
Shield of Faith

A Primitive Baptist Publication

December 2004

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah,

"Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:1-2)

Micah was cotemporary with Isaiah, and began to prophesy a little after him. In some cases they used almost the same words, that out of the mouth of two such witnesses God's word might be fully established. (Compare Isaiah 2:2-3, with Micah 4:1-2. Isaiah's prophecy is said to be concerning Judah and Jerusalem, but Micah's concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.)

The prophets were to convince Israel and Judah of their sins, and of the judgments of God ready to break in upon them. In Micah 1:5, the prophet states: "For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?" In the capital cities of the two kingdoms, idolatry was rampant.

After the death of Solomon and the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam was made king of Israel. 1 Kings 12:26-30 shows something of his character and his actions that led to great sin in Israel: "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought

thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan."

In the beginning, Israel claimed to worship Jehovah, but used the calves to symbolize Him. It was more convenient to go to Bethel or Dan than Jerusalem and having the calves made their worship more like the world around them so that they would not feel the reproach of the world. Most of Israel, then, was pleased with this new system of worship.

God, however, was not pleased with Jeroboam's innovation. It was contrary to God's word and dishonoring to Him. In the mind of Israel, God was brought down to the same level as the gods of the heathen. When a man places God on the same level and worships Him in the same manner as the heathen idols, that man has already become an idolater. It is then a short step to worship other gods. This is what happened to Israel.

Micah brought Israel the message of God's coming judgment. "For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place" (Micah 1:3-4).

The Lord would come forth from the place of his glorious throne as a judge, to hear, determine, and punish. He would show, by the effects of his power, justice, and wisdom, that he is more eminently present there. He would trample under foot all that is contrary to Him.

Of Samaria the prophets says, "...her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem" (Micah 1:9). Rather than to call Israel to repentance the message is one of doom.

Israel had deceived themselves into believing that God was with them and would

protect them no matter what. "Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest" (Micah 3:9-12). Even though their ways were evil, the rulers said, "Is not the LORD among us?"

Jeremiah warned against the same attitude: "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these" (Jeremiah 7:4). The false prophets taught that God would not allow any enemy to conquer them simply because the temple stood in Jerusalem; "*none evil can come upon us.*" God warned that "therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest"

The apostle Paul charged the Roman believers to "behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Romans 11:22); Micah spoke of the severity of God in pronouncement of His righteous judgment. He also showed the goodness of God and brought comfort to the righteous. "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law

(Continued on page 2)

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah,

(Continued from page 1)

shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:1-2). Though Zion be ploughed as a field, yet God has not cast off his people. The mountain of the house of the Lord shall again appear firm ground for God's faithful worshippers to stand, and give their attendance to Him.

For the sins of God's ancient people, the literal Zion has long been "trodden down of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), but God has been ever mindful of his spiritual Zion, and He has established her in the top of the mountains. Christ himself will build it upon a rock; it shall be an impregnable fort upon an immovable foundation, so that the gates of hell shall not overthrow nor undermine (Matthew 16:18); its foundations are still in the holy mountains (Psalm 87:1), the everlasting mountains, which cannot, which shall not, be removed. It shall be established, not as the temple, upon one mountain, but upon many; for the foundations of the church, as they are sure, so they are large.

Before these comforts were to be realized, Zion is exhorted to prepare for times of trouble. Though God will grant her a final victory over all her foes, he will, in the meantime, chastise her for her sins. The enemy "shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." Complaint had been made of the judges of Israel (Micah 3:11) that they were corrupt and took bribes, and this disgrace came justly upon them for abusing their power.

When the failure of earthly kings has been shown, God reaffirms the promise of His King. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

Bethlehem means "the house of bread"; Ephratah means "fruitful": both names referring to the fertility of the region. The true *fruitfulness of the house of bread* would be in the *bread of life* (John 6:35), the true manna that would come forth. The Savior of the world had his birth in a feeble village, and he was brought up in a despised town of Galilee. Thus God, in the very beginning of the gospel, taught his church to rely not on worldly rank and splendor, but on the power of his Spirit

Insignificant in size and population, little in worldly importance, Bethlehem is great in the spiritual significance of being the birthplace of Messiah (John 7:42). "...Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

God said this one shall come forth *unto me*. David in prophecy spoke as Christ when he said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalms 40:8). Jesus Himself said "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Jesus came forth unto the Father to completely fulfill the will of the Father. "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).

The coming One "is to be ruler in Israel." The ruler is the "Shiloh," "Prince of peace," "on whose shoulders the government is laid" (Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 9:6). In 2 Samuel 23:3, David said "He that ruleth over men must be just." (2 Samuel 23:5) David further states, "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." David and his family in many respects failed to show such in character as the just ruler described. It is in Christ alone that the idea of a perfect ruler, such as David here describes, is realized. Of Christ's reign, the psalmist said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Psalms 72:6-7). It was to David a subject of the highest joy and thankfulness that God will maintain His covenant with his family, until the advent of his greatest Son, the Messiah, who was the special object of his desire, and the author of his salvation.

The One to come from Bethlehem is described as one "whose goings forth have been from of old." In every age, from the foundation of the world, there has been some manifestation of the Messiah. He was the hope, as he was the salvation, of believers from the promise to Adam in paradise, to his manifestation in the flesh four thousand years after. There was no time in which he has not been going forth—coming in various ways to save

men. He is before all things. As he is the Creator of all things, so he is the Eternal, and not part of what was created. All being but God has been created. Whatever has not been created is God. Jesus is the Creator of all things; he is God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

The angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream, telling of the coming birth of the Savior and the fulfilling of prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). I fear the we often fail to grasp the reality that He is *still* "Emmanuel, ...God with us." The terms *from of old* and *from everlasting* convey the strongest assertion of *infinite* duration of which the Hebrew language is capable. Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). In like manner, all who truly see His day will rejoice and be glad.

In that day, is a very common phrase in prophecy. It speaks of both a time of judgment for the wicked and a time of blessing for the faithful. "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds" (Micah 5:10-11). "In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (Micah 4:6-7). While God has from generation to generation judged the wicked and blessed the righteous, these prophecies have their greater fulfillment in the kingdom reign of Christ, the day in which we live. The ruler in Israel has come forth from Bethlehem and reigns today. "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:16-17).

Bible Quiz

The prophets wrote and spoke of the coming Messiah. Tell which prophet made the following prophecies.

1. _____ said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.
2. _____ said the Messiah would be born of a virgin.
3. _____ said the Messiah would be taken out of Egypt.
4. _____ said the Messiah would be a mighty prophet in word and deed.
5. _____ said the Messiah would have his hands and feet pierced.
6. _____ said the Messiah would be despised and rejected.
7. _____ said the Messiah would make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
8. _____ said the Messiah would be made an offering for sin.
9. _____ said soldiers would cast lots for the Messiah's garments.
10. _____ said the Messiah would be betrayed and sold for thirty pieces of silver.
11. _____ said that Jesus would suffer in silence.

Answers on Page 4

REVIVAL OR JUDGEMENT?

Truly God is able to do the impossible, but whether this means we have a right to expect that God will act in the way many suppose when they speak of revival, is a totally different question. If our age is an age rapidly running down to judgment; if ours is an age which exhibits all the features of those historic times which immediately preceded the pouring out of the wrath of God—the age of Noah, the age of Lot, the age of Jeremiah—we have every reason to believe that the next event which lies before us is JUDGMENT, not REVIVAL.—Chas. D. Alexander

God grants not the requests of His people because they pray; but they pray because He designs to answer their petitions.—Joseph Hart

SATAN AND HIS GOSPEL

Is the Devil a living reality, or is he nothing more than a figment of the imagination? Is the word "Satan" merely a synonym for wickedness, or does it stand for a concrete entity? In cultured circles it has become the custom to return a negative answer to these questions, and to flatly deny the existence of the Tempter. Among such people it is regarded as a mark of intellectual superiority to repudiate the personality of the Devil. By many, Satan is now looked upon as a product of priestcraft, a relic of superstition, the myth of a bygone age. With others, Satan is simply an abstraction, a mere negation, the opposite of good. "All the Devil there is is the devil within you," is the last word of "modern thought." The words which Goethe puts into the mouth of Mephistopholes—"I am the Spirit of Negation"—is accepted as a good workable definition of the Devil. He is regarded as a mere abstract principle of evil. As someone has quaintly put it, "*They spell Devil without a 'd' (evil), as they spell God with two 'O's' (good). Good and evil is their scheme.*"

But the more general conception of Satan is different from the above. The popular idea, the one that prevails among the masses, may be gathered from the pictorial representations of him which appear on the street posters, which are to be met with in our illustrated magazines, and which are displayed upon the stage—where he is pictured as a grotesque monster in human form, having horns, hoofs and a forked tail. Such conception is an insult to intelligent people, and inconsequence, the Devil has come to be regarded either as a bogey with which to frighten naughty children, or as a fit subject for jest and joke.

Both of the above conceptions are far from the truth. The fact that they have gained such wide credence is due largely to ignorance—ignorance concerning the teaching of God's Word, ignorance concerning the Satan mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. But it is to Satan's advantage to keep people in such ignorance.

An intelligent enemy always keeps in the background and remains hidden out of sight. It is an important consideration with him that his identity should be concealed. Many an evil enterprise owes its success to its perpetrator remaining secreted. The assassin who plunges a knife into the back of his victim is usually hired for the purpose. The one who throws the bomb is merely a tool, the mastermind that planned the deed is unseen and unsuspected. Therefore, it need not surprise us to find that the masses do not believe in the existence of a personal Devil. It serves his purpose well to keep his dupes in ignorance concerning his real existence. The Devil has always worked secretly and sought to hide his true identity. When he beguiled Eve he did so through a serpent. When he appeared before God to accuse Job, he waited until a day when "the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6). When he sowed his "tares", he did so secretly, in the night—"while men slept" (Matt. 13:25). When he betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of His enemies, he worked through Judas! Satan is an adept in disguising himself—he comes to us not as a Dragon of Darkness but "**is transformed into an Angel of Light**" (2 Corinthians 11:14). ==Arthur W. Pink

The Devil's best ruse is to persuade us that he does not exist. -Baudelaire

The devil's most devilish when respectable. -Browning

Where God hath a temple, the Devil will have a chapel. -Burton

The devil has power to suggest evil, but he was not given the power to compel you against your will. -Cyril

Is Christ Preached?

True Faith

If there is to be blessing Christ must be preached. It is vain to think there can be prosperity in any other way. Doctrine has its place, but it cannot be a substitute for the preaching of Christ. Experience has its place, but it is only fleshly sentimentality if it fails to center in Christ. Christ is the central axis of all divine revelation, the source from which all vital experience flows and the one and only foundation upon which all doctrine rests. He and He alone is Head over all things to the Church. He alone is the author of salvation, and apart from the preaching of Christ there can be no preaching of the gospel. Preaching may take a thousand forms, it may explore a thousand avenues, it may radiate in thousands of directions, but if Christ is not its sum and substance, its center and its circumference, its foundation and its apex, then

"its noblest flight
must sing in darkness and expire
in night."

There can be no substitute for the preaching of Christ. The history of the Church plainly reveals this. Every revival has sprung out from the preaching of Christ. Every decline has had its rise in the overemphasizing of phases of truth to the exclusion of Christ. Christ and the Gospel are synonymous. If Christ is preached as He is set forth in the Scriptures, the Gospel is preached. If the Gospel is preached then Christ is and must be its center. For the great apostle of the Gentiles--and is not the God-ordained example for the ministry?---there was no distinction between preaching Christ and preaching the Gospel. For him the terms were interchangeable. The Gospel, for Paul, was not a theory or a system, it was a message; it was the "glad tidings," as the word itself signifies. His Gospel was "the Gospel of Christ." It had come from Christ, it centered in Christ, it led back to Christ. Christ and Christ alone, in all the fullness of His redeeming love, in all the freeness of His unmerited grace, in all the boundlessness of His

infinite compassion was the one and only foot point of his preaching. He Himself was the evidence of the truth and power of that Gospel: "I persecuted the Church and wasted it"--"He loved me and gave Himself for me." Here was where experience entered.

The call is one to the ministry. We make it in love and true affection. As Churches languish and Causes [local congregations] decay, the question has need to force itself upon our mind, "Is Christ preached?" We take our text and we expound the Scriptures, but "Is Christ preached?" We emphasize our doctrines and decry false teaching, but "Is Christ preached?" We expatiate largely on our denominational position, but the question rings out with increasing clearness "Is Christ preached?" We dwell on our manifold trials and difficulties, but the question still thunders forth, "Is Christ preached?" Let us set it up by our bedside. Let us write it across the pulpit desk. It cannot be written in too large letters before our eyes, nor can it echo too loudly in our ears, and happy shall we be if at the last we can say with the apostle, "I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ."

-B. A. Warburton
From *Old Faith Contender*,
FEBRUARY, 1970

THEN AND NOW

In 1777 our Continental Congress voted an expenditure of \$300,000 to buy copies of the Bible and to distribute them throughout the country. In our time the Supreme court has made a decision which in effect forbids the Gideons to give New Testaments to school children on public school property.

News And Notes

Faith is the gift of God. No man can possess a true and living faith until God is pleased to produce it in his heart. It is not merely an assent and consent to the letter of the word. True faith "standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." It is not merely sentiment or opinion, but it is a divine assurance wrought in the heart of a poor sinner by almighty power. It is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (or ground, or confidence) of things not seen."

Through the exercise of faith we credit that which we cannot comprehend and do not perceive. Nay, faith often receives that which is quite contrary to what we feel and see. Thus it is above sense, and very often opposed to it. The Lord enables His people by faith to triumph over sin through believing in the Saviour. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." I John 5:4. This faith works by love to Jesus, and so exalts Him in our esteem that we are brought to hate self and to value Jesus above every object, in heaven or on earth. He is all our righteousness, all our holiness, and all our salvation. We have no other, we want no other. Professors are apt to put the "fruits of holiness" for holiness, and thus to ascribe some degree of excellence to the creature; but all genuine fruit, whether internal or external, can only spring from our union to Christ. He says, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me."

J.Hobbs, "Gospel Standard",
March, 1872.

Answers to Bible Quiz

1. Micah, Micah 5:2; 2. Isaiah, Isaiah 7:14; 3. Hosea, Hosea 11:1; 4. Moses, Deuteronomy 18:18 -19; 5. David, Psalm 22:16, 6. Isaiah, Isaiah 53:3; 7. Zechariah, Zechariah 9:9; 8. Isaiah, Isaiah 53:10; 9. David, Psalm 22:18; 10. Zechariah, Zechariah 11:12 -13; 11. Isaiah, Isaiah 53:7

Devotions:

Psalms In Reflection

From the book of the same title by Elder Len Dalton

THE THIRTY-THIRD PSALM

Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. {goodness: or, mercy} By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. {bringeth: Heb. maketh frustrate} The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. {to all...: Heb. to generation and generation} Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee. (Psalms 33:1-22)

This psalm is indeed a triumphant song of praise. We frequently feel like singing a triumphant song of praise; doubtless this was true of the psalmist on this occasion. These two sentences may well account for the title that is sometimes given this psalm, which title is, "Jehovah, the Mighty Deliverer." The singer quickly appeals for the praise of all, and that all methods of praise be used. All the greatness and goodness of Jehovah is sung in general terms in verses four to eleven. In the psalm Jehovah's character is perfect, combining light-"righteousness and judgment" and love--"loving kindness" in verse five. Jehovah is also the Creator, full of power so that men should worship Him. This is seen in verses six to nine. He is the active King, overruling all affairs of men, verses ten to eleven.

The psalm then praises Jehovah as the God of the chosen people, verses twelve to nineteen. He chose them, and in their interest watches over all the sons of men, verses twelve to fifteen. Jehovah's watchfulness over His own people is a greater security than horses and chariots or even the greatest armaments. The great psalm ends with an affirmation of trust, and assurance of joy and a prayer for mercy in verses twenty to twenty-two. There is indeed something in this psalm which gives one a great lift and fills one's soul with great assurance and gladness. It is indeed a song of deliverance. Well may we end the psalm by saying, if Jehovah-God be for one, who can be against him! Doubtless, we would all be better Christians if we remembered this truth.

Hymns and Hymn Writers

Revive Us Again

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psalms 85:6)

In his own words here is the testimony of Scottish doctor, W. P. Mackay, author of "Revive Us Again."

My dear mother . . . had been a godly; pious woman, quite often telling me of the Savior, and many times I had been a witness to her wrestling in prayer for my soul's salvation. But nothing had made a deep impression on me. The older I grew the more wicked I became . . .

One day a seriously injured (laborer) . . . was brought into the hospital. The case was hopeless . . . He seemed to realize his condition, for he was fully conscious, and asked me how long he would last . . . I gave him my opinion in as cautious a manner as I could. . . .

"Have you any relatives whom we could notify?" I continued.

The patient shook his head . . . His only wish was to see his landlady because he owed her a small sum, and also wished to bid her farewell. He also requested his landlady send him, "The Book . . ."

I went to see him on my regular visits at least once a day. What struck me most was the quiet, almost happy expression constantly on his face . . . After the man died, some things about the deceased's affairs were to be attended to in my presence.

"What shall we do with this?" asked the nurse, holding up a book in her hand.

"What kind of book is it" I asked.

"The Bible of the poor man . . . As long as he was able to read it, he did so, and when he was unable to do so anymore, he kept it under his bed cover."

I took the Bible and—could I trust my eyes? It was my own Bible! The Bible which my mother had given me when I left my parents' home, and which later, when short of money, I sold for a small amount. My name was still in it, written in my mother's hand . . .

With a deep sense of shame I looked upon . . . the precious Book. It had given comfort and refreshing to the unfortunate man in his last hours. It had been a guide to him unto eternal life, so that he had been enabled to die in peace and happiness, and this Book, the last gift of my mother, I had actually sold for a ridiculous price . . . Be it sufficient to say that the regained possession of my Bible was the cause of my conversion.

Few books can stand three readings. But the word of God is solid; it will stand a thousand readings, and the man who has gone over it the most is the surest of finding new wonders there. -Hamilton

The Ten Primitive Persecutions

The Seventh Persecution, Under Decius A. D. 249

This was occasioned partly by the hatred he bore to his predecessor Philip, who was deemed a Christian and was partly by his jealousy concerning the amazing increase of Christianity; for the heathen temples began to be forsaken, and the Christian churches thronged.

These reasons stimulated Decius to attempt the very extirpation of the name of Christian; and it was unfortunate for the Gospel, that many errors had, about this time, crept into the Church: the Christians were at variance with each other; self-interest divided those whom social love ought to have united; and the virulence of pride occasioned a variety of factions.

The heathens in general were ambitious to enforce the imperial decrees upon this occasion, and looked upon the murder of a Christian as a merit to themselves. The martyrs, upon this occasion, were innumerable; but the principal we shall give some account of.

Fabian, the bishop of Rome, was the first person of eminence who felt the severity of this persecution. The deceased emperor, Philip, had, on account of his integrity, committed his treasure to the care of this good man. But Decius, not finding as much as his avarice made him expect, determined to wreak his vengeance on the good prelate. He was accordingly seized; and on January 20, A. D. 250, he suffered decapitation.

Julian, a native of Cilicia, as we are informed by St. Chrysostom, was seized upon for being a Christian. He was put into a leather bag, together with a number of serpents and scorpions, and in that condition thrown into the sea.

Peter, a young man, amiable for the superior qualities of his body and mind, was beheaded for refusing to sacrifice to Venus. He said, "I am astonished you should sacrifice to an infamous woman, whose debaucheries even your own historians record, and whose life consisted of such actions, as your laws would punish. No, I shall offer the true God the acceptable sacrifice of praises and prayers." Optimus the proconsul of Asia, on hearing this, ordered the pris-

oner to be stretched upon a wheel, by which all his bones were broken, and then he was sent to be beheaded.

Nichomachus, being brought before the proconsul as a Christian, was ordered to sacrifice to the pagan idols. Nichomachus replied, "I cannot pay that respect to devils, which is only due to the Almighty." This speech so much enraged the proconsul that Nichomachus was put to the rack.

After enduring the torments for a tune, he recanted; but scarcely had he given this proof of his frailty, than he fell into the greatest agonies, dropped down on the ground, and expired immediately.

Denisa, a young woman of only sixteen years of age, who beheld this terrible judgment, suddenly exclaimed, "O unhappy wretch, why would you buy a moment's ease at the expense of a miserable eternity!" Optimus, hearing this, called to her, and Denisa avowing herself to be a Christian, she was beheaded, by his order, soon after.

Andrew and Paul, two companions of Nichomachus the martyr, A. D. 251, suffered martyrdom by stoning, and expired, calling on their blessed Redeemer.

Alexander and Epimachus, of Alexandria, were apprehended for being Christians: and, confessing the accusation, were beat with staves, torn with hooks, and at length burnt in the fire; and we are informed, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius, that four female martyrs suffered on the same day, and at the same place, but not in the same manner; for these were beheaded.

Lucian and Marcian, two wicked pagans, though skilful magicians, becoming converts to Christianity, to make amends for their former errors, lived the lives of hermits, and subsisted upon bread and water only. After some time spent in this manner, they became zealous preachers, and made many converts. The persecution, however, raging at this time, they were seized upon, and carried before Sabinus, the governor of Bithynia. On being asked by what authority they took upon themselves to preach, Lucian answered, 'That the laws of charity and humanity obliged all men to endeavor the conversion of their

neighbors, and to do everything in their power to rescue them from the snares of the devil.'

Lucian having answered in this manner, Marcian said, "Their conversion was by the same grace which was given to St. Paul, who, from a zealous persecutor of the Church, became a preacher of the Gospel."

The proconsul, finding that he could not prevail with them to renounce their faith, condemned them to be burnt alive, which sentence was soon after executed.

Trypho and Respicus, two eminent men, were seized as Christians, and imprisoned at Nice. Their feet were pierced with nails; they were dragged through the streets, scourged, torn with iron hooks, scorched with lighted torches, and at length beheaded, February 1, A. D. 251.

Agatha, a Sicilian lady, was not more remarkable for her personal and acquired endowments, than her piety: her beauty was such, that Quintian, governor of Sicily, became enamored of her, and made many attempts upon her chastity without success. In order to gratify his passions with the greater conveniency, he put the virtuous lady into the hands of Aphrodica, a very infamous and licentious woman. This wretch tried every artifice to win her to the desired prostitution; but found all her efforts were vain; for her chastity was impregnable, and she well knew that virtue alone could procure true happiness. Aphrodica acquainted Quintian with the inefficacy of her endeavors, who, enraged to be foiled in his designs, changed his lust into resentment. On her confessing that she was a Christian, *he* determined to gratify his revenge, as he could not his passion. Pursuant to his orders, she was scourged, burnt with red-hot irons, and torn with sharp hooks. Having borne these torments with admirable fortitude, she was next laid naked upon live coals, intermingled with glass, and then being carried back to prison, she there expired on February 5, 251.

From *Fox's Book of Martyrs*.

To be continued.

Life's Little Day

The flower fadeth, the grass withereth The wind bloweth upon it and it is gone. By hear-say and record we read and form images and mental pictures of great men of old. Very few of us know anything about even our great grandparents, except by tradition. This has always been a fluid, and hence a flowing world of men. With all our present ability to record, we do not record but a drop of the bucket. Thousands do not know the actual date of their birth. It is rare thing that anyone can trace their ancestry back beyond four generations. Many records of the past have been lost, destroyed or misplaced. Time, wind, rain, sleet, snow, freeze have made many a cemetery marker illegible. There is nothing eternal about the man of flesh. The wind blows over it and it is gone. Margaret Mitchell's title of the story of the Civil War was well chosen: *Gone With the Wind*. It is and are we not all glad it is!

Somewhere in Virginia lie the bones of my grandfather in a mass grave of dead soldiers of the Confederacy. Let the wind blow, blow away even the memories of those sorrows. My mother never saw or knew her father.

If I were called upon to explain the cause of all the ferment, the churning, the restlessness of the young people of America, and indeed thousands of the older ones, it would be because they are ships without anchors, building without foundations, minds without ballast. The rains have come and are beating vehemently upon their house, and they are falling because they are built upon the sand. They do not know the fundamentals of human life and human existence. They do not know their frailties nor their sins. They do not know that they are not monarchs over all they survey. They do not know that they were made for the world and the world for them. They do not realize that at best their day is little, that the wind will blow upon them and they will go the way of all flesh. They do not know that they are a part of eternity. They do not know they are but dust.

Why do they not know this? Because they have not been so taught. There are A, B, C's of the alphabet, and there are A, B, C's of life. The past political race to select the political leader of our country heard accusation of anarchy. What is anarchy? It is rebellion against the status quo. But it is more than that. It is the attempted destruction of the good along with the bad. It is chaos. Rebellion is no new thing upon this earth. It came in with the creation of man.

Much study has been made by great minds, much effort has been made by many civilizations to bring man to Utopia, to the golden age.

Recently Mr. Johnson had concepts of a great society. It did not succeed fully because its life blood was materialism. The A, B, C's of life were not recognized, nor honored.

Our Lord has said, Life does not consist of the abundance of the things we possess. If so, there must be a life different to the life of flesh. There is; it is the life of spirit. It is a life in God. If a life in God, then it is a life in love. If a life in love, then it is a life in compassion. If a life in compassion, then it is a life in service. If a life in service, then it is a life in self abnegation and self denial. Not many of this young generation know this.

The Utopia envisioned by men, the golden age so long sought by men, yet not found, is not to be brought in by men but by God Himself. And yet with all our churches, Sunday schools, B.Y.P.T.U.'s and auxiliaries of every kind in the innumerable denominational institutions of our time and day, we in these United States appear to be finding more and more trouble with our youth. They say that their elders do not understand them, that there is a generation gap which separates them from their elders. It is not a gap of times but a gap of knowledge and wisdom of the godly virtues. They do not know values. They do not know the precious from the vile, the wheat from the chaff, the things temporal from the things eternal. They have been fed a diet of half-truths and surmises and have been expected to build a character upon them. They have, but they have built an unstable and uncertain character. They are foundlings, simply because they have been abandoned to sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish by their elders, in every medley of thought. Their wisdom has not increased with their increase of factual and scientific knowledge. Here they are, with a world about to be cast upon their shoulders, without the undergirding to cope with it. Who is to blame? They are not,— the elders are. When wind is sown to, the whirlwinds are in inevitable harvest.

There has not a naughtier idea ever been conceived than liberalism. Man's creation was it instituted in restraint. A voice of Supreme Authority came to Adam from his Creator, ***Thou shalt not!*** How dangerous it is to ride in a vehicle with no brakes. We live in a world of restraints, a word of natural laws, both positive and negative. Somewhere, somehow if by no other way than trial and error we all do have to learn to become subservient to the inflexible laws of nature and God or suffer penalties.

Those parents, those guardians, those leaders and teachers who began somewhere in the last of the nineteenth century to relax their vigilance of censorship of what their children were allowed to see, believe, and think and do under the catchword of liberalism and free thought, and those who have urged this idea on in this twentieth century, partaking quite a bit of it themselves, ought to be able to see the results of such folly.

But there is no point in diagnosing a disease unless you have a cure for it. My cure is to return to the old time religion, the old time principles of honesty, love to neighbor, willingness to live and let live, old time fear and respect for laws of God and the sanctity of the family life and home, and to every true, and tried principle of righteousness. But alas, there is a "gap" in the line of generations who cannot return, for alas they have never been there. But to these principles they must come or perish. Every plant which God hath not planted shall be rooted up.

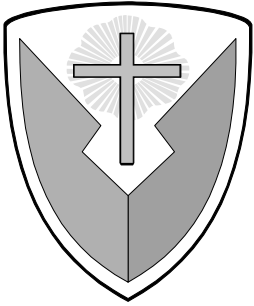
I like to hope that the darkest hours are always just before the break of day, but be it soon or late, we have the promise of God that He Himself will usher in and rule over the perfect day forever. Until that times comes we who believe this will just have to live life's little day unto its end with this prayer upon our lips, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever, O God.

Any person, family, church, school, with the teachings of an ungodly world, ought not to complain about the fruit it bears to them; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

We cannot educate our children to become Christian but we CAN "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We CAN teach and make known God's laws, for where there is no law known and understood there is no transgression. Let us be sure they do not perish in ignorance.

Let life's little day—little though it is—be dedicated to the glory of God and to the coming of His kingdom. Let us not be slothful and unfaithful witnesses to God's truth.

J. B. Dunagan (Deceased)
From *Old Faith Contender*, May, 1971



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

DEDICATION

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24)

The scriptures tell us that some Greeks had come to Jerusalem to worship at the feast. They came to Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip told Andrew and in turn they told Jesus. It seemed He did not answer the question at all, but began talking about grain falling into the ground and dying. Surely this calls for some interpreting. The spiritual interpretation must be in conformity to His own death.

Jesus had come to fulfill the plan of the Covenant of Grace. This covenant specified that there must be a propitiation for the sins of the elect. Jesus had said in another place, "And if I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." He died alone; but being planted bore much fruit through His resurrection. He did not remain alone.

These Greeks wanted to see the person of Jesus. If this be all that was intended for them they would not have had the witness with the Holy Spirit. Many people today are drawn to the "Holy Land" to see the places where Jesus walked. They see the physical place where He lay after He was crucified. Yet they return to their homes with nothing more than the ability to say to others they saw the place where He lay. This does not necessarily cause them to be dedicated to Jesus with their lives.

Jesus was saying to those men so long ago that we too must die to the things around us in order to bear much fruit. We must be drawn to the person of Christ in consecration of our lives. If we attempt to live in and to the world, we will abide alone. Our dying to the things of the world immediately places us in the presence of Christ. In Him all men must die.

I believe this is what Jesus meant to convey to Andrew, Philip, and also to these Greeks. This is also what we need to grasp from what seemed to be a diversion in the conversation of Jesus. We cannot divide our attention. If we would see Jesus we must fall into the ground and die. In the last day we shall see Him as He is for we will have been changed. In order to see Him spiritually in this life we must be changed by the act of Regeneration. The spiritual process for the children of God is to continue to die daily to the things that would hide our Saviour from our eyes. Therein we will not abide alone but will bear much fruit. He is the source of all growth for in Him we live and breathe and have our being.

Jesus continued with the explanation of what it meant to dedicate our lives entirely to Him. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life. If any man serve me, let him, follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour., Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:25-28).

Now, I think we can better understand the meaning of this seemingly diversion of conversation. It was to impress the greatness of our dedication to following Jesus rather than just seeing a glimpse of Him and then going on in our own way.

Let us dedicate our lives by dying to the things of the world and following Jesus in each bidding which He gives. We continue to read of the actions of Jesus following this conversation as He went to Gethsemane. From there to the mock trial, and then to the Cross where the Divine Will of God was carried out.

Elder Charles Taylor

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