

July 1994

to Sid Green

"PREACHING IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON"

II Timothy 4:2



My Life And Work Among The Churches of North Georgia

by
H.C. Owen

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A Word From The Author

My name is Harvey Cicero Owen, the son of Enoch and Emma Archer Owen. I was born in Cherokee County - Sharptop, Georgia on March 11, 1897. Born to my mother were four sons: Homer, Lester, Fred and myself. Two daughters born to my mother were named Mattie and Janny. I am the only one of mother's children still living.

My mother died when I was about nine years old. My father then married Sallie Anderson Taylor. To them were born one son, Wallace, and four daughters: Lona Mae, Myrtle, Lora Bell and Jewel.

I am a minister of the gospel and having obtained to the age of nearly 75. I have retired from serving churches regularly. As I am among the oldest preachers in this part, and my memories reach back to the first preachers and families which were charter members of these congregations, I feel we should have some record of the past work of these churches. With my own memories and what I can gather from others, I am giving the best that can be collected at this time. I also am among the pioneer preachers and I wish to write some about each of them, as well as a sketch of my own life and work as a minister.

H. C. Owen
(1972 - First Printing)



Dedication

The reprinting of this book has truly been a labor of love. My respect and admiration for the man who penned these memoirs spans many years. At this writing, brother Owen is now approaching his ninety-fourth birthday. God has blessed him with a long and exceedingly productive life. Surely, however, the inexorable pull of his spirit toward the heavenly reward grows stronger with each passing day. If anyone ever deserves the eternal rest, it's this man of God.

May the reader's appreciation for H. C. Owen, the work of God's kingdom, and especially the Cross be enhanced by the reading of the pages to follow. H. C. Owen is leaving for us a legacy more precious than gold.

I love you, Grandpa.

Randall Medlin
(2nd printing - 1991)

"...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15)

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PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

"STARTING OUT"

PART I
CHAPTER 1
"STARTING OUT"

The first four years of my life were spent on the farm one mile south of Sharptop Store where I was born. Sharptop was the country post office for a star mail route. Among the things I can remember at the old home was my father raising and curing tobacco in an old log barn which was built for that purpose. Hardly one can be found yet standing. I also remember Father shearing his sheep, carrying the wool to the factory and swapping it for yarn thread for Mother to weave into cloth and with which to knit us stockings.

In the fall of 1901 we moved to Pickens County to a place one mile east of Bethany Church. Wagons them days had no brakes on them. Log chains were used to rough lock the wheels down a steep hill to where we were moving. The house place is now covered with water from a fish pond.

The house into which we moved had been occupied by Preacher J. S. Meadows. He died there with T. B. We always believed my mother picked up the germ of T. B. there. It later caused her death. During the summer of that year, Janny, my two year old sister, died.

We only lived there one year or until my father and Uncle Craton Archer could build a store house and a dwelling at the Bethany crossroads. The store house was also used for a post office which was also kept by my father. This star mail route reached about twelve miles from Sharptop to Jasper. The carrier would ride mule back or walk roundtrip the same day. Not many people would dare try that job now.

The post office at Bethany crossroads was called Sherman. I suppose this is why the place received its name. We moved to Sherman and lived there two or three years. Then my father rented the Cicero Taylor farm where we remained until 1910. It was here that I recall so many happy memories of school days.

Most of my schooling was received from Indian Pine School. The sign of the school can hardly be discovered now. We walked two miles through all kinds of weather. The school lasted only five months -- three months during the winter and two in late summer. Many days we would finish the crop or help gather it after school hours.

My grandfather, Reuben Owen, was very fond of me. I stayed with him a week at a time for company. He taught me to chew tobacco when I was five years old, and I remained a tobacco worm for forty-eight years. He would visit us each week and he always left me with enough tobacco to last till he returned.

In the year 1907, my young brother died. He only lived a short time as my mother was in bad health with T. B. She only lived a short time after he died, about three months after Fred was born.

My father was then married to Sallie Anderson Taylor. She also had a daughter, Ada Taylor, four years old.

My brother, Homer, was now eighteen years of age (1910). Two young men from Johnson Bible College came down to Pleasant Hill Church, preached a week and then worked enrolling new students for college. Homer and Hill Little were enrolled for the next year. Homer soon learned that he had no talent for preaching. He quit school and became a nurse which he followed until he retired.

When I was ready for high school, it was my desire to become a preacher. But my father was poor and now had four children besides me and I was badly needed at home on the farm. There were no high schools in the rural areas. So I gave up all hopes of a future education and preparing for the ministry. At the age of 19 I was married to Ellen Cleo Blalock who was 17 years old.

After our marriage, my father and I built for me a two room house on his farm. With about sixty dollars worth of furniture and part of it was bought on credit, we moved in. It was no disgrace in those days to start out with very little. In August of 1917 our first baby, Lorena, was born. She only lived three weeks.

In the year 1919, we moved on the farm with my Uncle Tyre Owen in Bartow County. During the winter months there we picked crack bole cotton and I cut cord wood for our groceries. World War I was now going on and food was rationed. I managed to plant my crop and work my corn the first time when I learned I was not able to get more groceries as I was in a strange place without credit. I saw I must do something soon.

At this time my wife had some half-sisters visiting us. They had received the money to return home to Mascott, Tennessee. I took the money and paid for my ticket to Mascott. When I reached Knoxville I had fifty cents. It was sundown and I had fifteen miles to go. The police helped me thumb a ride which took my last penny. I landed at the home of Mr. Blalock at nine that night. I was unknown to the family as he and my wife's mother were separated when my wife was a baby. But I explained who I was and what I had done. All went well. Soon I had a job in the zinc mines. When my wife arrived we soon bought more furniture and moved out of his house. I worked at Mascott for eighteen months.

Many were getting hurt in the mines, so I decided to quit. I had no money. I locked up the doors and went to my grocery man. I asked for some money for a short time. That money was used to buy our tickets to Georgia. It was too late in the spring to farm. I had no job and our furniture was in Tennessee. Don't tell me that I was not up against a problem!

But I had been away from Georgia for three years, and it felt good to be home again. I seemed to have forgotten all my troubles. When my visit was over, I learned from Sister Cicero Presely that her daughter and her husband - Ruby and Homer Hendrix - were living at Maryville, Tennessee and that work was good there. So I decided to try for work at Maryville or Alcoa. I borrowed some money from my brother and went to Alcoa.

Well, I was lucky to get a job. But when I went before the doctor for my physical exam I was scared as I only weighed 102. I feared I was too light. When I was placed upon the scales my height was 5' 4". He moved the scales out to 125 and it fell like a rock. He looked at me and tapped it back about 10 pounds and still it stayed down. He again looked at me and I said, "Hit it." He did!! It went all the way back and bounced back to 102 and balanced nicely. He then looked me over and asked me what in the world was the matter with me. I said, "I am Pa's runt." Well, from that I was given all kinds of exercise trying to find a defect, but nothing showed up. I passed okay.

When my wife arrived, we boarded with Homer and Ruby until I received a paycheck. Then we went to Mascott after our things. Soon I was able to send all I owed back to Mascott from which I received a hearty thanks. Houses were selling so fast it kept us moving. When Harvey Burrell, who married my cousin, came to Alcoa I kept him until we decided to buy us a house. We found two buildings side by side which we bought for one thousand each.

Soon winter time came and my work ended. I tried to find work on the inside, but there was a multitude doing the same thing. I stood in line till I gave up. I was always the least man and stood no chance. Money was getting scarce. Cleo was pregnant and her time was drawing nigh. I put on a good face and went to the superintendent. I was kindly asked to have a seat. Then he asked me my troubles. I let plenty of them roll. "Boy," he said, "you are in a critical condition." He turned around, wrote a note, and told me to get back in line. If there was anything open, I would get it. This I did. When I reached the window, I handed the employment agent my slip. He looked at it then looked at me and cursed. He asked me how come I went to him. I replied, "I need a job." He gave me the worst one he had -- mixing concrete. I knew to take it. So I did. But I soon found favor with the foreman inside and got my transfer.

Well, by the next summer, we had paid several payments on our home and had it painted. Times began to go bad. The man from whom I purchased my house could see the end of work. So he offered me a reduced price on my house notes if I would take up some of them. I didn't have the money, but Harvey, willing to help me, offered to furnish the money. I borrowed about three "fifty" dollar notes. Soon hands were being laid off. In August it came my turn. I not only lost my house, but had to pay Harvey back money I had borrowed to pay the house. So all my work at Alcoa was lost. My mother-in-law was now living with us. Our oldest son, Glenn, was almost six months old when I lost my job. I just had enough money to buy our tickets back to Georgia.

PART I

CHAPTER 2

"BEGINNING TO PREACH"

I had been away again for almost two years. When I reached Georgia there was a meeting running at Pleasant Hill, my home church. It seemed so good to be home and enjoy the meeting. It also seemed to me that this was the worst yet in regards to living. No money, out of work, already August and living on a country farm with four now in the family. Well, it was up to us to try to get work pulling fodder, which ever farmer did those days and picking cotton. Cleo was not well and Glenn was small, so Effie, my mother-in-law and I helped gather the crops.

Then all the work I could find was clearing land. This did not pay much. I did it for six dollars an acre. It took me about eight days per acre to clear it. I was forced to farm the next summer as work was still hard to find. I rented on the halves with stock furnished. It happened to be extremely dry that summer and crops were very short. I barely made enough to pay for our groceries that we used while making the crop.

Brother W. H. Howard, a preacher from near Marietta, had been coming monthly for several years and preaching for the Pleasant Hill congregation. Even before I married and moved away, he had often persuaded me to begin preaching as I was fond of talking about the Bible. I was very well posted. I could hold my hand with any of the denominational preachers. But I thought I could not as I didn't have the proper education and it was too much to ask my father in his financial condition to send me back to school.

Anyway, Brother Howard was still coming and preaching at Pleasant Hill during that summer. He had no car as there were few cars in those days. His way of coming was on the train. Someone would meet him at the station and carry him back Sunday evening. We brethren took it by turns meeting him.

On March 10 it was my Saturday to meet the preacher. I well remember this date as it was the day before my twenty-fifth birthday. I was to meet him at Canton ten miles from where I was living. The only way to bring him out was in a two-horse wagon. But the ride out was all joy. We were soon buried in a Bible conversation.

All these years since I had felt a desire to preach, I would often have this desire renew itself. But so far I had been able to shift it off. But as we were riding along, Brother Howard again persuaded me to preach. This time I consented. He said, "How about tonight?" We always had our night services on Saturday night and I agreed. From there on to home he would stop and invite everyone to preaching that night to hear the new preacher. He had me pretty well tied where I was ashamed to back down. But I felt very brave as it was several hours away.

Now I had never had any public life anymore than leading singing. I had never so much as led a public prayer or waited on the table. The nearer the time came the more fright I felt. We had a very large crowd that night. When the time came, Brother Howard stood and announced my beginning as a preacher and turned it over to me. I won't try to explain my feelings. As I stood in the pulpit, I felt all my senses leave me. There I stood a perfect blank. I even forgot my text for a moment. Well, I just began talking. After I had said a few words, I could feel my senses beginning to return. Then I announced my subject and began. I fell far short of my expectation as I had given much time to my lesson. It was Ephesians 2:8 - "For by grace are ye saved." I never have used this text since then without thinking of the first time I used it.

PART I

CHAPTER 3

"PREACHING IN SEASON AND OUT"

Twelve years of preaching for the Christian Church. I had only preached for a short time when a meeting was called to ordain me to the ministry. Brother W. H. Howard was the preacher and the three elders were Brothers Tommy Land, West Cook, and my father, Enoch Owen. After they had ended the ordination they handed me the Bible and said, "Where the Bible speaks you speak and where the Bible is silent you be silent." I have always tried to remain faithful to this plea.

In the fall of 1923 I moved to the farm owned by Harvey Burrell. In the meantime, I had purchased a horse and buggy, a few farming tools, and some feed for the future crops. I was already in debt and had to buy groceries until the crop was made. But I did have a way to attend church and visit other congregations. This was an extremely wet summer. Parris, our third child, was born on May 27, and Effie was out of the crop housekeeping, therefore everything was left up to me about the crop. My crop grew up and drowned out also. I fell short of clearing myself of debts, so I worked at a sawmill until I paid for my groceries. I then sold my horse and tools and went back to sharecropping.

One day I was invited to bring my family over to my neighbor and his house to spend the night in order to go on an opossum hunt. This neighbor was a Baptist preacher. Well, we went to spend the night with him and went a small round of hunting. We were back by nine o'clock. He wasn't wanting me to hunt with him, but instead, he wanted to argue scriptures with me.

As we were all seated around the old fire place, he began to mention some different religious groups and make some remarks about them. Findally, he mentioned the Campbellites. My experience talking with people showed that they usually got mad and I was afraid that I would have to spend the night with a mad man or go home. So I was slow to enter. Finally, I said, "John, if you are going to continue to talk this way, I must help you." I said, "Let us take it by turns, you speak and ask questions for thirty minutes then I will do the same." To this he agreed, and we were soon locked in a Bible discussion. He had already said that water had no part in the salvation of man. Since I was asked to speak first, I reminded him of what he had previously said about water and I started by asking him some questions. "Is salvation in Christ or out of Christ?" "Well," he said, "In Christ." Then I asked for the scripture that stated that we believed into Christ. "I know of no such scripture," he said. Then I called for scripture that stated that we repented into Christ. He gave the same answer about knowing of no such scripture. I then asked, "Since you placed salvation in Christ, will you give the scripture stating the act that places us into Christ where salvation is?" After a moment he said, "You will have to." I read from Romans 6:4, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death." Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." You said that water had no part in man's salvation and you agreed that salvation was in Christ. You also agreed to accept the Bible for our answers to our questions. Now I have given you two scriptures each stating that man is baptized into Christ." Then I asked, "If water had no part, how are we to enter Christ in order to obtain our salvation?" All was quiet! The old clock on the mantle was saying 'tick-tock, tick-tock' until I began to wonder if he would ever speak. We were all sitting and waiting for his answer. Finally he answered by saying, "I will agree with you that we must believe, repent and be baptized to come to Christ, but we teach that men are not saved because they do these things, but because they are lost and need it."

He then gave this illustration: "I see a man who needs clothes and I say this to him, 'Come here and I'll give you some clothes', he comes. Now did I give him the clothes because he came or because he needed them?" I said, "You placed that gift upon a condition, come. It was free, but for only those who meet the requirement - to come. This is true with the offer of salvation. 'Come unto me' is the invitation, 'and I will give you rest.' Believing in Him as our rewarder (Heb. 11:6), having repented of our sins, we are then united with him in baptism into His death (Rom. 6:4).

We spent the entire night in this conversation. About six the next morning we were called to breakfast. This was a good experience for me and I was invited back for another discussion and he asked me to take the lead. I started it by giving Webster's definition for the word "grace" - as a favor. Then I began to sum up what all was contained in the word "favor".

I said, "I'll mention some things and ask for your approval as I go." He agreed. I began by quoting Jn. 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Then I asked, "Suppose Christ had come and had not give His life - then what?"

"Oh," he said, "He had to die for our sins."

I then said, "His death was a favor. Suppose He had died and was not buried?"

"No, he must be buried according to prophecy and the sign given of the prophet, Jonah."

I said, "The burial was also a part of the favor of grace. What if He had not been raised from the dead?"

He said, "Oh, he had to be raised from the dead or all would have been in vain."

I answered, "The resurrection was also a favor. What if He had remained here after His resurrection from the dead?"

He replied, "No, He must be glorified by the Father and be crowned Lord of Lord and King of Kings."

I stated, "His ascension was also a part of the favor. Suppose He had never sent the Holy Spirit back to inspire and guide the twelve in revealing His will to man?"

He said, "We have to have the Holy Spirit."

Then I said, "The Holy Spirit was included in the favor. Now we have agreed that each of the things mentioned were included in the grace or favor of God."

Then I said, "Unless the Holy Spirit gives us a message, what is it worth to us?"

This he agreed to, that the message given by the Holy Spirit was also grace or favor.

"Now," I said, "We can see how that we are saved by grace. In the book of Acts, chapter two, verse thirty-seven, Peter was asked by unsaved men what they must do and the message or answer was, 'Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins' (Acts 2:38). This answer was the favor of God directing man in coming to Jesus Christ and man had to believe and accept it through faith." I then turned the time over to him, but he refused to comment. So that ended the talk on grace.

PART I

CHAPTER 4

"WHATSOEVER STATE I AM IN ... BE CONTENT"

The next year I moved over the mountain to the Jerusalem community to the farm of A. P. Holmes. I lived there two years. While there I preached for Bethel and Ludville. All the country churches in those days had preaching only one Sunday each month. I usually preached for four churches -- one Sunday for each.

The first meeting that I ever held was at Bethel, five miles west of Ludville. At the end of the week we had a baptizing and baptized ten people. In those days we put off baptizing until the end of the meeting. Brother Holmes would carry me to Bethel in his Model T Ford for two dollars a trip. The church paid me two dollars and fifty cents each trip. Sometimes Ludville would pay me fifteen dollars a year. Well, this was much more than was paid to brother Land.

While living on the farm with brother Holmes, another son was born to us in April of 1925. We named him Enoch Cicero and he was called E. C. There were now six in the family. I decided to buy a little farm and quit renting on the halves. I bought a little farm in the Persimmontree District, about two miles west of the Indian Pine school house. When the crops were finished we decided to spend a few weeks patching up and working on our new farm. We carried only a few things and stayed a while.

It was a log house, and no one had lived there in the past few years. The land was all grown up with briars. Once, as I was cutting briars, I killed a Copperhead snake, but let the others get away. Cleo, my wife, was afraid to go to sleep. She said, "This old house is full of snakes." But I kept telling her that there were no snakes in the house. We had the children

sleeping on a pallet on the floor. While we were talking we heard a noise and looking up we saw a chicken snake six feet long laying between two logs. I ran for a hoe and Cleo placed herself near the children to protect them. When I struck at the snake down in the floor it came and up jumped Cleo on to the big trunk. She was defending the children, ha!! We were lucky because I killed it the next day. Snakes were not the only pests we found there. The house was full of bed bugs. No one had lived there in a few years, so evidently the bugs must have been carried there by bats and squirrels. Anyway, they were hungry and the only way to keep from feeding them was to set the bed legs in cans of kerosene.

The summer I lived there a meeting was called at Pleasant Hill. I had been preaching against open membership from the denominations and against the suppers and entertainments as a means of raising money. I wasn't invited to this meeting until the last moment. My father found out that I had not heard about it and sent me word to attend. The meeting was in progress when I arrived - the evangelist being from Atlanta. I went in and was seated near the front. While I was trying to figure out the cause for the meeting, the preacher had this to say: "This church is a Christian church and has been a Christian church for fifty-odd years and we expect it to remain a Christian church." From this statement I took a hint that he was here to straighten out someone and that someone might be me. When he had finished he asked if anyone had anything to say. Well, I sat quietly until I knew that no one else was going to speak, and I said, "Yes, I'll ask you a few questions."

"Let's have them," he said.

I asked, "Do you believe baptism to be for the remission of sins?"

"Sure I do," he answered.

Then I asked him why he didn't practice what he preached.

He said, "I do." He then asked, "Why not?"

I said, "You preach baptism for the remission of sins, but if people who were baptized for other reasons present themselves for membership you accept them upon their baptism."

He saw that I had him. "Well, brother Owen," he said, "If I was preaching here and if a good Methodist in this community who had never been immersed, but sprinkled - and if he wished to unite with this congregation, I would accept him upon his being sprinkled for baptism, not that he would be a member of the Kingdom, but I would fellowship him."

There was present at that time one of the elders who had been received upon a sectarian baptism, and I said, "That is all I wish to know." I felt sure that all the brethren were in disagreement with him, and until this day, that meeting has never been mentioned in my presence.

This year's crop was almost a failure as it was the year that the flea hopper came to Georgia and almost ate up my cotton. After we had sold all we could, including part of our furniture, to pay some of our debts, we were still behind and decided to leave the farm.

We located at Acworth, Georgia where I got a job in a small cotton factory. It was after dark when we arrived in Acworth. The next morning we had no stove upon which to cook our breakfast. This was one morning that pork 'n beans with onions tasted real good. But we took everything as fun.

The next day I purchased an abandoned stove for two and one half dollars. We still had no vessels to cook in. We had sold our others with our stove. Our neighbor had several peas to thrush using a thrusher which turned by crank. She gave us a job thrushing peas and paid us for work in cooking vessels. It was a tough job but it seemed the only way out. It became all fun when it was over.

At this time the children were needing clothes badly. Someone told me that the superintendent of the mill would help me if I would ask him. I finally mustered up the courage and went to him. He told me at which store to meet him at 2:30 that evening. My wife and I were there on time, but the man didn't show up. The merchant, Mr. McMellon, a very kind old gentleman, came to me and said, "Just be picking out what you need." As we gathered up the things, I noticed that he wrapped them. Finally I said to him, "We had better wait, the man hasn't come yet." He smiled and asked, "Did you come here in the dark?" "No," I replied. "Then you are not likely to leave in the dark." When our bill was counted, it amounted to forty dollars. I signed a note which was all he wanted. Later a friend of mine tried to get credit there and was refused. Mr McMellon asked me if I would stand for it, I shook my head, and he said that he was sorry. This taught me that there were people who could read faces.

While working at the mill in Acworth, I met a Holiness preacher. In fact, he was my fixer on the job. I discovered that he was acquainted with brother Howard and that made me feel closer to him. He asked if I had ever been baptized with the Holy Ghost.

"No," I answered, "have you?"

"Yes," he said.

I then said, "I guess then that you do miracles such as heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, etc."

"No," he said, "I can't do that."

"Why?" I asked.

"Well, I haven't got the faith to do things like that," he stated.

Then I asked him if he believed that Jesus was the Christ and that He healed the sick and raised the dead.

"Yes, I do," he said.

"Well, this is the first time I ever knew of God giving a man power to do things who didn't have the faith to use it. I see nothing wrong with your faith. It just seems to me that you doubt your doctrine."

Our stay in Acworth was only about six months. I got a better job in the Canton Mills. We lived there for four years. The only daylight I saw during those four years was on weekends and during lunch hours. When I moved to Canton, all my good friends whom I owed soon came to see me and my visitors were many. All of them were looking for my first paycheck. I went to see Mr. Will Blackwell, bookkeeper for Jones Merchantile Company and asked him if he would okay orders on me to the store until my debts were taken up. Then I could give him a note and make payments. To this he agreed and I found peace of mind.

During those four years, I did little preaching because there was no church in the area and we had no way of leaving town unless someone came for us. During my stay with Canton Mills my wife had surgery. The mill paid the hospital bill for me and withheld it from my check. There was about a year that I drew no money. The Masons threw me out of their lodge because of nonpayment of due even after I had explained my condition, but this didn't worry me.

One day while I was working, my uncle Wess Cook came in the mill to tell me that my father had been killed. He was riding a large mule on his way home from Ludville. Everyone who saw the incident said apparently a wasp or something stung the mule and it threw my father off and stomped him in the chest. This was a great shock to me because I had always depended upon my father for advice or help when I was in need of it. Now I was left to fight my battles alone. There are many people who have never realized what a father means to them until he is gone.

Shortly after his death the old home place was sold to Henry Warren, my brother-in-law. I was asked to move on the farm and care for it. I had been shut up so long in the mill that it seemed wonderful to live on a farm again in the fresh air.

In February of 1931 we moved to the home farm. This was during the Hoover days when the depression was at its worst. Not

too many people can recall those hardships today. I had left the mill with no money. I would cut a load of stove wood one day, haul it twelve miles to Canton the next day, and sell it for five dollars. I could do this only every two weeks.

I was back close to Pleasant Hill church, so that meant that I could go back to church. I was soon back doing preaching again which I enjoyed so much. On the farm, I had a mule that I could ride, so I took on both the Ludville and Bethel congregations. I traveled about twelve miles on mule to Bethel. I visited these congregations only each month. I also did some preaching for the Pleasant Hill congregation.

During my three years on the farm, brother Garfield Weaver and his family were attending services at Pleasant Hill. We had worked together in the mill at Canton. One Sunday when the invitation was extended at church, brother Weaver and his wife and one or two of the children made confession of faith and wished to be baptized. Places to baptize were very unhandy from the buildings. We usually dammed up a place in a stream in which to baptize. But this time I selected the place near my home in the pasture. The stream was small and the banks narrow. When I led brother Weaver into the pond, I noticed that he was almost as broad as it was. He weighed almost two hundred pounds with me weighing one hundred and seven pounds. Putting him under the water was almost like sinking a watermelon in a tub of water. When the pond received him, it was all on top of him. I guess you know why I remember this so well. I always used better judgment in selecting the places to baptize from that day forward.

One summer while there, brother Gordon Kelly was holding a meeting at Pleasant Hill. I noticed that when he gave the invitation at the close of his lesson, he would say, "If there is one present who wishes to unite with this congregation either by letter, statement or confession, come give us your hand." Sometimes one would give his hand from other denominations and would be accepted upon their baptism without anyone questioning it. I remember the plea that I was asked to keep when I was ordained to the ministry:

"Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." I wondered how one could follow such practice and remain true to that pledge.

One morning at 10 o'clock I had a called meeting to which I invited the elders and brethren. The meeting was well attended. I began by rehearsing the plea that I was asked to keep. I said, "There are some things I cannot do -- invite people to a

bench or encourage the same to be done. I cannot call upon people for an experience of grace or encourage it. I cannot ask for a vote to accept or reject people into the church. Many who have come have never known anything but such practices. Now brethren, if they were ever saved, they were saved by this doctrine which I am not allowed to preach and if they were saved by such practice, I see no need of changing them. From here on, if you wish them to be shook in, your elders can do the shaking."

After we dismissed, there was not a word about the call meeting. The practice still goes on. But if one affirms that he was baptized for the remission of sins there is nothing that man can say because this is the purpose so stated by inspiration (Acts 2:38).

The last year on the old home farm something great happened. The Ludville brethren purchased a \$25 Model T Ford for me. They made a present of it. I am reminded of the little book written by brother Marshall Keeble, the colored preacher, titled From Mule Back To Jet. I was just as glad at this time when I went from mule back to the Model T. This meant that now I could carry my family with me which we all enjoyed very much.

During the winter of 1934 I again moved to the Jerusalem Community with brother Holmes. There were six of us in the family and I had the promise of sixty dollars upon which to make my crop beginning on March first. Today a family of this number could not live on this amount for a week.

During the early spring of 1935 brother Owen Still came to see me. Brother Still was one person whom I deeply loved. He had visited my home before I was married and held meetings at different places. Brother Still wished to discuss evangelical work with me. He and a group of brethren in Atlanta were having some individual mission work done and they wanted me to work for them. Their plan was to pay me one dollar per day for holding meetings anywhere I could get a place - whether it be a school house, bush arbor, or abandoned church building. I was also promised all the offerings at the end of the meetings and you can imagine how this piled up! I was to furnish my own car and car expenses, but was free on the Lord's Day to serve my congregations as usual.

After getting brother Holmes to dismiss me from the crop and to help oversee my thirteen year old son, I agreed to begin the first work which lasted from June through September.

Just previous to my move the last time to the Jerusalem Community, I was preaching at Ludville and just before services a young man walked up and asked to speak to me. We stepped aside and he asked me if I would engage with him in a Bible debate. He was a young Holiness preacher. I asked him the proposition which he wished to discuss. He wanted each of us to affirm that the church to which we belonged was apostolic both in practice and teaching. Neither of us had ever engaged in a debate. I had read several and pretty well knew how they were run. I agreed and the time was set - one hour each with a thirty minute reply each - all in one day with dinner on the ground. We held the debate at Bethel Christian Church. It was the first debate like it that had ever been experienced in that part and there was a large crowd there. It was a very hot August day and the house was small with few windows which were filling with people onlooking. My greatest fear was not knowing how much ground I could cover in an hour. I was a very rapid speaker and I had never had a watch to preach by. Later, when I did get one, I forgot to look at it because my method of preaching was to finish my lesson, then stop.

During the debate I forgot to remove my coat and when I finished my speech the perspiration was dripping from me. I covered my lesson with a little time to spare. I asked my opponent to remove his coat which he did and we faired much better.

While he was affirming that people of today receive the Holy Ghost as they did in the early church, I noticed on the front bench a woman sat trembling and jerking terribly. I watched her very closely. When I was on the floor again I called attention to what I had seen. I said, "I suppose that she received the Holy Ghost?" Then I referred to the five senses that man had and said, "God has always dealt with us through them." I referred to Pentecost, how the Holy Spirit came as a rushing mighty wind and the cloven tongues which sat upon each of them. "But I was watching this woman and I saw nothing nor did I hear anything. Nothing could be felt, nothing could be tasted. What she experienced, she must have smelled it." You could have pushed her over with a straw and people laughed quite heartily. It was a great day in my life and I believe much good was done.

Soon after this debate there was a Baptist preacher who often preached at the Holt School House on Saturday nights and who made this remark: "No one who has ever been born again of the Spirit can fall away and be lost, and I am ready to back up what I say by the Bible." It happened that one of the brethren was there and heard what he had said. Soon I received a letter

from brother Medlin asking me to come see the preacher. I lost no time in going to see him. It was a rainy day when we arrived at the preacher's home and I had borrowed a raincoat from brother Medlin which was much too large for me. You can imagine how I looked to the preacher. After our acquaintance I began to tell him of my business, how he had promised to defend his teaching by the Bible which was: "No one can fall from grace and be lost who has been born of the Spirit." "Yes," he said, "I said it and still say it." Then I handed him a proposition for a public discussion on the subject. After he had signed it I asked if he didn't teach that the Church of Christ didn't begin in the days of John the Baptist? He stated that that was what he believed. I said, "Well, I will affirm that the Scriptures teach that it began on the first Pentecost after His resurrection. He agreed to discuss this subject two weeks following the first discussion. We both signed this proposition. We also set the date for the first discussion which was to be held at the Holt School House.

When the day arrived the house was filled. When my opponent took the floor to affirm his proposition, he felt very secure. His first point was: "I was born into the Fendly family and I will always remain a Fendly and there is no power that can remove me from this name." His second argument was Ecclesiastes 3:14, "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it." Then for his third argument he used John 10:27-29, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them to me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

When he ended his affirmative speech I could see by the expressions on the faces of his brethren that they were well pleased by his argument.

When I took the stand I fully agreed with his first argument. He was born into his father's family and took his father's name and would always continue to wear it. Then I said, "The same is true in the spiritual family. When one is born of water and of the Spirit, he enters God's family. He is a child of God and always will be. But what my opponent didn't explain was that there can and is two classes of children in God's family. One class is known as the faithful or obedient children and the other class is known as the unfaithful or disobedient children. What we are concerned about in this discussion is what happens to the disobedient or unfaithful children. Jesus speaks of them in Matthew 13:20-21 as those who received the Word

but because they failed to be well grounded they were not able to overcome temptations and soon fell away. Jesus again speaks of the unfaithful in John 15:6, 'If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.' These were once in Him, but like those in Matthew 13:20-21, they only abide for a little while. They become unfruitful and are destroyed. Peter refers to them in II Peter 2:21-22 as those who once escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and again became entangled therein. The latter end is worse than the first. In verse 21 he said it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the Holy Commandments delivered to them. He then compared them to a dog returning to its vomit and to a sow once washed and going back to wallow in the mire. What could be plainer than the teachings of Peter?"

James 5:19 teaches the same lesson which he directs only to his brethren by saying: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one converts or turns him from the error of his way, he shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins."

II Peter 1:5-11 exalts us as to how to keep from falling. By adding the Christian graces he plainly states that those who fail to do this become blind and even forget that they were once purged from their own sins. Then he said, "If we do add them, we shall never fall."

Paul warns against falling in I Corinthians 10:12 by saying: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Our last thought is from Matthew 13:41. All children good and bad are born alike into God's family -- born of water and of the Spirit. They are all in the Kingdom. But the Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and they which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

I then answered his argument from Ecclesiastes 3:14. I first explained how this scripture referred to God's own work in Creation. Then I proved by Adam and Eve's behavior that he was wrong in his application of this scripture. God made man and woman perfect, but Satan came along, deceived Eve, and they sinned. They fell from God's favor and it took four thousand years to redeem man from his sins through Jesus (Genesis 3:15). You could see the Baptist brethren's faces changing by now.

I then turned to John 10:27-29. Jesus is here referring to his faithful sheep. In John 8:47: First, He that is of God heareth God's Word. Second, "And I know them." Paul declares this truth to Timothy in II Timothy 2:19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." Third, "And they follow me." In John 8:31, Jesus explains how we follow Him by saying, "If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Fourth, "And I give them eternal life." Unto whom? "Them that follow me." Fifth, "And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Paul confirms this truth in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." God's power is our security as long as we follow Him. But those who turn back and do iniquity shall be gathered out of His Kingdom and cast into a furnace of fire and burned (Matthew 13:41).

The discussion was enjoyed very much by all who attended. But when the time came for the second discussion, the preacher had cancelled it.

PART I

CHAPTER 5

"COMING OUT"

My last work with the Christian church was spent as an evangelist. The work was sponsored by brother Sill and some brethren in Atlanta. I began working for them in June of 1935.

My first meeting was held in a school building on Tails Creek. During this meeting I stayed during the week with brother Milburn Stanley who lived near the school. On my way to brother Stanley's I was crossing over the mountain from Carter's Quarters to Tails Creek when I noticed that the huckleberries were ripe. I stopped my car and soon had my mouth filled with them. I was just breaking in my first dental plate and you can imagine what happened when I mashed down on those berries. The bad part of it was that I was so far from water.

The meeting began with good crowds but I soon learned that there was much bootlegging or whiskey dealing going on in this community. One night a brother came to me and said, "Brother Owen, if you will make just one statement in one of your sermons, I know a man who will pay well for it." I asked what it was and he said to just tell the people that there is no harm in bootlegging. He either thought I was out for the money or else he was having trouble with his wife. I rebuked the brother very sharply for thinking I would do such a thing. This brother could have been in sympathy with that crowd, but before he died, he seemed to be loyal to Christ.

I also held a meeting in the Flint Hill Methodist building near Carter Kay in Gilmer. I found out that the building was not in use so I saw the officials and got their permission to hold a week's meeting in it. I spent the week with brother Landon

Johnson and everyday we would visit and talk to people. One day there was a cemetery cleaning in the community and brother Johnson suggested that we go since there would be several people there. Soon after arriving a crowd had gathered around for us to talk.

One man asked me what I thought about baptism. I said, "I suppose you wish to know what the Bible teaches concerning baptism?" "Yes," he said. I started by explaining what baptism was according to the Bible. In Romans 6:4 Paul declares it to be a burial in water for he said, "Therefore we are buried with him in baptism." Verse 5 calls it a "planting." "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Paul again in Colossians 2:12 said, "...Buried with him in baptism wherein also we are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

At this point, he reached for my shirt collar and said, "Young man, you may be smart, but you nor any other man is going to stand up in my face and tell me that my father has gone to hell. I have a dead father in that cemetery and he was only sprinkled for baptism." I realized at this time he had been drinking and replied, "You didn't ask me what I thought about your dead father. I didn't even know you had a father much less a dead one." For some reason he turned me loose. His brother stepped in and said, "Preacher, do you mean to tell me that all those Baptist preachers are preaching lies."

"Well," I said, "I didn't say it that way, but let's put it this way. I will meet them in a discussion and affirm that they are not right in one thing."

He said, "I know that isn't true because they preach repentance as strong as you do."

"Yes, that's true," I replied, "but they place it before faith and that makes it unacceptable with the Lord. Paul said, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Then I promised him that I would pay each preacher which he brought to church one dollar per night and the use of the pulpit each night after I had finished preaching. He was there every night but no preacher.

One night I was preaching on Christian unity. The stage was very high and I stepped aside from the Bible stand and slid my Bible down the aisle almost half way down the building and then asked what preachers or persons present would meet me at the Bible and agree to pick up nothing but the Bible and leave off

all opinions, creeds, and articles of faith -- just pick up the Bible alone. You could have heard a pin drop, so I went back and picked it up alone. I was told later that it was this act and proposition that caused the man to turn and obey the gospel.

One day during a meeting, I was having lunch with a brother. A young man, standing at the yard fence inquired if there was a preacher there by the name of "Owen". They told him there was a preacher by that name there and he asked to see me. As I started out to see him he headed for the woods. I felt somewhat curious to know what he was up to, but he soon stopped and asked me who gave me the authority to go into that building and preach. I told him that the elders did. He said, "The elders had no right to do that because that is a dead church and it's against the law for anyone to use it." "Well," I answered, "Up until now we've had no altar, but if you will read to me from the Bible where it says that we should have one, we will get one for tonight." He stated, "Well anyway, we will be there tonight." Sure enough, he was and had with him a fine-looking preacher. I figured that I was in for trouble but I didn't spare the rod that night and made several propositions. When I closed a young lady school teacher remarked to me, "You have broken the record here. I have never seen such good behavior at this place." We had several added to the church during that meeting.

While holding a meeting in the old Talking Rock school house, I was visiting with a young man and his family. He was telling me about a conversation which he had heard between his preacher and one of the deacons. He said the preacher opened his Bible and put his finger on a verse of scripture and said, "I cannot preach that. The minute I do that they will turn me out of the church." He said, "I sure would like to know what the scripture was." I opened my Bible and turned it to Acts 2:38 and read it to him and said, "This is it. The minute he agrees to what Peter said, out he goes." He was much surprised.

During my stay for the meeting at Talking Rock, I spent much time with Mr. Bob Darnell. He had a brother who was a Baptist preacher whom I knew well. He was quite amusing in the pulpit because he would roll up his shirt sleeves, pound the Bible stand with his fist, and sometimes stomped the floor and often got in such a condition that he would foam at the mouth. Bob asked his brother one day if it was religion that made him act that way and he replied, "Yes." "Well," said Bob, "then I don't want it because I don't want anything that makes me act that way." One night during one of his meetings at Damascus, he was trying to stir up the mourners but wasn't having any success. Finally he stomped the floor and pounded his fist at them and said, "If you want to go to hell, just go to hell!"

Back in those days the only light which I had to preach by was an old gas lantern. Many times electricity was not available. One night at Talking Rock, my lantern flickered out and I continued in the darkness. I happened to be as active in the pulpit as brother Gordon Kelly. He would back back, then run forward, pull his hair and it looked sometimes as if he would step off the stand. Brother Brindell was at Pleasant Hill once during one of Kelly's meetings. As a joke brother Brindell asked brother Kelly if he had ever preached when the lights went off. "Oh, yes," said brother Kelly. Then brother Brindell replied, "It's a wonder that you hadn't broken your neck." This seemed to help brother Kelly about so much action in the pulpit.

When my meeting was over at Talking Rock, Bob said to me, "In twenty-five years from now these people can understand your preaching because you are that far ahead of them." Poor Bob seemed to understand but never did accept it.

This reminds me of night preaching at Bethel while a Baptist preacher was teaching a singing school during the day. I had heard that he was to be ordained to preaching the following week, so I said to him, "I understand they are to put a muzzle on you next week." "What do you mean?" he asked. I said, "I mean just what I said; they are going to muzzle you." Then he asked for an explanation, and I asked, "Are they not going to ordain you to preach next week?" "Yes," he said. "Will they not ask you if you believe this and that? Will they not make you promise to stand for this or that? Will they not make you promise to stand for this or that before they ordain you?" "If you promise 'Yes', you are muzzled. You must teach the final perseverance of the saints or go out and you tell me now that you do not believe it?" Yes, they muzzled him!

During my work as an evangelist I went to Acworth. Brother Ed Jackson arranged for me to hold a meeting there under a brush arbor. The first night it rained so that we held the service in the school house. I had never been to a place where there was no order so that I had to stop. Just about the time I was well into my lesson in came a crowd of young people from town. They stood up in the back because all the seats were filled. They began to talk and laugh as though they were attending a party. I stopped my sermon and called them to order. But when I started my lesson again, they started again. I had to call them to order the second time. I think it was brother Jackson who went back and quieted them. Finally they left. But this was an experience that was hurtful to me because I had never before experienced such lack of order. I arranged for two of the brethren to stand in the back with a pencil and paper and to take names. This

ended the bad order and all went well. I learned much from my experience that summer. It doesn't pay to leave a place where interest can be seen and move to a new place to convert some and then leave them without a place to worship. This is often thrown away and such is often with many tent meetings.

During the late summer, while brother Howard was holding a meeting at McCaysville adjoining Copper Hill, he and a Holiness preacher had an agreement to have a debate. Therefore brother Howard sent for me to be his moderator. The first night brother Howard was taking the lead with the negative side. He had never before experienced debating. He had just preached a sermon and afterwards I had to inform him about how he was to handle a discussion. We went back for the second round and they changed preachers on him. He wanted me to take his place and when they got things set up right and lengthened the speeches to fifteen minutes longer, I agreed to do so. I had debated just one night and they closed it out.

At the end of the summer brother Still called me to Atlanta to a preacher's meeting and to hear my report on my summer's work. The women had prepared some delicious food and at lunch time it was spread for all. After lunch, we were called to worship. While the bread and wine were being passed, soft music could be heard coming from the organ. I had used every opportunity to dispose of many things practiced by the Christian church. I had not fully made up my mind concerning the music question, but when I learned that there was no limit to where and when it could be used, such as during the communion service, I began to think about it more seriously than ever before. In this little book I will give my reasons why I was numbered with those who opposed instruments of music in the worship. I sincerely hope they are considered by all who read them.

PART I

CHAPTER 6

"PREACHING IN THE MOUNTAINS"

On August 19, 1935 our last child was born - Archer Wesley. We were very happy when he arrived because it had been ten years since our other child was born.

While I was at McCaysville with brother Howard in his debate, I met some of the brethren from Macedonia. After visiting the church there, I was asked to move up there and work with them and other congregations in Gilmer and Fannin counties. I have never lived where there was no cotton grown and didn't understand the ways of living in the mountains. But as I saw such great need of a preacher in that section, I agreed to try it at least two years.

Brother Will Hembree owned twenty-five acres of land near the church building which he agreed to deed to me for as long as I would live on it, although there was no house on it. The brethren there offered to build a three-room house on the land provided that I promised to stay and preach for them for two years. At the end of the two years, if I wished to leave the little farm, I had the privilege of selling it and keeping all over \$325 which I received for improvements.

A working or two was done and the house was soon ready. In the latter part of October we moved into the new house. I had no money upon which to live. We had canned fruits, a cow, and some feed. The farm was grown up and was to be cleaned but brother Hembree rented me some land for farming until I could clear some land. There was no contract stating how much I would be paid for my preaching services, but they were to see that we didn't

suffer. They were very generous in dividing what they had with us. But there was now seven in the family and a car to keep up. I began to clear land and work the wood into stove wood for the market. I contracted the wood for seventy-five cents a rick, stove length. I could put up one rick per day because most of the timber was rough. Soon, my oldest son, Glen, stayed out of school to help me.

During the second winter we had a lot of snow and we had to take shovels to remove the snow in order to saw wood. Money was very scarce and living was getting hard. It was five miles to Blue Ridge and at that time they were putting out bedspreads for hand-tufting which paid only five to fifteen cents each. We would walk to Blue Ridge and carry home as many as we could each week for the women to tuff.

There were many fleas in the woods where our house was built, and it wasn't long until they started taking over. They would get in the seams of the quilts on the beds and when we went to bed, they went to work. I would sometimes put out the light and walk across the floor and there would be four or five on my feet at one time. While talking about fleas, I recall an old friend of my father's who moved to south Georgia and allowed some hogs to sleep under his house. In writing to my uncle, he mentioned the fleas in his house. He said that there were fleas there and that lots of them would weigh a pound. Maybe that is where these fleas in Fannin county came from since they seemed to be the same size.

When I moved to Fannin county, brother Jim Porter, one of the oldest preachers of the church of Christ in that area was living near Macedonia. As I traveled from place to place, I would often carry brother Porter with me and sometimes he would speak in my place or take some part in the service. Once while I was preaching in a small schoolhouse on Stanley's Creek, brother Porter was making a talk concerning the Lord's Supper just before it was to be passed around. The floor was rough and uneven and the table upon which the communion was setting was not too steady and the little house was filled with people. Just as he was talking one of the boys moved and shook the table and over went the grape juice. I called the attention of brother Porter who was noted for his stern ways. Sometimes while he would be preaching and someone would laugh or make a noise, he would walk back to the door and order them off, then he would continue his lesson.

Once while running a meeting in the little school house on Stanley Creek there was school during the day and the school teacher asked brother Stanley to invite me over because she

wished to talk with me concerning the Bible. One evening after preaching I went out to spend the night and we were all seated on the porch. I asked her if she had something that she wished to discuss with me. "Yes," she said. Then for about an hour she asked one question after another. Finally she finished and I asked if she had received satisfaction. "Yes," she said.

The next morning was Saturday and there was no school. I wished to ask her some questions that morning, but couldn't find her. I finally located her sitting in her room reading. I asked if I might join her and she invited me in.

"Well," I said, "I gave you the privilege of asking me questions last evening,. Now how about me asking you a few?"

"Okay," she said, "I'll try to answer them."

I said, "I assume that you are a Baptist?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Then I guess you can give me chapter and verse for your doctrine. The first question is: Where in the scriptures do you read of a Baptist church?"

"I know of no such scripture," she replied.

"The second question is: From what scripture do you read of a mourner's bench?"

"There is no scripture for it. It is only a chimney corner law," she stated.

I said, "Then this is chimney corner law number one. Question three is: Where do you get the scripture for the experience of grace that you are asked to tell?"

"Oh, that is just another chimney corner law," she said.

"Then that is chimney corner law number two. Question four: Where do you learn that people should be voted upon as to whether they are accepted or rejected?"

"Just another chimney corner law," she stated. This makes the third chimney corner law.

"Now last night you admitted that you didn't believe the Baptist teaching on falling from grace so that would make chimney corner law number four."

"Yes," she said.

"Now let's just remove all the chimney corner laws from the Baptist church and what have you got left? Some day you may have children. What would you advise them to become? Should they join a bunch of chimney corner laws or accept the New Testament?"

After a moment she said she would tell them to take the Bible. I said, "That is all we are asking people to accept - just what they read in the Bible."

When I reached my new home in Fannin county, I found an old log church building hardly fit in which to hold a service. Brother Howard had been living in this community for around two years, but for some reason had decided to leave and go back to Cobb county. The church was unorganized. There were no elders nor deacons. For the first six months I preached and got acquainted with the people.

Brother Bart Bearden lived and worked in Copper Hill. Brother Hines Jones lived near the church building but also worked in Copper Hill. At this time brother Jones was a strong drinker. I soon discovered that without him my work in the church there would be slow. I often talked with brother Jones hoping to find the proper time and place in which to approach him on the subject. One day we went to the Blue Ridge Lake to fish. I was waiting for my chance. Soon he asked me what I thought about the work there. This was one time that we alone and he was anxious to talk. I told him that if I did any good I must have some help and that it seemed to depend upon him somewhat.

"If you will confess your wrongs, straighten yourself up with the church so I can use you as an elder, I see great work ahead. But if you are going to continue to live as you are then I may as well leave as for the good I'll do here."

Then I asked him to consider the responsibility that was upon him as a father to his children, to the community and especially to the work which I had come there to do. I soon saw that I had gained the victory by his reaction to the talk. He said, "Brother Owen, give me a few days to consider this matter." A short time later he came to me and whole-heartedly accepted the work. He was a very likeable man in the community and he made right his mistakes and the work was now ready to go forward. A business meeting was held and brothers Bart Bearden, Hines Jones and John Callahan were appointed elders.

Plans were soon made to erect a new building. When the Blue

Ridge Lake was built, water backed upon the Willscot Church and it had to be moved. The Ralston brethren had moved from there to the Hemptown Community and were worshipping most of the time at the church at Macedonia. They agreed to give us the church building if we would move it. So that was one and as of today the building is yet standing. This all happened in 1936.

Many from Boardtown, including the George Hollaway and the John Thurman family and others aided the work in Macedonia. Soon I was holding meetings at Boardtown in a small school house. At this time brother Jack Oliver and his wife, Mary, were living in the Boardtown school house. I soon began holding meetings in the school house and later brother Jim Hollaway, who then lived in Atlanta brought Romain Parnell, a preacher, with him to Boardtown. He held several meetings there and baptized several.

While living in Macedonia, a meeting was being held in a denominational church in the community. My children had been attending the meeting. They asked me to go over and hear what was going on. One evening I decided to attend. There was a large crowd and soon the preacher took the stand and made these remarks: Now you sinners that are here tonight, I don't want you to pay any attention to what I'm saying. While I am talking you be praying for your soul's salvation." I wondered when I heard this why they were not using God's power unto salvation, which was the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16). I often wonder if preachers like these have ever learned any better.

I made several trips over to Dial church of Christ while at Macedonia holding some meetings there. I enjoyed staying with brother and sister Virge Woody. They lived near the river. It was a cool place and I could hear the river which made a noise resembling rain coming down. Hearing this made me sleep very soundly. One night at Dial I preached on strong drink. I began with the Blockaders and came on down to the Bootleggers and Dram Drinkers. I had all of them present and I knew very well who they were. After I finished preaching, one of the bootleggers said, "Boys, he sure did put it to brother So-And-So, the blockader." And you know, people continue to be like that. They try to give all the lessons to the other fellow.

During one meeting at Dial, there was an old retired railroader staying there whose hair was white with age. One Sunday morning he said to me, "I suppose you are going to have a baptizing in the river today."

I said, "Yes."

Then he said, "I think I will go see it done, as I've never seen anyone be baptized."

Considering his age I was greatly surprised to hear that and asked, "Are you a Methodist or a Presbyterian?"

"I'm a Presbyterian, but my people baptize. It's just that I've never seen it done that way."

From that I began to explain the purpose of baptism and the way of baptism as taught in the scriptures. He soon had his hat in his hand and was walking the floor. He asked, "Do you mean to tell me that all our great educated men are going to hell?"

I replied, "I am not telling you anything. Preachers Peter and Paul are doing that and you do as you like about heeding their teachings." Since he was there he stayed for services that evening.

At the close of one of my meetings at Dial, a collection was taken to support the meeting. I don't think I've ever seen as many one dollar bills. The brethren shoved the pile out to me and I said, "Brethren, I don't want all of them." What I had said was noticed because one brother replied, "Well, I have never heard a preacher say that before!"

The last year at Macedonia living became so hard that I began to serve McCaysville at Copper Hill some each month. The support I received from them was a great help. There were some fine people in the McCaysville congregation. As of today, some of them are still living although many have passed on.

The last Christmas we spent at Macedonia, I was wondering about how we would fare during the holidays. We had always had something extra to enjoy, but this seemed to be a complete failure. I was very disheartened. One evening after dark I heard a car drive up. It was brother Claude Duncan and his wife. There was also another couple with them. They came in and stayed a few minutes and then asked if I cared if they brought us some things for Christmas. I said, "Certainly not." They began to bring in such things as groceries of all kinds, oranges and fruits, clothing and everything that was needed to make a Merry Christmas. I can't explain how much this meant to my family and me. These hardships were rather tough, but later on I realized that it was these hardships that make us what we should be. For he who never was in need cannot sympathize with those who are in need.

Brother Buel Stanley was a one-armed man and getting up into years, but he always had something to give to his neighbors. When he visited them he carried his little bow basket on his arm with something in it. If someone was sick he saw to it that the wood was chopped or the crop was worked. Once at a funeral, a man had died and left his wife with several children to raise. People were standing around sympathizing for the poor woman, but brother Stanley pulled off his hat and held it out and asked, "How sorry are you for this woman?" Several dollars were given to help her. People, this is Christianity and we need more people watching for opportunities like this.

At the end of my two years at Macedonia I could not see my way further because my family could not help me there as much as they could on a cotton farm. So I sold the little farm to brother Bart Bearden for a little profit. Just enough to straighten up and move back to Pickens County. Up until this there was a church of Christ in Pickens County.

When I moved to Fannin county I arranged for brother Alf Porter to preach for the Ludville church hoping that he might convert some to the church of Christ. But he was soon starved out because he was living in Dalton, Georgia. I was there at the end of the year when they were discussing many matters. I heard one of the brethren say, "If you haven't received enough money to pay your expenses, I'll dig into my pockets and give you fifty cents." Brother Porter knew what it was to be poorly paid for his services.

PART I

CHAPTER 7

"BACK TO THE PICKENS AREA"

When I returned to Pickens County, I moved back near Jerusalem again on the farm with brother Holmes. There were several of the brethren in the Ludville Christian church who were ready to unite and start a congregation of the church of Christ. We began to meet at the Holt School House once a month for preaching and each Sunday for Bible study and partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Preachers were scarce then. I was still serving the congregation at Macedonia and other churches in Gilmer county. Sometimes I think we were doing better with preaching once a month and Bible study each Lord's Day than we are today. People were hungry to hear preaching. I seemed to do them good. But now if you haven't got the best preacher you can find, you can't interest the people. They must be preached to death.

I remained in the Holt section for three years. I was not able to own a car and it was ten miles to Jasper to the bus line. When I went to serve the churches in Gilmer and Fannin counties, I had to hire someone to take me to the bus on Saturday and meet me at the bus on Sunday evening. The same was to be done on the other end of the line. Sometimes they failed to meet me and I would have a very enjoyable walk.

One Sunday evening I caught the bus at Blue Ridge and took a seat by a well dressed man. I noticed him looking me over very closely. Finally he asked, "Are you a salesman?"

"No," I answered, "I just happen to be a preacher." I wasn't feeling very well and was not in the mood for an argument.

He soon asked, "A Baptist preacher?"

"No," I replied.

"A Methodist preacher?"

"No," I answered again.

"A Holiness preacher?"

Well, by this time I was somewhat awakened and asked, "What kind of church do you read about in the Bible?"

He said, "The church of Christ."

"Well, why do you think I would preach for any other kind?" Then I began to tell him why I could not afford to preach for other churches which he had mentioned. My first reason was because neither of them are mentioned in God's Word. Another reason was that some have perverted the mode of baptism from a burial to a sprinkling. Nowhere do we learn that an apostle ever practiced sprinkling for baptism. On the contrary, Paul taught it as a burial in water. He said in Romans 6:4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

He taught again in Colossians 2:12, "...Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

Those churches which you mentioned refuse to be guided by inspiration. Jesus told the twelve apostles in John 14:26 and 16:23 that He would send the Holy Spirit upon them which would guide them in the way of all truth and bring all things to their memory which He had spoken unto them. If we are to believe in inspiration, we are to believe that the mind and the words and the application of these words are controlled by the Holy Spirit as read in Matthew 10:19. Jesus here tells them to take no thought as to how or what they shall speak for it shall be given them in that same hour what they shall speak. Paul also tells us that they were given words to speak by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:13). "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Now do we believe that Peter spoke the words which were given him as he gave answer to those sinners in Acts 2:38? He said, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." At least these were the words which they gladly received, and when they obeyed, Jesus added them to His church (2:47).

"Now as for me to preach for these churches which you mentioned I must do some changing in Peter's word and make it appear that they already had remission of sins before they were baptized. The same is true with Mark 16:15-16 where Jesus said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' For these churches, I must preach that he that believeth is saved and should not be baptized."

"Another reason why I cannot preach for those churches which you mentioned is because some of them believe that after they are born into the Kingdom by water and the Spirit that they are eternally saved and cannot be lost."

"Jesus taught no such doctrine as this in Matthew 13:20-21. He said the seed received into stony ground is the same as he who heareth the Word and with joy receives it. But when tribulations or persecutions arise because of the Word, by and by he is offended. He taught the same lesson in John 15:5-6 - 'I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.'

This is the same burning as is spoken of in Matt. 13:41-42 - "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

But in Matt. 10:22 Jesus said, "But he that endureth to the end shall be saved." In Rev. 2:10 he said, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." No wonder Paul said in I Cor. 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Now if these things which I have mentioned as unscriptural are not the gospel of Christ, all that preach them are perverters of the gospel (Gal. 1:7-8). If they are not the doctrine of Christ, all who teach or practice them have not God (II John 9-10). And if such teachings are not learned from the apostles,

all who teach them cause division and should be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17).

On another occasion I was riding the train from Blue Ridge to Jasper. When I entered the coach there were only two men in it. One of them asked if I was a preacher and I answered, "Yes." Then he asked me where I had been and I told him. He wished to know how much I received each visit to these churches. I told him, "Around ten dollars." I saw them cut their eyes at each other and then one of them said, "You know how much a preacher gets each Sunday where I attend and he just walks out and preaches --- Sixty dollars!" Well, I saw they had fallen in love with my method of preaching on cheap pay.

We still have these kind today. These two were interested in what they had found and began to ask Bible questions. Much interest was soon aroused. The flagman joined in and soon the conductor joined in also. Very often the conductor would remind the flagman to stop the train because he was interested in the conversation and he would forget where he was. When I was getting off the train each of the two men handed me fifty cents and said what they had heard was well worth that much.

One day at Jasper I was catching the bus for Gilmer county and as the bus rolled up my attention was called to a preacher standing across the street speaking over a loud speaker. I heard him say, "I am going to prove that John the Baptist was a Missionary Baptist preacher and he baptized Jesus and that made him a Missionary Baptist." Boy, this is too much to miss. I'll just wait for the next bus. I crossed the street and took a stand near the preacher. When he had finished I went to him, shook his hand and asked him, "Did you mean to tell these people that John the Baptist was a Missionary Baptist just as you are and was teaching the Baptist doctrine as you are teaching. And do you mean to tell these people that Jesus was a member of the Missionary Baptist church?"

He answered, "I didn't say that."

"Well," I said, "It must be that you intended for them to believe it and if you think that is true, I'll meet you here and prove that that assertion is not true." But he was ready to dismiss the subject.

One day when I arrived in Blue Ridge some preacher was doing some loud preaching on the street. I made my way through the crowd up close to the preacher and every time I could catch his eye, I would give him a nod of sanction for he was telling the

people some truth. When he had finished I went to him, shook his hand and commended him for the things which he had said.

"I suppose you are a Missionary Baptist?"

"Sure," he replied.

I then asked him what was going to happen to those one-day Christians and six-day devils to which he had just mentioned as you do not believe that one can fall away and be lost.

He said, "I think you misunderstood me. I don't think I said that."

"Well, I asked, "Do you want me to prove to you by this crowd that you said it?"

He replied, "I must have some water," and across the street he went.

During my stay near Hold I held a meeting at Old Fort Tennessee for the Antioch congregation. One evening I thought I had preached one of my best sermons. A man caught me as I left the building, bragged on the lesson and called my attention to a statement which I had made in the lesson. Where the Bible speaks we speak and where the Bible is silent we are silent and that we have an example for all we practice.

"Yes," I said, "We believe that."

"Would you mind if I ask you a question?" he asked.

"Oh, no, go ahead and ask me."

Then he popped it to me. "Will you give me the scripture for an example where any apostle ever baptized anyone in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost?"

I first thought I could do that easily but the longer and harder I tried to recall an example of that kind the more confused I became. I asked him to give me until the next day. Well, the next day I was still without an example, but I referred him to Matt. 28:18-19 where Jesus commanded it to be done this way. We also know from Acts 19:1-4 that the Holy Ghost was to be named in baptism because Paul knew there was something wrong with their baptism as they had not heard there be a Holy Ghost and rebaptized them. But this taught me not to play smart because there is always someone ready to call your attention to things.

I didn't own a car back then that was dependable and I was always without money. I started to Tennessee to hold a meeting near Chatsworth, Georgia and all at once the old car quit running. There I sat with three cents in my pocket. Finally a man from Florida stopped and asked if I wanted him to send the wrecker after me. I said, "No, I haven't any money." I then asked him if he would give me a push over the hill. I saw that he didn't want to but he did and it so happened that it cranked and I landed okay.

During the year of 1941, two of the children had to have surgery and I believe it was that same year that Parris and Glen were both married. I have heard it said that two weddings were equal to a burn out. But all this at one time left me in debt until I wondered if I would ever see daylight again. The next year I sold all my farm equipment and went to the Lindale Cotton Mill to work. E.C. helped me in the mill for one year and then he married and left for the farm. There was much of the time that I worked seven days a week. After I went to the cotton mill I had to sell my car as tires and gas were rationed during the war and my preaching was limited to only where I was carried or on the bus line.

Brother Little and I took Sunday about going to Cartersville and preaching for some brethren there. Brother Clark and brother Walter Chastain and brother Latamer and their families constituted the church there. The worship at that time was being held in the court house. I also made several trips to Adairsville to preach. They were worshipping in a store building downtown, but they soon built a block building in which to worship and a few years later while brother Jerry Smith was serving them they erected a nice brick building. While I was at Lindale, the Hold School House was sold and moved away and the brethren had no place to worship. But during this time, E.C, my son, had married the daughter of A. P. Holmes and had moved into the home with him.

During the summer of 1944, brother Samples from Cleveland, Tennessee - who had once held a meeting for us in the school house - came down to visit the brethren and seeing their condition began a meeting in the home of brother Holmes. He began to urge them to build a church house. He agreed to help them. So the logs were cut and hauled to the mill and brother Oscar Medlin gave two acres of land on which to build a church house. Very soon a building was underway. This congregation went by the name of "Pine Grove." The house was only hulled in and had only temporary seats. E. C. Owen was soon called to the service and this left them without a leader.

At this time my health was failing me as I was overworked and I was advised by the doctor to leave the mill for a rest. As Pine Grove was without a preacher, I was asked to move back to the Jerusalem district and work with the Pine Grove congregation. I moved into the house which had been built for E.C. and again rented land from brother Holmes to make a crop. I was now free of debts and had enough money ahead to purchase around twenty-three acres of land joining the church property. The next year, 1946, I went to work on my little grown-up farm. There was only one cleared acre of land on it. The rest was in pine timber. Some was large enough for lumber and much of it as pulpwood size. I cut the logs to build a four room house and barn with a bow saw. I hired someone to haul the logs to the mill. I had never built a house but I decided to try one and went to work. About the only help I had was my wife. Many times she was asked to hold things or aid in times of need. The next job was to finish the church building. We sealed the house and made seats and soon the work was going well.

During my stay at Lindale Mills brother Hogan held a meeting for the brethren at Pine Grove. When he learned that many of the members at Pine Grove had been converted from the Christian church he insisted that they be rebaptized into the Church of Christ. Many of them were rebaptized. Soon after my move to Pine Grove I learned that brother Hogan was holding a meeting at the Boardtown Church of Christ. During this meeting I went to visit the church and the meeting there. I learned that he was also teaching those there who had been converted from the Christian Church that they should be rebaptized. Brother William Holloway asked me to spend the night with him as brother Hogan was staying there. He was interested in hearing us discuss our differences on our views of rebaptism from the Christian Church into the Church of Christ.

Soon after we were all seated in the home of brother Holloway, the subject was raised and I was asked to give my views first. I began by asking a question -- "Was the division between the two congregations caused over things taught and practiced outside before entering the church or after we had been added to the church?" I then quoted Romans 1:16 showing that the gospel of Christ was the power of God unto salvation... Galatians 1:7-8 which teaches us that there was only one gospel... I Thessalonians 1:7-8 to show that this one gospel must be obeyed. Then I quoted Peter in Acts 2:38 and assured him that we all agreed that the gospel which Peter preached was the one gospel, "For all who gladly received (Peter's) word were baptized" and were added to the church by the Lord. Then I assured him during the twelve years that I preached for the Christian church I preached this

same gospel which Peter preached on Pentecost and those who gladly received it and obeyed it were added to the church by the Lord. If not, why not? After we have been added to the church we are one until some unscriptural practice or teaching is introduced into the work or worship. Then we are to mark them who have gone astray, avoid them (Rom. 16:17), and withdraw ourselves from them (II Thess. 3:6). This is what we did when we learned of the wrongs being practiced by the Christian Church. This is all the Lord requires. When these things were explained our differences were over.

Sectarian baptism very often comes up. Maybe someone from the Baptist church wishes to unite with the Church of Christ, but he wished to do so upon his previous obedience. He says he is satisfied with his baptism. Now the only important question is this, "Was his baptism scriptural?" Paul tells us that there is one baptism (Eph. 4:5). That means there is only one which God will recognize. We must satisfy Him - not ourselves. This one baptism was for, or unto, the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Jesus only promised salvation to the baptized (Mark 16:16). Paul was commanded to be baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). Peter tells us in I Peter 3:21 that baptism now saves us. It puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27); into His death (Rom. 6:4); makes us new creatures (II Cor. 5:17); and is the beginning place for a new life (Rom. 6:4).

Now, baptism has some essential things connected with it if it is to be scriptural baptism: (1) People must be believers (Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:37). (2) They must repent (Acts 17:30; 2:38). (3) They must confess their faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). (4) They must be buried in water (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). All these are in order to our salvation or remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Now if one has been buried in water thinking that he is already saved, it makes the act of baptism of none effect. It is a perverted baptism and is of man - not God. Now, it is possible for one to learn from the Bible his duty in obedience to God and to learn from Acts 2:38 that baptism is for the remission of sins. If he obeys this, God is pleased and man has a right to be satisfied with his baptism.

Now back to Pine Grove... When I moved there I began to preach for them and they gave me five dollars a week toward the support of my family. I farmed for the other support. Soon I was in need of some more support from the church, so I took on other churches one Sunday a month in Gilmer and Fannin counties. Now I was preaching for four churches one Sunday a month.

One of these congregations was Pisgah. Pisgah was located

about eighteen miles northeast of Ellijay, Georgia. There was no church building there when I first visied them but there had been one year before. Brother Joe, Jace and Sanford Stanley, brother Wood and brother Will Garland were the families living there, but at this time they were worshipping at Dial or Stanley Creek congregations. I first held services in a little school house over the mountain near the old Pisgah post office.

Every summer they would meet at the cemetery where the church now stands for a decoration. I would hold services under the trees. Large crowds would come to the decorations. I learned of a school house near the cemetery, so I asked the brethren about holding a week's meeting in the school house. They said that brother Howard had tried that once but didn't have any success. I insisted that I try it one week. We did and were all greatly surprised with the large crowd which attended the meeting.

One night when the invitation was given, a man came up to me, gave his hand and said, "I don't believe it." I understood that he was drinking and asked him to be seated, but he returned to his seat in the auditorium. Then he came back up, gave his hand and said, "You misunderstood me. I do believe it. They turned me out of the Baptist church." I again asked him to be seated and he again returned to his seat in the audience. This time someone got him to go outside. I had never had such an experience before and I was wondering why he acted this way. Was he put up to this mischief just to see what the church of Christ would do with a man of his character?

You know, some people these days think we don't teach repentance. I heard a preacher once say that all those Campbellites teach is baptism. Well, I never did see a Campbellite or hear one of them preach, but we of the church of Christ do teach repentance. So at the close of the invitation I thought it good to say something concerning what had happened. I referred back to John the Baptist. When those vipers came to him to be baptized he asked them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. He demanded evidence that they had repented. I then said I saw no evidence of fruits of repentance in the man who had come forward. This meeting was well attended. I baptized around thirteen and this was the meeting which led to the building of the Pisgah church building.

Back in those days the roads were very bad. I had no car and I often went to Ellijay on the bus. Sometimes in bad weather they would come for me at Ellijay with a jeep. Preachers weren't hunting places like this to preach. Now preachers can get to

Pisgah with all ease. There are good roads all the way.

While in a meeting at Pisgah, I was invited to a Baptist home for lunch. I learned that this good woman was a great believer in foot washing. After lunch, which I enjoyed very much, her husband and I were seated out on the porch. As soon as the dishes were finished she joined us with her Bible in her hand. "Well, brother Owen, what do you think about foot washing?" That was the way she began.

"Well," I said, "I am a great believer in footwashing. Jesus taught it. He washed his disciples' feet, and he had his apostles teach it." I then said, "I don't know of any subject more plainly taught than footwashing." She looked at me in great astonishment. Then I said, "We may agree as to when, where, and the purpose for the act of footwashing. All this we must learn from the Bible."

After showing her that Jesus, having all power or authority on earth (Matt. 28:18), he commissioned his twelve apostles to preach the gospel to all the world. I also showed her that he also promised them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth and to bring to their remembrance all the things which he had taught them (Jn. 14:26; 16:13). We must depend upon them for testimony concerning our works and worship. Then after showing her the difference between a work and an act of worship, I explained to her that we had no authority to take a work and convert it into an act of worship. Neither could we convert an act of worship into a work and to do so would be to pervert the doctrine of Christ (Gal. 1:7-; II Jn. 9-10).

After she was made to understand these things I said, "We are now ready to see what they (the apostles) said about footwashing." In I Timothy 5:9-10 Paul advised the young preacher about the conditions upon which a "widow indeed" could be supported by the church -- if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. Now, Paul being guided by the Spirit into all truth, placed footwashing among good works and not among acts of worship. Now, I said, I am a strong believer in footwashing as long as it is kept where God placed it, but I have no orders to practice it elsewhere. She thought for a moment and then said, "I have never heard that before." The subject was dismissed.

After the subject of footwashing was dismissed she wished to relate her experience of grace, her deep conviction, how earnestly she prayed, the great relief she felt while praying, and how happy she was now. Then she asked me what I thought about this experience she had. Well, I knew that her experience

was the experience of many others. I also knew that to reject an experience usually hurt people's feelings. I had had this experience with many before her.

All I knew to do was to first establish the standard by which all must be governed, which is the Bible, and then to let her compare her experience with the divine standard. I showed how Jesus called the twelve apostles (Matt. 10:1-5); how he promised them divine knowledge and guidance (Jn. 14:26; 16:13); how he was depending upon them to be His witnesses; where for them to begin and when to begin (Lk. 24:46-49); and the authority behind them. Notice the words Jesus spoke to them (Lk. 10:16) - "He that heareth you heareth me; and that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Jesus Himself didn't reveal His will to us, but his twelve apostles did after His ascension.

Now what was the standard or condition of salvation? Remember there is only one way. He prayed that we all might be one (Jn. 17:21). Again Paul condemned division, asked us all to be of one mind and to speak the same thing (I Cor. 1:10). We must all have the same experience if we obey the same gospel (Gal. 1:7-8). If you and I obey a different doctrine, at least one of us is lost (II Jn. 9-10). Now we have located the divine standard upon which the Lord himself adds us unto the saved body - the church. Peter first gave it (Acts 2:38) when sinners asked for it by saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Would we imagine that Peter failed to give the true standard of requirements of salvation the first time it was proclaimed? What did he give in answer to their question? They were under conviction just as you were. They were willing to do anything just as you were. They were believers that Jesus was the Christ already.

Now to these believers he said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Notice he said, "...every one of you..." What one does, all must do. There is only one way. Salvation was only given to those who gladly received Peter's word, which was repentance and baptism for remission of sins. This is what Jesus promised in Mark 16:15-16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." He only saves those who obey in baptism.

Then I asked her how her experience corresponded with the standard. Then I reminded her that this standard, which was His word, would be our judge according to John 12:48 - "He that

rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth
him; the word
that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
This was a visit that I will always remember. The good lady went
on her way to face the divine standard relying upon a standard
built by man for her eternal salvation.

My friends, will this experience not be a lesson for you???

PART I

CHAPTER 8

"TIMES ARE ROUGH BUT THERE IS HOPE"

Soon preaching and farm life became tough again. Debts began to pile up as doctor bills were very common with my wife. We decided to leave the farm and try the cotton mill again. This time we decided to move to Knoxville, Tennessee. Our oldest child was now located there. We sold our stock and moved to Knoxville. This was in July of 1948, after crops were finished. I was soon employed by the Brookside Cotton Mill.

At this time the Vestal congregation was small and they were holding worship services in a dwelling house which had been converted into a place for worship. Just previous to my move to Knoxville, the colored brethren had lost their preacher by death. They were being supplied by the elders from Vestal church. I was asked to work with these colored brethren. I did and enjoyed it very much. They seemed so sincere in their worship. Then they were meeting from house to house but now they have a nice building in a good location and are doing well.

You know it is very common for people to become religious during the summer season. Meetings were being held around town and all seemed anxious to talk religion. One lady working next to me seemed to be very religious. She kept mentioning the Bible. So one day I asked her if she really believed the Bible.

"I sure do," she said.

"Well then," I said, "I don't mind talking to you."

Soon she was telling me her experience -- how the Lord met with her at the mourners' bench and saved her. Then I said, "I

thought you believed the Bible." She again said she did. Then I quoted from Acts 2:38 where Peter said "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" and Mark 16:16 where Jesus only promised salvation to those who were baptized. "Now here you are telling me that you were saved before you were baptized," I said.

Then she said, "I don't care what the Bible says, I know when I was saved."

Poor woman -- she isn't the only one who doesn't care to reject God's Word. I wonder what such people think about the question which Jesus asked in Luke 6:46, "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

After an eight month stay in Knoxville the family became homesick for our little Georgia home, and in March of 1949 we returned to Georgia. I was soon employed by the Jasper Lumber Company and remained with them until late summer. Then I began to work for myself as a painter. Mr. Lawson, a car dealer in Jasper, owned a large house which he wanted me to paint. As I had no car, he wanted to give me a good Model A Ford for the painting of his house. I agreed to this and now I could carry on my painting work. My first contract job proved to be my best lesson. One day as I was looking for a house to paint, I came to a house where the owner was sitting on the porch. I asked him about a paint job. He asked to look it over and give him my price for a two coat job with me furnishing the paint. After inspecting the job, I offered to do it for \$40. he said, "Go to work." When the job was finished and the paint paid for, I had two dollars left.

Once as I was looking for work, I was riding along and noticed a car wheel passing me. Then I realized it was my back wheel. It headed down the highway meeting several cars. The second one was the Highway Patrol. The wheel struck his front bumper then went over the headlight and knocked the fender loose from the body. By this time the Patrols were out directing the traffic. Then I called to them and asked, "What seems to be the trouble over there?" The Patrols said that some man met a loose wheel coming down the highway. "Well," I said, "I am absent one over here." He laughed and asked to see my license. The he said it could not be avoided but the man would expect me to have his car fixed. The man had a very nice car and acted as if he were uneasy about my being able to fix it. Well, I guess my outfit did look bad to him, but I went with him to the next station and gave the man twenty-eight dollars to fix him up. As soon as people learned that I was a painter who didn't drink whiskey I got plenty of work to do. I continued to follow the painting until I retired.

In the early spring of 1951 my wife became very ill. She had been in bad health for several years. On June 15, 1951 she passed from this life. We had spent thirty-five happy years together. You can see from this writing that many hardships came during these years. But she was a faithful companion and mother. She never complained when the going was tough. I yet look upon her as the one who bore the greatest burdens in the Lord's service. Many people have never learned the hardships of a preacher's wife. It gives me much courage as I near the end of this life to look beyond with the hope of uniting with those who have been so near and dear to me.

After the death of my wife I was left with one son, Archer, who was sixteen years old and my wife's mother, Effie, who was growing old. Again I was left in a very bad financial condition. I was now fifty-three years old, very much in debt, and was without a companion to help and encourage me. I soon realized that life had nothing to offer a man in my condition, so I made up my mind not to give up but to start life over again as far as possible.

My first problem was finding the proper woman to make a faithful preacher's wife, for my whole life for several years had been given to the ministry and I wished to continue this work. There was a forty-nine year old widow living in the community whose husband had been dead for six years. Her name was Alice McDaniel. I had known her and the family for several years. I had baptized her and some of the children while preaching for the Christian Church. I also preached her husband's funeral and the funeral of her oldest daughter. Then about a year before we were married, I said the ceremony which united her youngest daughter to Dewey Medlin. I went to see her and found her to be one upon whom I could depend. She had five living daughters and I had one daughter and three sons living. I believe this union to be as perfect as one could be. Our children have been the best of friends and Alice has been to me a wonderful companion. Fifteen years have passed since we were married and as I look back over these fifteen years I can see how good the Lord has been to me. Alice and all her daughters are now members of the Church of Christ and so are my children.

Alice owned a little farm in Gordon county and she sold it to the pulp wood company and placed the \$800 on my debts which were near \$2500. Then we went to work raising broiler chickens as we had two small chicken houses. We also farmed and I continued to work at painting. It wasn't long before all our debts were settled and I felt free again.

I think the most enjoyable work that I ever did was painting two years with my two sons, E.C. and Archer. We had a bad-looking rig. It was an old Model A with a ladder rack on it. We often tied buckets to the spare tire behind. We didn't need a horn on our car for people could hear us coming. When we got there the job was soon over. There were few common houses that we couldn't paint in one day. E.C. was beginning to preach at that time and was very much interested in learning the Bible. Many times we were so concerned about our Bible conversations that we hardly realized how we got the house painted.

Well, it was time for more worry. On December 25, 1952, Archer decided to enlist in the Navy. I tried hard to persuade him not to do this but I could not convince him. After he had finished his training and come home on his vacation, I saw that he was sorry he hadn't listened to me. All seemed to be going well until one night in June 1953 when a message came stating that Archer was missing from the ship. You can't imagine what a shock this was - not knowing what had happened or how it happened. We had no hope that his body would ever be found. This trouble almost got me down. I continued my preaching but I could see that my memory had been disturbed because of this worry. It was in October while I was holding a meeting at Pisgah, Georgia that my wife and daughter brought me the news that Archer's body had been found. According to marks of identification we could not be certain beyond any doubt that it was his body. But the body was sent home and we accepted it as Archer. We gave him a nice burial beside his mother in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Well at the time of our marriage, my little farm was in need of much repair work. Alice and I took great delight in making improvements around the house and on the farm as well. In a few years we had the farm in first class shape. I still think as I look back at it that it was the most complete little farm that I have ever known. We were enjoying life on it so much but it was time for more worry.

All at once I was notified to stop using the road which went through the church property to my chicken houses. I had been using the road for seven years without a complaint. Sometimes when I came home I would find wire stretched across my road to the field. Now I thought I had had enough trouble and all kinds of trouble, but this was a different kind of worry to any I had yet had. I had worked with these people for twelve years in the Christian Church. I placed the utmost confidence in them as brethren and friends. I had lived among them at different times. When I left the Christian Church, they followed me into the

church of Christ. I had moved back into their community in hopes of retiring near Pine Grove to spend my old age there. Now those whom I had considered my oldest and best friends had turned against me. Friends, if you have never had this experience, let me tell you that it is one that you will remember as long as you live. To be let down or to lose confidence in brethren or friends is, I believe, the worst trouble that man can experience. But this was the experience of Christ, Paul and of many others -- not just me.

During the last year at Pine Grove on our little farm, brother Jack McElroy was preaching for the Cartersville Church of Christ. They were busy building their church building. I went down there and gave them some paint work and this was the time that I first met brother McElroy. He was asking about the prospect of a tent meeting in Fairmount as there were a few members then living in Fairmount. Soon a tent meeting was arranged and several of the brethren from Cartersville supported the meeting. Among the families was brother Fletcher and his family.

During this meeting we decided that a church could be started there. A lot was purchased with a small dwelling on it which was converted into a place of worship. This little building was used for about two years. At first, services were held in the evening. A few of us from Pine Grove and a few from Cartersville could take a part in helping them. By this time I had seen that I could never be happy living where there was no peace, so we decided to sell the little farm and move to Fairmount. We found a house and moved in March, 1957. During the year we built a church building.

Work was scarce in Fairmount. The greater part of my paint work was in Jasper, Georgia, so we decided it would be better if we lived near Jasper. Soon a place was located which seemed to suit us and we bought it. We rented out our house in Fairmount and moved to Jasper in July, 1959. We were again in debt \$5800. But we worked hard raising chickens and I kept up my paint work. Soon we were out of debt.

Now our greatest problem was worship. We continued to go to Fairmount and worship with the brethren there. For six years we would drive eighty miles a week to church and the highway was very crooked and dangerous. When we first came to Jasper there was no Church of Christ there. There were a few families who came from Florida to spend the summer around Jasper and they would worship with us at Fairmount.

About four years ago we all decided to start a congregation in Jasper. When the preacher came, we Fairmount brethren learned that these Florida brethren were anti-orphans home brethren. There was so much difference between us that we could not go along with them. They rented a building in Jasper and started worship there but we continued to drive to Fairmount.

On December 16 we had a business meeting in which brother Dewey Medlin and I met with the anti brethren of Jasper and tried again to work out a plan by which we could be united. We offered to limit our support of the orphan homes, Herald of Truth, colleges, etc. to individual donations and refrain from supporting these from the church treasury. This offer was rejected. They refused to support any home that would accept from churches. This ended all hope for unity in Jasper. Several times in the past years we have met to discuss unity but they will not allow us liberty that the Bible allows.

On April 3 we held our opening service for a true Church of Christ in the Youth Recreation building in Jasper. Brother James R. Lundy from the Avondale congregation in Atlanta did the preaching. The meeting was well attended with visitors from several congregations. Plans were made for a full time preacher. The responsibility for his support was accepted by the Trion, Georgia congregation. Brother C. T. Kidwell was the preacher chosen for this work. Brother Kidwell is a man of ripe age and one with much experience. He arrived in Jasper May 16 and delivered his first sermon. Certain problems arose and at the end of six months, brother Kidwell decided to change places and moved to Pisgah, Alabama.

Soon after the leaving of brother Kidwell, brother Bill Hardin and brother Earl Barfield from the Marietta church began to assist brother Dewey Medlin and myself for around two years. Brother Richard Holbrook from Marietta also did some preaching. In the fall of 1968, brother Broome who preaches for the Canton church of Christ was out holding a meeting in Oklahoma and came in contact with Donald Musgrave a young preacher just out of Sunset School of Preaching about a year. He was looking for a place to locate to do the Lord's work. Brother Broome recommended the work here at Jasper to him. The work here was taken up before the Okmulgee church of Christ in Oklahoma and they agreed to send him here to Jasper. He had already been working for them while looking for a place to locate. They agreed to support him here provided we would move him here and pay his rent and utilities. To this we agreed.

Houses were very scarce in Jasper but we finally found one which was not very desirable. In February, 1969, Don, his wife Dona and their two children, Cindy and Don, Jr. arrived here and began his work here as a full time preacher for the Northside congregation. During the year of 1969 we managed to build a nice three bedroom brick home for the preacher to live in. We now have the house completely paid for and have begun to pick up some of the support of the preacher. The church is very happy with them and the work they are doing. Some progress is being made and some setbacks have occurred. We are looking forward to greater progress in the future.

As I close out this section of this book of memories, you can see that I am acquainted with sorrow, hardships and sacrifices which also belong to all pioneer preachers before me. But if you will continue to read this little book you will see that it is true that we have come a long, long way. May God's blessings be with all you good people. Let us strive to be among that number when the saints go marching in.

"And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

PART TWO

CHAPTER ONE

"SOME OF THE PIONEER PREACHERS"

PART II

CHAPTER 1

"SOME OF THE PIONEER PREACHERS"

There are not many people living that had the privilege of meeting and hearing our oldest pioneer preachers. As I had this privilege, I take the pleasure of passing on to the reader some things concerning their lives and work which they did with the church of Christ near its beginning in North Georgia.

UNCLE JOHNNY PAYNE

We will begin with Uncle Johnny Payne as everyone called him. When I first knew Uncle Johnny, he was very old and getting tottery. He had a cancer in the corner of his mouth which hindered his speech from being plain. He and Aunt Sarah, his wife, always went in a top buggy driven by a red horse.

They had a lovely pet dog, Spot. He followed the buggy everywhere it went. Spot went to church. If Uncle Johnny preached, Spot would lie in front of the pulpit. If he sat down in front, Spot lay at his feet. Once Spot was missing from home a few days and they were very much worried about him. But one Sunday while Uncle Johnny preached, Spot came in and took his place before the pulpit. When Uncle Johnny saw him, he pointed at Spot and said, "Thar's Spot!"

I heard a man say that while the little log church house was standing that he and some other boys went to Pleasant Hill one Sunday. There was no one there but Uncle Johnny and he was down praying. They went in, sat down for a while, got up, and went out while he was still praying. They said Uncle Johnny never knew they had been there.

Uncle Johnny and Bill Cagle, a Baptist preacher, were always debating. Uncle John would go to Bethany where Mr. Bill preached and

get up on the front seat. When Mr. Bill said something out of line, Uncle John would hold up his hand and cross his fingers at Mr. Bill. Uncle John was well known and stood firm for the truth.

BROTHER JIM LAND

Brother Land was getting old when I first remember him. He wore a long beard. I can just see him as he stands in the pulpit. He talked a little slow. He and sister Land always came to church in a buggy. When they came it was time to start the worship.

I heard him tell my father about a horse trade he made. He said that he was riding along when he met a stranger riding a good looking horse. He stopped him and asked him for a swap. "How will you trade and neither of us ask any question?" The man made him an offer and they swapped. He said that was the best swap that he ever made.

I've heard brother Land tell about going up in the mountains somewhere to preach and hold meetings. He said at the end of the year some sister gave him a pair of knit socks. This was all he received for his preaching. Many times when I was hardly paid, I would think of brother Land and that I was better paid than he.

BROTHER DAVE ANDERSON

Brother Dave Anderson, who lived at Ludville, served the church at Pleasant Hill and held several meetings there. He also was getting up in years as I first remember him. He traveled horse back or in a buggy. His route was across the Henderson Mountain. At that time the road was very steep and rough. Brother Dave had a soft voice and he seemed so kind and humble. Many times when he took the stand to preach, he would sing by himself the song of "The Wayfaring Stranger." He was a good singer and when he finished the song, people were wiping tears from their eyes. Friends, if I were to see people doing that now days, I would be tempted to ask them what was wrong. People, what is wrong???

Brother Dave preached lots on the subject of repentance. One time he used it for three times on a straight line. One man asked him why he did that. His answer was, "They haven't all repented yet."

Once while brother Anderson was preaching there was much disorder in the house. He stopped preaching for a bit and then began singing, "What will you do when the meat gives out, sit in the corner with your lips stuck out?" But this time all was quiet and he continued his preaching. Brother Dave did much good work among all the churches in this part of North Georgia and had many friends here.

BROTHER COLUMBUS GOODSON

Brother Goodson was also from around Ludville. He served the Pleasant Hill congregation a few times and held some meetings there. In the summer of 1912 I was baptized by brother Goodson. I heard my father speak of him when he was a young preacher. In that day it was a custom that all the congregations would meet together once a year. This was called the annual meeting. Brother Goodson was selected to deliver the opening sermon. During the course of his lesson he wandered off his text so far that when he wished to take it up again, he had forgotten it. Quite astonished he turned to someone and asked, "Brethren, what was my text?" I can imagine his feelings as I have had my memory fail me a few times.

He also did much work among all the congregations through this part. After his wife died, he moved down near Atlanta somewhere and married again. He and his last wife visited Ludville Church. He did the preaching for me that day. This was the last time I saw him. Sometime later I heard of his death.

EPHRUM PRESLEY

Brother Presley was a young man. He had a wife and two children. At the time of his death, brother Ephrum was well known for the pranks he would play on people. His mother and father would lodge travelers many times. A drummer was spending the night there once when Ephrum was about grown. He was asked to build the fire in company's room. When the fire was built, Ephrum placed two or three pods of strong pepper in the fire and went out. It wasn't long till the drummer was coughing and sneezing. Sister Presley thought the man was taking cold. She was doctoring him by giving him all kinds of tea.

Brother Ephrum died while young. I cannot remember much about his preaching. He met his death while working at a sawmill near his home.

BROTHER CICERO PRESLEY

Brother Cicero was a brother to Ephrum. I bear his name sake. I still remember the little striped waist which he gave me for a present. He lived all his life in our community. He was the best neighbor and good around the sick bed.

Brother Cicero did much preaching at Pleasant Hill as well as at other congregations. He and brother George R. Miller were holding a meeting in Gilmer country when he became hoarse. He never did regain his voice until he took T.B. and only lived a short time. He died about 1918.

BROTHER GEORGE R. MILLER

Brother Miller came from Gilmer county around 1915. I spent much time with him. I enjoyed talking about the scriptures and he enjoyed helping me. He was the first visitor to spend the night with Cleo and me when we moved out to ourselves. Cleo was then a Baptist. She listened to brother Miller and me talk that night. I guess it was the conversation that helped her make up her mind to be added to the church.

Brother Miller was present to hear my first two sermons. At the close of my second lesson, the tears could be seen running down his cheeks. He arose from his seat and said, "Brethren, he is ready for ordination."

He was a great help in my first preaching. I hadn't been preaching long until one day he asked me, "Do you wish to be popular among the people as a preacher, or do you desire to just have the truth?" I said, "I just want the truth." Then he advised me to subscribe for the Firm Foundation paper which was published in Austin, Texas by the people of the church of Christ. He said they were a firm crowd. This I did. It converted me from the Christian church and was the only schooling I had. It also converted my father but he never had the opportunity to unite with the church of Christ.

I heard brother Miller tell about a horse trade he made one time. He was on his way to hold a meeting. He was riding a small but a good little mule when he met one of the deacons riding a fine looking horse. The deacon asked him for a swap. No," said brother Miller, "I'll never be able to own a horse like that one." But the deacon said, "Well, brother Miller, I have never helped you any for your preaching and I'll just do it in the swap. I'll just swap even with you."

Brother Miller changed and started on his journey beating and whipping the horse. He said that he thought he would never get to his journey's end with the horse and that he was beat out of a good mule. I guess this deacon was like lots of deacons today. He was a little short on his qualifications as a deacon.

Brother Miller was visiting his son in Texas and the people around there learned he was a preacher and asked him to preach some. The church was a Baptist church. In those days they were not so particular with their pulpit as they are now days. After preaching a few nights, some old man met him at the church early and told him to close out his meeting that night and accused him of being a Campbellite. As he began preaching, he removed the large church Bible from the pulpit and reached for his own Bible and said, "I'm sorry, I didn't know you had a Campbellite Bible here. I had been using it, but I'll just use mine tonight."

I'll never forget one incident he told me. He was traveling with brother Haynes under whom he learned to preach. There was a revival going on in the community. The children there where they spent the night were attending. A young man professed religion the night before and came home with the children. Brother Haynes had been told what the young man had said in his experience. Next morning as they were eating breakfast he said to the young man, "They tell me that you seen the Lord last night." "Yes," said the boy. "Well, how did he look?" asked brother Haynes. "Well, he was black-headed and had blue eyes," said the boy. Brother Haynes said, "Well, that is twice he has been seen since he left. John saw him and said he was white-headed, his hair white as wool, and his eyes as flaming fire. Now you say he is black-headed and blue-eyed. I wonder which one of you told the truth?"

BROTHER GORDON KELLY

Brother Kelly from Atlanta did a lot of preaching at Pleasant Hill. He was a rapid speaker and very interesting. At first he had much action in the pulpit. He would run backward, then forward, and then run his fingers through his hair. It was interesting to watch him.

One summer brother Brindel from below Atlanta was visiting the meeting at Pleasant Hill. After preaching, brother Brindel asked brother Kelly if he ever preached where they had electric lights. "Oh, yes," he said. Brother Brendel then asked, "Did they ever go out?" "Oh, yes," said brother Kelly. Brother Brindel then said, "It's a wonder you hadn't broken your neck!"

BROTHER W. H. HOWARD

Brother Howard was from Blackwell, Georgia. He was a large, strong man. He hadn't been preaching long when he first came visiting Pleasant Hill. Brother Howard spent around eight years off and on with us at Pleasant Hill. It was brother Howard that got me started to preaching.

I learned that brother Howard had been reading of the church of Christ and I talked to him concerning our change over. I insisted that we both come out of the Christian church together and use all our influence to try to change the whole church over as he, at that time, had a good influence over the brethren there. But he would not. Later he moved to Fannin county where he stayed about two years and preached for all the congregations of the church of Christ in that part. Brother Howard, a faithful old soldier of the cross, died near Atlanta, Georgia.

BROTHER LEMUEL (LIM) MOSS

Brother Lim lived near Ludville as long as I knew him. The first time I remember seeing him he and brother Itmas Barrett came to Pleasant Hill and did a week's preaching for us. The most of his preaching was at the Bethel congregation. He served the church there many years.

BROTHER CHARLEY JONES

Brother Jones is a preacher that I have heard about by several of the old brethren. I never did meet him. He had the name of being very smart in the scriptures and he might have played a great part in the starting of several of the congregations in North Georgia.

It was brother Charley that met a Primitive Baptist preacher in a debate in Gilmer county once. In that debate, brother Charley quoted John 3:5 where Jesus said except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. But the Baptist preacher answered him by saying that water there didn't mean water -- that it could as well mean wind. During the rest period brother Jones went to the old preacher and said, "Brother, let's go out to the spring and get us a good drink of wind."

Brother Charley was the first preacher remembered by our oldest brethren around the Boardtown church of Christ. He could have aided in the starting of the Macedonia church of Christ.

BROTHER JIM PORTER

Brother Porter of Fannin county was one among our oldest preachers. When I was very small he came to Pleasant Hill and held meetings. He was also known around Ludville and Bethel churches in their early years. He was well known for his conversations on the streets and around the courthouse. He was fearless and always willing to uphold the truth. Brother Porter was still living when I moved to Fannin County and we had the privilege of working together in his last days.

BROTHER NORRIS

Brother Norris is an old preacher. I can remember his coming to Pleasant Hill. He was from Fannin county. He and brother Porter worked together. They could have helped start the Macedonia congregation. There was a little church up on Fighting Town Creek near the home of brother Porter. I only visited it once while I lived in Fannin county. They had ceased having services in it at that time.

"LEST WE FORGET..."

Brethren, it has been a pleasure for me to recall my acquaintance and friendship with these old preachers who made it possible for me to hear the truth. I wanted their names and their work to be on record. The things which I have had to say about each of them was said in the best of feelings. I am the youngest among them and my service is nearing the close; but I am looking forward to meeting them where there will be no more separations.

PART THREE

CHAPTER ONE

"SOME OF THE HISTORY"

PART III

CHAPTER 1

"SOME OF THE HISTORY"

PLEASANT HILL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

This church was organized in 1853. The land for the church was deeded to the church from William Sawyers. The first preacher to help organize the church is unknown, but it was probably either John Payne, Jim Land, or brother Adair from Adairsville.

The first members were brother and sister George Little, brother and sister John Payne, sister Jim Cantrell, brother and sister Jim Turner, brother and sister John Anderson, brother and sister Jim Land and others.

The first building was a small log cabin. I recently talked with a man who remembered going to church in it while it was still standing. It was later enlarged and weatherboarded. Recently it has been replaced by a brick building.

It was about 1900 or 1901 when brother John Meadows came to Pleasant Hill and did some preaching. During his preaching, my father was converted from the Baptist faith. Some time later he sent for Ephrum Presley to come and baptize him in the creek near our home. This I cannot remember clearly. People in those days were very prejudiced against what they called "Campbellites." There was much murmuring among my parents' people when Father was converted. Mother was very badly upset over it. She said, "Enoch, we are just ruined. Our people will have no more to do with us." But Father paid it no attention.

Our dwelling house was built with a chimney and an old fashioned fireplace which was in the front bedroom where Father and Mother slept. Every night before going to bed my father would read from his Bible, but Mother would go on to bed and play as if she was asleep. He would read aloud and explain the scriptures as if she was sitting near him. This went on for almost two years. One day Mother said, "Enoch, I have stood it as long as I can. I want to be baptized." She said, "I have been convinced for a long time that you were right, but was just too stubborn to admit it." So she was baptized.

There were Christian churches in Gilmer and Fannin counties, and three congregations in Pickens county at that time and there was no division among them. It was about 1925 that my attention was called to the division that had occurred in the brotherhood. Up until about 1906 instruments of music in worship were unknown. The first organ to be used in worship was installed in the Bethany Baptist Church in our community. All the people (especially the young folks) fell for it. Sister Emily Little, the best woman I believe I ever knew, and an awful good church worker, was awakened over the improvements of the singing with the organ. She thought we at Pleasant Hill should install one for the young folks to create more interest and compete with our neighbor church. Sister Little began at once to plead for the organ and was soon busy making up money to purchase one.

I can remember her going from house to house, driving old Charley the red horse in her buggy. I believe there was a box supper held in the church building to raise money to complete the amount to purchase the organ. Box suppers and entertainments have always been used as a means to raise money among the Christian churches. As far as I can remember there was only one member sharply opposed to the use of the organ and that was brother John Payne. He took a firm stand against it. The protracted meetings in those days were mostly two services a day - one service at eleven and the other at two in the afternoon with a spread dinner on the ground in between. After lunch all the preachers would gather in the shade of some trees and have a Bible conversation. Brother Payne was always on hand for this and his favorite subject was the organ. Brother Payne was without any need of help when he was giving his voice against the organ in the church. I can remember that he could never get the preachers to answer his questions. They outnumbered him and tried to outtalk him, but as long as brother Payne lived he stood against it.

About the same date the Ludville congregation began to use the organ and later it was used at the Bethel church. It was

accepted without any opposition until about 1925. We began to read and hear more about the division and it was about 1935 that I became fully convinced and took my stand with the church of Christ.

BETHEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

I began preaching for the Bethel congregation in 1923 and served it off and on until 1935. At the beginning of my work with Bethel, the building was very small and made of logs. Soon the house was enlarged and weatherboarding was put over the old logs which remained in the building. New benches were also made for the church.

This church dates back as far as 1856 according to the marker of Joseph R. Chastain which states his death as being on Feb. 20, 1912, after serving as an elder of the Christian Church for 46 years. This would date back as far as 1856. The oldest deed on record is land given from N. B. Barrett on August 20, 1879.

The preacher which helped to organize the church at Bethel is unknown, but it is believed to be one of these three preachers: brother Charley Jones, brother Dave Anderson, or brother Adair from Adairsville. The charter members were brother N. B. Barrett, brother and sister Singleton Prather, brother and sister John Pock, brother Billy Stone, brother and sister Azze Jackson and others.

The organ was not used in the church until around 1915 and then only on certain occasions was it used. This is where I held my first protracted meeting and baptized ten.

LUDVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The land for the New Liberty Church, which is now called the Ludville Christian Church, was deeded to the church on August 29, 1859 from Francis M. Forrester.

The charter members were Bedridge Kenny, William Kelley, Jasper Parker, Richard Kelley, Booker Gravely, John Holmes, preacher Dave Anderson, brother Charley Jones and probably others. Sister John Anderson, who was born in 1843 said that at the age of thirteen she was baptized at Ludville Christian Church by a preacher named Love. This would make the work of the church date back to 1856.

I served the church at different times between 1923 and 1935. Ludville was the home of brother Dave Anderson, brother Charley Jones, and brother Columbus Goodson, who served the church for many years.

BOARDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Shortly after the debate between brother Charley Jones and Mr. Jim Ellis near Boardtown around 1858, small congregations of the church of Christ began to be started in Gilmer county. One was organized at Chopped Oak a few miles south of where the Boardtown church of Christ now stands. A log building was built there but no deeds were given and when the property was sold the building was lost.

The members there were the families of John Sluder, Sam Pritchett, Pierson Sisson, a brother Orr and brother Key. There was another congregation at Boardtown Gap near the place where the church building now stands. Among the members worshiping there were: Mrs. Lillie Chatman, George Holloway, Bill Holloway, Nancy Ledford, Jossie Allen and others whose names we cannot recall.

The brethren from Chopped Oak were united with Boardtown Gap congregation until this property was lost because of a deed. The little school building which stood nearby was used for worship and school. I held some meetings there in 1935-36. Brother Romain Parnell from Atlanta also held meetings there. In 1943 brother Crete Samples from Cleveland, Tennessee, working with the brethren there, built a church building. Brother Hogan from Chattanooga held the first meeting in the new building.

In 1971 a new building was built in the gap near the cemetery. Boardtown church of Christ now has an attendance of around one hundred on Sunday mornings. This congregation for several years was greatly supported by brother George Holloway and brother John Thurman and their families. As to the preachers who started the old congregations we cannot be certain. But it is reasonable to think that brother Charley Jones continued to work in this section after his debate with Jim Ellis. Brother Jim Porter and brother Linn Norris continued the work in the surrounding counties for many years.

MACEDONIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

In my search for a beginning of the church in Fannin county, I can find no evidence of a church of Christ being in Fannin or Gilmer counties prior to the Jones and Ellis debate which was

held in the Boardtown section in Gilmer County. The exact date of this debate is not known, but is believed by the writer to have been in the late 1850s. I talked to two men, brother George Holloway and his brother who were at the debate, and neither of them could remember the gospel being preached in that section before this debate. It has been stated by old settlers of Fannin county that at the time of this debate there was a Primitive Baptist church at Macedonia and it was converted over to the church of Christ by the debate. This could very well be true.

The record of Macedonia begins with brother James Land whose age dates back to 1812. He died in 1881. As the first owner of the land given to the church, brother Land will always be in the record book. The property later became the property of brother Kincaid as there were no deeds given until 1878. There has been three buildings erected on the property. The first log building was burned and the next log building was still standing in 1935 when I moved to Macedonia. This log house was used for a schoolhouse and church until around 1912 when a schoolhouse was built and the log house was used only for church purposes. In 1936 the old log house was removed and a frame house or building replaced it, which now remains.

As to the preacher that organized the first congregation it is not certain as we have already stated. It could have been Charley Jones or, as James Porter and Linn Norris were the oldest preachers in that part, it could have been them. The oldest members were James Land, the Kincaids, Tom Berry and probably James Porter and others whose names we cannot recall. This congregation is still active and thanks to brother Reed Hembree, who has done much to preserve the truth there and to keep the fire burning.

WILSCOTT CHURCH OF CHRIST

Wilscott congregation was near the home of Robert Raulston, on the head of the Blue Ridge Lake. The first building was a log house, but when I first knew it a framed building had replaced the old one. My only visit to Wilscott was in 1916. A Baptist preacher by the name of Lon Davis had come through that section and challenged the brethren at Wilscott for a debate. He pretended to be young in the ministry.

Brother Robert Ralston sent for brother George Miller who was then living in our community. Brother Miller asked me to accompany him in this debate. Brother Miller was very much surprised when he learned that Davis was a real learned man and a professional debater. Brother Miller had not prepared himself to

meet such a man and the debate was dismissed until a later date. It was continued in Pickens county in the Pleasant Hill Christian Church building.

In 1931 when the water from the lake covered the church property, the house had been moved to higher ground near the cemetery and services ceased to be carried on there. Later the building was given to Macedonia and used there in the building that is now used for worship. Brother Hains, brother John Meadows and brother George Miller was believed to have started the Wilscott congregation.

FIGHTING TOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Fighting Town community was about 5 or 6 miles west from Macedonia. I was there once during my stay at Macedonia in 1936. I preached there that day at the decoration. I am told that the decoration of the old cemetery is still carried on each year. But no regular services have been held there for many years.

This was a community church, as in those days transportation was slow, roads were bad and weather was a problem. People worshipped close to home in those days. Several people lived in the Fighting Town Community whose names are still remembered. There was a preacher named John Sluder, Linn Norris, Sam Stanley, a brother Jones and James Porter. It is possible that this congregation was started by brother Sluder and brother Jim Porter. While the congregation there ceases to exist, the fruits of their labor live on and we should never forget that it was these old Christians that preserved the truth for us. Let us strive to pass it on to others.

BLUE RIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Around the date of 1947 the Maryville church of Christ sent brother Walker to Blue Ridge to start a congregation there. There were a few members then living in Blue Ridge. There were also some from Midway that aided in this work. The upper room of the drug store on the corner near the railroad crossing was used for a place of worship. But for some reason the work failed to prosper and was dismissed.

Around 1942 a congregation was started at Hemptown by the Raulston brothers and it continued until 1965. At this time the brethren at Hemptown, Stanley Creek, Midway and some from Macedonia decided to consolidate and start a congregation in Blue Ridge. The Ralph Kinser property on the south side of town on

Highway 5 was purchased and a tent was used for a meeting. Soon a nice meeting place was erected and everything was ready. The work started with about 65 members. Brother Edsel Hughes held the first meeting in the new building and brother Warner Holloway was the evangelist for at least the first year.

Blue Ridge is now in its seventh year and has grown to a regular attendance of 165. Brother Leland Rodgers is now serving as evangelist and the future outlook is very good.

DIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST

Dial is near the northeast corner of Fannin county, near 70 miles from home in Pickens County. The roads were not good then and many not paved. Dial was on the Toccoa River. It was quite a cool place and an ideal place to enjoy a week's stay for a meeting. Many old pioneer preachers enjoyed their stay at Dial. Dial was blessed with brethren that could make you feel welcome. As I look back to Dial over the past 40 years, those past visits seem as of yesterday and my eyes are filled with tears.

Brother Verge Woody, sister Davenport, sister Vanzanct, brother Liss Stanley and the Weeks family were wonderful people. The building in use in my day was a school house and a church house until a school house could be built. Later the old building was burned. Now there is a church building where the old building stood. Dial has lost many of its faithful members. We hope that the young members at Dial will continue to keep the Lord's work going there.

PISGAH CHURCH OF CHRIST

The old Pisgah church building stood a short distance behind the new building. For several years meetings were held in the Big Creek School House between the homes of brothers Joe and Jason Stanley. Brother Howard did some preaching there a few years before me. It was around 1938 when I first visited this community.

Around 1945 a new building was erected near the cemetery. The building has been enlarged and at this writing Pisgah meets each Lord's Day with around 50 in attendance. Pisgah is being served by different preachers each Sunday. But much interest can be seen at Pisgah.

MCCAYSVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

McCaysville is near the Tennessee line at Copperhill. When I first learned of this congregation it was a Christian church.

They used the organ in their worship. My first visit to McCaysville was in 1935. Brother Howard from Blackwell, Georgia was preaching there at the time. He was engaged in a debate with a Holiness preacher. He sent for me to be his moderator in this debate. It was then that I met brother Claude Duncan and brother Tom Bailey who were the elders there at that time.

Brother Duncan was telling me how they managed to dispose of the organ. He said at first they rolled it to one side and worshipped without it for a while. Then they moved it from the building. Brother Duncan's father was a gospel preacher but had passed on. I heard of his work from several old people and he must have been one of the first to preach the gospel at McCaysville.

I visited McCaysville many times while I lived in Macedonia and enjoyed their fellowship very much. Brother Claude was a good gospel preacher and a special friend of mine. He preached my wife's and my son's funerals. The Duncan family, along with others I could mention, has meant so much to me and especially the McCaysville church.

The first building was a small frame building upon the bank of a very unhandy place to enter. But for a few years now they have moved to a better location and have a nice building. The memories of the McCaysville church are still sweet and will be till we meet again where that fellowship will be forevermore.

ELLIJAY CHURCH OF CHRIST

The correct dates concerning the starting of the church in Ellijay are uncertain to me. Brother Willie Lemmons from Dalton, Georgia held the first meeting there. It was a tent meeting. I was present at that meeting. I had just moved back from Lindale, Georgia. This was in 1945.

Following this meeting a few members met in the courthouse for a short time. They then moved to Logans Funeral Home for about a year, I believe. A building was constructed on Main Street which was soon outgrown. In 1963 some property was purchased on Dodge Street and a \$30,000 building was soon erected. At this time they have around 100 members (1972). They are self-supporting and one of the promising congregations of North Georgia. Brother Joseph Pettit is serving them as their evangelist. Work there is on the go!

STANLEY'S CREEK CHURCH OF CHRIST

As I am only giving a brief history of the starting of these churches which I have served or worked among, it will not be possible to go into great detail. I have before me some information gathered by brother Lawrence Stanley from his father Jason and grandfather, David Stanley, and his great uncle, Clell Stanley. With his permission I am using some statements which I could not give otherwise. I understand that he will write a book giving details.

When James Ellis, the great-grandfather of Lawrence Stanley, came home from the war (which ended in 1964), he began to organize Primitive Baptist churches in Gilmer and Fannin counties. One in Gilmer County at Pisgah and one at Stanley's Creek and one at Macedonia in Fannin county. Some time later, brother Charley Jones, a church of Christ preacher, came to Fannin county preaching the gospel of Christ and challenged Ellis, the Primitive Baptist preacher, to a debate. It was accepted and held according to the record on the Macedonia church property. According to my information it was held in Gilmer county near Boardtown. But this is not important. People were there from all over these churches and heard this debate. When preacher Ellis went down in defeat, all these churches were turned over to the church of Christ.

The first building at Stanley's Creek was a log building. I remember seeing the old decayed logs. I held meetings near it in the little school building. It was later moved over to the Stanley Cemetary on the Toccoa River.

John Meadows, a young preacher from Johnson Bible College, was among the first preachers they had there. He died in Pickens county in 1900 with T.B. George R. Miller was also active in Fannin county at that time. He died in the Old Soldiers' Home in Tennessee around 1929. Preacher Hains was among the oldest as brother Miller said he learned to preach under brother Hains. All of these along with Charley Jones was probably the ones who got the churches going in these two counties.

PART FOUR

CHAPTER ONE

"SOME OF THE CHANGES"

PART IV

CHAPTER 1

"SOME OF THE CHANGES"

There have been a lot of changes in 65 years. When I was young we would often sing a song titled: "Just Look How This World Has Made A Change." My grandfather would often mention this by saying, "The world has changed so much." What would our grandfathers say if they could see the changes which have occurred during the last 65 years?

I get much pleasure these days looking back and reviewing the past and comparing the changes with today. In this little article I wish to state some of the most interesting changes. You might enjoy reading some of them.

FASHIONS OR MANNER OF DRESS

We will begin with the year of 1903. My mother as well as all other women her age wore dresses which I refer to as "sweepers." Anyway, they would drag on the ground around eighteen inches to two feet behind them. When just a child, I would sometimes step on the dragging skirt until I learned that this wouldn't work. During dusty or muddy weather, women would gather up their skirts and hold them out of the mud.

One thing you didn't see in those days that haunts us so today is those bony knees. If by an accident a girl happened to expose her knees, her face would blush with shame. But today when most all her body is exposed there seems to be no shame with lots of them. They should read I Timothy 2:9-10 where Paul said: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works."

Women in my young days never appeared before men with men's pants on. This was also a shame. They were taught to respect God's Word as it is recorded in Deuteronomy 22:5 - "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." Among the great changes there can be none greater than the change or manner in which women dress themselves. The extreme seems to have reached in both directions - both up and down!

Another great change concerning women's dressing is hats. At church you never did see a woman without a hat on her head. She was also taught to respect Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 11:5-6, "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered."

Another great shame was for a woman to have her hair cut. I can remember when bobbed hair became the fashion among girls. When this happened in my father's family, it grieved him as if there had been a death in the family.

Preachers today have become silent on these things as they have on other things such as mixed swimming pools and moving pictures. Some religions have even accepted the modern dance along with these things. I can remember when all denominations would call their members in question or withdraw from them for taking part in the dancing of that day.

It seems that the preachers today have ignored Paul's teaching in Galatians 5:16-21. Among the sins listed in this scripture as "works of the flesh" is the "sin of lasciviousness and such like" which includes any act or game which stimulates the sexual nature of man or woman. We all know that there is nothing better to do than the modern dance. But Paul hasn't changed his teaching on the subject. He still says that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom. It's up to you.

COURTSHIP

When I was too young to court the girls, there was a custom which was very strictly followed. This was when a boy carried his sweetheart to church, they separated when they entered the door. He was seated on the left side with the men and she was seated on the right with the women. Oh, how people would stare at a couple who broke this custom. When worship was over they would reunite

at the door. If some boy wished to catch him a girl friend, he would wait for her on the outside. He would step up to her, tip his hat, and ask if he could see her home. If she said, "No," you should see his face when we all laughed at him. This was called "getting your leg broke."

TRANSPORTATION

Walking was most popular in courtship. Very few boys were able to own a horse and buggy. If a boy could, he would be called lucky. The girls seemed to fall for him.

I attended several churches during my courting days. Some were as much as five miles from home. During big meetings, I would walk the five miles to church to get with my girl friend, walk home with her, which was about three extra miles, then walk eight miles home. I had plenty of time to digest every word which was said during our stay together.

There were no cars in the country at that time. Just before I was married, I walked with my girl friend two miles to meet a boy who owned a car. He carried my girl friend and me for our first car ride - thirty miles per hour! This made our heads swim. This was a great day in our lives.

I can look back to childhood. We often stood in the church yard and watched the people gather for worship. Some came walking, some on horses, and some came in wagons drawn by mules or oxen. There were few buggies. There were a few of the best "livers" who came in a two-seated buggy called a "hack" or "serry." They were drawn by two mules or horses. People seemed to take special notice to them. We would wonder if ever we could afford such a way of transportation.

The corpses in those days were carried to the cemetery in wagons. Very few were able to have their dead embalmed. Many times when they reached the church building for the funeral service they were in too bad a shape to be opened. I was almost grown when we were served with a hearse. This was something wonderful. I will compare my feelings with a very poor family of which the father died. His coffin was a homemade one but looked nice. After the father had been placed into it, one of the sons said as he looked at it, "I would like to be put in a pretty box like that." The hearse looked so nice it almost made me want to ride in one.

RECREATION

There has been a great change in recreation during all these years. Our pasttime had to be spent near home as we had no cars or ways of getting far from home. Singings on Saturday night and Sunday night were enjoyed. Ball games, pitching horse shoes and playing marbles were also enjoyed.

In the fall after all cotton was picked except the cracked boles, we would pull the boles and call in our neighbors for a cotton picking at night. After all the boles were picked, a room was vacated and young people would enjoy all kinds of games.

When corn was gathered and put in one pile under the crib shelter, people were invited to a corn shucking. A lot of young people would meet. Boys would shuck corn with their girl friends. At night the young would again enjoy their games.

Box suppers were very common those days. Girls would dress up a shoe box most beautiful and fill it with good food. It was put up and bought by the highest bidder. We boys who had a girl friend lived hard. We would pay a nice price for the box because whoever bought that box was supposed to take her home. We could not bear to see another boy going home with our girl friend. After supper, if more money was needed to meet the need, two of the most popular girls were chosen and were run as the prettiest girl. Votes were one cent each. After that, two men were run as the ugliest man. In these races we had fun and gave all we had to win our choice.

HABITS

There has been a great change in the habits of people during the past 65 years especially among those of Pickens and Cherokee counties.

Smoking in my first recollection belonged mostly to our grandmothers and grandfathers. A pipe was made of clay with a cane joint for the stem or from a corn cob. Pure strong home raised tobacco was all the kind they smoked. Very few people today would enjoy such smoking. You seldom ever saw young men smoke and no teenagers, period! At that time it was against the law to sell cigarettes to minors. I was in my teens when cigarettes came into fashion. Young men would often give me a puff to see me lose my breath.

It was several years after I married before I first saw a girl smoke. This was looked upon by most people as a disgrace

among women. I never did get over it. I still think it was and is a bad mark for a lady.

When I was five years of age, my grandfather taught me to chew tobacco. It was fun for him to see me spit. Habits usually like company. As I spent much time with him, he furnished me tobacco for several years.

Chewing tobacco and using snuff have always been filthy habits, but they are handled much better today. Sixty-five years ago men and women would use their tobacco and snuff during preaching and would spit on the floor - usually against the wall. In places you had better watch your step lest your feet slip out from under you. In store houses, men would sit around the heater, chew, and spit the way their face was turned.

I am glad that I overcame this filthy habit after fifty years as a user. I heard a man ask a little boy one time why he chewed tobacco. His answer was: "To get the juice out of it!" Well, I think I juiced my part of it sixteen years ago.

Boys, don't tell me that you can't quit. I smoked, chewed, and used snuff. I quit all of it and so can you. You are wasting your money, depriving your self and family of many things which they really need. For a reward as a faithful user you receive cancer or bad health. Many times it causes people to be separated from their families in death before they would have had they never used it. Girls, be a lady. Stay free from habits. Encourage your boy friends to live a clean life free from such habits.

PART FIVE

CHAPTER ONE

"SOME OF MY SERMONS"

PART V
CHAPTER 1
"SOME OF MY SERMONS"

"THE THREE BUILDERS"
(Matthew 7:26-27)

Notice the reading of our text:

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

Friends, our investments may be little, or we may invest everything earned in this life in a good home. But if it is built upon the sand, it is all lost.

The same is true with our spiritual building. If we use poor judgment and carelessly build upon something that is not truth - then when the test comes - all will be lost. This is clearly seen in these three builders in our lesson. These men were all deceived in their thinking. God gave us a mind with which to think and gave us the privilege to use it as we please. But many times he has taught us that we can think to our own hurt; that we should take heed HOW and WHAT we think.

NAAMAN

Our first builder is Naaman, the leper. We learn of him and his building in 2 Kings 5. When Naaman learned that there was a prophet in Samaria that could heal the leprosy, he was very much pleased. First, he consulted the King, and with his blessings, preparations were being made for the journey to Samaria. Men and chariots, silver and gold and many changes of raiment were prepared. And they were off.

We know as Naaman's life was at stake that his mind was looking forward to the success of this journey and just WHAT or HOW things would be carried out. Naaman had much to his advantage, he thought. He was a captain in the king's army. This gave him rank. He was recommended by the king. This was no small thing. He was rich in that he was qualified to pay an honorable reward. With these advantages, Naaman built up a great imagination.

No doubt but what he thought the prophet would greet him with a salute of honor, and then proceed with some honorable ceremony - waving his hand over him and in this way he would be healed. Naaman was greatly deceived. He was just the character Paul had in mind in Galatians 6:3, when he said: "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

When Naaman reached the place, his rank was not noticed. He found no special honor from the prophet as he came not out to see him. Even his recommendation from the king was not noticed and no special ceremony recited over him. So great was the fall of his imagination that he turned away in a rage. All he could say was: "I thought..."

The remedy seemed awful to Naaman. "Think of a man of my standing, going to a muddy river and going to all the trouble to dip myself seven times." This, he, at first, could not accept until his servant remarked: "Naaman, how much rather go dip and be healed?" In other words, "Now, Naaman, forget your own way, your imagination and accept God's remedy and be healed." When Naaman rebuilt upon God's commands and obeyed them, all was well. Friends, are you willing to do as Naaman did - lay aside what you think and do as God has commanded? Do this and your house will stand.

SAUL

Our next builder is Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:26. Saul was

also a man of high rank among his people. He was a highly educated man and a man in whom Jesus saw something great - and that was determination. Saul had also built a great house. But he had not built upon his own imagination as Naaman did. Saul had been deceived by the vain words of men.

Probably this was what was in his mind when he wrote Ephesians 5:6 - "Let no man deceive you with vain words." Saul had heard much concerning the man Jesus, but his testimony had come from the wrong source. He had believed the report made in Matthew 28 by those who were placed as a watch over the tomb of Jesus. They said that while they slept, Jesus' disciples came and stole his body away. Saul fully believed this report. This made Jesus in his mind an impostor. Saul hated this new doctrine concerning Jesus and his resurrection. He had taken a great hand in trying to overthrow it. For some time he had been forcing men and women into prison and he had also consented to the death of Stephen.

We find Saul's house fully completed as he went on his journey to Damascus. But when he saw that great light and heard the voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And when he heard the voice say, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest", Saul, with all his hopes, confidence, and imaginations, went down. So great was the fall of Saul's building, he could only say, "I verily thought..." (Acts 26). He had honestly built upon false testimony. But his honesty was no protection to the foundation upon which he had built. Jesus has said all that is built upon the sand will fall. Friends, consider the testimony upon which you are building. The fall is too great to suffer.

DAVID

Our next builder is David. David was a man after God's own heart. But he did some building upon the sand. His was not upon imagination as was Naaman, nor upon false testimony as was that of Saul. But his building was upon pure carelessness. David was like many today. He seemed to think any way was okay or that one way was as good as another. To learn of David's troubles you may read I Chronicles chapters 13 and 15.

When David was appointed king of Israel, the ark of the covenant had been stolen and placed in the hands of other people. David wished to restore it back to the temple in Jerusalem. Without consideration he used his own method of doing the job. He selected his own men, supplied them with an ox cart and went after it. As they journeyed with an ox car with the ark on it, the oxen stumbled and the ark was the in the act of falling.

Uzzah, one helping with the ark and cart, stayed the ark with his hand and fell dead.

They knew something was wrong. David was much displeased with Uzzah's death. The ark was unloaded and left for three months until an investigation could be made. When David investigated, he found that God had given special orders concerning the moving and handling of the ark. Certain men which were the sons of Ko-Hath were to care for the ark. They must carry it upon staves on their shoulders.

When David learned this, he confessed that the reason for the breach sent upon Uzzah was because they sought it not after God's order (I Chron. 15:13). God had commanded them not to touch the ark lest they die, for it was holy. But Uzzah was honest and ignorant of this. Still it didn't prevent God's word from coming true. When David carried out God's orders concerning the moving of the ark, all went well.

My friends, these lessons should teach us that our imagination, the testimony of men and carelessness even if done in all honesty are nothing but sand upon which, if we build, we will suffer loss.

OUR OWN BUILDING

In I Corinthians 10, Paul tells how many thousands of the Israelites fell in the wilderness and failed to enter the promised land. He said these were examples to us and written for our admonition. Then, turning directly to us, he said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (v. 12). "Let the thinker, who thinks all is well, consider the reason for so thinking lest he be wrong," is Paul's teaching. But people are not willing to believe Paul. They are made to think that redeemed men and women cannot turn back into sin and be lost.

Friends, from what source are you getting this conviction? Is it something you have imagined like Naaman, or has someone misapplied some scripture causing you to believe this or have you carelessly thought it is right because so many think it is okay?

Jesus and Paul's teachings are in perfect harmony. Hear Jesus in Matthew 13:20-21. Jesus tells us the seed sown is the word. The ground is the hearts of men. The stony hearts received the word (it germinated), sprang up, endured for awhile (until temptations and persecutions arose), then fell away.

Now hear Jesus again in John 15:5 - "I am the vine, ye are the branches..." Verse 6: "He that abideth not in me is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them and they are burned." Now the seed in the stony hearts came up. They failed to take heed and fell according to Paul's teaching (I Cor. 10:12; Matt. 13:20-21). They failed to abide in the vine according to what Jesus taught (Jn. 15:6). They became entangled again and overcome according to II Peter 2:20-22. They erred from the truth according to James 5:19. At Judgment, they will be gathered out of his kingdom and cast into a furnace of fire, according to Jesus in Matt. 13:41. With this teaching, friends, are you going to still continue your conviction that one cannot return into sin and be lost?

THE CHURCH

We hear just such reasoning concerning the church as many people believe that one church is as good as another. Friends, from what or from where do you gather such evidence? Are we judging from faith or from what we see?

Listen to Paul in 2 Cor. 4:18 - "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." In chapter 5:7 we read - "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

When we only judge the churches from what we see, such as...

- (1) They all claim to believe in God, Christ and the Bible.
- (2) They all visit the sick, feed the hungry, relieve the oppressed, support the widows and orphans, etc.
- (3) They all teach righteous living.
- (4) They all attend church worship - sing, pray and commune.
- (5) They all sacrifice of their money and time.
- (6) They all claim to be saved.
- (7) They all believe they are going to heaven when they die.

...then we could say, they all look alike. I see no difference.

Maybe as far as the building is concerned, they are all equally good. But what about the foundation upon which each is built? You can build as nice and costly a house upon the sand as you can upon a rock, but the more you invest the greater the

fall. If we build upon what we see, we are as the three builders: Naaman, Saul and David. We, too, are upon the sand. Faith, which comes from hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17), is the rock upon which to build. Jesus said in Jn. 8:32, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Peter said in I Pet. 1:22, "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth."

Now let's look at doctrine or truth which is the only foundation that God will recognize. Now, for one church to be as good as another, they must be equally wrong or all equally right. Let's illustrate this by Matt. 16:13. When Jesus asked his disciples, saying: "Who do men say that I the son of man am?" Some said he was John the Baptist, some Elias, and others said he was Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Now, was not one answer equally as good as the other? All will say, "Yes, for all are wrong!" But when Peter added his answer to the question and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God," were they all equally wrong? No! Also no longer was one counted as good as the other because one was right while all others were wrong.

Now we can understand how all but one can be equally wrong. And concerning them, we can truly say that one of them is as good as the other. But if there is one true church, and only one, as it taught in the scriptures ("My body" = the church - Matt. 16:18; one body - Eph. 4:4; the church = the body - Eph. 5:23), then there remains only one conclusion: All denominations constitute the one true church and each denomination represents a branch in John 15:5. This is what most people believe.

Let's see if this works out. QUESTION #1: Can each denomination teach a different doctrine (which all admit they do) and each one teach the doctrine of Christ at the same time? Who will say "yes" to this? Not one! QUESTION #2: Can all denominations teach different doctrines and preach the same gospel? The answer again is, "No!" QUESTION #3: Can all denominations teach differently and refuse to fellowship each other without causing division? The answer again is, "No!"

Now hear what the Bible says about such teaching. In 2 John 9-10, "Whosoever transgresses and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God; but he that abideth in the doctrine hath both the Father and the Son." Whether Jn. 15:5 refers to a denomination or an individual, the answer is the same. Hear Paul in Gal. 1:7-8 - "There be some that would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Paul again, in Rom. 16:17, says: "Now I beseech you

brethren, mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."

Friends, why do people make such foolish claims when the scriptures so plainly condemn such? My purpose in this lesson is to convince you that there is just one church. It only has one gospel which is one doctrine - the doctrine of Christ. All that causes division and offence by other teachings hath not God.

Maybe you will become interested, not to look up the church of your choice, but the one church which teaches and practices the doctrine of Christ. If you are interested in such investigation and I can be any help, please write me or invite me to your home.

SERMON #2

"REGENERATION"

(Matt. 19:28)

Friends, this is a lesson that all should understand, especially preachers. A failure to understand this verse has led to many errors from pulpits. There are five different thoughts expressed in this verse. Notice them as we read it:

- (1) Ye who have followed me;
- (2) In the regeneration;
- (3) When the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory;
- (4) Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones;
- (5) Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

As the regeneration is to follow the first four, we will notice them first one at a time.

{1} Who are the "ye" referred to here by Jesus (Lk. 6:13-16 and Matt. 10:1-4)? We have twelve men whom Jesus chose to be his apostles, and in Acts 1:16-26 we learn that each of these men was a follower of Jesus from his baptism until his ascension. Even in the conversation from which our text was taken Jesus was speaking to them and he referred to them as "ye." Now I believe everyone will agree that the promise contained in this verse was made to the twelve apostles.

{2} We must learn when Jesus was seated on his throne. According to Jn. 20:17, Jesus had not ascended back to his Father when talking to Mary at the tomb after his resurrection. From Acts 1:1-3 we learn that Jesus remained on earth after his resurrection. From Acts 1 we also learn it was for forty days before his ascension back to heaven. Acts 1:9 tells us of his

ascension and not until Peter in his first address to the people on Pentecost (which was fifty-three days after Jesus' death) did he declare Jesus to be at the right hand of God exalted (Acts 2:32-33). Now this alone teaches us there was no regeneration previous to his ascension, and if no regeneration, certainly there was no church or kingdom. No, not even a system of faith had been made known until the Holy Spirit made it known by Peter on Pentecost (Acts 2).

{3} In our text of Matthew 19:28, Jesus said that when he was on his throne in glory, that these twelve apostles would also be sitting upon twelve thrones. What is meant by the word "throne" or "thrones"? We cannot take these thrones to be twelve literal thrones, but the exalted positions to greater authority or power than others. Jesus was so exalted that Paul speaking of the power of God in Eph. 1:20-22 said: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and power and might, and dominion and every name that is to come."

So the twelve apostles were exalted by Jesus Christ above all other men on earth. These twelve were divinely called "(Lk. 6:12-13). They were the only chosen to be his witnesses on earth (Acts 1:8). They were baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4). They were divinely guided by the Holy Ghost (Jn. 16:13). They were reminded of all things that Jesus had taught them (Jn. 14:26). They were given power to perform miracles (Mk. 16:17-20; Heb. 2:1-4). They also had power to give spiritual gifts to others by laying on their hands (Acts 8:14-17; 19:5-6).

They were given the keys of the kingdom; the authority to offer an entrance into the kingdom upon certain conditions. They were promised by Jesus that what was bound on earth by them would also be bound in heaven (Matt. 16:18). They were ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:19-20). Jesus promised them that all that heard them would also hear him, and those that rejected them were rejecting him also. They that rejected Christ rejected him that sent him (Lk. 10:16). Friends, what greater exaltation ... what greater position ... what greater power could be given to men? It was at Jerusalem on Pentecost day that they were embued with power and began to judge the world.

{4} Judging the twelve tribes. How are the twelve apostles judging the world? Our first question to consider is: Has God ordained a standard by which all must meet on Judgment Day? Jesus says "Yes" in John 12:48-50. "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day."

This same John had the privilege of seeing this judgment scene in Rev. 20:12. Hear him: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened [the old and new testaments]. And another book was opened, which is the book of life [our book or record of our acts on earth]. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." The New Testament is the will or words of Jesus Christ which has been preached and recorded by inspired men of God. When Jesus said, "My word which I have spoken," it includes more than just what was spoken by him while he was on earth, but also what was spoken by his ambassadors after he returned to heaven.

Hear Paul or the writer of Hebrews 2:1-4, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him [the twelve apostles]. God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." Jesus also told his apostles in Luke 10:16, "Whosoever heareth you heareth me, and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me."

The Holy Spirit was to bring to their memory all things which Jesus had said unto them (Jn. 14:26), and guide them into all truth (Jn. 16:13). Jesus gave the apostles a message which they were to preach to every creature in all the world. This message was the gospel and this gospel was to save the world or condemn it. Mark 16:15-16 says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 5:19-20, "To wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." As ambassadors for Christ, they were his spokesmen, and spoke only the doctrine of Christ. John tells us this doctrine is judging today between those who have God and those who do not have God (2 Jn. 9-10). The words spoken by the twelve apostles not only judge the entrance into the kingdom, but also judge us while in the kingdom by our abiding in the doctrine of Christ which were delivered by the apostles. Yes, the eyes of the world and of angels and men are upon them (1 Cor. 4:9).

Paul also tells us when the law was removed. It "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:14). Jesus could see this new creation of God's law, the great changes that were about to take place, at his death. Let us consider some of these changes:

{1} The change of covenants spoken of by Jeremiah in 31:31 and by Paul in Heb. 8:8-13. Remission of sins is offered only in the new covenant.

{2} The priesthood was changed from an earthly priesthood to a heavenly Jesus Christ (Heb. 8).

{3} The sacrifice for sins was changed from animal blood to the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:1-19).

{4} The death of Jesus upon the cross fulfilled God's promise to Abraham (Heb. 2:9). Jesus tasted of death for every man. Now all nations have become equal -- all are under sin. All former relationships that the Jews had with God under the law of Moses were done away with. Justification and reconciliation to God must be through the blood of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-21). Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me (Jn. 14:6). Now we can understand why Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven (Jn. 3:5). He was lost. He, as the whole world, must become a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).

When, where and who were those first to be regenerated under the new system of regeneration?

First, it could not be before Pentecost (Acts 2:32-33)!

Second, it could not be anywhere else but Jerusalem. They were told to go there and wait there for the power to come. They were told to begin their mission of preaching repentance and remission of sins in his name at Jerusalem. Remission of sins is part of the new creation and Peter preached it first at Jerusalem on Pentecost. The results of that sermon - three thousand were regenerated or born of water and of the Spirit that day (Acts 2). What was the law of regeneration? "Unto the believer," Peter said. "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." My friends, have you been born again?

{5} We are now ready to take up our last point - the regeneration. The word means to "recreate or make anew." From what I read, as well as what I generally hear preached concerning regeneration, it is only applied to the new birth of water and Spirit (Jn. 3:5). But there is much more referred to than just the change of man. The grace of God always precedes the blessings derived from it. That is certainly true in this case. As Jesus was speaking to his apostles, he knew that this death

would signal a complete change of religious government -- from the law of works to the law of faith.

Paul makes this clear in Gal. 3:23-26 - "But before faith came, we were kept under the law; shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Paul also tells us the time and place of this great change in Col. 2:14 - "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." On the cross the old covenant died and the new covenant was brought in.

Read Jeremiah 31:31 and Hebrews 8:8-13. Notice the difference in the nature of the two covenants. Acts 13:38-39 says, "Be it known unto you therefore, Men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Hear Paul again in Romans 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now, before man can be justified, there must first be created a system by which man can be justified. This new creation, called the new covenant, or the new and living way (Heb. 10:19), brought about a complete change:

- (1) From tabernacle worship to church worship
- (2) A change of priesthood
- (3) A change of sacrifice
- (4) A change to better promises.

Now, when we look back to Jn. 3:5 and hear Jesus tell Nicodemus that he must be "born anew", we can understand why. His relationship as a child of God under the law or old covenant was to die. Paul in Gal. 3:22 said, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise of faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." The death of Christ made all men equal, Jews, Gentiles and Samaritans. None can become children of God now except by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).

Now, when did this new system of regeneration begin? This is easy to see. Jesus was on his throne on Pentecost, fifty-three days after the crucifixion (Acts 2:32-33). The apostles were exalted with power and guidance on this day (Acts 2:1-4). The gospel was first delivered in the name of Jesus Christ on that day. People were told what to do to be saved for the first time on that day. Also, the new system, which was faith,

repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, was given that day.

Three thousand obeyed and the Lord added them to the church that day. I would like to read Zach. 14:6-9 and see the picture he draws concerning this great day - the changing over from one covenant to the other. Listen to him: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark, but it shall come to pass, that at evening time, it shall light. And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea. In summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one." Peter declared this now to be true (Acts 2:36).

SERMON #3

"TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?"

(John 6:68)

Friends, this is among the greatest questions ever asked by man. Nothing can be more helpful to our understanding of the scripture than the correct answer to this question. Many of the disciples of Jesus walked away from Him to follow Him no more. Jesus then asked his twelve apostles if they also would go away. But Peter answered and said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

My friends, our eternal life depends upon us locating these words. We must know what they are and by whom we are to hear them. Paul admonished Timothy in II Tim. 4:14, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." The subject before us is the key to understanding the scriptures. Let us then consider the evidence of the scripture. We will notice some great men that God has used in the past and who we still remember today.

First, Abraham. As you know, Abraham is known for his faith. We look upon him as the Father of Faith. We learn in Gen. 17:4 that he was to be the father of many nations. We also learn from Matt. 3:9 that the Jews expected much in the way of benefits to come from being the seed of Abraham. It seems like they thought this was enough for them without the repentance and baptism taught by John. But John said to them, "And think not to say within yourself, we have Abraham to our father."

Nicodemus was also depending upon the seed of Abraham giving him the right to enter the kingdom. But in John 3:5, Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God." The fleshly birth only made

Nicodemus a child of God under the fleshly covenant. But it could not be sufficient for him to enter this spiritual kingdom of God's, for only the spirit-man can enter this kingdom. There must be a birth of the spirit-man, for that which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit (or the spirit-man)(Jn. 3:6). Not Abraham, nor his fleshly covenant could give to us the words of life. But through him we only receive Him who can give us the words of life - that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, Moses. Did Moses have the words of life? Moses was a chosen man of God (Ex. 3:4-10). His mission was to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and to lead them to their Promised Land - the land of Canaan. God also used Moses to deliver the Law which was to govern the children of Israel. This law is known as the law of Moses. It is also said to be our "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Gal. 3). This, of course, was speaking to the Jews. It was to last till Jesus became lord of lords. Christ replaced the law with his own will and his own blood (Gal. 3:19; Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:12). Nothing greater can be said about Moses than that he was known as a type of Christ. In Deut. 18:18 we hear the prophet say concerning Moses and Christ these words: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee [Moses] and will put my words in His [Jesus'] mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Peter quoted this in Acts 3:22-23 in reference to Moses and Christ.

As we learn, Moses failed to enter the Promised Land because of unbelief (Joshua 34). Friends, one thing we must keep in mind - the Law was given by Moses and could not justify (Gal. 3:11). Every leader and the work which he did is done under the Law of Moses until Jesus died upon the cross (Col. 2:14). This will include John the Baptist and Jesus during His personal work on earth until His death. Yes, Moses was known as a law giver, but not for giving the perfect law of liberty. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Third, John the Baptist. Did John the Baptist have the words of life? There was a man sent from God whose name was John (Jn. 1:6). We must not underestimate John and the work he was sent to do. The angel said, "And he shall be great in the eyes of the Lord." And he was. Matthew 11:11 says, "Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

John had the privilege of introducing Jesus to the world as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29). Many were willing to accept John as the Christ (Lk. 3:15; Jn. 1:25). John was sent to bear witness of Jesus. John 1:7 says, "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe." John was sent to prepare the way of the Lord (Mk. 1:3). John was to prepare a people for the Lord (Lk. 1:17). John had the privilege of baptizing Jesus and hearing the words of God as He proclaimed or endorsed Jesus to be His Son. Yes, friends, many great things can be said about John and the mission he was sent to do. These things we can all see and understand. So, friends, it is not what John was sent to do and what he did during his mission for the Lord that confuses people. But the confusion comes from what people think he did. Many give John credit for things which he did not do. These are the things I wish to call to your attention.

Before we can understand the scriptures we must rightly divide them as stated by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15. God has made two covenants to govern His people. Read Hebrews 8:7-13. The two covenants are known as the old and the new testaments, or as the law and the gospel ages. We must know when the first ended and where the new begins, as we cannot mix them nor work in both at the same time.

Some think because Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are called the New Testament that they belong in the New Covenant. But the Old Covenant, the Law of Moses, lasted until Jesus died on the cross. Paul makes this clear in Col. 2:14 - "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way nailing it to the cross." Hear Paul again in Gal. 3:23 - "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. We cannot be under the Law and under faith at the same time." Verse 24 - "Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith." Verse 25 - "But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster, or the Law."

But, friends, faith as a system of justification did not begin until Jesus was proven to be the Christ by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). Again Romans 10:9 says, "But if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." To come to the Father one must believe that he is alive, a risen Lord (Heb. 11:6). This faith could not exist before the

cross, neither was there any justification before the cross. So, as we review the work which John was sent to do, we find nothing he did that was contrary to the Law. There could be no changes, for Jesus said in Matt. 5:17-19, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, 'Til heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." This was after John's day and the Law still remained unfulfilled.

Now friends, will you agree that all John's work was done under the Law of Moses? If you should doubt this, read Luke 10:25 - "And behold a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" Verse 28 - "This do, and thou shalt live." Jesus was even teaching the law long after John's death.

Now friends, we are ready to correct some false claims that are being made today concerning John's work.

(1) JOHN'S WORK WAS LIMITED TO A SPECIAL PEOPLE - THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL (THE JEWS). These Jews which John came to prepare for the reception of Jesus were God's chosen people. They were already children of promise, children of God under the Old Covenant. They had departed from the commandments of the Law. They were sinners having transgressed God's law. John was sent to restore them back to the Law of Moses which was to bring them to Christ as their schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24). In John 6:68, when Jesus asked the twelve if they also would go away, Peter asked, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Preachers today look upon John as giving these people the words of eternal life. Friend, if this be true, we had salvation before Jesus came. Why then send Him to die on the cross?

(2) JOHN'S BAPTISM WAS GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION. Some think that because John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, that God's plan of redemption was already in force. Preacher, do you know what you are doing? You are teaching redemption without the blood of Jesus. Jesus said in Matt. 26:26, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Friends, there was no blood in John's day but the blood of animals, and this blood could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4). The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins was only for the disobedient Jews to restore them back to the law. John did not baptize people who believed in Jesus Christ or because they believed the gospel as stated in Mark 16:15-16. But John baptized upon the request or pledge that they would believe on Jesus when he came (Acts 19:4). What preacher is teaching and practicing John's doctrine today?

(3) JOHN THE BAPTIST ESTABLISHED THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. Many people believe that the New Testament church was established by John the Baptist. Some preachers still teach this. I had one preacher to offer to affirm that the church began in John's day. But the discussion did not materialize. I heard a preacher preach on the street in Jasper and claim that John was a Missionary Baptist and he baptized Jesus and that made Him a Missionary Baptist. Friends, the name "baptist" was given to John because he was sent to baptize, not as a religious brand. Now let us suppose that John started the church. Let us see what kind of church we are upholding:

a. There can be no church without saved or redeemed people. If people were saved in John's day, they were saved by animal blood, for Jesus was not yet crucified for sins.

b. If people entered the church in John's day, they entered the church before they entered the kingdom. But those who so teach also teach they enter the kingdom first by being born of the Spirit and are then baptized into the church. In John's day the kingdom had not yet come.

c. If people were saved by John's doctrine, why did Jesus tell them they had to be born again before they could enter the kingdom?

d. If there was a church in John's day, it could not be the church of Christ, for in Matthew 16:18, six months after John died, Jesus said: "...upon this rock I will build my church." It was still in the future.

e. If John's baptism put men into a church in his day, what happened to that church when Paul rebaptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus? The only people that Jesus adds to his church are those who gladly receive the words spoken by Peter (Acts 2:38-41, 47). No, friends, John the Baptist was not in either the church or the kingdom, for they both came after his death. John was a great man and his mission was a great one, but only a temporary one. Jesus only has the words of eternal life. We will continue our search for those words. What are they? By whom do we hear them?

Fourth, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus lived around thirty-three years on this earth. At the age of twelve we hear him say in Luke 2:49, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" While in the very heart of his ministry Jesus said unto them in John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." At the closing hours of his

earthly stay, in his prayer to the Father in John 17:4, he prayed, "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." The last words spoken on the cross were, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Friends, from the above scripture this is the sum: I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge, And my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me. Who can deny that the entire life of Jesus on earth was a preparatory life getting ready for his own reign as King of Kings which began after his resurrection when he announced his power over heaven and earth (Matt. 28:28). These thoughts will help you to understand the lesson before us.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." There is a dividing line between the Law of Moses and the law of Christ, or the Gospel Age. There is also a dividing line between the personal mission of Jesus while here on earth and that after he was raised from the dead. These lines must be understood if we expect to understand the scriptures. If Jesus had the words of eternal life as Peter expressed in John 6:68, we must find them either before His death or after. Let me remind you that if Jesus taught the word of life before His death, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are all the Bible you need. If we can receive the words of life from these four books and be saved and cannot come unto condemnation, then the twelve apostles spent much time and effort for naught. They only confused us by their much preaching.

Now hear and consider this. Jesus at no time and at no place ever uttered the words of eternal life while here on earth except to his twelve apostles. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them [the twelve apostles] that heard him" (Heb. 2:3). These twelve apostles were his chosen witnesses. In Acts 1:8 Jesus told them, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." It was to the twelve that he said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). It was to them that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit which was to guide them unto all truth and to remind them or bring to their memory all things which he had said unto them (Jn. 14:2; 16:13).

Friends, this gospel which Jesus sent the twelve to preach included repentance and remission of sins in His name. Before this there was nothing done in His name. In Luke 24:46 Jesus

said to the twelve, "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

The first gospel sermon preached under this commission was in Acts 2 where Peter preached repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. The doctrine Jesus preached before the cross was not His doctrine but that of His Father - "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me" (Jn. 7:16). After Jesus was raised from the dead, He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). We must now abide in the doctrine of Christ, for "whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God" (2 John 9). When we hear the apostles, we hear Christ. Jesus told His apostles, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me" (Lk. 10:16).

Friends, this line at the cross of Christ is so clearly drawn that we cannot help but see it if we stop to consider these facts:

- (1) I can believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ.
- (2) I can believe every prophecy concerning Christ.
- (3) I can believe every word spoken by Him up until His death.
- (4) I can believe every miracle, wonder and sign that He did.
- (5) I can follow Him, see Him die, and be buried...

...And yet still not know and understand what the words of eternal life are. I challenge any man to deny this.

Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is no hope! Jesus was raised from the dead for our justification (Rom. 4:25). There could be no justifying faith before His resurrection. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). Friends, the faith of which Jesus speaks in John 5 and 6 is a faith which continues on through His resurrection and accepts Him as a risen Lord and does the things which He says, obeying His gospel as Jesus stated in Mark 16:15-16. Any preacher who tries to establish a saving faith before the resurrection only shows how little he knows about rightly dividing the Word of God.

Yes, friends, I know that some preachers will tell you that I am trying to do away with all that Jesus taught while on earth. No. I believe every word of it and what He did was all necessary to carry out His mission. He came to fulfill the Law by keeping it perfectly - no sin. He came to fulfill all prophecy concerning Him. He proved to the world by miracles, wonders and signs and by His teachings that he was the promised Messiah. He taught mercy and righteousness as examples to us. He taught the principles which were to govern His kingdom. He personally forgave sins to individuals not as a system of forgiveness. All promises based upon believing in Him included a belief in the future in Him as Lord and Christ, accepting His teaching, His commands.

Jesus asked, "Why call me Lord, Lord and do not what I say?" (Lk. 6:46). "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my word hath one that judgeth him (Jn. 12:48). To believe in Jesus is to obey his gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Here Paul states very clearly that Jesus is coming to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. To obey the gospel is to first believe it (Mark. 16:15-16).

I have written this that it might be a help to some to understand the scriptures better and to show others the error we so frequently hear from the pulpits. If you have a comment, I am ready to listen. Contact me at the address in the front of the book.

SERMON #4

"IS IT RIGHT, OR IS IT WRONG?"

Friends, I hold in my hands a little book which contains this statement, and I quote: "We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace." With all respect for those who preach this and to the many who believe this to be truth, will you give this a fair investigation?

Webster tells us that grace is unmerited favor of God. Webster also tells us that the world "wholly" means "entirely or exclusively" which would make this statement read: "We believe that the salvation of sinners is entirely and exclusively of God's favor to man." If this be true, then God expects or demands nothing of the sinner. Friends, think! Does God demand anything of us? If so, what? Does God demand that man must believe? Does God demand that man love Him? Does God demand that man obey His commandments? Can the sinner have the grace of God applied to his heart without faith, love and obedience? What saith the scriptures about faith?

In Hebrews 11:6 it reads, "But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Mark 16:15-16 tells us, "To go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned." Listen to John 8:24 where Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if you believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." God offers grace to the sinner (Titus 2:11) - to all men. But grace is not applied to unbelievers. "By grace are ye saved through faith!" (Eph. 2:8). What do the scriptures say about love?

In I John 4:8 we read, "He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love." Matthew 22:37 says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment." God offers His grace even to those who hate Him (Rom. 5:8; Ti. 2:11). But he that loveth not, knoweth not God (I Jn. 4:8). What do the scriptures say about obedience?

Why did God give the Ten Commandments to Israel if He didn't want them to obey (Ex. 20)? In the New Testament John tells us the words of Jesus in Jn. 14:21, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." My friends, you can do without loving - but you cannot love God without doing! "For if you love me, you will keep my commandments," Jesus said in John 14:15. Now we read in Rev. 22:14, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." God also offers grace to the disobedient, but only the obedient have the right to the tree of life. Grace is free. Salvation is a gift of God to those who have the right. To have the right to something you must have a legal claim or qualifications. This right demands faith, love and obedience.

Remember, James said, "God giveth grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Who can say that the unbeliever, the hater, the disobedient are humble? While some desire to discard all but faith, others desire to discard all but grace! But God, by the Holy Spirit, bound upon man by the mouth of Peter in Matt. 16:19 that all men must believe, love God, and turn to Him by repentance and obey His commandments in baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). By the grace of God you are added to His church or family (Acts 2:47). If you walk in the light (I Jn. 1:7), and die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13), this right to the tree of life will be yours. Won't you do it?

SERMON #5

"WATER AND GOD'S PLAN"

Friends, we are acquainted with the division that arises over the use of water among the religious people as to its use in connection with man's salvation. Many good and honest people are ignorant as to what the Bible teaches concerning water. Some never read their Bible! They are relying on what they have heard others say. Friends, you know that when we appear before the judgment seat that we will not be judged according to what you think or what someone told you or by how you feel about the matter. Jesus plainly said in John 12:48, "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day." God has spoken and it is up to us to learn what He requires of us. We should not be given to prejudice but open-minded and willing to accept the truth at all times. As a friend I beg you to listen to what the Bible teaches on the use God has ordained with regard to water.

God has used water in different ways and for different purposes. He used it to preserve life and vegetation. There is nothing that moves or grows that can exist without water. God also used water to purify things, such as to cleanse the world from sin by the flood (Gen. 6:7). He used water, the Red Sea, to destroy the army of Pharaoh and deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 14). He used water as a priestly wash in the tabernacle service (Ex. 30:17-20). God has ordained the use of water in connection with man's salvation today (Jn. 3:5; Mk. 16:15-16). There is much to be learned as to what was accomplished in each purpose in which water was used. We will take up each lesson as they appear and see what they teach us.

First, THE FLOOD. Why the flood (Gen. 6-7)? These chapters tell us that man became so wicked that it repented God that He had made man. The world needed purifying or cleansing from wickedness. Noah's family, the righteous people, needed saving or delivering from the wicked and God used water to accomplish all these things. When we look back to the flood we see first, the old world corrupt in sin, and after the flood, a purified world. We also see Noah's translation from one to the other as the ark left the old world and was let down upon a new purified world.

Does this flood teach us anything concerning our salvation? Peter said so in I Peter 3:20-21. The Holy Spirit by the mouth of Peter used this as a type of our salvation. We read what Peter said, "When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure [or in the true likeness] whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." As water saved Noah from wickedness and translated him into a new purified world, so baptism frees us from our old sinful life and translates us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). As Noah stepped from the ark to a purified world, we arise from baptism to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). In other words, in baptism, we go down into the water from our old life; we come up from the water into a new life - born again! That is what a birth is, a translation from one state of life to another.

Second, ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE. We should read Ex. 3-14. As the flood served as a water line between the old world and the new, we also see the Red Sea as a dividing line between the bondage and the freedom of the Israelites. As long as the children of Israel were in Egypt they had to serve Pharaoh and were under bondage to him. God called Moses to lead them out or to deliver them from Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh. When they came to the Red Sea, Moses stretched his rod out over the sea, the water divided and they crossed the sea on dry ground. Now let us sum up what changes took place during this crossing:

- (1) Pharaoh and his army were destroyed in the sea (Ex. 14:27).
- (2) A change of leadership - Moses was now their leader.
- (3) They were a free people - no longer under bondage.
- (4) They had changed territory from Egypt to the wilderness.

Fifteen hundred years later the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Paul said in I Corinthians 10:1-2, "Moreover brethren, I would

not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Paul in this crossing of the Red Sea could see a type of baptism. Each of the four changes that took place with the children of Israel as they crossed the Red Sea, now in baptism we experience similar changes to theirs.

- (1) Sin is destroyed by washing it away (Acts 22:16).
- (2) Our leadership is changed from Satan to Christ (Gal. 3:27, Rom. 6:17-18).
- (3) We are free from the bondage of sin (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:5-14).
- (4) We have changed our state or territory. Having been translated from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12-14).

Third, THE PRIESTLY WASH. You should read chapters 25 through 30 of the book of Exodus. After the children of Israel had left Mt. Sinai, God had Moses to build a tabernacle in which service was to be made to God. God chose Aaron and his sons to serve in this tabernacle as priests unto Him. But before one could serve as a priest they had to meet certain requirements.

God had Moses to make a laver and place it before the door of the tabernacle and put water in it. Now before the priest could enter the tabernacle to do service, he first had to wash his hands and his feet in this water (Ex. 30:18-21). Now if you read this you will see that they must do this or die. Next they were to put on the priestly robe made from fine linen (Ex. 28:39-43). Next they were to receive the anointing oil, called "holy oil", which was placed upon their heads and the blood of a ram sprinkled upon their priestly robes. After all of this was completed then they could do service as a priest. Now, let's notice again the priestly requirements:

(1) Washing in water. Without water they will die if they enter the tabernacle. So, no washing in water - no priest. No washing - no robe. No washing - no anointing - no sprinkling of the blood. Friends, I believe that you would think it a silly question if I were to ask you if you thought water was essential in becoming a priest? Not only is it essential in becoming a priest, but in every act performed by the priest, for he could not serve before washing.

Why wash? To cleanse the filth from the flesh. Fifteen hundred years after this priestly law was given, the Holy Spirit reminded Peter not only of Noah's freedom by water but also saw

the priestly wash and used it as a type of baptism. He said baptism was not the putting away of the filth of the flesh (like the priestly wash), but it was the answer of a good conscience toward God (I Peter 3:21). They cleansed the flesh before the white linen robe was put on.

We are baptized to cleanse the inner man for the robes of righteousness. Some preachers today teach that you robe before washing. Later on in this lesson I will prove to you that as the priest could not do any service before he washed, so we as the priests of God can do no service before baptism in water.

Fourth, WATER IN THE KINGDOM AGE. Next we go to the church or kingdom age. In Daniel 2 we hear the prophet say that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and this kingdom shall not be left to another people but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever." Around six hundred years later in the Matt. 3:2 we hear John the Baptist preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." While John was in prison, Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

Jesus taught many parables concerning His kingdom, but the first time any method of entering the kingdom was mentioned, water was mentioned. John 3:5 - "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Six months after John the Baptist was beheaded we hear Jesus tell Peter in Matt. 16:18 that "...Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." This is the first time Jesus had mentioned His church and it was still in the future.

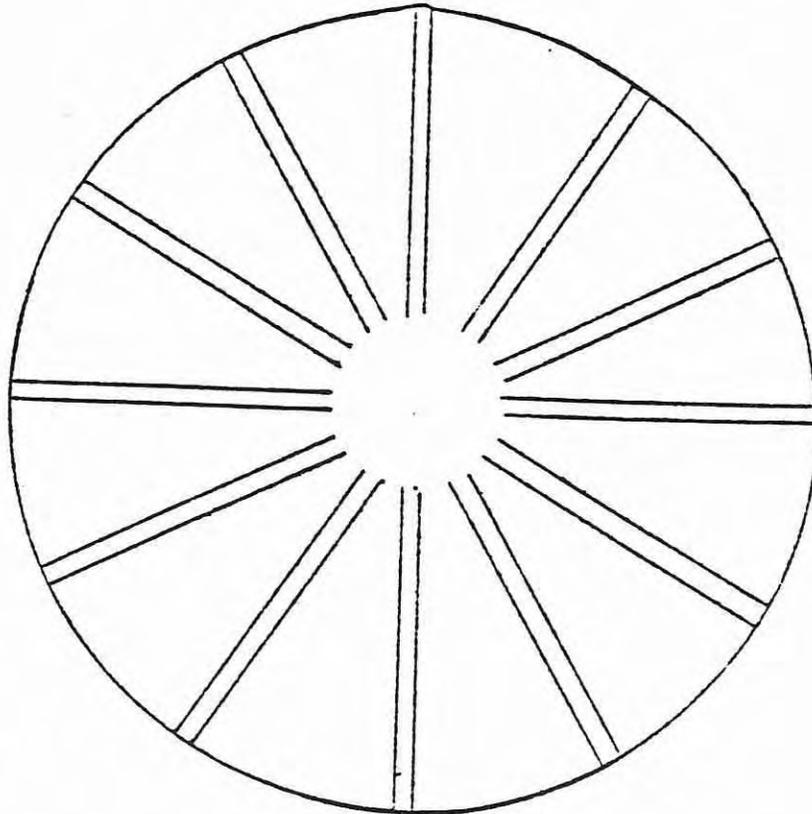
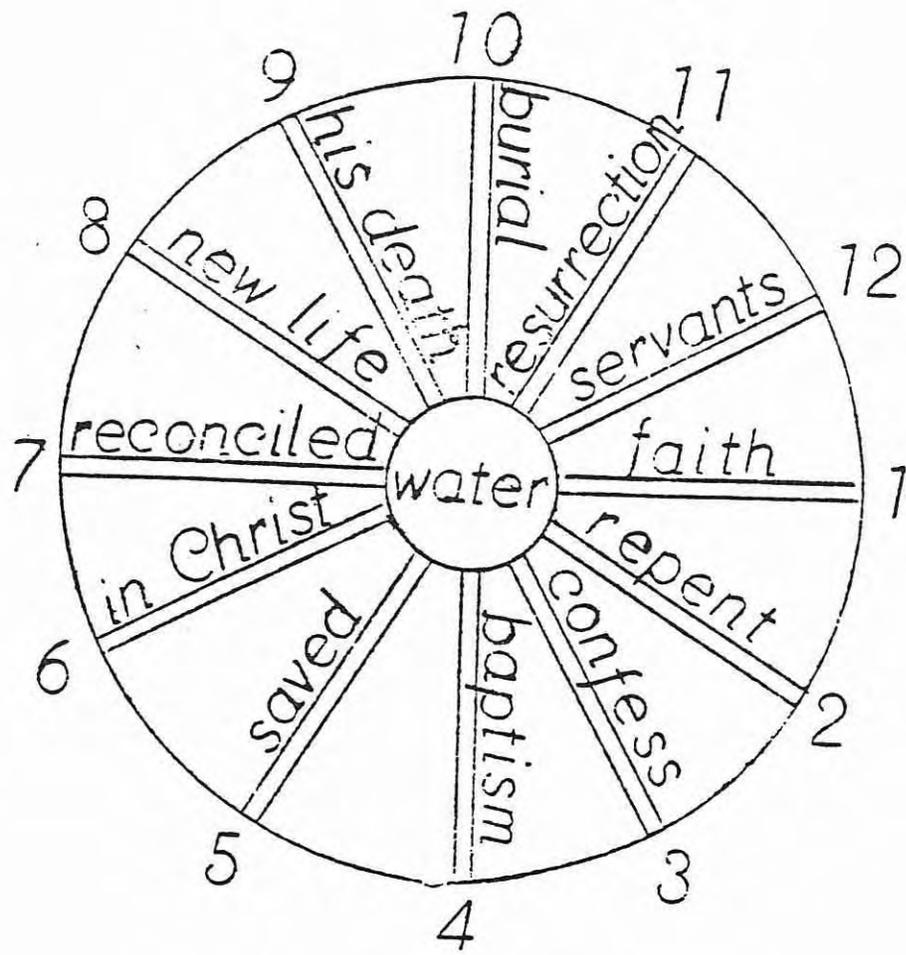
I call to your attention that in this statement Jesus mentioned the church and the kingdom together. I ask these questions: Are the church and the kingdom the same thing? Why were they mentioned in that order and context? There are some marks of difference, as we will see, but let me say this and then I will prove it ... You cannot enter the church and remain out of His kingdom. Neither can you enter His kingdom before entering His church.

What is the church? The called out of God. Saved people. What constitutes a kingdom? Three things: A king (Jesus as a king - Matt. 27:11; I Tim. 6:15). Subjects or people over which the king can reign (the saved or the church - Acts 2:47). A territory (the world - Mark 16:15-16).

When Jesus adds the saved to the church you are His subjects. You are subjects of His reign. When we speak of Christ's church we have reference only to God's children. When we speak of Christ's kingdom we include Christ as our King, for He is the head of the body or church (Eph. 1:22-23). He is king of the kingdom. But the fact is that neither the church nor the kingdom can be entered into without water! Jesus plainly states the facts that until one is born of water he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5). Is anything plainer than that? Paul in I Cor. 12:13 said, "...by one Spirit (not in or with one Spirit) are we all baptized into one body." The one body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). The three thousand on Pentecost day were baptized before they were added to the church (Acts 2:47). So if you can go to heaven without being in His church or His kingdom, you need not worry about water. But otherwise we had better take heed to His teaching.

One thing more. Did you know that the first order or command that Jesus gave after He became king had water in it? This water was as broad as the Great Commission. Every taught believer in all nations were to be baptized. This was the order of the King. The book of Acts is a record of their carrying out of this order and nowhere did they fail to use water. Nine times they gave us examples of conversions and in each one baptism is mentioned. Now with my chart I wish to prove my former statement - that without water, like the priest of old, you cannot enjoy any spiritual blessings or do any service.

{See Chart - Next Page}



Will you please notice the difference in these two wheels. One has no hub while the other one is complete with a hub. Now, most will admit that a wheel without a hub can offer no service, but is completely worthless. This wheel will truly represent a plan of salvation without water. The wheel with the hub will scripturally represent God's plan of salvation, including water.

Now here is how it works. We will let the hub in wheel #1 represent water or baptism. In this wheel there are twelve spokes. Each spoke is wholly dependent upon the hub for its support. So far I know we can all agree. Now we wish to let each spoke represent a command or a blessing which God has given man. But each one of these commands is connected with water or baptism, and they cannot be enjoyed without water. They are as dependent upon the water as each spoke is dependent upon the hub for its support. Now, be honest, and examine each command and the scripture connected with it and see for yourself that the support of each command or blessing is enjoyed only by the baptized.

1. FAITH. Jesus in Mark 16:16 makes no promise to the unbaptized. What faith is for, baptism is for, i.e., salvation. It takes both to obtain salvation. Faith apart from baptism is worthless and offers nothing.

2. REPENTANCE. Peter on Pentecost, in Acts 2:38 commanded everyone to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Here again two things of equal importance are connected together with the conjunction "and." What repentance is for, baptism is for - remission of sins. Without baptism you have no promise.

3. CONFESSION. Confession in Acts 8:37 proves to be a condition to baptism. As baptism cannot be administered before faith (Mark 16:16), so also confession precedes baptism. Confession gives a right to baptism and without confession, baptism cannot be applied.

4. BAPTISM. This is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 and is administered in water (Acts 10:47).

5. SAVED. This is a promise to only the baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21).

6. IN CHRIST. The only way to enter Christ is by baptism (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27).

7. RECONCILIATION ... of Jews and Gentiles in the one Body. We are baptized into the one body (I Cor. 12:13). Reconciliation is also in Christ (Eph. 2:16). We are baptized into Christ where God meets us.

8. NEW LIFE. This is in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). We are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27). We rise from baptism to walk a new life (Rom. 6:4). We are born again (John 3:5).

9. HIS DEATH. Can only be reached in baptism (Rom. 6:3).

10. HIS BURIAL. We are buried with Him in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

11. HIS RESURRECTION. If we have been planted together, we will be in the likeness of His resurrection. Planted in water. Buried (Rom. 6).

12. SERVANTS. As the priests of old times could not serve before washing, neither can we. Paul said in Rom. 6:17 that in obedience to the gospel we become servants to obey God. To obey the gospel is to be buried in water.

Friends, this is the plainest way I can explain the value God places upon obedience to His command of baptism. Study the chart and the spokes. Truth sets us free (John 8:32).

PART SIX

CHAPTER ONE

"WHY I LEFT"

{A Letter of Explanation}

PART VI

CHAPTER 1

"WHY I LEFT"

{A Letter of Explanation}

My father was an elder in the Christian church. At the age of fifteen I was baptized and remained in the Christian church for twenty-two years. When I was twenty-five I was ordained to preach and worked for the Christian church for twelve years. Many of my close relatives and some of my closest friends were members of the Christian church. It is not easy to turn away from friends and relatives and the old home church. I know that many have not yet understood why I left the Christian church and united with the church of Christ. As I am writing this book which will contain my work for the twelve years in the Christian church, I feel that I should give my reasons for making the change. I just hope that what I will say will be considered and weighed by the standard by which we all are to be judged (John 12:48-50).

It is not hard to understand why the denominations differ and refuse to fellowship each other. They have different manuals, creeds and articles of faith to guide them. Church fellowship means nothing to people who believe they are saved separate and apart from the church. One church to them is as good as another. But for Christians who pretend to take the Word of God for their standard of work and worship and then to disagree so as to disfellowship one another is something I cannot understand.

We know that God hates those who sow discord (Prov. 6:16-19) and division (I Cor. 1:10-11). God is displeased with those who walk by different rules (Phil. 3:16; Rom. 16:17). We all claim Jesus as our mediator, but ignore his prayer which he prayed in

our behalf that all who believe on Him through their [apostles'] word might be one (Jn. 17:20-21). John condemns all but one and this is he who abideth in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-10). Where there are divisions there are different doctrines. Who will argue that two can disagree and both have the doctrine of Christ? This, my friends and brethren, is something we must consider now. We can wait too long.

To be a believer in Christ through the apostles' word as Jesus prayed (Jn. 17:20-21), or to abide in the doctrine of Christ which was revealed only by the twelve apostles, I must follow their teachings from Pentecost until the end with the church of Christ for which they preached. Not one word was uttered concerning the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. For sixty years Jesus looked upon the church as it progressed on earth, and then had John to write to the seven congregations and tell them their failures. He never found fault with something lacking that ought to be added to the worship. What a good time to add the instrument if it was desired. How long did the church operate without it? It was added in 667 A.D. by the Catholic church into their worship. It split every denomination that added it until 1906 when it divided the church of Christ.

What great religious leaders opposed it? John Calvin (Presbyterian), Adam Clark (Methodist), John Wesley (Methodist), Martin Luther (Lutheran), Charles H. Spurgeon (Baptist), Alexander Campbell (Christian), J. W. McGarvey (Christian). All of these great leaders gave their voices against it.

THE TWO COVENANTS

In Jer. 31:31 we learn that a new covenant is to be given. Paul in Hebrews 8 teaches us that it began with Christ as Lord and King (Acts 2:36). They are different. Changes have been made. One of the changes is the worship. Many things such as burnt incense, sacrifices, sabbath, and instrumental music were never mentioned in the new covenant.

"But the Bible does not condemn it!" some cry out. This, some think, will justify its use in worship. Was oak and pine forbidden to be used in the ark? God didn't condemn it. Could a cow be used instead of a lamb for sacrifice? God didn't say **not** to use a cow. Can meats be used on the Lord's table? God didn't say **not** to use them. My friends, such argument opens the door for anything. When God specifies a thing to be used, it condemns all other. God commands us to sing as the only music. If playing on the instrument is included, then all must play.

"But it is only an aid to worship!" others cry out. They who claim this fail to understand God's purpose for singing (Col. 3:16). Paul commands us to teach and admonish each other in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The piano destroys the understanding of words and yet we must understand words in order to teach.

When I was ordained to the ministry I was given a Bible and asked by the elders to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent. Soon I learned that I was being unfaithful to my promise. It was a custom of the Christian church to receive people from other denominations without baptizing them. Just a handshake was all that was asked of them.

I reminded the elders of what they required of me at ordination and told them they were not practicing what we preached. I told them that the Bible was silent on the use of a mourners' bench, an experience of grace, a vote on people as to the right of baptism and nowhere did the Bible teach that one was saved before he was baptized. The Bible teaches three things with the act of baptism: (1) immersion, (2) in the name of Jesus Christ, (3) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). One of these three elements is as essential to the obedience as the other. The purpose of baptism is emphasized as clearly as any command. Notice these scriptures: Mark 16:16 - Jesus offers salvation only to the baptized. Acts 2:38 - Peter offers salvation or remission of sins to the baptized. Acts 22:16 - Paul was told to be baptized to have his sins washed away. Peter also stated in I Peter 3:21 that baptism saves us.

Now, notice the scriptures that refer to the results of baptism:

- By baptism we put on Christ - Gal. 3:27.
- By baptism we enter into Christ - Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:4.
- By baptism we enter the one Body, the church - I Cor. 12:13.
- In Christ is reconciliation - 2 Cor. 5:18-20.
- In Christ we are new creatures, born again - 2 Cor. 5:17.
- In Christ are all spiritual blessings - Eph. 1:3.

Without baptism, not one of these blessings can be enjoyed. Now, are not elders who accept people into their fellowship - who claim that they were saved before baptism - not endorsing another doctrine contrary to the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9-10; Gal. 1:7,8)? Are they not walking disorderly (Rom. 16:17)? Now Paul tells us to withdraw ourselves from those who walk disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6).

It was also a custom of the Christian Church to violate the

practice of the apostles' teaching in ways of getting money. They had box suppers, entertainments and pie suppers. This action is unknown to the Bible and contrary to Paul's teaching (I Cor. 16:1-2).

There are some other reasons why I left the Christian Church, but these are the ones that were important to me. I believe I have examined my reasons and stated them clearly. According to the scriptures, things which destroy unity, love and fellowship among brethren, can be nothing but wrong in God's sight. We can unite up the teaching and practice of the apostles, as they are ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

The End