyond the need of atonement. Though our fellowship with GOD be unbroken by any conscious transgression, it continues unbroken only because "the blood of JESUS CHRIST His Son is cleansing us from all sin."

The man, however, who would presume on GOD'S forgiveness, and despise GOD'S holiness and His claim upon His people, by doing deliberately the thing that he knows to be contrary to GOD'S will, that man will find spiritual dearth and spiritual death inevitably follow. His communion with GOD is brought to an end, and it is hard to say how far Satan may not be permitted to carry such a backslider in heart and life. It is awfully possible not merely to "grieve" and to "resist," but even to "quench" the SPIRIT of GOD.

We have a solemn example of presumptuous sin in the case of the man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. He was not — he could not be ignorant of GOD'S ordinance concerning the Sabbath. The gathering of sticks was not to meet a necessity; his case was not parallel with that of the poor man who perhaps has received his wages late on Saturday night, and has had no opportunity of purchasing food in time to prepare it for the day of

rest. To the Israelite, the double supply of manna was given on the morning of the day before the Sabbath; and as the uncooked manna would not keep, it was necessary that early in that day it should be prepared for food. He had, therefore, no need of the sticks to cook his Sabbath's dinner. And the country was so hot that no man would kindle a fire from choice or preference. His object in gathering the sticks was simply to show, openly and publicly, that he despised GOD, and refused to obey His holy ordinance: rightly, therefore, was that man put to death. But occasion was taken in connection with this judgment to introduce the wearing of the "RIBBAND OF BLUE."

GOD would have all His people wear a badge throughout their generations they were to make them fringes in the borders of their garments, and to put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue, that they might look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them, and might be a holy people, holy unto their GOD, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, to be their GOD.

Blue is the color of heaven. The beautiful waters of the sea reflect it, and are as blue as the cloudless sky. When the clouds come between, then, and only then, is the deep blue lost. But it is the will of GOD that there should never be a cloud between His people and Himself; and that, as the Israelite of old, wherever he went, carried the ribband of blue, so His people today should manifest a heavenly spirit and temper wherever they go; and should, like Moses, in their very countenance bear witness to the glory and beauty of the GOD whom they love and serve.

How interesting it must have been to see that ribband of blue carried by the farmer into the field, by the merchant to his place of business, by the maid-servant into the innermost parts of the dwelling, when performing her daily duties. Is it less important that the Christian of today, called to be a witness for CHRIST, should be manifestly characterized by His spirit? Should we not all be "imitators of GOD, as dear children," and "walk in love as CHRIST also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us"? And should not

(Continued on page 8)

DEATHS

EXCITEMENT

Death as spoken of in the Scriptures always means some kind of a separation, and there are many deaths. Let's take them as they are given and experienced with the Scriptures, and as we study them may God give us an understanding which will be beneficial to us. Let's study the first death God gives in His holy word, and it will carry us to the garden of Eden, "But the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Adam disobeyed God and in that day Adam died the death God was speaking of, and which he died in sin, not in a natural death. Adam was separated from God and the tree of life: When God drove him out of the garden with a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. This death was passed upon all Adam's race, in that we were made sinners by Adam's disobedience: which Paul wrote the church at Rome, chapter 5:19 and Eph. 2:3. We will have to understand these to know a sinner in birth.

DEAD TO SIN

When God raises us from being dead in sin, then we die to sin, and we are not to go about breaking God's laws or the laws of our land: Paul said "...shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:2.) How shall a sinner by nature know when he dies to sin? "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Love is the result of one being born again. It may have come even as it did to Jeremiah, (See index, Jeremiah born again before he was born of his mother.) A child of God does not sin because his heart desires to do so, but because he was deceived by Satan. Peter said, "...the devil, as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). And he has devoured many of God's children in this life of many joys, but not eternally.

DEAD TO THE CHURCH

When a church member goes out to live in sin he dies to the church, he dies to the fellowship of the brethren, to the blessings in the church; this is the lesson taught in the prodigal son. When the prodigal son had spent all his earnings he became in want, he came to himself be-

cause of hunger. Sometimes it takes the people of God to come to this to wake them up. On the prodigal son's return home there was rejoicing and dancing, his father in his happiness ask for the best robe to be put on his son, the fatted calf to be killed, a ring to be put on his finger: "For this my son was dead and is alive again..." The son was alive to the things he had been separated from, joy, happiness, love in the home. That's the way it is when one of God's children has left the gospel church, and returns with a full repentance, to that which he died.

This becoming "Dead to sin" is a different death, than the "sin unto death". "If any man see his brother sin a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto deaths I do not say he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16).

CORPOREAL DEATH

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit: neither hath he power in the day of death" (Eccl. 8:8). Solomon is saying the day of death, all men (the Adam's race) will bow to God; and that is what James is saying in the New Testament, "for the body without the spirit is dead..." (James 2:26). I, like all men, all men in their sound mind, that has a love for loved ones in the flesh, would like to remain as long as it be God's will, to be with those which means much in the flesh to us: but to be as the apostle Paul said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philip. 1:21). Blessed be the Lord God.

Elder T. L. Crumpton (Deceased)

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 5:1-5)

(Continued from page 4)

sidered a factory where Christians are made. A false zeal will always lead down into error of some kind.

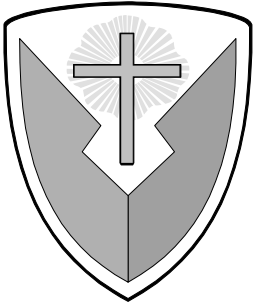
The blessed gospel is preached publicly. While it is always beneficial in some degree to the known people of God, the preacher cannot tell in advance among others whose heart the Lord may open to gladly receive the word. I believe that it is the solemn duty of the Lord's people to join the church and be baptized; but for Primitive Baptists to hold their meetings solely for the purpose of increasing their membership, is sorely Arminianism. Though Arminianism may not at such time be preached by them, but in this supposed case, it would surely be practiced, and it seems to me that we had about as well preach Arminianism as to practice it. The number and length of Baptist meetings should be governed by local conditions and circumstances, for no general rule could be given, as each church should be the judge in this matter.

Elder W. S. Craig

For a Refuge

The Church of God is pictured in the Bible as being beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. The kings of the earth have seen it and they marveled; they were troubled and hasted away" (See Psa. 48:1-5.) The time of trouble, wars, and adversities often cause a slumbering nation to tremble with fear and pass by and view her stronghold, her laws, and the quiet and patient suffering of a poor and afflicted people whose trust is in their God. "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord" (Zep.3:12). David said: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word" (Psa. 119:67). The Church is a home for the meek, and for the poor in Spirit. So joys are found in the Church when His people lean upon His strong arm, and cry for His help. They find in Him all the things they need.

Elder J. D. Holder
in *Principles and Practices of the Church*



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

RIBBAND OF BLUE

this spirit of God-likeness be carried into the smallest details of life, and not be merely reserved for special occasions? If we understand aright the meaning of our SAVIOR'S direction, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect," it teaches this great truth. We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, not to break one of the least of the commandments, not to give way to anger, nor to tolerate the thought of impurity, to give no rash promises, or in conversation to say more than yea or nay. The spirit of retaliation is not to be indulged in; a yeildingness of spirit is to characterize the child of the kingdom; those who hate and despitefully use us are to be pitied, and loved, and prayed for. Then comes the direction, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect." In the little frictions of daily life, as well as in the more serious trials and persecutions to which the Christian is exposed, he is to be manifestly an imitator of his heavenly FATHER. Now, GOD'S perfection is an absolute perfection; while ours, at best, is only relative. A needle may be a perfect needle, in every respect adapted for the work for which it was made. It is not, however, a microscope object; under magnifying power it becomes a rough, honeycombed poker, with a ragged hole in the place of the eye. But it was not made to be a microscope object; and, being adapted to the purpose for which it was made, it may properly be considered a perfect needle. So we are not called to be perfect angels, or in any respect Divine, but we are called to be perfect Christians, performing the privileged duties that as such devolve upon us. Our FATHER makes according to His perfection the least little thing that He makes. The tiniest fly, the smallest animalcule, the dust of a butterfly's wing, however

highly you may magnify them, are seen to be absolutely perfect. Should not the little things of our daily life be as relatively perfect in the case of each Christian as the lesser creations of GOD are absolutely perfect? Ought we not to glorify GOD in the formation of each letter that we write, and as Christians to write a more legible hand than unconverted people can be expected to do? Ought we not to be more thorough in our service, not simply doing well that which will be seen and noticed, but as our FATHER makes many a flower to bloom unseen in the lonely desert, so to do all that we can do, as under His eye, though no other eye ever take note of it? It is our privilege to take our rest and recreation for the purpose of pleasing Him; to lay aside our garments at night neatly (for He is in the room, and watches over us while we sleep), to wash, to dress, to smooth the hair, with His eye in view; and, in short, in all that we are and in all that we do to use the full measure of ability which GOD has given us to the glory of His holy NAME? Were we always so to live, how beautiful Christian life would become! how much more worthy a witness we should bear to the world of Him whose witnesses we are! May the life we are living be characterized by that growth in grace which will glorify GOD; and may tell-tale faces, and glad hearts, and loving service be to each one of us as "a ribband of blue," reflecting the very hue of heaven, and reminding ourselves and one another of our privilege to "remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them."

J. Hudson Taylor

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