

is not defined, and it may be fulfilled when the two witnesses receive life from God, and stand upon their feet, to the great consternation and dread of their enemies, and they ascend up to heaven, never again to be oppressed. The spirit of the dragon, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, is manifest in both the first and second beast, so they may be called the man of sin or anti-christ.

Sixth, how is the war waged, and what is meant by being killed and to lie three days and a half unburied? We answer, by being made powerless and set aside by the powers that be. We understand the great power of the beast, to consist first, in his power to deceive. Paul in speaking of him says, "whose coming is after the workings of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish." And John in the Revelations speaks of him after the following manner, "he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on earth, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles, which he had power to do in the sight of the beast. Then, secondly, force them to yield, for it is said, he causeth that as many as would not worship the beast should be killed, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. The object of deceiving, is to keep men from receiving the love of the truth, and to draw them from the truth to that which is not the truth; in a word to beguile them from the simplicity of the truth of the word of God, to notions and opinions of men, founded on inference and supported by reason. These notions and opinions soon run into traditions, popular favor gives them life, and time gives them strength, and some of these can be traced back to their rise under the first beast, thereby establishing an image to the first beast; and when we look around on the multiplicity of sects of religionists to day, all claiming Jesus as the only way, we are shocked at the amazing extent and influence which traditional notions now hold on men. It is obvious, no sect can be formed without a departure from the teachings of the word of God, to a greater or less extent; then when we look at the extent of these sects, we are forcibly

impressed with the thought, of how much of the word of God is set aside, and made powerless by traditions, because it is equally obvious, if all believed, understood and practiced, according to the correct spiritual teaching of the word, there could be no sect, it would all be one belief and practice, (all one in Christ Jesus.) But is there none that believe, understand and practice according to the spiritual teaching of the word of God? There certainly must be, unless the time is closed, that the two witnesses were to prophecy; without it, there would be no corresponding witness to the word of God, but we take it for granted there is a corresponding witness yet answering to the candlesticks. A question may arise, are there any believers led away after these traditional opinions and notions of men? This question is well calculated to arouse the opinions of men to lively activity, but as we understand it, that the scriptures are written mainly for the comfort and edification of the saints, so all the examples, cautions, warnings, admonitions and commandments written in the word of God, are to this end, and to reject, turn from or disobey, brings distress, darkness and discomfort; and much of the mourning prefigured by the sackcloth on the witnesses, may perhaps arise from this state of things. But when we read of the elect's being gathered from the four winds, and his people, being gathered from the nations, whither they had been driven and scattered, but especially when he says, come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, are we led to believe christians may go after them, to some extent. When we take a view of things in this line, as they now exist, are we not charitably led to believe, many christians are in error of some traditions? See the many, yea the many thousands perhaps, who believe Jesus was baptised by sprinkling, or else believe they perform as acceptable worship to God in having their children sprinkled, as though Christ Jesus had been baptized by sprinkling, and that in infancy. And why is this? Is it because there is any scripture teaching for it? Certainly not; it rests upon the inferences of men, grown strong by tradition. The same may be said of Sunday schools, Missionary boards, &c.; and yet how many believe these to be acceptable worship to God, and

are as zealous for them as though they were the good works which God ordained, that his followers should walk in them. I have referred to these things, not for controversy, because they are established with men, but purposely to show the power and influence of the inferences and notions of men, run into tradition. Allowing then, that each traditional notion of men, has set aside and rendered powerless some portion of scripture truth, I would ask, may we not reasonably calculate, that the day is not far distant when the whole word of God will be set aside, each setting aside a portion? And may not the number of the beast, (666) answer to the number, sufficient to accomplish this end? And while reflecting upon this thing, O how my heart has been pained and my soul made sorrowful, to see brethren standing high, both as ministers and writers, parrying, quibbling, or actually setting aside, some plain, unequivocal passage of scripture, to establish a new idea or traditional notion. One case I refer to: Christ said to Nicodemus, "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God; he was amazed; Christ replied again, "marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." Notwithstanding, this plain, unequivocal sentence, connecting with it, the personal pronouns, *thee* and *ye*, yet brethren are parrying, questioning or actually denying the propriety of applying it to Nicodemus, or any Adamic man, and why? Simply to do away with the idea that the soul of man is made spiritual or is possessed of eternal life, after the second or new birth. And why is this? In order it seems to establish the new idea of a spiritual seed, having a *spiritual progenitor*, forming a spiritual family, inhabiting eternity, each one of which comes down, enters into the Adamic man and brings it into subjection, and thereby produces the new birth. If I understand the purport of this teaching, all resting upon inferences and supported by reason, not one plain direct passage of scripture to support it. O, brethren, is there not some position, running fast to traditional, anterior to these new ideas, which needs their support. And thus the word being set aside by degrees separately, its force is weakened in proportion. No reproof can be effectual against any man, who has a traditional opinion, which he esteems above the scriptures. No

light can be afforded from the word of God, to any man who esteems his opinion above the word. And thus I understand the witnesses will be killed, when they are rendered powerless by the traditions of men; and when this influence is concentrated, and is committed to one head, its power will be turned loose against the two witnesses, when their powerless state or condition will be manifest, and the pains of death will be inflicted, they will be held up before the wicked to scorn and contempt and perhaps confiscation of property, disfranchisement and other punishments to the church. But it may be asked, will not the gates of hell prevail against the church in this state? I answer, no more than the wicked Jews prevailed over Christ. They doubtless, thought they had prevailed when they had the Saviour nailed to the cross, when he was taken down dead and laid in the sepulchre, and a seal set on it, but to their utter astonishment and confusion, on the third morning, their watch sunk, the seal was broken and Christ arose; so the joy of the wicked, over the two witnesses, will be of short duration. After three prophetic days and a half, they will receive life from God and stand upon their feet, to the confusion and dismay of their enemies, and they hear the voice from heaven saying, "come up hither," and they will ascend in a cloud (perhaps of exquisite glory) to heaven, never to be oppressed any more, and their enemies behold them.

J. J. DAVIS.

Appointments.

Elders ANDREW HALL and D. R. MOORE, have appointments to preach as follows:

- Peach Tree, Wednesday, 14th April.
- Thursday at the Falls Tar River, 15th.
- Battleborough, Friday 16th.
- Saturday and Sunday the 17th and 18th, at Williams' Meeting House.
- Monday 19th, Lawrence's.
- Tuesday 20th, Deep Creek.
- Wednesday 21st, Kehukee.
- Thursday 22nd, Conetoe.
- Friday 23rd, Rest.
- Saturday and Sunday 24th and 25th, Spring Green.
- Monday 26th, Skewarkee.
- Tuesday 27th, Flat Swamp.
- Wednesday 28th, Cross Roads.
- Thursday 29th, Conetoe.
- Friday 30th, Rest.
- Saturday and Sunday 1st and 2nd of May, Tarboro'.
- Monday 3rd, Old Town Creek.
- Tuesday 4th, Upper Town Creek.
- Wednesday 5th, Wilson.