

Old Time Preaching
By J. D. Tant

"I am today (June 28, 1907) forty-six years old; and knowing that I have ascended the hill of life and am now fast passing down to the river below, my mind runs back with a vivid memory for forty years, and it seems the changes have been so great that we are almost separated five hundred years from that time in all we do. Then we had the loom, the spinning wheel, the old-time water mill, the cradle-cut wheat, the home raised boy, and the many little things that made home happy. But things have changed, and old things have passed away. With them has passed, also, the old-time preacher.

"In those days we had many godly men who would work on their farm until Friday night; get on their horses on Saturday and ride from twenty-five to forty miles, preach on Saturday night and three times on Sunday, and do some baptizing; and then off for home on Monday morning. These were not big preachers -- only godly men. They were not paid ten to twenty dollars a trip, but went at their own expense; and when they went, they knew but little of grammar and history, but were full of the Bible and of love for the children of men. These men were welcome everywhere. All religious people in the community went out to hear them. None became tired at the two hour sermon; all were anxious to shake hands with the preacher and have him go home with them. The preacher in those days was not looked upon as the professional man that he is today, but all recognized him as a messenger of God.

"I am now preaching in the hills of Alabama, and I often hear members speak of the old-time preacher. We had no ambitious schools and colleges to make preachers; yet we had the preachers any way. We cannot claim that we had such big preachers as we have today, but they were men of God; and today we have members and a few congregations all over Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, and throughout the South that were built up by the old-time preachers. But as times began to change, many brethren began to seek the preacher that could entertain their neighbors; and as these old brethren were not so well up in smooth language and good manners as the college boys, many of them were relegated to the background to make room for the big preacher. As many of the big preachers must have money and are wanted at big places, I find that at many of the interior points, where the church is not able to send for the big preacher, the cause is now dead; and men and women are dying without the knowledge of Christ and the gospel. The old-time preacher has gone, and these places are not able to employ the young and able preachers. Would to God a spiritual wave could come over the church today, and hundreds of brethren who have homes and ordinary intelligence could give up the great desire for money-making and fast living and move far back into the country, build up homes among the people, preach to them the plain simple gospel, which is God's power to save, reinstate the old-time preacher and gospel preaching, and preach more to save and less to entertain and please the sects! If this could be done, in ten years' time thousands of good people all over the country could hear the gospel and be saved; but under the present surroundings they are bound to be lost. May God help us to think on these things." (Gospel Advocate, August 29, 1907)

Fallen by the Wayside

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."
(Gal. 6:1)

A family, all nine of them, loaded all their earthly possessions into a covered wagon pulled by a four-horse hitch and set out to join 14 other families leaving Arkansas headed for Texas and the promise of a new land. Rolling through rainstorms, hail, blistering hot days, fighting off insects at night, the wagons rolled across the plains of what is today, Oklahoma.

One afternoon a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon behind the group, and the wagon master halted the column and drew them close together into a circle. The men reached for rifles while the women gathered the children together into the center of the wagons. In a few minutes it became apparent that the dust was coming from a lone rider, carrying a parcel across his saddle.

Slowing his horse to walking gait, the man called out that he meant no harm. The horse stopped, the man got down, reached for the bundle and unwrapped a small child no more than two years old. A cry of recognition tore from the throat of the baby's mother when she saw her seventh child standing beside the strange man. The child had not been missed, but he had fallen from the wagon, and the cowboy had found him sitting in the dirt and sifting it through his fingers and waiting for someone to come back for him.

How many of us are on life's "wagon train" headed for the promised land, and so intent on our own journey that we do not miss those of God's children who fall off along the way? Let us seek to restore those who have fallen by the way side.

A Moments Wisdom

I only have three faults: what I say, what I do, and what I think.

If you neglect another day, you have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in.

Idol worship is often done during idle time.

When death knocks, you will come as you are.

Haste is usually to save minutes, after hours have been wasted.

God is the only one in a position to look down on others.

If you think of this world as a place intended simply for our happiness, you might find it quite intolerable; think of it as a place of training and correction and it's not so bad.

It takes both hands to lay hold of eternal life; you will have to let everything else go.

A thankful heart speaks more eloquently to God than the most persuasive tongue.