
Shield of Faith

A Primitive Baptist Publication

September 2005

They Have No Changes

(Psalms 55:19) God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. (KJV)

The Fifty-fifth Psalm was composed by David when he was greatly distressed and persecuted, experiences that David knew well. It may have been by Saul, or by Absalom, or when betrayed by some pretended or former friend that David was persecuted.

David, surrounded with danger and distress, called out to God, praying that God would Hear. He confessed his pain and fear. "My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me" (verse 4). He longed for escape; "...Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest" (verse 6). He strengthened himself with God's protection, (verses 16-18), and his with assurance of the enemies' utter destruction, (verses:19-23).

David is assured that "God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old" (verse 19). David's meaning might be that God shall hear the prayers of his servant, and visit evils upon his enemies, (verses 9,15); and shall bring them down upon them, in answer to his requests; or it may be, rendered, "God shall hear and answer them;" he shall hear their blasphemies, and take notice of their wickedness, and answer them by terrible things in righteousness.

The One Who will perform this is God, "even he that abideth of old." He sits in eternity, enthroned judge for evermore; all the prayers of saints and profanities of sinners are before his judgment seat, and he will see that justice is done.

David understood the problem with the enemy, those who trouble him: "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God" (verse 19). They have no changes in their hearts, nor in their lives, but continue in their natural and sinful

estate, without any impression of the power God. Or they have no changes in their worldly circumstances, from good to bad; things go well with them, and they are not in trouble as other men; they are at ease and quiet, and are settled on their lees; "For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment" (Psalms 73:4-6). "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles" (Jeremiah 48:11-12).

Their lack of change may mean that they have no regard to their last change by death; and are not afraid of that, as one interprets it; they put away this evil day far from them; think nothing about it, as if it would never be, and as if they had made an agreement with it that this change should never come upon them.

Therefore they fear not God; they do not serve and worship him now, and are not afraid of his judgments; no change is made in their hearts, nor any alteration in their lives for the worse; they have goods laid up for many years, and sentence against their evil works not being speedily executed, their hearts are hardened, and they live secure in sin.

They fear not God; their prosperous success makes them go on securely and obstinately in their wicked courses, without any regard to God, or dread of his judgments. Few things hardens men's hearts more than uninterrupted prosperity. "And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved" (Psalms 30:6). "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and

the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Proverbs 1:32). "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice" (Jeremiah 22:21).

David complained of enemies and those whom he called "evil," so we may wish to apply this teaching to the ungodly world. Notice, however, Psalms 55:12-14; "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." David expected trouble from the heathen nations around him, but was deeply pained when "a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance," one with whom he "took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company" turned against him.

There are, sadly, many in the church today who "have no changes, therefore they fear not God" and have become enemies of the cross. "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)" (Philippians 3:18-19).

It is true that they may not openly fight against God. They may, like the church of Ephesus, labour, and have patience, and "canst not bear them which are evil", yet they have left their first love (Revelation 2:4). Like the church of the Laodiceans, they say "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:7).

Our nation has enjoyed a long period of relative peace and prosperity. We have

(Continued on page 2)

They Have No Changes

(Continued from page 1)

had wars, but they have been on foreign soils, far removed from us. We have seen on television vivid images of the fighting, but our minds have put the images in the same category as our entertainment. It doesn't quite seem real, unless we have a loved one personally involved.

We have some who are poor, but even they are far better off than much of the rest of the world. In general, we live at a level of prosperity and comfort that our forefathers could not have imagined. And we have no changes.

The church has been affected by this prosperity just as was Israel of old. Israel became "at ease in Zion." "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!" (Amos 6:1). Please note the symptoms of their "ease." "Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:3-6). They persuaded themselves that "the evil day" foretold by the prophets was "far off," though they declared it near (Ezekiel 12:22,27). In their imagination they thought it far off, and therefore brought near violent oppression, suffering it to sit enthroned.

The judgment-seat, which should relieve the oppressed, condemn the wicked, and acquit the innocent, was made a seat of violence, where unjust judges condemned the just and took bribes. They drew the judgments of God on themselves by bringing violence against the poor, and contemning the threats of the prophets.

Either out of laziness or luxury, and to please the flesh, lay themselves to rest upon beds of ivory; on beautiful, rich beds, bought with the gain of bribes and oppression. They indulged their pride and luxury, and on beds or couches laid themselves to feast, when God called them to mourn and weep.

They ate lambs out of the flock; the very best in all their flock, and probably they

chose them out first, before they set out lambs for sacrifices; or else these gluttonous judges and rulers eat the best lambs, not of their own, but out of poor oppressed men's flocks.

David caused different types of instruments to be made to serve God's glory, but these did strive to invent as many to serve their pleasures and lusts. Does that not describe so many people, even God's people, today?

There seems to be few calls to repentance in the preaching of the gospel today. When repentance is called for, how is the message received? When have you seen evidence of godly sorrow? When a message intended to bring conviction and repentance is preached, does the congregation not most often leave the sanctuary smiling and happy. Few are convicted of sin. We have no changes.

Israel was in a similar condition in the days of Zephaniah, the last prophet before the captivity in Babylon. Because they had no changes, God Himself would bring about change. "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof" (Zephaniah 1:12-13).

Those of that day were careless, satisfied with the goods of this life, trusting in their riches. While they acknowledged that there is a God, they thought that he will "...not do good, neither will he do evil." They mistakenly thought that God would take no notice of their evil.

Today we find many with the same erroneous notions as those Zephaniah's day and of Job's day. "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" (Job 21:13-15).

Think not that God will not "punish the men that are settled on their lees" today! "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord

shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30-31). "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-3).

Four years ago I watched the television images of the World Trade Center towers falling down and thought, "If this does not cause us to repent, what will?" Not only was there a lack of general repentance in the nation, there has been a great lack of change in the church. We say that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4).

Since September 11, 2001, we have seen droughts and floods, storms and destruction, war and death and we have no changes. We have now witnessed what may be the greatest "natural" disaster this nation has ever experienced, and we have no changes. Most of the television preachers have failed to even consider that these events are God's calling His people to repentance. In fact, they try to distance God from the events. Study the word and see if these events are not consistent with God's judgment.

"And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? (3) I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (4) Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? (5) I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2-5).

"O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us" (Psalms 4:2-6).

Bible Quiz

Elijah was an outstanding prophet in his time. Answer each question about him.

1. How did Elijah divide the waters of the Jordan (2 Kings 2:8)?
2. How was Elijah fed when he was in hiding (1 Kings 17:3-4)?
3. How did Elijah heal a child (1 Kings 17:21)?
4. How did Elijah propose that the true God would make himself known (1 Kings 18:24)?
5. Where did Elijah find Elisha (1 Kings 19:19)?
6. Who succeeded Elijah as prophet (2 Kings 2:12)?
7. Why did Elijah flee into the wilderness (1 Kings 19:1-3)?
8. As Elijah prayed under a juniper tree, what did he pray for (1 Kings 19:4)?
9. What message did God tell Elijah to deliver to Ahab (1 Kings 21:17-19)?
10. What punishment did Elijah tell Ahaziah would be his because he sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub (2 Kings 1:16-17)?
11. How many times did Elijah fill the barrels with water and pour them on the fire (1 Kings 18:33-34)?

Answers on page 4.

October Meeting

The October Meeting of the Central States Ministerial Association will be held October 11-13, 2005, at the TAG camp facility near Lynchburg, Tennessee, the Lord willing.

While this meeting is sponsored by the Ministerial Association, it is not limited to ministers. The meeting is a time of worship and fellowship and all who desire to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth are warmly invited and strongly urged to attend.

Accommodations will be provided on the site, in local homes, and in area motels. All meals will be provided at the camp.

Fairview Primitive Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee will serve as host church. In order to plan for the needs of the meeting, we would like to know, if possible, if you plan to attend.

Contact: Elder Greg Phillips
807 Ashwood Lane
Chattanooga, TN 37415
(423) 875-3652
eldphil@bellsouth.net

Elder Howard Pippin
138 Graysville Road
Ringgold, GA 30736
(706)937-7430
hpippin@catt.com

Importance of Studying the Bible

One thing I have noticed in studying the Word of God, and that is, when a man is filled with the Spirit he deals largely with the Word of God; whereas, the man who is filled with his own ideas refers rarely to the Word of God. He gets along without it, and you seldom see it mentioned in his discourses. A great many use it only as a text-book. They get their text from the Bible, and go on without any further allusion to it; they ignore it.

But when a man is filled with the Word, as Stephen was, he can not help speaking Scripture. You will find that Moses was constantly repeating the commandments. You will find, too, that Joshua, when he came across the Jordan with his people, stood with them while the law of the Lord was read to them; and you will find all through Scripture the men of God dealing much with His Word. Why, you will find Christ constantly referring to them, and saying: "Thus saith the Scriptures." Now, as old Dr. Bonar of Glasgow said: "The Lord didn't tell Joshua how to use the sword, but He told him how he should meditate on the Word day and night, and then he would have good success." When we find a man meditating on the words of God, my friends, that man is full of boldness and is successful. And the reason why we have so little success in our teaching is because we know so little of the Word of God. You must know it and have it in your heart.

— MOODY

You want me to tell you why God is to be loved and how much. I answer, the reason for loving God is God Himself; and the measure of love due to Him is immeasurable love. Is this plain? Doubtless, to a thoughtful man; but I am debtor to the unwise also. A word to the wise is sufficient; but I must consider simple folk too. Therefore I set myself joyfully to explain more in detail what is meant above.

We are to love God for Himself, because of a twofold reason; nothing is more reasonable, nothing more profitable. When one asks, Why should I love God? he may mean, What is lovely in God? or What shall I gain by loving God? In either case, the same sufficient cause of love exists, namely, God Himself.

And first, of His title to our love. Could any title be greater than this, that He gave Himself for us unworthy wretches? And being God, what better gift could He offer than Himself? Hence, if one seeks for God's claim upon our love here is the chiefest: Because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Ought He not to be loved in return, when we think who loved, whom He loved, and how much He loved? For who is He that loved? The same of whom every spirit testifies: "Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;" (Psalm 16:2). And is not His love that wonderful charity which "seeketh not her own"?

But for whom was such unutterable love made manifest? The apostle tells us: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Romans 5:10). So it was God who loved us, loved us freely, and loved us while yet we were enemies.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Circular Letter
Sequatchie Valley Association
 2005

The Sinfulness of Sin

Having been ask to again write this letter to be circulated among the churches of the Sequatchie Valley Association, I thank God for his blessings during this session. We were blessed to see the leadership of the Holy Spirit as each servant of God spoke on one central theme, Jesus Christ. We were made to rejoice as one by one each minister, by the preached word, painted a beautiful portrait of Christ who is in control of all things, surrounded by his love, mercy, and grace.

We are reminded that even the gates of hell will never prevail against Christ's church, because he loves her so much. We who also love the church, and the cause of Christ, being concerned for her welfare, are often grieved at an apparent decline. We often wonder; what can we do! All too often we look to things that appeal to the flesh rather than spirit. The church was not founded upon, nor can she survive, upon natural things, only upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

There was a time when Israel feared for her existence. She was under a cloud of threat of Assyrian domination. Her hope of deliverance was in a strong King, but he, as all men, died. Their confidence was in King Uzziah rather than God. Because of their continual disobedience and idolatry God was turning them over to their enemies. As we look at them we are reminded that we are, as they were, great sinners, but God is a greater Savior. Although from time to time they were cast down they were not destroyed.

To see Christ in all his beauty and glory is the greatest blessing a church can have. Isaiah was so blessed as he went into the temple after the death of King Uzziah, to see Christ in this manner. Isaiah 6:1 "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." There was room for nothing else in that magnificent temple except Christ. "His train filled the temple." The temple was filled with his beauty and praise. Oh that this was the only thing we looked for in our churches today!

As God comforted Israel then, he also comforts us today. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1-2).

Elder Howard Pippin

The best enjoyments of Christ on earth are but as the dipping of our finger in water for the cooling of our thirst; but Heaven is bathing in seas of bliss. Even so our love here is but one drop of the same substance as the waters of the ocean, but not comparable for magnitude or depth. Oh, how sweet it will be to be married to the Lord Jesus, and to enjoy forever, and without any interruption, the heavenly delights of His society! Surely, if a glimpse of Him melteth our soul, the full fruition of Him will be enough to burn up with affection. It is well that we shall have more noble frames in Heaven than we have here, otherwise we should die of love in the very land of life.

— SPURGEON.

The awfulness of sin comes not wholly from the fact that it is a disobedience of God, but as well from the certainty that it is a doing of violence to the soul itself in the loss of power, the decay of love, the enfeebling of will and the general atrophy of the nature. The thing effected by our indulgence is not alone the book of final judgment, but the present fabric of the spirit. — HENRY DRUMMOND.

Answers to Bible Quiz

1-With his mantel, 2-Ravens, 3-Stretched himself upon the child three times and prayed, 4-He would burn the sacrifice on the altar, 5-In a field plowing, 6-Elisha, 7-Jezebel wanted to kill him, 8 -To die, 9-The same dogs which licked the blood of Naboth would lick Ahab's blood, 10-He would not get off his sick bed but would die, 11 -Three

The sinfulness of Sin not only appears from, but consists in this, that it is contrary to God. Indeed, it is contrariety and enmity itself. Carnal men, or sinners are called by the name of enemies to God (Romans 5: 8 with 10; Colossians 1. 21); but the carnal mind or sin is called enmity itself (Romans 8:7). Accordingly, it and its acts are expressed by names of enmity and acts of hostility, such as, walking contrary to God (Leviticus 26:21), rebelling against God (Isaiah 1:2), rising up against him as an enemy (Micah 2:8), striving and contending with God (Isaiah 45:9), and despising God (Numbers 11:20). It makes men haters of God (Romans 1:30), resisters of God (Acts 7:51), fighters against God (Acts 5:39 and 23:9), even blasphemers of God, and in short very atheists, who say there is no God (Psalm 14:1). It goes about to ungod God, and is by some of the ancients called *Deicidium*, God-murder or Godkilling.

Though all these things are not done by every sinful man, yet they are not only in the nature of sin, and that of every sin more or less, but are all of them in the heart of all sinners in their seed and root (Matthew 15:19). So what is done by any man would be done by every man, if God did not restrain some men from it by his power, and constrain others to obedience by his love and power (2 Corinthians 5:14; Psalm 110:3). Here then is the desperately wicked nature of sin, that it is not only *crimen laesae Majestatis*, high treason against the Majesty of God, but it scorns to confess its crime. It is obstinate and will not that he reign over it. It is not only not subject, but it will not be subject, nor be reconciled to God; such is its enmity!

Ralph Venning (1621-1674)

If I might comprehend Jesus Christ, I could not believe on Him, He would be no greater than myself. Such is my consciousness of sin and inability that I must have a super-human Savior.
 — DANIEL WEBSTER.

Devotions:

Psalms In Reflection

From the book of the same title by Elder Len Dalton

<<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)

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!"

Hymns and Hymn Writers

Sweet Hour of Prayer

In 1842, in the town of Coleshill, Warwickshire, England, the Rev. Thomas Salmon stopped by a small trinket shop to visit with his friend, William Walford. Walford was seventy years old at the time and his eyesight was almost gone. Nevertheless, he ran the tiny shop where he sold small carvings and engraved items.

On this particular day, Walford asked his friend to copy down the verses to a prayer-poem he had been composing in his head. Salmon took pen and paper and wrote the words to the gospel hymn we now call "Sweet Hour of Prayer." Thomas Salmon was so impressed with Walford's poem that he made a second copy of it for himself and tucked this away in his notes and papers.

Three years later, Salmon traveled to the United States; while in New York City, he sent Walford's poem to the editor of the *New York Observer*. The editor was so impressed with the prayer-poem that he published it in the September 13, 1845, issue of his paper. In addition to the text of the poem, the paper carried Salmon's tale of having received it by dictation from his blind friend, a carver of trinkets in England.

The possibility of the poem becoming hymn was appreciated by the compilers of Baptist Hymnal in 1859, and they included it in a book entitled *Church Melodies* publishes that same year.

Still, it wasn't until William Bradbury noted American composer of gospel music set the words to music in 1861 and then published the words and music together in his collection of hymns, *The Golden Chain*, that the general public began to appreciate and enjoy the comforting message of this hymn.

William Bradbury was well-known in the mid-1800s for taking a simple religious poems and giving it wings with his music. Although he was a gifted musician and composer and could have gained fame and prosperity in the field of secular music, Bradbury's heart was drawn to writing quality melodies for song to be sung in Sunday schools. He disagree with the trend in those days of using popular secular tunes as accompaniments for religious hymns. In his efforts to change this trend, he became known as the "pioneer of Sunday school songs." In all, he published sixty songbooks containing the melodies for the following favorites, as well as many others: "Jesus Loves Me," "Just As I Am," "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Else," "He Leadeth Me," and "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us."

"Sweet Hour of Prayer" was the result international cooperation: a blind poet and of his pastor friend in England who shared their work with a newspaper editor and a composer in New York. The result was a hymn that has strengthened and encouraged faith on both sides of the Atlantic for over 140 years, proving once more that the power of prayer is not limited by political or geographical boundaries.

Current and past issues of the *Shield of Faith* can be found online at www.shieldoffaith.us

YE SHALL LET YOUR CHILDREN KNOW

(Please read Joshua 4:19-24)

There may be moments when we become so busy or so wrapped up in pursuing happiness that we forget (or fail to notice) God's hand working in our lives. How many times have we as God's children experienced His Blessings and His constant mercies in the circumstances of our everyday walk? Perhaps the evidence was as insignificant as a smile from a passerby, or a song on Sunday morning that blessed our heart, or a word of encouragement from a loved one. The evidence may be of a deeper nature, such as the overpowering feeling of peace when we know that God is with us in a time of great difficulty or sorrow, because we experience the joy of His presence.

After the children of Israel had obeyed God and passed over the river of Jordan into the land promised to them through the faith of Abraham, God told their leader Joshua to build a memorial to the way God had provided for crossing the river that hindered their inheriting the land of promise. Remember, these people had wandered in the wilderness many years because of their fathers' disobedience. Probably during all that time they had heard about this wonderful land from Joshua and Caleb, who had seen its splendor, tasted of its goodness, and trusted in God to help them take possession of it.

So here were the people, able to see the land they had heard so much about, yet barred from entering in by a seemingly uncrossable obstacle. To make matters worse, God had led them here at a time of year when the river was swift and overflowing its banks. God told Joshua to have the priests take the ark of the covenant and pass over before the people. They took the ark and stepped into the river at its brink; they then were commanded to stand still in Jordan. The Bible says, "And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clear over Jordan." God was not only with them, He caused the waters to stop! Because the ark (the evidence of God's pres-

ence) was sent into the river ahead and stayed in the river to protect the children of Israel, these "waters of trouble" didn't touch them.

God then told Joshua to have twelve men take twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan. They took them from where the priest's feet stood firm, carried them to the other side, and laid them down there. A remarkable thing then came to pass. Joshua took twelve stones and set them up in the midst of Jordan, replacing the twelve stones that the other men had just carried out. God intended for the people to place a memorial there a means of remembering the evidence of His hand in delivering and leading them. They were to pass along the meaning of these stones to their children, so that the children would know of God's mercies to their parents. The visible evidence of the stones where the priests had stood in the midst of the river Jordan.

Are we taking time to build memorials to the evidence of God's blessings in our lives? Do we "leave stones" at the place of each deliverance to remind us of what great things He has done for us? Do we tell our children (and others of God's children) How God delivers His people and protects us? Or have we failed to leave stones? And finding ourselves in the midst of great trouble do we feel like we're not being delivered? Perhaps it is because we are having to experience the trouble that we doubt God's promises and His presence. Remember, the Israelites didn't go AROUND the river Jordan, they went THROUGH it. But even though they went through it, they were not touched by it. I don't believe their clothing got wet, nor did they even carry mud from the river bottom across on their shoes. The reason for this may be found in their obedience to God's directions. God had given them the ark to be a constant reminder of His blessings and deliverances. They sent the ark into the river first, and God used this to stop the water. Then they were able to cross untouched.

What if they had said, "I'll take my chances in getting through this. I don't believe the ark will help me this time?? May each of God's children trust in His promises, go through the barriers that are before them to lay hold on deliverance,

then when others ask, "What mean these stones?" we can say "This is the place of God's deliverance!"

Elder Bill Taylor
Grace Newsletter,
February 1990

More and more there is growing up a disposition among parents to permit all matters of religious observance to be with their offspring mere matters of choice or preference. Your child must learn French and German and drawing; but he shall learn his catechism and his Bible lesson and a reverent observance of Sunday, if he chooses, and not otherwise. A more dismal and irrational folly it is not easy to conceive! I do not say that there may not have been folly in another and opposite direction. I am not unmindful that religious teaching has been sometimes made a dreary and intolerable burden. But surely we can correct one excess (not, I apprehend, very frequent or very harmful) without flying straightway into an opposite and a worse one. And so I plead with you who are parents to train your children in ways of reverent familiarity with God's word, God's house, and God's day. Let them understand that something higher than your taste or preference makes these things sacred and binding and constrains you to imbue them with their spirit. And, that you may do this the more effectually, give them, I entreat you, that mightiest teaching which consists in your own consistent and devout example.

— H. C. POTTER.

If that roaring lion that goes about continually seeking whom he may devour finds us alone among the vineyards of the Philistines, where is our hope? Not in our heels, for he is swifter than we; not in our weapons, for we are naturally unarmed; not in our hands, which are weak and languishing; but in the Spirit of God, by whom we can do all things. If God fights in us, who can resist us? There is a stronger lion in us than that against us. — SPURGEON.

Circular Letter

Faith

(167th Session of the Towaliga Association)

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." He was exhorting the church at Philippi to rejoice, even though they were experiencing afflictions that then were distressing them. Even though Paul himself was in prison at Rome, yet he was encouraging the saints at Philippi to "rejoice in the Lord always", despite the discord that was in their midst and persecution by their religious enemies. The word "rejoice" is a beautiful word in that it expresses joy or great delight. The Greek defines the word "to be cheerful and calm" during distressful times.

We, as Primitive Baptists, also have cause to rejoice, even though we see our numbers dwindling, the average age of our membership increasing, the lack of young people in some churches and our churches closing. Under these conditions, it would be very easy for us to become discouraged, to throw up our hands in defeat, and to murmur and complain. But I'm sure that Paul would have us to "rejoice," even in these discouraging times, because we have the wonderful truths that should cause us to "rejoice in the Lord." The Prophet Isaiah (in Isaiah 61:10) said "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...."

Yes, we have much about which we can rejoice, because we believe in the Sovereign Grace of our God. It was Paul who said in Romans 8:28-30, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here we have the golden chain of salvation, which can never be broken. These things are so wonderful, we should "rejoice in the Lord always..."

In the first place he speaks of the glorious doctrine of election, in which a people are "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world", as Paul said in Ephesians 1:4. Our Articles of Faith declare "We believe that God chose a people unto salvation or eternal life and that this choice was eternal, particular and

unconditional."

In the second place we also believe in the precious doctrine of predestination, which declares the sovereignty of God, and also declares the fact that those people who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world shall be effectually called, justified and glorified. The final destiny of these people He planned and settled beforehand; that is, before they existed in this world. Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:5 "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will..."

In the third place this golden chain of our salvation tells us that those chosen and predestinated before the foundation of the world are effectual called in time by the Holy Spirit out of darkness into the marvelous light of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is an inward call that is irresistible. No one can resist it, for Job says in Job 9:12, "who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?"

In the fourth place we should rejoice in the fact that those whom He calls are justified by the blood and obedience of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Our justification was determined beforehand and is as sure as God Himself.

Finally, in the fifth place, those elected, predestinated, called and justified shall be glorified. How can we not rejoice in this truth? Those chosen in Christ shall be in eternal glory with Christ someday. It is as sure as God is Himself, because we are told by Paul in Romans 8:35 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?..." and then in verses 38 and 39 he says "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall he able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

How can we not "rejoice in the Lord" in such a glorious doctrine? It speaks of the Sovereign Grace of our God; a Grace that is unmerited. Let us then continue to think of this grace as the "Amazing Grace" of God, and rejoice in the fact that it saves us to eternal glory.

Written by Elder Carlton Kirby
August 16, 2005

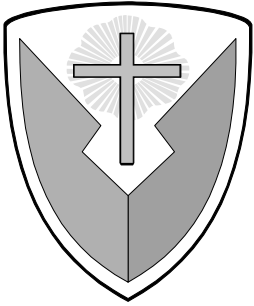
At this point in our study, we turn to a saying of our Lord, which there is need to emphasize, since it is the very keystone of the arch of faith and prayer. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. We should ponder well that statement — "Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Here is described a faith which realizes, which appropriates, which takes. Such faith is a consciousness of the Divine, an experienced communion, a realized certainty.

Is faith growing or declining as the years go by? Does faith stand strong and four square, these days, as iniquity abounds and the love of many grows cold? Does faith maintain its hold, as religion tends to become a mere formality and worldliness increasingly prevails? The enquiry of our Lord, may, with great appropriateness, be ours. "When the Son of Man cometh," He asks, "shall He find faith on the earth?" We believe that He will, and it is ours, in this our day, to see to it that the lamp of faith is trimmed and burning, lest He come who shall come, and that right early.

Faith is the foundation of Christian character and the security of the soul. When Jesus was looking forward to Peter's denial, and cautioning him against it, He said unto His disciple: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, to sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fall not." Our Lord was declaring a central truth; it was Peter's faith He was seeking to guard; for well He knew that when faith is broken down, the foundations of spiritual life give way, and the entire structure of religious experience falls. It was Peter's faith which needed guarding. Hence Christ's solicitude for the welfare of His disciple's soul and His determination to fortify Peter's faith by His own all prevailing prayer.

In his Second Epistle, Peter has this idea in mind when speaking of growth in grace as a measure of safety in the Christian life, and as implying fruitfulness. "And besides this," he declares, "giving diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness." Of this additioning process, faith was the starting-point — the basis of the other graces of the Spirit. Faith was the foundation on which other things were to be built.

The Necessity of Prayer by E. M. Bounds



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

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

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

Concerning the nature and extent of Christian devotion.

DEVOTION is neither private nor public prayer; but prayers, whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of devotion. Devotion signifies a life given, or devoted, to God. He, therefore, is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God, who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety, by doing everything in the Name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to His glory.

We readily acknowledge, that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our prayers; that in them we are to look wholly unto Him, and act wholly for Him; that we are only to pray in such a manner, for such things, and such ends, as are suitable to His glory.

Now let any one but find out the reason why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same as strong a reason to be as strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For there is not the least shadow of a reason why we should make God the rule and measure of our prayers; why we should then look wholly unto Him, and pray according to His will; but what equally proves it necessary for us to look wholly unto God, and make Him the rule and measure of all the other actions of our life. For any ways of life, any employment of our talents, whether of our parts, our time, or money, that is not strictly according to the will of God, that is not for such ends as are suitable to His glory, are as great absurdities and failings, as prayers that are not according to the will of God. For there is no

other reason why our prayers should be according to the will of God, why they should have nothing in them but what is wise, and holy, and heavenly; there is no other reason for this, but that our lives may be of the same nature, full of the same wisdom, holiness, and heavenly tempers, that we may live unto God in the same spirit that we pray unto Him. Were it not our strict duty to live by reason, to devote all the actions of our lives to God, were it not absolutely necessary to walk before Him in wisdom and holiness and all heavenly conversation, doing everything in His Name, and for His glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most heavenly prayers. Nay, such prayers would be absurdities; they would be like prayers for wings, when it was no part of our duty to fly.

As sure, therefore, as there is any wisdom in praying for the Spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that Spirit the rule of all our actions; as sure as it is our duty to look wholly unto God in our prayers, so sure is it that it is our duty to live wholly unto God in our lives. But we can no more be said to live unto God, unless we live unto Him in all the ordinary actions of our life, unless He be the rule and measure of all our ways, than we can be said to pray unto God, unless our prayers look wholly unto Him. So that unreasonable and absurd ways of life, whether in labor or diversion, whether they consume our time, or our money, are like unreasonable and absurd prayers, and are as truly an offense unto God.

From *A SERIOUS CALL TO A DEVOUT AND HOLY LIFE*
BY WILLIAM LAW, A.M. (1728)

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.