

The Gospel Herald

“As the truth is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21)

For The LORD’S PILGRIMS, STRANGERS & SOJOURNERS

by
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“We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”

II Corinthians 5: 20

It was in the month of February 1996 that I visited the aged body of a Father in Zion to me, as he lie in a hospital with congestive heart failure continuing to weaken his mortal body. I had, in time past, sat for hours conversing on the scriptures and his past walk among the Old Baptists since his childhood. His dear wife of over 50 years would fix some of the best collard greens that have ever entered the mouth of this writer. With a bucket of fried chicken, biscuits, cole slaw and her collards, we would have a lunch feast as I would visit their home often.

I never ceased to visit this humble little two-bedroom rented bungalow where my brother was not reading the scriptures or reviewing the volumes of the “Signs of the Times” that he has retained over many years of receiving the publication. Along with the “Old faith Contender” and the “Remnant,” of which the dear one was a contributing writer from time to time. His dear wife would tell me that in his sleep he would be preachin’. I was blessed to know this brother, whose mind was stayed on his Saviour even in his hours of slumber.

He was a mentor in the truth of the scriptures. He would share with me as a non-affiliated, non-official primitive Baptist, at the time, with the burdens that grieved his vexed soul over the condition of the Old Baptists. He had seen the Mt. Enon Association(s) split and divide over and over again over a 60-year period. He had seen and heard the ridiculous arguments and discord that were used to divide the brethren. He had moved to Louisiana around the 1960s and pastored a primitive Baptist old line church hours away from his home, traveling many miles monthly. He shared with me how that over the years he had been baptized on three different occasions to satisfy the demands of the people whom he desired to be among, with tears running down his cheeks.

I sat by his bedside at the hospital on this one occasion and asked, "is there anything that I can do or bring you at this time?" He said, "Brother Martin, I ask that you pray that I would be RECONCILED to the Almighty's will, for if I am reconciled to His will, as I earnestly desire, all things shall be well."

I shall NEVER (God permitting) forget those words from my dear dying brother. I pondered his comment, and thought what a glorious request, to be RECONCILED to God's divine will and purpose is the key to a PEACE that is passed all understanding. Here lay a man, that had given his live for a people he loved with a God-given love. He worked as a humble bookkeeper along life's way, raising (to the best of my knowledge) four children and ministering at every occasion that God would provide. With an automobile that was maybe ten years old and no home to which he held ownership, he pressed on with a Social Security income having his needs provided by divine providence. He was a WITNESS to me of a man who lived what he preached.

TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD'S WILL rang through the heart of this writer, even as it does this very day. Oh, beloved brethren, as I reflect upon those who have been brought to severe afflictions of their mortal bodies in God's determined purpose, I cannot help but to think TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD'S WILL by our Savior's grace and loving mercy is one of the greatest blessings a Child of God can experience in heart and soul. Knowing that God DOES ALL THINGS WELL, and our suffering in these mortal frames are but for a "season," till mortality shall be swallowed up with victor, through our transformation into that immortal realm which has been promised all them who are blessed to believe.

I reflect upon the writings of the prophet Job, and the beloved David, as the scriptures record the following in the midst of afflictions:

"seeing his (man's) days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job 14:5).

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the delivereth him out of them all" (Psa. 34:19).

"before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Psa. 119: 67).

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psa. 119:71).

"I know Oh Lord that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness has afflicted me" (Psa. 119:75).

*“Unless thy law had been my delights, I should have perished in mine affliction”
(Psa. 119: 92).*

*“I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord according unto thy word”
(Psa. 119: 107).*

I cannot help but to think, as I write of the experience of late; of Elder James Poole with his affliction and the recent deliverance from medication conflicts that devastated his body and mind over the past few years. I say, “Oh God our Father, CAUSE your afflicted children to be RECONCILED to thy will, sweep over the hearts, minds and bodies that are racked with pain and suffering, with sweet visitation of thy maintaining grace; that HOPE shall be increased and the presence of Jesus Christ, our beloved Saviour, would be magnified before us.” RECONCILE US DEAR GOD, OUR FATHER, For JESUS’ sake and honor.

This article was written of my visitation with Elder Robert Miles within weeks of his death in February 1996, in Plant City, Florida. He departed as the pastor of the “Original Orthodox Mt. Enon Primitive Baptist Church” (as inscribed on the granite sign that sits in front of the old meeting house).

*Humbly submitted on this Lord’s Day,
January 29, 2006*