

The Baptist Examiner

An independent paper, standing foursquare for the distinguishing doctrines of Baptists,
and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God.

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

Vol. 1

MARION, KY., MONDAY, JUNE 1, 1931

No. 5

Ye Are The Branches

JOHN 15:1-10

PASTOR CLINTON E. GARVIN, ELYRIA, OHIO

The Lord Jesus Christ had a delightful aptitude for using figures of speech in the illustration of truth. He was able to take the most difficult truths and convey them in the simplest terms. This is the mark of the truly great teacher. In the portion of Scripture before us He uses the figure of the vine and the branches.

Like all other Scripture, this portion has a definite interpretation and lends itself also to many applications. The interpretation we believe, in this instance, belongs to Israel. In the Old Testament (Isaiah 5) Judah is likened to the vine. Judah failed, but Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, has become the true vine, and inseparably united with Him are the believers, in Israel, the true Israel (Romans 9:6-8). However in this paper we desire to confine ourselves to application rather than interpretation. In this application we wish to study the analogy between the vine and the branches—the believer in Christ and His blessed Lord. May the Holy Spirit lead us in this meditation that we may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

THE VINE

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." (vs. 1.). These words were spoken by the Lord to His own disciples as He was on the way from the upper room and the last supper to the garden of Gethsemane. It is worthy of note that the only ones who heard these words were those who wholly followed Him. Judas had been with Him in the upper room but had long since departed to arrange for the betrayal of the Son of man. Thus it was that only the eleven, who were to become the witnesses to His resurrection, received this precious message.

The Lord declares Himself to be the true or real Vine. He is always the ultimate in God's purposes. When God created the first man, Adam, He had in view the second man, Christ. When He taught sinful man that redemption was possible through the shedding of blood, He was thinking of the precious blood of His Son. When He sent Moses to Egypt as a prophet to Israel, He was planning for the One who was to be like unto Moses, the greatest of all prophets. He appointed Aaron as a high priest that he might be the pattern of Him who was to be the High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

This is a studious and carefully written exposition of an interesting Scripture. Without fully committing ourself to every part of the exposition (for there are some parts of it that we wish to give further study), we wish, nevertheless, to express our appreciation of it; and to commend it to our readers for their close study.

We are confident with our brother that this parable does not teach that a branch that is truly in Christ can ever be separated from him. Also we are confident that every true branch in Christ will bear fruit.

The author of this article affiliates with the Ohio Association of Independent Baptist Churches.—Editorial Note.

And when He spoke of Israel of old as the vine of the Lord, it was because He foresaw Christ, the Son of His love, as the true Vine.

THE BRANCHES

"Every branch in Me. . ." (vs. 2). Here is a wonderful truth. "In Me." United with Him, one with Him. Deriving our life our sustenance and our strength from Him. What a position! Beloved of the Lord, have you begun to comprehend this glorious truth? In Christ Jesus! Members of His body! Branches in Him, the true Vine! Yet this is not all.

"Abide in Me, I also in you, for the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." (vs. 4). The first great truth for the believer is

UNION, and the second COMMUNION. Our union to Christ becomes the basis for our communion with Him. In fact the purpose of our union to Him is in order that we may enjoy communion. Just as the branch cannot produce fruit apart from the vine, even so there can be no communion with Christ if there is no union. Not only so, but the fundamental reason for our union is communion, and the end of our communion is fruitfulness.

It is sometimes said that we are saved to serve, but the message to the branches is that fruitbearing is the result of union and communion. The branch is the avenue through which the life of the vine is expressed in fruit. In like manner the believer is the one through whom our Lord expresses His divine life.

TWO CLASSES

Two classes of branches are referred to, fruitless and fruitful. The first is mentioned in verse 2. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; . . ." Here is a believer "in Christ", having union with Him, but no communion; for there is no fruit. This kind of a believer is often confused with the unsaved members in our churches. The difference is apparent after a little careful study. In the case of the unfruitful branch the Lord has undertaken to care for it and bring it to a state of production. It may be unfruitful now, but if God is faithful, and He is, He will see to it that it is not fruitless permanently, for He hath said, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away."

The verb "taketh away" is the translation of the Greek

airo. It occurs 102 times in the New Testament and is translated over 40 times by the words, take up, lift up. "**Taketh away**" is the secondary meaning of the word, according to all Greek lexicons. By translating this passage with the primary meaning of the Greek verb **airo**, we get the following: "**Every branch in me which beareth not fruit He lifeth up.**" This undoubtedly is the true sense of the verse. It is not a question of removing the fruitless branch and thus severing its union with the vine (for in Christ we are eternally secure), but it is the restoring of the offending member to its proper position that the life of the vine may be manifested through it in fruit.

We discover in this verse two things. First, the reason for the unfruitfulness of the branch, and second, the husbandman's method of rectifying the trouble.

The branch we find is grovelling in the dirt. And in this position it cannot be fruitful. To bear fruit it must be suspended high and dry in the air. So it is with the true believer in Christ Jesus. He cannot find his fellowship in the world and bear fruit to the glory of God at the same time. Fruitfulness in a saint depends upon his unbroken communion with Christ and his elevated life as one separated from the world. His only real contact must be with the vine. Yet, sad to say, there are at times those who lose their fruitfulness because they lose their place of separation from the world. Such an experience however is abnormal. And to such a one the God of glory has promised that He will lift up the fruitless branch that is grovelling in the dirt. Brother, if you are saved, united with Christ the vine, and are mingling with the world, the Lord of heaven has pledged His word that He will lift you up. You cannot remain fruitless if you are a true believer. God will see to it that you become fruitful. If you profess faith in Christ and continue in an unfruitful state I beg you to examine your connection with the vine and discover whether ye are truly in Christ Jesus and Jesus Christ in you, or whether ye be reprobate.

Again we have the second class of believers referred to in verse 2. "**And every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.**" The fruitless branch our Lord has promised to make fruitful, and the fruitbearing branch He says He will purge that it may bear more fruit. What a promise! Notice the progress; "**No fruit**" (vs. 2). "**Fruit**" (vs. 2) "**More fruit**" (vs. 2) "**Much fruit**" (vs. 5). The Divine purpose is growth and increase in our Christian life. Once we become fruitful, the holy Husbandman endeavors to prepare us for greater service, more fruit and much fruit, that the Vine may enjoy a greater ministry and bring more glory to God and blessing to man.

ABIDING

The secret of this is all wrapped up in one little word—"abide", "**Abide in Me and I also in you, for the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me**" (vs. 4). "**If a man abide not in Me, he was** (see Greek) **cast forth as a branch, and was** (see Greek) **withered; and they** (see ASV) **gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.**" (vs. 6).

What is meant by "**abide**", and "**abide not**"? Does this refer to some particular state of piety to which the believer must attain, or is it rather an eternal position which he enjoys in Christ Jesus his Lord? The latter surely. The word abide means to dwell, to stay, to continue. To be fruitful, one must dwell in Christ. On the other hand if one is not dwelling in Christ, the end for him is the fire. There are just two conditions and two results. The one is "**dwelling in Christ**" and "**fruit**." The other is "**not dwelling in Christ**" and "**fire**." Clearly this is the difference between a sinner and a saint, a believer and a professor.

This truth is plainly taught by the apostle John in other places. Turn to John's gospel, chapter 6 and verse 56. Here we read: "**He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him.**" In verse 54 we have this explained. "**Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood,**

hath eternal life." Verse 47 says, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.**" Thus we see that "**dwelleth in Me**" in verse 56 is the same as "**hath eternal life**" in verse 54. We further find that "**eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood**" in verses 56 and 54 is the equivalent of "**believeth on Me**" in verse 47. So we dwell in Christ by believing in Him. But the One in whom we are to believe is the One "which came down from heaven." (vs. 51). The expression "**which came down from heaven**" is to be found just seven times in this chapter. It speaks of the incarnation of Christ. He, who was in the form of God, must empty Himself and take the form of a servant if we were to be saved. Beloved, do you believe in Him who came down from heaven to give His life for and to you? Have you received Him as your Saviour? You cannot dwell in Him unless you believe in Him. Union with Him as the true Vine is through the avenue of faith. This is further substantiated in 1 John 4:15 where we read, "**Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God (i. e.) the One who came down from heaven), God dwelleth in Him, and He in God.**" Thus we see that abiding in Christ is not the result of piety, but of faith. It is not a condition attained by personal effort, but a position received by Divine grace. And the evidence of such a position will be fruit, for the natural result of such a position and the Divine purpose is fruitbearing.

Since fruitbearing is only possible through abiding, for "**without Me ye can do nothing**" (vs 5), then it naturally follows that the one who is a true believer in Christ must have fruit.

Before we close this paper let us consider briefly the case of the one who "**abides not.**" It is said in verse 6, "**he was cast forth as a branch, and was withered.**" There can be no question that our Lord referred to a particular case when He addressed these words to His own disciples. We believe that they understood to whom He referred. Do we have such a case on record? We do. Turn again, please, to John's gospel, chapter 6.

The discourse in this chapter was addressed to those who followed our Lord the day after He had fed the multitude with the loaves and fishes. The burden of His message was that they believe on Him as the One who came down from heaven to give them life. In verse 60 we are told "**Many therefore of His disciples** (notice that this is a reference to those who have associated themselves with Him as Teacher), **when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?**" Christ replied (vss. 61-62): "**Doth this offend you?** (i. e. that I should come down from heaven to give you life). **What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?**" (vs 64) "**But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him.**" So in order to separate the true believers from the false He brings them to the acid test. Do you believe that I am the Son of God, which came down from heaven to give you life? But although they professed to accept Him as their Teacher, they refused to learn the greatest lesson He taught. They would not receive His teaching concerning Himself as their Saviour. So we read (vs. 66): "**From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.**" They would not believe in Him, therefore they could not abide in Him; and not abiding in Him there could be no fruit, consequently their end was the end of all fruitless ones, the fire.

DISCIPLESHIP

Thus we discover that the true test of discipleship is fruitful living. Jesus says (John 15:8): "**Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.**" Discipleship, then, is not merely bearing the name of Christ, but true discipleship is bearing the evidence of a living Christ in our lives. And this is only possible as we abide in Him.

THE CONDITIONS FOR ABIDING

The conditions for abiding is stated by Christ in verse 10.

"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandment, and abide in His love." The condition for abiding, then, is obedience. Obedience to God. Keeping His commandments. And what are His commandments? We read in 1 John 3:23-24: **"And this is His commandment, That we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in**

Him, and He in him. 'And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.'"

In conclusion let us recapitulate. Fruitbearing is the proof and result of abiding. Abiding is the result of obeying His commandments. His commandment is to believe in His Son Jesus Christ. Beloved, have you believed in Him? Do you love the brethren? No faith, no obedience. No obedience, no abiding. No abiding, no fruit. No fruit, no salvation. Are you saved?

Christian Union And The Great Commission

CHAPTER III.

THE COMMISSION AND OPEN COMMUNION

PASTOR A. N. MORRIS, Doerun, Ga.

I use the term **"communion"** in an accommodated sense, as most people will better understand it. Paul calls it the **"Lord's Supper."** Baptists do not speak of the Lord's Supper as a **"sacrament,"** as we do not believe that it has any saving value. It is only a symbol of great truths.

The Commission obligates Baptist churches to teach baptized disciples to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, and the proper observance of the Supper takes its place among these. Do the Scriptures teach that the Supper should have no restrictions about it? Certainly no one would say there are no restrictions, but many differ as to what these restrictions are. **"What saith the Scriptures?" "How readeest thou?"**

The first Baptist church was constituted by the Lord before His death, and after His ascension this church moved into Jerusalem (Luke 24:49). What was the practice of this church? Did it understand the teaching of its Head,—Christ? Did other churches follow the example of this church? Consider—

1. **The institution of the Supper.** Jesus had only eleven men with Him when He instituted the Supper (Matt. 26:26-30).

(1). These were the **"charter members"** of the church (Luke 6:12, 13 with 1 Cor. 12:28).

(2). These were one in doctrine, and the **"loaf"** was a symbol of this oneness (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; Acts 2:42).

(3). This was restricted, because Jesus did not invite the **"good man"** of the house who furnished the room in which Jesus and the disciples took the Supper.

(4). Jesus said to His disciples: **"Take this, and divide it among yourselves"** (Luke 22:17). He has never authorized His churches to **"divide"** with those who have not met the scriptural requirements.

2. **The observance of the Supper by the Jerusalem church.** In Acts 2:41, 42 is a record of what the church did. Note—

(1). The Word was preached and men were convicted (vs. 37).

(2). These convicted ones were told what to do (vs. 38).

(3). They **"gladly received his word"** (vs. 41).

(4). They were baptized (vs. 41).

(5). They had Christian fellowship, church fellowship, and doctrinal fellowship with all the other members of the church (vs. 42).

(6). Within this fellowship they observed the Lord's Supper.

Here was a threefold fellowship—Christian Fellowship; Church Fellowship; Doctrinal Fellowship. This came before taking the Lord's Supper together. The **"breaking of bread"** belonged to this fellowship and was not apart from it. This

is the divine order, and Paul said: **"Let all things be done becomingly and in order"** (1 Cor. 14:40—BUV). Nowhere are the churches authorized to break this **"order."**

3. **The observance of the Supper by the Corinthian church.** (1 Cor. 11:18-34). Note—

(1). It is a church ordinance—**"when ye come together in the church"** (vs. 18). It has been seen that **"the church"** is an assembly or congregation. It is not to be taken when Christians of different faith meet in some gathering, but belongs to the congregation meeting in one place.

(2). There must be no important divisions among the participants—**"I hear there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it"** (vs. 18). Is there no difference between Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Campbellites, Lutherans, etc? Who will say there is not? The word **"division"** means a **"split,"** a **"rent,"** a **"schism,"** a **"cleft."** We all know that the religious denominations are split apart one from the other.

(3). Those taking the Lord's Supper must believe the same things. The church in Jerusalem was one in doctrine (Acts 2:42.) The word heresis, in vs. 19, is elsewhere rendered **"parties"** (Gal. 5:20), **"sects"** (1 Pet. 2:1—margin). Paul is dealing with **"divisions,"** **"parties,"** **"sects,"** and nowadays these sects have become fixed and we call them **"denominations."**

(4). The Lord's Supper can not be observed where these religious parties and heresies exist—**"this is not to eat the Lord's Supper"** (vs. 20). **"It is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper"** (Am. Rev. Ver). **"There is no such thing as eating the Lord's Supper"** (J. F. & B.) It is clear, therefore, that different denominations coming together can not observe the Lord's Supper. Again do we see that Baptists are right in their observance of the Lord's Supper.

For a more complete discussion of this subject see the author's treatise, **"Close Communion: Is It Right or Wrong?"** Price 10 cents.

(The next chapter is on **"The Commission and Pulpit Affiliation."**—Editorial Note.)

We are very happy indeed to announce that the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Marion has returned to his work after a month's rest, and reports that he feels better than he has felt in five years. We rejoice in, and thank God for, the restoration of his strength. **"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint"** (Isa. 40-41). And here we want to acknowledge our deep gratitude to the pastor mentioned above for the good work he has done for this paper. He has gotten us a number of subscriptions, and has said many kind words about the paper and its editor; all of which we duly appreciate.

The Baptist Examiner

Published Semi-Monthly By The Editor
At 115 Maple Street
Marion, Kentucky

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

1 Year in advance - - - - - \$1.00
6 Months in advance - - - - - \$.50
Foreign Subscriptions, per year - - - - - \$1.25

The paper will not be sent to any one beyond time paid for, except by special arrangement.

Application made for entrance as second class mail matter

THE POLICY AND PROGRAM OF THIS PAPER

A Good Foundation For a Great Paper

(Reprinted From The First Issue)

We feel the need of a repetition of our policy and program. We could not send the first issue to all of our prospects; therefore, some do not know exactly what we stand for. For the benefit of these we give below the ten planks in our platform:

1. This paper is a real Baptist paper.

There are many different kinds and colors of "Baptists." Consequently, the name is not always as distinguishing as it should be. Therefore, for the sake of clearness the editor wishes to say that he belongs to the largest group of "Baptists," which group was formerly known (in England) as Particular Baptists; later (in America) as Regular Baptists; still later as Missionary Baptists; and now generally as simply Baptists. But there are some that affiliate with this group who are Baptists only in name. For that reason we specify that this paper is a **real Baptist paper**. It will stand four square for those distinctive principles that have ever made Baptists a separate people,—viz., the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; the complete separation of "church" and state, and religious liberty; baptism as immersion in water of a saved person by a duly authorized administrator; close communion; the democratic polity of New Testament churches under the headship of Christ; total depravity; the absolute sovereignty of God and unconditional election; and the eternal preservation and perseverance of every believer in Jesus Christ. We will stand also for the perpetuity of New Testament churches from New Testament days to the coming of our Lord for his saints.

T. T. Eaton is quoted as saying: "Some say they are Baptists, but not a Baptist and a half. The only reason I am not a Baptist and a half is that there is only one of me. If I had another half, it would be Baptist too." The editor can truly say that these are his sentiments. Some say that they are Baptists, but not fool Baptists. The editor is what many call a fool Baptist. Some say they are Baptists, but not narrow Baptists. The editor is a narrow Baptist because the truth is always narrow. The truth is just one definite thing; not two or three things. Some say they are Baptists, but not fighting Baptists. The editor is a fighting Baptist because the scriptures command him to put on the whole armor of God and to fight the good fight of faith. They also command him to contend earnestly for the once delivered faith, and the Greek word for "contend earnestly"

means to fight against every assailant of the faith. Besides these, there are many other scriptures also that enjoin warfare for truth and righteousness. We will remember, however, that **"the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."** (2 Cor. 10:4). We will do all our fighting with **"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"** (Eph. 6:17). Also we will remember that victory for the truth is wrought **"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts"** (Zech. 4:6).

This paper will strive to make more Baptists and better Baptists. If it is right (in the full sense of the term) for one person to be a Baptist, it is the duty of all saved persons to be Baptists. And if it is right for a person to be a Baptist, it is his duty to be the best possible Baptist.

2. This paper is an independent Baptist paper.

This means that the paper is under no control, except that of the Holy Spirit. It means that it is bound by no obligation, except an obligation to be true to the word of God. It means that it owes no allegiance and loyalty to anything, or anybody, except the Lord Jesus Christ and the word of God. It means that the paper will be free to print the whole truth without fear or favor. **This paper is as independent as the first Baptist was when he came crying in the wilderness and calling the people to prepare the way of the Lord.** Our mission is essentially the same as his.

3. This paper will be a unifying tie between real Baptists all over the English-speaking part of this continent.

We have adopted nothing less than the entire English-speaking part of this continent as our field. We will expect and solicit support from real Baptists all over this field. And in this day of looseness and compromise real Baptists (those who love the whole truth in sincerity) should be drawn closer together, and should realize their unity more fully. Therefore, one of the distinctive missions of this paper will be to work untiringly and systematically toward these ends. This paper is undertaking to provide a medium of expression for real Baptists all over our adopted field. **To this end we solicit the help of our brethren.**

4. The one main objective of this paper is to bring about a clearer understanding of, and more exact obedience to the whole word of God.

In this, as in other things, we will differ from denominationally owned papers. The chief objective of denominationally owned papers is the advocacy and defense of denominational programs, policies, institutions, agencies, and organizations. But our appeal will be ever to **"the law and to the testimony."**

The greatest prosperity of Baptists depends not upon the efficiency of their methods, nor upon their loyalty to a man-made program; but upon their loyalty to the whole truth both in doctrine and in practice. This is our greatest need. There is no sound basis for cooperation other than the word of God. **We will seek to promote cooperation and unity, but only on the above-mentioned basis.** We are certain this is the kind of a paper our people need, and we have the conviction that it is the kind a goodly number of them want.

5. This paper is to be an open forum for discussion in the light of Scripture.

This is one of our special characteristics. We will not demand that a man agree with us before we will allow him to use the columns of this paper. But permit us to add that the truth, as God gives us to see it, will be safeguarded. When we feel sure that there has been any considerable or important departure from the truth by any writer, we will always point it out and meet it with the Scripture. And, while we will use it in extreme cases only, yet we must reserve the right to reject any article when we feel led of the Lord to do so. To those who are jealous for the truth (as all of us ought to be), we wish to say that we will feel a more acute responsibility for the teachings of this paper than we would feel for that which might be preached in the pulpit of a church

scriptural practices), are doing direct church mission work; over which the Lord had set us; for that which is written down in black and white, so that it may lie constantly before the reader, is capable of doing more evil than the spoken word. But we believe the best way to oppose prevalent heresy through a paper is to let the heresy come to the light and then meet it with scripture. Thus intelligent beliefs are wrought in the hearts of believers. God has allowed heresy to come into the world because its presence has a strongly confirming influence upon believers in the truth, because it furnishes the needed stimulus for study of the truth, and because it makes the truth stand out more prominently by providing a background for it. We believe this item of our policy and program is sound, and think it will prove beneficial. It will increase interest in the paper and extend its usefulness. We have adopted it after much prayerful deliberation.

6. This paper will magnify the dignity, authority, and importance of the local church as the body of Christ and the custodian of his commission.

Paul reproached the Corinthians for despising the church (1 Cor. 11:22). The opposite of despising the church is magnifying it. This we shall ever endeavor to do. Baptists seem to be slowly realizing that they have minimized the church in missionary activities. It is an indisputable fact that Baptists in practice have taken the commission of Christ out of the hands of the church. But, thanks be unto God, there is the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees. **There is a movement back toward the Book among Baptists. This paper will cultivate and encourage this movement.** It will advocate that churches are directly responsible for that which they support, and that, consequently, they should make up their own budget; also that they should support only that which is scriptural and right.

7. This paper will be thoroughly missionary and evangelistic to the core.

It will be glad to give place to the report of sound missionary work. Space will be given frequently to the discussion of topics and scriptures that relate to missions. **We have no patience with anti-missions in any form or kind. We will ever seek to cultivate and encourage scriptural missionary zeal and activities.** Also from time to time we will carry appropriate messages to the lost.

8. This paper will stand strongly against the six most deadly, damaging, injurious isms that war against the once delivered faith,—viz., Modernism, unionism, Arminianism, feminism, secretism, and postmillennialism.

These isms are all rank enemies of truth and righteousness. They all make for loose doctrine and living. We will wage an incessant warfare against them.

9. This paper will stand against all worldliness and will seek ever to hold up the scriptural ideal of holy living for believers.

Our position and policy in this connection are well defined by the following scriptures: **"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (or spiritual) service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1,2).** **"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11, 12).**

10. This paper will stand for the whole counsel of God and against every unscriptural doctrine and practice.

This item really has been covered in a general way in the foregoing paragraphs, but we wish here to give it special emphasis to remove all grounds for suspicion that we will stand only for a few pet ideas. We will ride no hobbies. We

have no grievances to satisfy. We will seek to declare the whole counsel of God as God leads and enables us to do it. And this item covers everything we have not thought to mention particularly. Our contention for these things will include, not merely the letter, but also the spiritual reality that underlies them.

If this policy and program appeals to you, we urge you to send in your subscription immediately. We need your subscription now more than we will need it later. **SUBSCRIBE NOW!**

"After reading the first two issues of your paper, I can urge every Baptist to subscribe for it."—J. D. Coleman, Louisville, Ky.

TWO APPRECIATED LETTERS

Heartily Endorses Our Policy and Program

"Texarkana, Ark.-Tex."

"Dear Brother Simmons: I learned of you and your paper through Elder James F. Dew, now pastor of the Baptist Church at Artesia, N. M. While in his home at Hope, Ark., some weeks ago, I saw a copy of the first issue of The Baptist Examiner. I read the policy and program of your paper, and I can say with all my heart that you have indeed laid **'a good foundation for a great paper.'**

"I am a Baptist evangelist and teacher of the Bible, but have played the part of a Jonah for eighteen years. But God has severely chastized me for my disobedience, and now I have turned my back on worldly vocations and have forsaken all to follow Christ the rest of my days on earth. I am ready to go anywhere and conduct meetings, preach a series of doctrinal sermons, conduct a Bible school, or teach the 'all things' commanded by Christ for the edification and sanctification of the churches.

"Let it be clearly understood that I have no sort of fellowship for the devil, his preachers, his churches, nor his new fangled inventions. Jesus set up only one church, but the devil has set up more than seven hundred churches, which are nothing more than snares and traps of the devil. God says to his preachers: **'See, I have set thee this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant'** (Jer. 1:10). See the preacher's work? First, **'to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down.'** Second, **'to build and to plant.'** For one, I mean, with God's grace and power, to carry out this program in the exact order commanded of the Lord.

"If you live up to the foundation laid, we can do team work together. I am for you 100 per cent, and if you will send me a few sample copies of The Baptist Examiner, I will cheerfully represent it at the fifth Sunday meeting to be held at Hope, Ark., the fifth Sunday in this month. Please put my name on your list and send me all back numbers, if possible.

"Churches wanting my services can address me at 511 Ash Street, Texarkana, Ark.-Tex.

"Yours faithfully,

W. M. WEBB."

"P. S.—I am the same W. M. Webb who was once office Editor of The Arkansas Baptist, and Business Manager for The Baptist Publishing Company of Little Rock, Ark."

"MISSIONS ON THE PACIFIC COAST"

"Caldwell, Idaho, April 20th, 1931."

"Dear Brother Simmons:

I see from your most excellent little paper, under "The Policy and Program of This Paper," you say you 'will be glad to give place to the report of sound missionary work.' That is good. Many true Baptists, who cannot cooperate with the Northern convention on this coast (because to do so we would have to support evolution and alien immersion, and other unscriptural practices), are doing direct church mission work;

and we cannot get recognition in reporting our work in their papers.

"We have three associations of true Baptists on this coast, who do not receive alien immersion, and who oppose evolution with all of its evils.

"Elder W. M. McCart, of Portland, Oregon, is a general missionary evangelist, recommended by these associations of churches. He is doing a good work. He is now in a meeting at Maxwell, Calif. We expect to have him with us the middle of May. Elder G. W. Reynolds of Silver Lake, Oregon, is associational missionary for the Middle Oregon Association. The writer is a missionary for Idaho, recommended by the Middle Oregon Baptist Association, and local churches. Most of these independent churches support The China Direct Mission.

"We have only three small regular Baptist churches in Idaho. The northern convention has churches in most of the leading towns. They hold open communion, receive alien immersion; and many of them endorse the evolution teaching as to the origin of man. There are a few churches here, calling themselves "Fundamentalist Baptists," who have pulled out of the northern convention because of evolution in it; but these so-called "Fundamentalist Baptists" receive alien immersion and hold open communion. They most all oppose us because we will not endorse these things. Some of them will not let us preach in their church houses, but will let most any other denomination in.

"Many of our people in the South do not know how to sympathize with us out here in our struggles in standing for the faith once delivered to the saints. Many have come here from the South since I came here, who claim to be true Baptists when they came; but they have not been able to stand out against the machinery and money of the northern convention, and have surrendered to them.

"Life is a battle. It takes the grace of God, and a backbone like railroad iron, to enable one to stand up for the truth against all the powers of darkness one meets out here.

"Pray for us. And may God bless you in your undertaking to run this paper. Be true to Him and His Word, and God will be with you; and his true servants will back you up.

"Yours in Jude 3,

R. Y. BLALOCK"

(We are indeed glad to give space to this letter from Brother Blalock. We invite others to send in reports of scriptural mission work. Brother Blalock promises to send us other reports from time to time.—Editorial Note).

NOTICE!

We are compelled to cancel all subscription offers made in the first issue of the paper. We find that they are not in harmony with the postal laws and regulations governing second class mail. But we will sell you any Bible or book at a reduced price. Let us have your Bible and book orders. Also we are in a position to handle your printing needs. The BEST service at a low price. You can help us by letting us serve you in these ways.

Those subscribing to this paper may have their subscriptions begin with the issue of May 1st, so as to get the two previous articles on the second coming of Christ.

SOME QUESTIONS

In our issue of May 1st, we made the following statement: "The Scriptures teach the necessity of a divine call for teachers quite as strongly as they do the necessity of a divine call for preachers. See 1 Cor. 12:28." This has led one of our West Kentucky readers to raise some questions that call for further discussion of this matter. The question is raised as to whether

the term "teachers" in 1 Cor 12:28 refers exclusively to preachers. We do not think it does. In this chapter the apostle argues for the unity of the church. And we take it that the latter verses of the chapter contain a resume of the preceding argument. In the seventh verse the apostle says that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (that is, every saved man) to profit withal;" and in verse eight wisdom and knowledge are mentioned as two of those manifestations. We believe that all to whom the Spirit has given wisdom or knowledge have a divine call to use their gift in teaching. Notice the expressions "word of wisdom" and "word of knowledge." This certainly refers, not merely to the possession of wisdom and knowledge, but, along with that, the ability to express them. By a divine call to teach we mean a deep impression that God has endowed and ordained one for that work. Therefore, inasmuch as there is no reason to believe that the gifts of wisdom and knowledge are confined to preachers, we believe that others than preachers may be called to a teaching ministry. Later, in writing to the Romans, the apostle engages in a parallel discussion. And in that discussion teaching and exhortation seem to have been substituted for the gift of the "word of wisdom" and the "word of knowledge." For these reasons we take it that the term "teachers" in the resume in 1 Cor. 12:27-30 include both the preachers and the lay members of the church to whom had been given the "word of wisdom" or the "word of knowledge." We believe that preachers have a special and peculiar call to their work; but we believe that no less certainly lay members may have the gift of wisdom or knowledge, and, therefore, a call to teach as they may find opportunity. Matthew Henry says that "teachers" in 1 Cor. 12:28 refers to "those 'who labor in the word and doctrine,' whether with pastoral charge or without it." In commenting on the passage from Romans, Stifler refers to prophecy, ministry, teaching, and exhortation as semi-official. And E. P. Gould, in "An American Commentary on the New Testament," in commenting on 1 Cor. 12:28, says of teachers: "The difference between these and the prophets is very much the same as that between preachers and teachers now, with the same opportunity for the two to run into each other. In general, indeed, there are no fixed lines of division between these functions of the members, and in only one or two cases do they belong to official position, or constitute it."

Thus we maintain that God "sets" teachers in the church, and that all the public teaching in the church was by these. So it ought to be today. There is as much reason for following the Scriptures in this as in anything else. Are the Scriptures our only rule of faith and practice? Why censure others for unscriptural practices if we are not going to follow the Scriptures ourselves? When a Baptist church assumes the prerogative of electing or selecting teachers without regard for the necessity of a divine call for that work, it is as far out of line with the Scriptures as are Campbellites when they deny the necessity of a divine call for preachers. "But," you say, "such a rule would keep our Sunday school from being standard." Which is the more important, to be standard, or to be scriptural? Human wisdom, man-made plans and standards have gotten Baptists in a bad way. One of our great needs is to turn away from these back to Scriptures.

One of our readers in Ohio writes: "I heartily agree with the position that salvation is by grace apart from law. But what place do you give to repentance in salvation? At what time and for WHOM would you put the emphasis, if any, upon it?" To this question we answer that we make repentance essential and necessary to salvation, just as the Scripture does (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19). With Paul we teach salvation through "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). We preach that all men are responsible to repent (Acts 17:30), and that those who do not are guilty of wilful rebellion against God. We define repentance as a change of disposition that leads to a change of conduct.

We insist that repentance precedes saving faith (Matt. 21:32). We take the position that repentance, when mentioned alone, involves faith; and that faith, when mentioned alone, implies repentance. Moreover, we present both repentance and faith as **"sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God."**

Another one of our readers asks: **"Why were not the followers of Christ present when the Lord's Supper was instituted?"** We answer that it was because the Lord's Supper was instituted as a church ordinance and not as a Christian ordinance. The fact that only the eleven apostles (Judas having gone out already) were present is one of the best proofs we know of that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance. Only the apostles, it seems, were at that time members of the church. Thus the Lord's Supper was instituted as a restricted ordinance. When Baptists practice "close communion," they are following the example of Christ and the first church as well of the instructions Paul gave to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:18-20). Baptists are considered narrow for not inviting others than Baptists to come to the Lord's table with them; but if this constitutes narrowness, then Christ was narrow also. He did not invite his mother, the man in whose house the supper was instituted, nor any of his other friends, followers, and co-laborers. And we need to note also that as a church ordinance, the Lord's Supper is to be partaken of only by those who are members of the church observing the ordinance. 1 Cor. 5:11 requires a Baptist church to have disciplinary authority over those who partake of the Lord's Supper with it. When a Baptist church invites members of other Baptist churches to take the Lord's Supper with it, it has no way of knowing when it is violating the above Scripture.

Questions are always welcome.

As we go to press, Brother Hicks Shelton, son of Pastor T. G. Shelton of West End Baptist Church of Paducah, is on his way to the mountains of Kentucky to engage in independent mission work. Brother Shelton has gone out depending on the Lord, without any church or individual guaranteeing his support. In a recent Bible institute at the West End church, the Lord reclaimed our brother from a worldly life and brought him to surrender to the call to preach. He began preaching immediately. Now he has felt the call of God to the mountains, and has gone out looking to the Lord for guidance and support. We commend him heartily to all that love the whole

truth in sincerity. He is of the typical West Kentucky stock of preachers, and already gives promise of great usefulness. If Brother Shelton comes in contact with any of our readers, we urge them, as John urged Gaius, that they bring him forward on his way after a godly sort, according as the Lord may enable them; for in so-doing they will be fellowhelpers to the truth. See 3 John 5-8.

If each one of our present subscribers would get us one other subscriber, it would greatly increase our subscription list and would help us much. Write us for sample copies. We will give you any book you desire in return for your work of getting subscriptions. Pick out the book you want and write us for terms. Send us three dollars worth of subscriptions, and we will send you Roy Mason's book on "The Church That Jesus Built" without further cost to you. Or for the same amount we will send you "Feminism," the greatest book in print on the question of woman's work in the churches. Send us six dollars in subscriptions, and we will send you Peloubet's Bible Dictionary, International Bible Commentary, or Cruden's Complete Concordance.

A CORRECTION

In our first article on the second coming of Christ we stated that **"it cannot be established that heaven is ever particularly called a kingdom."** We have been led to see that there is at least one passage (we know of no other) that seems to refer clearly to heaven as a kingdom. That passage is 1 Cor. 15:50. Therefore, we hereby gladly retract the above statement.

A layman from Florida writes: **"I am trying to get away from convention-owned papers, as it is from independent papers that I can hope to get something besides denominational troubles."** Nuff sed.

The editor shall be glad to visit any church at any time in the interest of this paper. He is free to preach anywhere there may be an open door on the first and third Sundays of each month. He is hoping to visit a number of associations this summer, and shall be glad to preach on the first and third Sundays of August and September in the vicinities of associations that meet just preceding or following those Sundays.

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16).

The Great Tribulation Period

The Third Article of a Series on "The Second Coming of Christ and Related Events"

By THE EDITOR

We have seen that the second coming of Christ consists of two phases, and that these two phases are to be separated by a period of time. The writer has stated his belief that this period of time will be the time of the future great tribulation. Our reasons for this belief will appear in the course of this article. We will study this period under the following heads:

1. The Scriptures that describe this period.

The first Scripture we desire to notice is Matt. 24:21, 22, and reads as follows: **"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those**

days shall be shortened." That these words cannot be wholly referred to the sufferings of the Jews at the time of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A. D. 70, is shown by verses 29 to 31. These verses tell us that immediately after the tribulation of those days Christ will come in power and great glory. This clearly refers to the second phase of Christ's coming. Nothing that attended or resulted from the destruction of Jerusalem can fully satisfy these verses. It is true that according to verse 34 the destruction of Jerusalem brought about either a spiritual or a typical fulfillment of all that is predicted in this part of the discourse. The destruction of Jerusalem struck the death-blow to Judaism, and marked the

coming of the kingdom of God with power, as Jesus had foretold (Mark 9:1; Matt. 16:28; Luke 9:27). This was a **spiritual** fulfillment of all Christ said about his coming in this chapter. And the siege of Jerusalem (A. D. 70) brought about a typical fulfillment of all he said about Jerusalem in this chapter. But the literal fulfillment of that which Christ said about his second coming, and the antitype of the siege of Jerusalem are yet to come. No believer in verbal inspiration can find in the destruction of Jerusalem a full and complete satisfaction of the prophecy of this chapter. Its ultimate reference must be to the final siege of Jerusalem in the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-21; 19:11-21; Zech. 12:2-9; 14:1-7, 12-15); and to the personal and bodily coming of the Lord, as promised in Acts 1:11.

But in Rev. 6-19 we believe we have a far more extended and detailed description of this period. We take these chapters as descriptive of this period for the two following reasons:

(1) As we saw in the last article, we have in chapter 7 the sealing of the servants of God in the forehead; and only Jews are sealed. This shows that all Gentile believers (and previous Jewish believers) have been taken out of the earth, and therefore, that the rapture of the saints (which will occur at the first phase of Christ's coming—(1 Thess. 4:15-17) has already taken place. Then the second phase of Christ's coming is clearly pictured in Rev. 19:11-21. Therefore, we take the intervening section of the book as describing the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming. And we relate chapter six to this period because we regard the riders of the four horses (6:2-8) the same as the four angels (7:1-3) whose work is restrained until after the sealing of the servants of God.

(2) Then in Rev. 7:14 we have a reference to the great tribulation in the following words: **"These are they who come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"** (R. V.). These words were spoken of the numberless multitude in verse 9. The original here is very emphatic. It says literally: **"These are they WHO ARE COMING out of tribulations, THE GREAT ONE."** It is not just tribulation in general that is spoken of here; it is a definite and particular tribulation, viz., **the great one.** In this verse the present participle, **"are coming out,"** shows the great tribulation to be in progress. Thus we assign this section of the book to the great tribulation period.

2. The length of this period.

It is our conviction that this period will be seven years in length. We hold this conviction because the combined time of the prophesying of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3) and the career of the Beast (Rev. 13:5) is approximately seven years. Note that the witnesses are to prophecy **"a thousand two hundred and three score days"** (approximately three years and a half); then the Beast is to arise and kill them (Rev. 11:7), and is to continue **"forty and two months"** (Rev. 13:5). It is our opinion that the witnesses will begin testifying soon after the rapture, and since the Beast is to be destroyed when Christ comes to judge and make war (Rev. 19:11-21; 2 Thess. 2:8), we conclude that the length of the intervening period is to be found by the above method. It will be noted that we take the thousand, two hundred, and threescore days and the forty-two months literally. We do this in harmony with the rule mentioned in our last article. We find no reason for taking it otherwise either in the passages themselves, or in their context, or in any other Scripture.

3. The horrors of this period.

This period is to be the "day" of God's wrath. During this period the God to whom vengeance belongeth will avenge himself of the treatment this world has accorded his Son and his saints. He will fully avenge his elect (Luke 18:7; Rev. 6:9, 10). He will pour out the vials of his wrath to the last bitter dregs upon this old sin-cursed and devil-darkened earth. The earth

will be wrested from the devil and his people and given to the people of God (Matt. 5:5).

We regard Rev. 6:12-17 as picture of the turmoil, trouble, fear, and consternation that shall come upon the world at the time of the rapture of the saints; the beginning of this period. Coming to the realization that Christ has come for his saints and that God's day of wrath is upon them, the inhabitants of the earth are represented as saying to the mountains and rocks: **"Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand."** This gives us some idea of the horrors of this period. Then as we see in rapid succession the depiction of war, famine, death, and plagues and torment of every kind, we surely cannot fail to realize something of the horrors of this period. We are told that **"in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them"** (Rev. 9:6). The inhabitants of earth in this period will get a veritable foretaste of hell. **And here we would speak a word to every lost soul. If today Christ should come for his saints, you would be left here to go through this awful period, whose horrors are indescribable. Christ may come at any moment! Therefore, we urge you "to flee from the wrath to come." Turn from your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!** (Luke 13:3; Acts 16:31).

4. Will the gospel be preached during this period?

This is a much controverted question, but we unhesitatingly give an affirmative answer as our opinion. In chapter eleven, as we have seen already, we have the mention of God's two witnesses. We have stated already that we believe these two witnesses will prophecy during the interim between the two phases of Christ's coming. We believe they will preach the gospel and announce the millennial kingdom, just as Christ and the apostles preached the gospel and announced the spiritual kingdom (the kingdom of God) and the temporal phase of the kingdom of heaven. We can think of no other message God would have for the world during this period. Then we take the numberless multitude depicted in Rev. 7:9-17 to represent those who are saved during this period, and who, having been martyred or otherwise died, are immediately caught up to heaven, just as it is said the two witnesses will be (Rev. 11:7-12). Also we take the sheep in the judgment of the nations (Matt. 24:31-46) to be people who have believed and been saved during the great tribulation period. Someone may inquire how people will be saved during this period. We answer that they will be saved exactly like all others have been saved. **God has never had, and never will have, but one way of salvation.** That one way is by grace through faith. **"But,"** someone may say, **"how can people be saved after the Holy Spirit has been taken out of the world?"** The answer that they will be saved just like they were before the day of Pentecost. During the great tribulation period the Holy Spirit will have access to the world just like he did before the day of Pentecost.

5. Who are the two witnesses who will prophecy during this period?

We do not regard the two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-12) as merely two individuals. Two persons could not bear an adequate testimony to the world in three years and a half. And since there are to be a hundred and forty-four thousand saved Jews in the world during the first part of the tribulation period, we take these two witnesses to represent them. We think the significance of the number two lies in the fact that the hundred and forty-four thousand are of both Israel and Judah. We are confirmed in the opinion that the two witnesses represent the hundred and forty-four thousand because after the witnesses are killed they are taken up to heaven (Rev. 11:12), and then in chapter fourteen we have the hundred and forty-four thousand and seemingly already taken out of the earth. Moreover, we take this hundred and forty-four thousand Jews to be the brethren of Jesus referred to in the account of the judgment of the nations in Matt. 25:31-46.