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# Shield of Faith

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A Primitive Baptist Publication

July 2004

## Thou Hast Left Thy First Love

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. (Revelation 2:1-3)

It is necessary for believers to realize that the Lord Jesus Christ expects His children in every local church to maintain a warm, glowing love. He expressed this in His letter to the church in Ephesus recorded in Revelation 2:1-7. He commended the believers there for their many fine qualities, but then rebuked them for one serious failing: "because thou hast left thy first love." (v.4).

Notice that Jesus did not say, "You have lost your first love." He used the Greek word *aphiemi*, which means "to leave, to forsake, to abandon." The expression "your first love" may mean your love for God, your love for one another, or your love for God and one another. I believe the last option is correct.

Some scholars have suggested that the verbs used in the phrase "have left your first love," shows a continuous action that shows not a complete abandonment, but a process. "You are leaving your first love," is their interpretation.

Others say that the *love* for Christ has not been forsaken, but the zeal of the early love had been lost, that the first enthusiasm is gone. Jeremiah speaks of the devotion of Israel to God in the early days. God says to the nation that He remembers, "the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals" (Jeremiah 2:2). There had been a honeymoon period, but the first flush of enthusiasm was past.

It may be that the Risen Christ is saying that all the enthusiasm and the thrill has gone out of the religion of the Church of Ephesus. It may also mean that the first fine rapture of Christian fellowship and love for the brotherhood is gone. The believers at Ephesus had abandoned the fresh, ardent love for God and one another that they had experienced when they first became members of the church family.

Perhaps they had become preoccupied with matters like church growth and doctrinal purity, and had gradually failed to nurture their love. Church growth and doctrinal purity are very important matters for the church but those matters cannot be allowed to cool our passion for Christ. In fact, if the church is to grow, if it is to be doctrinally pure, that growth and purity must spring from a burning love for Christ. For reasons we can only speculate about, the church at Ephesus had forsaken her first love. Whatever the cause, the Savior was grieved. Even today, He is pained when our ardor toward Him cools—just as a wife is hurt when she senses a growing coolness on the part of her busy, ambitious husband.

We must remind ourselves that love is an emotion. If the fire is not continuously rekindled, the flame will die. Love thrives only when it is nurtured. That's why Jesus told the Christians in Ephesus who had left their first love, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Revelation 2:5). We need to recall how we felt when we first came to know the Lord. Our love for God and His people is kept alive the same way love is in a marriage. Remembering the tenderness of our feelings in the past, and doing kind and loving deeds for one another in the present, will keep the fire burning.

While love is an emotion, it is also a

determined act of the will. Throughout the New Testament, we find exhortations to love; to love God, to love one another, to love our spouse, etc. God has given us the ability to love and the command to do so. In other words, we determine in our will to love and act out of that determination.

This admonition has particular significance in the United States. A large percentage of believers have grown up in a Christian home and made a profession of Christ at a young age. In addition, many followers of Christ are living in affluence. As a result, our familiarity with the church and our enjoyment of material things has made us worldly minded. We tend to take the blessings of salvation for granted.

We may be strong champions of orthodox doctrine. We may be diligent about carrying out our responsibilities in the church. But we can do all this without having a warm, glowing love for Christ and His people. How imperative it is, then, that we remind ourselves of the emotions we experienced when we first knew Christ as Savior! It is urgent that we start doing what we know will please our Lord! When we do these things, our love for Him and His children will be revived.

The word *love* that Christ uses in His indictment against the church at Ephesus is from the Greek word *agape* which indicates the highest form of love. It is *love manifested*; it is *love in action*. I have often heard people say something like "I love the Lord, *but* I don't have time to go to church." "I love the Lord, *but*, ..." then a thousand different excuses are offered. Read the Bible and see if you can find any verses using *love*, *but*. The only one that I find is 1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." My point is that true love motivates to action rather than offering excuses for inaction.

A church in its first love for Christ will

(Continued on page 2)

## Thou Hast Left Thy First Love

(Continued from page 1)

be making that love manifest. A visitor to such a church will not have to wonder if these people love one another. It will be immediately evident. By the same token, if that love is missing, it will be felt immediately. The church at Jerusalem after Pentecost is a good example of this. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; {45} And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. {46} And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, {47} Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," Acts 2:44-47.

The church at Ephesus was a hardworking church. In verse 2 Christ says, "I know thy works, and thy labor." The language indicates that their work was the kind that would make one sweat. They also were patient. They were able to endure the tough times. Ephesus wasn't an easy place to live. But Paul's preaching resulted in a drop in the sales of idols and brought about a riot. The people in the church at Ephesus endured in the midst of a tough city.

In verse 2 Christ also says, "Thou canst not bear them which are evil." They were dealing with sin in the church. They wouldn't tolerate sin. When someone was doing something evil, they dealt with him. Verse 6 says, "Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Apparently the Nicolaitans following the teaching of an individual named Nicolas—a man who espoused sexual immorality. Clement of Alexandria said that the Nicolaitans "abandon themselves to pleasure like goats." We can't be sure what they believed, but we do know that they practiced a licentious kind of behavior.

Verse 2 says, "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and they are not." They dealt with false teachers. They had a biblical standard—a statement of faith—that they measured men by. They were doctrinally solid.

Verse 3 says, "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." That is the

greatest motive for anything a Christian does. Glorifying God was their motive. The people in the church at Ephesus were serving in Christ's name. They labored and didn't faint. The Ephesian church was a great church. It was doctrinally solid. The people were busy unmasking false teachers and disciplining those who were sinning. But they had one fatal flaw.

In Revelation 1:14 Christ's eyes are described as "a flame of fire." The searching, penetrating eyes of Jesus Christ found a fatal flaw: "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). Love lost its fire in the church at Ephesus. It had orthodoxy and activity without love. The church's definition of love didn't match God's. It missed the one basic thing that Jesus repeated three times to Peter. Jesus essentially said to Peter, "Before I ask you to feed My sheep, I have to ask you one thing: Do you love Me? If you say yes, then feed My sheep" (John 21:15-17). Why did Jesus ask that? Because no one can be effective for God apart from loving the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The church at Ephesus was one of the greatest churches in history. Yet the Lord's penetrating eyes found one fatal flaw. The people exchanged their hot hearts for cold orthodoxy. They carried out a biblical ministry without passion. If we ever have orthodox performance without love, we have allowed Satan to accomplish the first step in his plan to get a foothold in the church. When the honeymoon with Christ is over and you don't live your life out of overwhelming love for Him, you are in trouble. Look at your life. Is your enthusiasm for Christ still there, or is the thrill gone? Is it fair to say you don't have the same love for Christ that you used to have? If you love anything in this world (e.g., yourself, your family, leisure, money, or success) more than you love Christ, then you have left your first love. If you're serving the Lord Jesus Christ in an orthodox way without loving Him, then you've missed the purpose of the Christian life.

When a lawyer asked Jesus which was the great commandment of the law, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. {38} This is

the first and great commandment. {39} And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. {40} On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," Matthew 22:37-40. Our love for God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is to be just as Jesus said, with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

We must ask, "How did this happen? How can a church leave her first love?" While scripture does not answer that question directly, we can assume that somewhere along the line, this church failed to follow the admonitions given in scripture. It is unlikely that this happened suddenly. Rather, it was probably as very slow, almost unnoticeable process. In fact, the church apparently did not realize their own condition

In Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Moses spoke these words to Israel: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; {27} A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: {28} And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known." The blessing of obedience and the curse of rebellion has always been before God's people. Christ sets before the church at Ephesus a blessing and a curse. The blessing is "... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," (Revelation 2:7). That carries our thoughts back to Genesis 3:24, "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." The man was cast out of the garden and denied access to the tree of life because of disobedience. He had had the blessing and the curse set before him and had chosen the curse. Among other things that he lost was communion with God. Through Christ the believer has again been granted access to God. Those who *experience* communion with God, those who eat of the tree of life, are the overcomers. They are the ones who do not let sin, Satan, or circumstances cool their love for Christ.

## Bible Quiz

God's will for His people often requires that they "go" to another place. Match each person with the place he was to go.

1. Moses (Ex. 19:20)
  2. Joshua and Caleb (Deut. 1:35-38)
  3. Jacob (Gen. 35:1)
  4. David (1 Sam. 23:4)
  5. Jeremiah (Jer. 18:2)
  6. Samuel (1 Sam. 16:4)
  7. Disciples (Matt. 28:19)
  8. Abraham (Gen. 22:2)
  9. Elijah (1 Kings 17:9)
  10. Jonah (Jonah 1:2)
  11. Philip (Acts 8:26)
- a. all nations
  - b. Bethel
  - c. Bethlehem
  - d. Gaza
  - e. Mount Sinai
  - f. Promised Land
  - g. Moriah
  - h. Zarephath
  - i. the potter's house
  - j. Keilah
  - k. Nineveh

*Answers on Page 4*

## MUSIC

MUSIC is the universal language of the human soul. It touches the entire scale of human emotions. Inspired by its stirring rhythm and influence, men forget fear and rush into battle to kill and destroy, while with its soft cadences and melody, gentle mothers lull little babies to sleep. In our church life, it is the one medium through which we can all get together, regardless of creed or denomination. Churches that would not interchange pulpits, sing hymns written by leaders of other denominations and find great and helpful spiritual ideas and facts that are common to all. Music, if made sufficiently attractive, interesting and helpful, is the field of religious activity and worship where the greatest number can participate; thus helping to solve one of the greatest problems of the church, that of giving the membership a personal, active part.

Selected

## And the Singers Sang Loud

*Nehemiah 12:27. "And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness..." (Nehemiah 12:43), "Also that day then offered great sacrifices and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: SO THAT THE JOY OF JERUSALEM WAS HEARD EVEN AFAR OFF."*

Give Thanks at the Remembrance of His Holiness. The great swelling tide of voices described in the text must have surely started as only a small sound of thankfulness to God for His mercies and help in rebuilding the wall of the great city, Jerusalem. After all, most of these people had been in captivity for many years in a strange land, forced to live according to the strange customs of their captors. Perhaps they had even lost their desire to sing until this time as they stood on the rebuilt wall. We can read in Psalm 137 a very sad account of how they had felt as they were being led into captivity decades before: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" It is very likely that any songs they sang after this event lacked the depth of feeling expressed by their singing in Jerusalem prior to captivity. Yet after so long a time God had made a way for them to be delivered from the bonds of Babylonian captivity. Persia had defeated Babylon and the new king, Cyrus, was used as God's instrument to restore His people to the joys of His covenant with their forefathers. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus with Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in

Judah. WHO IS THERE AMONG YOU OF HIS PEOPLE? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." So, as the prophet Ezra wrote, "then rose up ... all of those WHOSE SPIRIT GOD HAD RAISED, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem."

The Remnant Are in Great Affliction. When all of Judah had been defeated by Babylon many years before, some (a remnant) were left behind in the province of Judah. But these few Israelites had been subjected to "great affliction and reproach" by the evil ways of their captor "guards". The great city Jerusalem, once feared by its enemies and revered by its inhabitants, was in very bad shape. The prophet Nehemiah (who led those of the captivity back to rebuild the city walls) "sat down and wept" when he heard that "the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire." Nevertheless, the captives returned, determined to rebuild the city and its walls.

Keep the Dedication with Gladness. Much hardship and troubles had to be overcome by the returned people and the remnant before they were able to complete the rebuilding. But finally, having overcome the open resistance of Israel's enemies to their rebuilding this fortress city, these joyful people started to sing and give thanks for God's providence. As they stood on the wall and remembered all the promises of God's covenant, they must have been overcome with the renewed experience of God's love for them. They were reminded of the words of David generations before: "For David said, the Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever." What started out as a few small, tired voices rose to triumphant shout of victorious praise; There was an outpouring of gladness of heart from an obedient people united in joyful thanksgiving to God, who had given them this great victory, And had brought them out of captivity.

Elder Charles Taylor

## Origin of the Name "Primitive"

The following newspaper clipping was sent in by Ray Rotenizer, a Primitive Baptist minister of Hillsville, Va. This clipping appears in a column "Our Religions, by Carlyle Adams. His column is headed "Primitive Baptists started in North Carolina in 1827."

**QUESTION:** In my community there were churches known as Primitive Baptists. As I recall they did not believe in Sunday School nor in special education for their ministers. Apparently there are no churches of this denomination in any area other than the one in which I grew up. Can you tell me about their origin?

-Washington, D. C.

**ANSWER [by Adams]:** There are nearly 1,000 Primitive Baptist churches scattered around the United States, principally in the southern states. Sometimes they are called by other names such as "Hard Shell" or "Old School Baptists," although the name "Primitive" is most widely used. They do not have any system of theological training, but they do not forbid their ministers being educated. On the other hand, education is not to be required as necessary to ordination.

All Primitive Baptist, are opposed to missionary societies. They grew out of a meeting of the Kehukee Association in North Carolina in 1827. That meeting condemned all "modern, money-based, so-called benevolent societies." Although there is no central church organization as such, the semi-monthly magazine, "Primitive Baptist," is published at Thornton, Ark.

Like many such questions and answers published in newspapers, they are often limited in scope and inaccurate. The columnist is presumed to be an authority or at least to know a little of everything. He or she rarely admits he is not informed on a subject, etc., so he gives his opinion without reference authority.

This question, for example, would require several pages to give an outline on the subject involved. To answer such a question intelligently, one should know if the questioner is interested in learning where the "people" known as "Old School or Primitive Baptists" originated, or merely where the term "Primitive Baptist" originated.

Briefly, a division began to develop in the Baptist family in England and America prior to 1800. Several issues were involved in both doctrine and practice. However, the issues that finally brought the split were money-based mission boards, establishing seminaries to educate men for the board to send into foreign fields, a salaried ministry, the use of Sunday schools as auxiliaries to increase church membership, etc. What really decided many churches was Mr. Rice advocating the churches be assessed so much money for the support of the mission boards and seminaries.

During this period-up to 1832-the contending parties began to be called "new school" and "old school." These were mere terms used to identify the two contending parties within the Baptist family at the time.

The controversy came to a head and spelled out somewhat officially at a meeting of "Particular Baptists" of the "old school" held at Black Rock Church, Black Rock, Maryland, September 27, 1832. At that meeting a declaration was drawn up and later published, called the "Black Rock Address." That meeting and the declaration could not be official not authoritative for other churches. However, many other churches did adopt and follow the same position published in that declaration.

Following this action the term "Old School Baptist" began to appear more often. The churches continued, as in the past, to use such terms as "church of God," "church of Christ,"

"Baptist," etc., or simply "the church" at a given locality. When the division spread throughout the United States, the different churches began to identify themselves as "Old School" or "Anti-Means" Baptists, while the "new school" or Missionary Baptists" were termed "means Baptists." None of these terms were ever meant to be "official" names of a religious body on either side.

The term "Primitive" did not appear until about 1840, and as Mr. Adams says, was perhaps first used in the Kehukee Association, and was slowly adopted in the southern states, by combining "Old School" with "Primitive." In the northern states where the division began, the churches never used the term "Primitive" until more recent years; and they still use the term "Old School" mostly, while the churches in the south have adopted the term "Primitive Baptist."

The true church of God in all ages has never been identified by mere names, either of men, or by specific practices. Up until the destruction of the Jewish temple in A. D. 70 the priests could trace their lineage back to Aaron; but Christ brought this system to a close. The great Head "of the church which is His body" said, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, that you have love one for another." They have been called many things by men. They were called "Christians" first at Antioch, but, NEVER given an "official name" unless it would be "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHT-EOUSNESS." (Jeremiah 33:16) But even this is her Lord's virtue ascribed to her as His Bride.

Mr. Adams refers to the Primitive Baptist position in reference to "missionary activity" and missionary societies," theological training, etc. Again we must understand the meaning of the terminology used. During the controversy which developed the Baptist split, the term meant only one thing to the new school movement, and that was the "sending" of "trained" preachers into "foreign," "heathen" countries for the avowed and express purpose to save the "millions who were dying and going to hell-all because we were not getting the gospel to them." In other words, the "new-school" leaders were Arminian in belief, and to them "missionary activity" meant the "saving of souls by the preaching or printing of the gospel"; and "the gospel" to them meant what it means today to every Arminian professor, namely, the "means" of saving souls from eternal hell. Of course even that meaning has now changed to many who no longer believe in "hell" or everlasting destruction. Also the "new school" men decided that no man or woman should be "allowed" to enter their "missionary activity" who had not first had a thorough and complete education in what Mr. Adams correctly terms "a system of theological training." Colleges and seminaries must be established to supply this "sorely needed education." Incidentally, many of the colleges established at that time have become hot-beds of the modern, agnostic and even atheistic teachings; and at this writing are the scenes of hippy and anarchic lawlessness.

THIS was the type of "missionary activity" and ministerial or

(Continued on page 7)

### Answers to Bible Quiz

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Devotions:

## Psalms In Reflection

From the book of the same title by Elder Len Dalton

Hymns and Hymn Writers

## He Keeps Me Singing

### THE FORTY-EIGHTH PSALM

<<A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah.>> Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hastened away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah. We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness. Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death. (Psalms 48:1-14)

In Psalms Forty-six the singer rejoiced in God as a Refuge, and celebrated His presence in the City as the sure guarantee of her security. In this he dwells upon the beauty and security of that City, which is thus protected by the abiding presence of God. After exulting over a deliverance wrought in the hour of dire peril, the song proceeds to dwell upon the exceeding wealth of the resources which a people so delivered have in such a God. In a great word of praise this statement is made: "Thy right hand is full of righteousness."

Another way of comparing the two psalms which is very important is that in Psalms Forty-six the dominant note was of confidence because of the government of God in the midst of His people; in this there is a song describing the experience resulting from such government. When cities, by their kings, were assembled against the City of God, it is said that "they passed by together." They were seized with weakness and fear and simply passed by. God had delivered them, and they were confident that the City was established forever.

The singer now calls upon the inhabitants to examine the City well that the wonder of its preservation may fill their hearts with praise and be a foundation for faith in all the years to come. While it is true that we may not be able to place a finger historically on the time or place of the incident mentioned above, if we remember the guiding principles of the incident we shall not be losers. It is true to constantly recurring experiences of the saints, and the psalm has become very precious to the saints through the passing centuries.

Doubtless it has often happened to the saints that threatening perils massed against us suddenly waver and pass away smitten by unseen hands, and deliverance is wrought when we had seen nothing but certain destruction. Well may we say: "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised is the God of deliverance." THIS IS A GRAND PSALM!

*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads....*  
Isaiah 35:10

Though battered by life, the patriarch Job declared that God is able to give us "songs in the night" (Job 35:10). When the Psalmist, Asaph, felt overwhelmed, he consoled himself with God's "song in the night" (Psalm 77:6). God is strong enough to keep us singing, even in the night seasons.

North Carolina native Luther Bridgers began preaching at age seventeen while attending Asbury College in Kentucky. Afterward, he developed a reputation as an effective pastor/evangelist/church planter. The Lord gave him a wonderful wife and three precious boys.

In 1910, when Luther was twenty-six and the future seemed bright, he took his family to his wife's home in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, southwest of Lexington. They were going to stay with her parents while Luther was on a preaching trip.

One evening a nearby neighbor, unable to sleep, rose in the night and glanced out his window. He was horrified to see flames. Racing across the field, he gave the alarm, but by that time the house was fully engulfed. Luther's in-laws evidently escaped, but his wife and sons perished. (Dr. Alfred B. Smith says that Luther himself was at his in-laws that night and had to be restrained by neighbors from re-entering the collapsing inferno.)

During the long, slow recovery from overwhelming grief, Luther suffered deep and almost suicidal depression, according to some sources. But he recalled the Bible's promise of "songs in the night," and several months later he wrote both the words and the music for this gospel song about God's ability to keep him singing. Notice how he alludes to his tragedy in verse 4:

*Though sometimes He leads through waters deep,  
trials fall across the way,  
Thought the path seems rough and steep,  
See His footprints all the way.  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know  
Fills my every longing, Keeps me singing as I go.*

In 1914, Luther married again and became a general evangelist for the Methodist Episcopal Church South, a ministry that kept him occupied for the next eighteen years (with a brief interruption after World War I when he traveled to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Russia, doing evangelistic work).

After 1932, he served as pastor in churches in Georgia and North Carolina, and retired in Gainsville, Georgia, in 1945. He passed away in Atlanta in 1945.

## Faith

## NOT GROWING OLD

Faith is the confidence we have in God. It is trusting him. We trust in him in the matter of the resurrection. No other being could make the promise of the resurrection, because no other being can fulfill such a promise. We cannot know how it is effected, but faith embraces the promise, knowing that God is able to perform it. We believe the narratives of Jonah being swallowed by the whale, and the Hebrew children in the furnace, although philosophy cannot explain how these things are possible. Such narratives would be impossible and incredible if told with the authority or wisdom of men, but being told to illustrate the character of God, they are perfectly reasonable and credible.

Cruden speaks of faith in the following way: first. Historical, which is the historical knowledge we have of God and of Christ. The devil had this kind of faith (James ii. 17:24).

Second. "Temporary faith." He illustrates this faith by the parable of the sower that went forth to sow. "He that received seed in the stony places among thorns," these hearers were temporarily affected by the word. Some men receive the word with joy and make resolves to reform, but all comes to naught.

Third. "The faith of miracles." Nicodemus said, "We know thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the miracles thou doest except God be with him." Many believe on him, seeing his wonderful works.

Fourth. "Justifying faith" is a saving grace wrought in the soul, and is to be distinguished from the three above mentioned faiths. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Faith is the substance of things hoped for. That is saving faith. It is the gift of God. Paul says, "Through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God". Faith is not the ground of our justification, that is, the meritorious cause of it; because faith is in degrees. "O ye of little faith;" while justification is never in degrees. Our apprehension of it is in degrees, and we apprehend it by faith; faith is the hand that lays hold of Christ and applies his merits to our needs.

We are justified by faith instrumen-

tally, and by blood meritoriously, and by works declaratively. Faith works by love. When faith is in the heart, so is love, it "works by love." It is called the faith of God's elect, because it is given to them, and we see it in others by their works. "Show me your faith without your works; and I will show you my faith by my works," says an apostle. While faith ever denies our being saved by our works, yet it is known, by the good works of them that have true faith. We may say of true faith--saving faith, it is not temporary or momentary, but it is durable, permanent, and associated with love to God and man. It is not antinomian in its tendency nor is the charge of lasciviousness due to it.

It is dependence on God, not a dependence on our dependence upon God, but it is to trust our eternal all with God. It is not an effort to save ourselves, it is a giving up all hope in self, and casting all our care on him. The thief on the cross is an illustration of this; he left all with God. "If thou wilt thou canst make me whole." Faith demands nothing; it claims nothing; it assumes the attitude of a criminal. It knows no other Savior or hope. If it is rejected at a throne of grace it knows no other hope. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" There is nothing better than to look on him. Look to him in the hour of death; In every extremity depend on him. This is faith in action. Depending on him alone. He can go with us all the way and deliver us in every extremity. "O for a faith that will not shrink." "Lord give us such faith as this."

Elder J. H. Oliphant  
From *The Collected Writings Of Elder  
J. H. Oliphant*

Faith achieves the impossible. During the World War a lad at the front was carried back wounded very badly; but all aflame with enthusiasm, he looked up into the surgeon's face and said: "I tell you, Doc, they do things out there that *can't be done*." That is the kind of faith that achieves. -Sunday School Times.

They say that I am growing old.  
I've heard them tell it times untold,  
In language plain and bold—  
But I am not growing old.  
This frail old shell in which I dwell  
Is growing old, I know full well—  
But I am not the shell.

What if my hairs are turning grey?  
Grey hairs are honorable, they say,  
What if my eyesight's growing dim?  
I still can see to follow Him  
Who sacrificed His life for me  
Upon the Cross of Calvary.

What should I care if times old plow  
Has left his furrows on my brow?  
Another house, not made with hands,  
Awaits me in the Glory Land

What though I falter in my walk?  
What though my tongue refuse to talk?  
I still can tread the Narrow Way,  
I still can watch, and praise and pray.

My hearing may not be as keen  
As in the past it may have been  
Still I can hear my Saviour say  
In whisper soft, "This is the way."

E'er long my soul shall fly away,  
And leave this tenement of clay,  
This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise  
To seize the "everlasting prize."  
I'll meet you on the Streets of Gold.  
And prove that I'm not growing old.

John E. Roberts

By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee. I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. (Psalms 71:6-11)

## THE LORD'S SPECIAL PROVIDENTIAL MERCY TO ME

Through the unmerited and great mercy of the lord, for which I try to thank Him every day, I was saved from injury when I was run away with by a mule in 1862, and by a horse in 1898, in my own county; and, together with Elders W. H. Everitt and G. W. Stewart, by a horse, near Dawson, Georgia, in May, 1909; and, with a young man named Arthur I Hand, near Mauk, Georgia, Sept. 11, 1913, when, on going down a hill, the harness broke, and his horse ran away, while, on the very next day a young Brother Matthews, returning from the Ocmulgee Association at Mt. Pleasant Church, near Gray, Ga., was run away with, and so severely injured, as I was very sorry to learn, that he died about a week afterwards. The ways of the lord are indeed unsearchable. Although traveling very extensively in the United States, I have never been in a railroad or steamboat disaster. And I desire most thankfully to testify that the lord has mercifully healed me of what I feared would be fatal diseases of the lungs, bowels, kidneys, heart, prostate gland, liver, and brain, and what seemed to be a cancerous tumor on my face; and that he has, in mercy, healed my four living

children of what are often fatal diseases. He has compassionately spared us from thousands of diseases that afflict our poor fallen humanity. He has preserved for us the use of our reason, senses, and limbs. I have never had to use spectacles. I am now older (71 years of age) than I have known any of my near relatives to live to be, except my father's mother, Mrs. Martha Biggs Hassell, who died in her 77th year. Thousands of years would be too short a time for me to praise the Lord for His special providential mercies to me; and eternity would end before I could sufficiently thank Him for the unspeakable gift, as I believe, of His Son to die for me, and of His Spirit to renew me and conform me to the image of His Son. My experience has been such that, by the grace of the living God, I could no more doubt His being, His Written Word, His sole eternity, His infinity, His sovereignty, His holiness, mercy, wisdom, truth, and power, although all other creatures should deny them, than I could doubt my own existence.

Elder Sylvester Hassell  
From *The collected Works Of Elder  
Sylvester Hassell*

## Origin of the Name

(Continued from page 4)

"theological training" the "old school" brethren objected to then, and object to now. The issue was NEVER the scriptural proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God to dying sinners either at home or to "the ends of the earth."

The leaders of the new school or missionary movement openly admitted they did not have scriptural authority for what they were doing. The following is typical of statement published in their own periodicals:

"Hence we shall search in vain for any special directions for the wide, and innumerable, and diversified details of Christian effort and benevolent actions, which details are nevertheless an imperative on every individual disciple as if specially enjoined."

Unfortunately, as time passed, there has developed many unchristian and unscriptural doctrines and practices in both schools. The missionary churches having centered their efforts on their institutions, missionary efforts based on man's abilities rather than the Spirit, a social gospel instead of the one gospel of Christ, fine buildings, etc., the whole structure has become a man-made machine, having no resemblance of the church of Christ.

On the other hand, the "old school" or "Primitive Baptist" movement has deteriorated. While the leaders in the controversy made it very clear in their opposition to the innovations, that they were not opposed to education, as such, nor to the proper support of the ministry, nor to God-called men going anywhere to preach the gospel, etc., but they were opposed, as explained, to all the modern schemes of using money and unregenerate characters to accomplish their purposes. However, as in all such controversies, the succeeding generations among the old school churches have either forgotten or have never known the real issues. As a consequence they have allowed themselves to be driven from the scriptural teaching on various points, both in doctrine and practice. Too many have "traditionally" taken the original opposition or abuse of scripture teaching such as salaried ministry, missions, etc., and think of THESE issues as the true and only identifying marks of the true church. This understandable but wrong attitude has developed the present state of affairs among the Old School or Primitive Baptist churches in America and among the Strict and Particular Baptists of England.

--W. J. Berry in *The Primitive Baptist Library Quarterly*

## Melchisedec

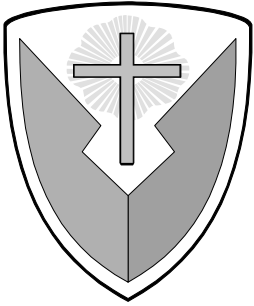
By the repeated request of sister Maxie Dukes, of Barwick, Ga., and other brethren at different times, I give my views on Hebrews 7:1,3, and as especially requested, as to who or what Melchisedec represents.

You will notice that Melchisedec is presented to us as "King of Salem and priest of the most high God" only. Then in description it reads "First being by interpretation King of righteousness; and after that King of Salem," &c. This shows that he was king of righteousness before he was king of Salem, and with the inference that the first necessarily preceded the last. In harmony with this idea we are told to "consider how great this man was," (7: 4). This shows he was a mortal man before he was made king and priest. Also it reads of Melchisedec, he "was made like unto the Son of God," (3: 4), which proves, not only that he was not

the Son of God--as some affirm--as that a shadow or likeness cannot be the substance, but also that "this man," as such, was as the result of certain preceding causes--made a king and priest. Then, evidently, not as the man, but as the already-made king and priest, he is here presented. And as thus limited in presentation, so also he is limited in representation to Jesus Christ, the risen and anointed King and Priest at God's right hand in heaven.

How well this accords with the history of Jesus Christ, first manifested in the flesh as born of a woman--as made man with human body, soul and life, subject to mortal passions and death: else he could not have died; nor could he have saved a human creature, save as made such.

Rebecca Anna Phillips  
In *Zion's Landmark*, July 15th, 1898.



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

## FELLOWSHIP, COMMUNION

FELLOWSHIP, COMMUNION. These two words are the translation of *koinonia*. This Greek word is used in a marriage contract where the husband and wife agree to a *joint participation* in the necessities of life. The key idea in the word is that of a partnership, a possessing things in common, a belonging in common to. For instance, "What things does light have in common with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14), or, "These things write we unto you that ye also may have jointparticipation with us" (in our knowledge of the life of our Lord) (I John 1:3), or, "Our joint-participation is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3), that is, the things in which Christians participate in salvation, they participate in jointly with God, a common nature, common likes and dislikes; or, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a joint-participation (which we saints have in common) in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a joint-participation (which we saints have in common) in the body of Christ" (broken for us) (I Corinthians 10:16) ? That is, the saints participate in common with one another in the salvation benefits that proceed from the out-poured blood and the broken body of the Lord Jesus. In the light of the usage of the word *koinonia*, make a study of the following places where the word occurs, I Corinthians 1:9; II Corinthians . 6:14, 8:4, 13:14; Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 3:9; Philippians 1:5, 2:1, 3:10; I John 1:3, 6, 7. In Acts 2:42 and I John 1:3, 6, 7, the usage of the word also approaches the common usage of today, that of fellowship in the sense of

companionship. In Philippians 2:1 and II Corinthians 13:14 the word refers to the joint-participation of the believer and the Holy Spirit in a common interest and activity in the things of God. Study the usage of the word in Romans 15:26 (contribution) ; II Corinthians 9:13 (distribution) ; Philemon 6 (communication) ; Hebrews 13:16 (to communicate) .

Kenneth S. Wuest in Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek  
*New Testament*

One might be disposed to wonder at the lack of reference to the Lord Jesus in the secular history of the early centuries. The following four considerations explain this failure of the historians to mention Him. First, He was born in an obscure remote land, far from the hub of the universe, Rome. Second, He came from peasant stock in a nation that was hated and despised. Of course, we Christians recognize the fact that He came from the royal family of David, but so far as the Roman world was concerned, He was just a peasant in a remote country of the Roman Empire. Third, crucifixion was a common event in the world at that time. Fourth, it was a common practice of Roman rulers to deify themselves, and when Jesus went about Palestine claiming to be the unique Son of God, He was to the general populace, just another person claiming to be a king, who deified himself.

*Selected*

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