

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 1

HOW GOD CHANGED THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER

By *BENNIE CRYER*

We have a changeless God who gives counsels that are immutable and yet changes his mind at other times to fit changing situations and circumstances. Remember Jonah? He knew God's character and attributes, Jonah 4:2, and that Jehovah was willing to repent (change his mind) of the evil (harm, see Acts 16:28 where the Greek word for evil is translated "harm") he intended to bring upon the inhabitants of Nineveh. The citizens, including the king, did works to show they believed the preaching of Jonah. *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not, 3:10.* An important question here is, "How do we know God changed his mind?" The answer is equally important. The scripture reveals it. We do not know that God has changed his mind about anything except the scriptures say so.

Denominational practices indicate that many have forgotten this rule. New ideas are put forth and considered, not from the standpoint of scriptures, but from pragmatic considerations along with popularity concerns. Women teachers and preachers are examples of this. In spite of the fact that God's mind on this subject is clearly stated in scripture in this manner...*it is a shame for women to speak in the church, 1 Corinthians 14:35*, women teachers, preachers, and "pastors" are becoming popular and acceptable to many. Where in the scripture is it stated that God has changed his mind? It cannot be found! The criteria is: if it works and it is popular. The tragic thing is that just as many Churches of Christ followed the denominations in organizing and using Sunday Schools in their worship, some in our own ranks have practiced and utilized women in teaching roles not revealed in the Scriptures. Where in the Scriptures is it revealed that God has changed his mind about this subject?

Another example of God changing his mind because of changes in situations and circumstances is in the observance of the Passover in Egypt and the observance of "the perpetual Passover" as some Jewish writers express it after the Israelites left Egypt.

One of the first changes involved who was to kill the Passover lamb and where it was to be slain. In Exodus 12:6 *the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel was to kill the lamb or goat.* This was to be done by each house or family putting up the animal on the 10th day of the month and keeping it until the 14th day of the month. On this day the man or father of the house was to slay the lamb at the appropriate time at his place. After the exodus a part of this was changed. Deuteronomy 16:2 indicates the change. *Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.* The place the Lord chose was the tabernacle and later on the temple at the altar. This is properly a change but the important thing is God had the change written down in the Scriptures and we can read it to this day. They did not assume it was all right. The Lord God could be appealed to regarding this matter. Attempted changes in religion today should be handled in the same manner. If one cannot appeal to God through the written word the change is not acceptable to him. Another difference from the first Passover example is where the blood should be sprinkled. In the first Passover these instructions were given. *And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it, Exodus 12:7.* However, in 2 Chronicles 30:16 the priests did the sprinkling of the blood, not on the door posts but upon the altar in the sacred place that God had chosen. *And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites.* Another change that was made in the Passover's later observances is found in Numbers 9:5-12. Israel was keeping the Passover. However there were certain men that could not keep it with their brethren because they had become defiled by the body of a dead man. They wanted to partake of the Passover so they appealed to Moses and Aaron. Moses could have said, had he been like some modern religionist, "Go ahead

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Editorial

OF WHOM IS
HYMENAEOUS AND PHILETUS

By DON L. KING

There are very few things more likely to cause a stir than to call the name of a wayward brother or sister in print or in public. In some places the preacher might be "called on the carpet" for doing so, and the practice is not welcomed in some religious journals either. There seems to be an unwritten law of ethics that prohibits, or at least renders distasteful, such actions.

Let the record show that such behavior is often uncalled for in the normal course of things; and that before such actions are taken, one needs to be absolutely certain of what he is saying. However, there are certainly occasions when it is not only called for but virtually demanded if the purity of the church is to be protected.

We recently did a brief perusal of the Scriptures to see when the names of sinful individuals were called or written for the public to know. While we admit that this is certainly not an exhaustive study, by any means, yet some details seem obvious.

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he apparently found some false teachers at work there. He must have rebuked them and commanded that they teach only the true gospel of Christ. It is reasonable to assume that he realized other congregations nearby could also have been harmed by their false teaching; and so as he departed for Macedonia, he decided that Timothy could be of great value to the work at Ephesus. One of his main responsibilities would be to restrain the false teachers by publicly refuting their teachings and condemning their sinful practices. As Paul began his first letter to Timothy, he mentioned the names of Hymenaeus and Alexander in the very first chapter and verse 20. "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." Scholars argue as to whether or not Alexander is the same man mentioned as "Alexander the coppersmith" in 2 Timothy 4:14. Some say yes, others maybe and some say no. However, it seems apparent that he and Hymenaeus were corrupt teachers at Ephesus whom Timothy was to oppose in every way. Hymenaeus was probably the same man mentioned along with Philetus in 2 Timothy 2:17, 18 who had been teaching that the resurrection was past already and had overthrown the faith of some. These men were named specifically as being guilty of causing the faith of others to be ruined. Their names are famous today as sinful brethren who were publicly identified by an apostle.

The Incestuous Man Was Not Named!

As Paul wrote the first Corinthian letter, he spoke

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QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: When should one be rebaptized?

Answer: Anyone who has been baptized according to the teachings of the New Testament Scriptures, and who did so out of an obedient heart, does not need to be rebaptized. In fact, there is no such thing as second and third baptisms. One who has scripturally answered the gospel call never needs to be baptized again. Even if the individual sins and leaves the church, if and when they return, they need only repent of their sins and confess them, asking God for forgiveness Acts 8:13-24. This is exactly what Simon was told to do. Neither does one need to be rebaptized if they were baptized by someone (the one doing the baptizing) who was in error. I have heard of some who claim if one obeyed the gospel under the preaching of someone who was practicing some type of error in worship, then the baptism was invalid. Such is just not the case. The administrator in the act of baptism does not affect the validity of the baptism. The preacher could secretly have an evil heart, and be living a life of hypocrisy, that however would not cause the baptism of the individual to be rejected. If such should be the case, we would have to trace our baptism all the way back to the days of the apostles in an unbroken line in hopes of making sure everyone was baptized by someone who was 100 percent right. That not only is impossible, it is unnecessary. But what about someone who has left the church and gone into some denomination? Do they need to be rebaptized? I don't believe so. What they need to do is come back to the church, confessing their sins Acts 8:13-24; 1 John 1:9, and asking God's forgiveness. There are situations, however, where people who have been "baptized" i.e., (been immersed in water), need to be scripturally baptized. For example people who were sprinkled when they were infants need to be scripturally baptized. Infant baptism is not taught in the Scriptures. Infants cannot comply with the prerequisites of scriptural baptism such as "believing," "repentance," and "confession." They are incapable of doing the things commanded by the Scriptures, hence their so called baptism is not acceptable. (See Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10; Mk. 16:16). Infant baptism also flies in the face of our Lord's teaching about the innocence of little children in Mt. 18:3 and 19:14. Children are not sinners, hence have no sin of which to repent. Another group of people who need to be scripturally baptized are those who say "I was saved, then I was baptized." The clear indication is that the person thinks baptism has nothing to do with salvation. To them baptism is nothing more than an outward expression of an inward change, that previously took place. The Scriptures teach that one is saved, forgiven, has his sins remitted, and washed away, after baptism not before. Note Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16 and 1 Peter 3:21. This being the case, the individual who feels he was saved before baptism, needs to realize the place of baptism in the Lord's plan and submit to it. It is also

the conviction of this writer that one who has been baptized into a denomination needs to be rebaptized. One does not become a member of the Lord's church by accident, but by purposeful action. Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 12:13 "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." By the teachings of the one Holy Spirit we are all baptized into the "one body" or church. The saved were added to the church in Acts 2:47. When one joins a denomination they do not become members of the Lord's church. He does not add them to His church. They do not believe they are members of the church of Christ. Just ask them. They will tell you the denomination to which they belong. These people need to be baptized scripturally even though they have already been immersed by someone. Another class of people who need to be rebaptized are those who have not been properly taught and did not know what they were doing when they were baptized. That raises the question "just how much does one have to know in order to be baptized?" To answer, let us look at Acts 2. These people were baptized after hearing their first sermon. What did they know? They knew that they were sinners, they had crucified Christ, and when they learned that, they wanted to know what they had to do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins v. 38. They gladly received his word and were baptized whereupon the Lord added them to the church. Hence, we conclude, one needs to know he is lost, that he is a sinner, that Christ died for his sins, and in order to be forgiven he must believe in Christ, repent of his sins and be baptized for the remission of sins. As one grows in Christ he will learn many things he did not know when he obeyed the gospel. That has caused some to wonder if they knew enough when they were baptized. As a result some have wanted to be rebaptized for fear that they did not know all they needed to know. In many of these cases, I personally feel that rebaptism is unnecessary. If the candidate understood the things mentioned above, that is all that was necessary. I might add just here that one who finds himself in an unscriptural marriage, does not need to be rebaptized. Being rebaptized will do him no good. He needs to get out of the unscriptural marriage and that will take care of the problem, rebaptism won't change the marriage status. Finally, I believe that people who were baptized for the wrong purpose need to be rebaptized. The scriptural purpose for baptism is the remission of sins. One should never be baptized in order to get someone to marry them, or just because someone else is being baptized, or just to please ones spouse, friends, or parents. Baptism for such reasons will not result in the forgiveness of sins.

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

*(In 1925 **The Apostolic Way** waged a campaign against carnal warfare. A number of the editors wrote articles condemning participation in war by Christians. This particular article was written by N.L. Clark, who at that time served as an editor of the paper. Brother Clark was from Lincoln County, MS. Later he settled and lived in Ft. Worth, Texas until his death. He was well educated and for years worked with the Public Schools of Ft. Worth. His writings were always informative and logically written. He opposed the Sunday School but contended for the right to use more than one cup in the communion. Brother Homer L. King conducted a written debate with Brother Clark on the issue of individual cups which was published in the pages of the **Old Paths Advocate**, and is a tribute not only to the skill of Brother King, but to the power of truth as well. This article is worthy of re-print, because we all need to bear in mind our relationship to the government and participation in carnal warfare.)*

OUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST WAR

By N. L. Clark

The Apostolic Way is now waging a war against Christians taking part in carnal warfare. We have only begun this fight, for we expect to keep it up until we rally to our help the rank and file of the Lord's army, the church. Yea, more than this, we hope to arouse such an interest in this matter among other religious people that our political leaders will feel strongly the influence of these efforts and know, at least, that the Church of Christ in this country believes that its great Captain is unwilling for His soldiers to take part in the destruction of human lives.

In making this fight we expect to have opposition, to be misunderstood and misrepresented, even by brethren. We expect to be called "slackers," "cowards," "traitors," etc. Some of us are so weak in spiritually that we are ready, upon very slight provocation to join the rabble in the cry to crucify our Lord. One of the saddest experiences of my life, one of the greatest disappointments I ever had in men, was to see so many of the recognized leaders of the church lined up with the powers of destruction and death when our country entered the World War. How any intelligent, God-fearing man, who professes to be guided by the New Testament, could speak or write in favor of such wholesale destruction of all that savors of Christianity is something I cannot understand.

We have never sought to dictate in such matter to the world. We try to teach the world that it is wrong to make war, that the Prince of Peace, whom we follow, has shown a better way to settle men's differences with each other, but we do not propose in any way to bind the nations to our ideas. Nations imbued with carnal ideals and actuated by carnal motives have always fought Their ideas of military glory, of power by physical might, of conquests gained at expense of human happiness are in keeping

with the demands of man's carnal nature, which has ever been under the control of Satan. Hence the Bible teaches in Rev. 20 that when Satan is bound by the power of God, the nations will cease to make war for a thousand years. It is not too much to say that all carnal warfare in the world's history resulted from the activities and deceptions of Satan. I deem it unnecessary, now to argue these points at greater length, since my present purpose is rather to stir up my brethren on this subject than to convince any reader of the correctness of my views.

Denominational bodies around us take an entirely different view of the whole situation. Many of their leaders assume the doctrine of a kind of union between the church and State. They will not avow the doctrine, to be sure, but deny they teach it. Yet, in their general assemblies, they take action upon political issues, pass upon the merits or demerits of men and measures before the voters of the land, and assert it to be their duty as churches to make themselves felt in the national affairs of this country. These bodies are, therefore, found either offering their services as such to the country in the prosecution of carnal warfare, or, on the other hand, dictating to the Government what it shall do in opposing war. We consider such actions very erroneous because based upon the wrong premises.

Christianity is a religion of the soul. It is to be sure all aggressive, yea a militant doctrine; but its weapons are ideas, not swords, its conquests are of men's minds, or spirits. Its control of any mans body is to be attained through his spirit. Christ asks me to mortify the fleshly man, yea, if need be, to die physically for His cause, but He asks me to do this only after His gospel has brought my spirit into loving submission to His will. It follows that all efforts, and they are many, made by religious bodies to control the conduct of men by civil authority or by any other human agency are essentially erroneous. First the mind, afterwards the body in subjection to the law, is God's order. The world says: First the mind if it will listen, otherwise, subject the body anyway. Later, if possible and convenient, bring the mind to accept what has been forced upon the body.

The fundamental difference between the ideals of Christ and those of men is well illustrated by the contrast between Jesus and Peter in Gethsemane. Peter used a sword. Under the circumstances, he showed great physical courage. The world calls such action heroism. On the other hand, Jesus submitted to be bound and mistreated, although He had power at His command to destroy all His enemies. The world usually calls such action cowardly and unworthy. Jesus exemplified the principles of conquest by spiritual weapons ideas. He also showed in this case that spirit may sometimes conquer only by destruction of the flesh. Peter's conduct exemplified the human notion that physical might should assert itself in opposing the advances of an enemy, even to the point

of taking human life.

Finally, we would sow the seeds of brotherly love and compassion in the hearts of all men. Thus we would seek to bring the souls of men into subjection to the will of Christ, assured that such results will destroy the desire to kill or rob other men. We would go into all the world armed with the gospel of our Captain instead of the weapons of carnal warfare. We would leaven the world of mankind with the notions of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. We would banish the monster War from earth not by political conferences and fallible treaties, but by the power of faith in the word of Jehovah, deep-planted in the sentiments and motives of humankind.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

By C.A. SMITH

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21:2, 3). "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife...And showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Heaven is frequently in scripture termed a city. See Rev. 22:14; Heb. 11:16; 13:14. It is a place where we have a "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5:1). It is the place of our future inheritance, 1 Peter 1:4. This place we shall enter after this earth and the works therein are burned up. (2 Peter 3:7-13) Therefore we affirm that in this chapter there is a place and state of future rewards in an immortal and glorified body in heaven, which is the place of God's throne and home of the angels.

Our object in this article is to treat directly on that which John saw coming down from God out of heaven. A thing which came "out of heaven" cannot be heaven itself. But was this, as many suppose, a literal city? Let the Word answer. It came down "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Here is a sufficient hint to the wise, that this city is not a literal thing, but represents a spiritual bride, i.e., the bride of Christ. The angel promised to show John "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and accordingly showed him "the Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God." It is an undeniable fact that this holy Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife.

The bride, the Lamb's wife, is the church of Christ. In the early twilight of the Christian era, John the Baptist affirmed of Christ: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." (John 3:29). "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the

body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7:4) That first husband was the law. He emphasized his demands with "Thou shalt and Thou shalt not." The Jewish church failed to obey him, and he was ready to stone her to death. Such was not a happy union. Yet this woman was bound to that husband as long as he lived. But in the course of time that husband died—the law was abrogated, and passed away—and she was married to another. This second husband loves her, He gave his life for her. Instead of emphasizing his demands with "Thou shalt," he tenderly says to her, "If you love me, you will keep my words." This second husband is Christ; he who is raised from the dead.

The object of this union is "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The fruit of matrimony is offspring. Not in a future age, but now Zion travails and brings forth children unto God. (Isa. 66:8-13) "Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." (Psa. 87:5). The whole church are "workers together with God" in the salvation of lost souls. In the A.D. 30's Jesus had a bride and he was himself a bridegroom. (John 3:29) Like a true companion his wife joined heart and soul with him in the great cause which drew him to earth. Accordingly in A.D. 96 we hear "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." (Rev. 22:17) "But Jerusalem which is above [above the law dispensation and the world] is free, which is the mother of us all." (Gal. 4:26) Every convert to the gospel of Jesus Christ from the dawn of this dispensation to its close is a "new-born babe" in the family of God. This being true, if Christ and the church—the spiritual Jerusalem are not now married, we who are her offspring are bastards, and not legitimate sons of God. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:23-32).

This language is very clear and conclusive. The marriage relation is that which now exists between Christ and his church. "The husband is the head of

the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." As the man and his wife are one flesh, "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And that we might know that we are indeed married to Christ now, he was unwilling to drop the mysteries of this wonderful relation without reassuring us that the marriage of the Lamb has already come. "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." So Christ and the church are living in the beautiful bond of matrimony.

In 1958 brother E. H. Miller met brother Jess Broseh in a public discussion, in Odessa, Texas, at the old Clements Street meeting place and this question was discussed. Brother Jess Broseh affirmed that "we are not now married to Christ, and that our marriage to him would be consummated in heaven." Brother Miller was ready and with the sword of the Spirit, literally exposed the fallacy of brother Broseh's arguments, so much so, that brother Broseh was unable after his first affirmative, to make a logical and sensible argument there after. Of course there are still many who hold to this unscriptural and ungodly idea, but those who will accept what the Bible clearly teaches, can, if they are spiritually minded, discern this wonderful truth.

The marriage of man and wife in a most striking manner illustrates our union with Christ. In our next article, we would like to note with you some of the points of agreement between the two.—810 N.W. 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714

DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

The key to converting our children, leading them to become responsible adults who choose to live for Christ, is in the proper discipline in the home. However, we must recognize that discipline is not limited to the context of punishment alone. It involves much more than that, for true discipline is the "training of the mental, moral, spiritual, and physical powers by instruction, control, and exercise." The following passages of scripture emphasize the great responsibility of parenthood: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6) "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4)

The Commitment

It should be obvious that the training of children involves a serious commitment, a commitment of time, energy, and perseverance. The word "train," for example, means more than just to impart instruction. It includes the idea of laying the ground work of character—to instill principle. Respectful and responsible children result from families where the proper COMBINATION of love and discipline is present, for an absence of either is disastrous! "He who spares the rod hates his son," Solomon declares

in Prov. 13:24, "but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." (RSV)

Many parents make the mistake in thinking that love and discipline are the opposites of each other. The truth is that real love and discipline go hand in hand together; one is the function of the other. Here is a saying that all parents need to think long and hard about: "Chastisement and punishment are not something done TO the child, but FOR the child." Respect for authority begins at home! The reason some children never learn to submit to any kind of authority—teachers, police, civil, or religious—is because they never learned to be submissive to parental authority. We must not fail our children in this regard.

While There Is Hope

Prov. 19:18 contains an expression that we need to take to heart: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Do you hear what Solomon is saying? Don't wait until your child is a teenager before you attempt to get things under control. By then it will probably be too late because most teenagers just naturally have a rebellious streak. After all, the teenage years are a time for testing rules and boundaries, as young adults are trying to discover who they are. If you don't have your child under control before they become a teenager, when that time finally comes you are going to be in big, big trouble! Another saying is: "The proper time to begin disarming the teenage time-bomb is twelve years before it arrives."

When is the right time to begin your child's training? Start at the cradle! Also, realize that there is a critical period during the first four or five years of a child's life when he can be taught proper attitudes; those early concepts will become quite permanent. The old adage is still true: "Spare the rod and spoil the child."

To Spank Or Not To Spank

Some psychologists and so-called experts in human behavior denounce spanking as a means of discipline and believe that it is a form of violence against children. Yet, here is advice from the wise man of old: "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. 23:13-14). Based upon Scripture and personal experience, I still recommend spanking as a useful tool for parents to utilize on occasion—especially deliberate misconduct. Let me emphasize that I am not talking about CHILD ABUSE, where a child is beaten severely. Incidentally, the KJV uses the word "beat" in the above passage, but the word simply denotes to strike. By spanking, I'm talking about applying enough pressure and pain on a child's "bottom" to get his attention and to let him know that certain behavior is unacceptable.

We should know the difference—and I believe that children can perceive the difference—between SPANKING (as corrective discipline) and an ACT

OF VIOLENCE that is mindless and out of control. There are two main objections to spanking: (1) It promotes violence. I read where one psychologist reasoned that parental spanking promotes the thesis that violence against others is acceptable. How ridiculous! If people really don't understand the difference between an act of discipline borne of love and a mindless act of violence, I feel sorry for them!

When you stop to think about it, they have misunderstood one of nature's most important lessons. A way that a child learns what is and is not acceptable behavior is through PAIN. When a child touches a hot stove, the lesson is learned that one should not touch what is hot. If a child pulls the cat's tail and is scratched, the child learns not to pull the cat's tail. Does the above scenarios make a child violent or angry with the world? No, the child learns some valuable lessons by pain. Likewise, spanking can often be the surest and quickest way to get a child's attention and teach him what he can and cannot do. (2) It creates fear in a child. What is wrong with that? The problem with too many children is that they have no fear of anyone or any thing. While we do not want to break a child's spirit, we must cultivate RESPECT for authority: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7).

Please consider two final points about spanking. First, an isolated incident of spanking probably accomplishes very little. It must be CONSISTENTLY applied. Finally, spanking does not solve all problems and is not always the right discipline. One thing you learn as a parent is that all children are different and what works with one may not work with another. As parents we must study the nature and disposition of our children and train them accordingly. Also, the day will come when you cannot force your children to do what is right. That is why we must teach them self-discipline and responsible behavior at an early age!—2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803

HOW GOD CHANGED THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER

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and partake because I can see you are really sincere. "Moses said nothing like that. What did he say? Numbers 9:8, *And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you.* This is what a gospel preacher means today when he teaches people to demand a "thus saith the Lord." When this is practiced there can be no doubt as to whether or not the action will be pleasing to God. What changes were made in the observance of the Passover at this time? Numbers 9:9-11, *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, if any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it*

with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. So these defiled men were given the opportunity to observe the Passover the second month of the year instead of the first. Does this example give us the right to change things today if a difficult situation occurs? No it does not. It does give us the proper action. Moses told them to wait and he would see what Jehovah said about the matter. Incidentally, when Hezekiah observed the Passover in 2 Chronicles chapter 30 we are told the observance was in the second month, v.2. They could observe it in that month because their situation was similar to that in Number 9. They could rightfully appeal to that chapter to observe it because God had made a change that would allow them to do it in the second month instead of the first.

Other changes could be noted that God made in the observance of the Passover. The point is: God made the changes. Man did not. You can read Jewish literature and find many changes they have made in the Passover's observance from before Christ to the present time. They can point to their traditions as their authority for these changes but I think such changes are displeasing to God. Dark clouds are gathering on the horizon that should be a warning to us all to cling more tightly to the practice of requiring a "thus saith the Lord."—4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

of a terrible sin affecting the congregation in chapter 5. Fornication was present, and it was the type of which not even the Gentiles would condone. Apparently, a man who was a brother in Christ had either married his father's wife or was committing fornication with her. Paul rebuked the church because they had not been offended to the point of insisting that this behavior be stopped. The apostle demanded that this sinful brother be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (Verse 5). Virtually all commentators understand that Paul meant that the brother was to be withdrawn from, and forced out into the kingdom of the world (Satan) in the hopes that he might be brought to repentance and thus be saved in the Day of Judgment. In other words, the church was to have no company with him at all. It is believed that this may be the brother to whom Paul refers in 2 Corinthians 2:5-8 where some un-named person was restored to the faith. Does it seem strange that Paul does not name this man? Please, consider this. The incestuous man was already known to the brethren at Corinth, so they didn't need to hear the name. Since he was probably only locally known and not a teacher, or preacher, who would be a threat to the neighboring congregations with his false doctrine such as Hymenaeus and Philetus at Ephesus, Paul saw no need to call his name.

Today, the immoral man with his father's wife (likely his stepmother) would perhaps be more likely

to have his name called publicly than anyone. However, after consideration, it seems obvious that the false teacher is the greater danger. While there is never any excuse for tolerating immorality, we must realize that men who teach false doctrine are a huge danger to the church at large. They must be identified by name so that others, even those who live far away, may know to avoid them. (See Romans 16:17).

Church members everywhere should realize this truth and be grateful when brethren identify **by name** those men or women who are advocating unscriptural practices, whether by their teaching or actions. Such people are a greater threat to the church than anyone because their impure teaching, or actions, may have repercussions for hundreds of years and cost thousands their souls. If one of us becomes involved in false teaching, we have no right to complain, or cry foul, when faithful brethren identify us by name and soundly refute the false doctrine or actions in which we have become involved. We need to expect this to happen and sound brethren everywhere need to applaud it when it occurs rather than saying how unfair it was of "preacher so and so" to mention the names, etc. Please keep in mind that Jesus named people and things specifically as did the apostles. Many examples could have been cited to show this truth. May God help us to "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my (our) people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah 58:1)

Think on these things.—DLK

Announcements

Regarding February Issue

Since I will be out of the country during most of January we ask that you send all items intended for publication in the February *OPA* to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808. After January 15th you may resume sending to us at the Livermore, CA address as usual. Our sincere thanks to Ronny for accepting this task again.

Can You Help Send The Paper To Someone?

We are trying to build the subscription list for the paper. We want it to go into more homes than ever before and we need your help. If you know your subscription is about to expire, please renew early; that will save us sending you a reminder. Also, consider sending the name of a friend or brother along with your renewal. When you renew for the usual price of \$10 per year, you can subscribe for a friend who doesn't currently receive the paper for only \$5 extra. You can subscribe for as many new subscribers as you wish for only \$5 each with your renewal. 144 pages this year for only \$5. Nearly everyone can afford to do that. Please, sit down right now and subscribe for a friend or brother. Remember also that anyone who sends us 10 new subscriptions at the

regular price of \$10 each will get theirs free for one year. If everyone would do so the number of readers would double overnight. Let us hear from you this month, please. Thanks so much.

Do You Have A Subject You Would Like To See?

If you have a topic you would like to see someone write about, please tell us. While we don't promise that we can always deliver, we will certainly try to ask someone to write an article about your subject. Also, ask preachers in your area to report to the paper or consider writing an article for publication.



Eighty Years Together!

Claude and Lucile McClain celebrated their 80th Wedding Anniversary on December 2, 2003. They were married in Roswell, New Mexico, on December 2, 1923. Bro. T.F. Thomasson, a preacher of the gospel, and the father of Lucile, performed the ceremony after the morning church service on that Sunday. They left for Texas that afternoon. Claude and Lucile were blessed with six children, five daughters and one son. The names of those children are: Juel Sallee, Marvin McClain, Melba Dorsett, Louise Franklin, Christine Massengale, and Brenda Hope. They have seventeen grandchildren, thirty-eight great-grandchildren, and twenty-nine great-great-grandchildren. They are Pa Pa and Ma Ma to all those grandchildren. They are very fortunate to have this large family and to have had no deaths of their descendents. The only two deaths in the family were their sons-in-law. Claude and Lucile lived in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and California. They moved to Escalon, California in 1949. They had a dairy there. They lived a simple life, worked hard, and raised just about everything they ate. Anyone who visited them for breakfast remembers those delicious biscuits Lucile made every morning, from scratch, the real churned butter, fresh milk, and fresh eggs. In later years they owned a small mobile home park, where they lived, within close walking distance of the church in Escalon. They were always able to attend the worship services of the church. In May of 1998, their children decided that it was no longer safe for Claude and Lucile to be left alone. They lived with some of their children until September of 2000. At that time they were moved to a retirement home and put into assisted living. They have adjusted very well and are happy there. They are doing well, considering their ages. Claude is ninety-nine years old and Lucile is ninety-six years old. Address: Claude and Lucile McClain, Casa de Modesto Retirement Center, 1745 Eldena Way, Modesto, CA 95350.

Note: In these days of rampant divorce, Brother and Sister McClain are certainly a wonderful example of

what God intended to be. One man and one woman, for a lifetime! As long as I can remember, they have been an example of simple Christian living and old fashioned qualities. May God bless them.—Don. L. King

Silver Communion Cups

Brother Alton Bailey has located a source, here in the US, that will supply us with silver communion cups. They may be ordered in the following sizes: 24, 28, 32, or 36 oz. They come as a set, including cup, lid, and plate. The price will be in the neighborhood of \$400 for the complete set. They will be cheaper if ordered in sets of 6 or more. So churches needing a new set, need to notify Brother Alton. His address is Alton Bailey 410 Ginger Circle, LaGrange, GA 30240. Phone number 706-882-1114.

Church in Charlotte, NC

A church is now meeting in Charlotte, NC in the home of Brother Terry White. The address is 11213 Fountaingrove Dr. Charlotte, NC 28262. You may call at 704-717-8274 for times of meeting. If you know of anyone in the Charlotte area who might be interested in meeting with this group, or if you have friends or relatives that they can contact, please notify brother White.

Our Departed

MORRISON—Brother Aubrey Morrison, a long time member of the Church of Christ in San Angelo, Texas, passed from this life on October 14, 2003 after a lengthy illness. He was born in Lamar Co., near Paris, TX, March 19, 1920. He was 83 at the time of his passing. His parents were Robert and Christeen Morrison, well known members of the church in San Angelo. His father preceded him in death only a few years ago. Aubrey is survived by his wife, Verima, of the home. They were married for 53 years. He is survived by three sons, Royce Morrison of San Angelo, Aaron Morrison of Burleson, TX, and James Morrison of San Angelo. He is also survived by two brothers and five sisters. He is survived by four grandchildren. His body was laid to rest in the Eola cemetery not far from San Angelo. Members of the church provided the beautiful singing, assisted by Brother Cullen Smith. Aubrey will be greatly missed by the church at San Angelo and by all those who knew him. A large crowd was gathered for his graveside service. Brother Cullen Smith and the writer, Melvin Blalock endeavored to speak words of comfort and warning to those who were present.

TIDMORE—Jennie Lee Tidmore, the daughter of John Wesley and Nancy Ann (Wright) Curtis was born in Hope, AK August 28, 1910, died at her home in Valliant, OK October 29, 2003. She was 93 years old. August 15, 1929 she was married to Lum Tidmore at Clarksville, TX. Jennie was a member of the church for 75 years. She was a lover of gospel singing. In addition, was contended to be a homemaker, enjoying

quilting. Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband and 4 brothers, 7 sisters, 3 daughters, 1 son, 5 stepsons, 4 grandsons, 2 granddaughters, 1 step granddaughter, and 1 step grandson. She is survived by 2 sons, 4 daughters, and a number of grandchildren, and numerous nephews and nieces. The memorial service was held at the Valliant meeting house with an overflow crowd attending. The congregational singing was beautiful being led by Brother Wm. St. John. The writer spoke words of admonition, hope and warning. Sister Jennie will be missed her family, the church, and by preachers at gospel meeting time as she was always in attendance even when she did not feel like being present. Only the Lord knows her works, which shall appear at the Judgement. I am grateful for the assistance afforded by Brother William.—Barney Owens

CRANDALL - Mikeal Allen Crandall departed this life September 14, 2003 from injuries sustained from a motorcycle accident. Mikeal had come back to the church on this very day to get things right with the Lord. A young man of 18 years attempting to get his life in order Mikeal was struggling to live for the Lord. His early family were not members of the church and somewhat diverse in their own beliefs. Few of his friends offered him spiritual support and work associates liked him but showed little concern for his spiritual needs. The service was difficult for this preacher as I attempted to comfort the family with words of peace and truth. We pray that his time with the church will serve as some example to other of his family in the days ahead. Perhaps we may learn from this untimely event the need to always be prepared for no man can know the hour when he or she shall be called to go. The only possible peace one may draw from this is knowing things were well with his soul as far as we are able to discern. Pray for his family and remember all those that weep, but especially our young. May the redeemed rest in the peace of God's comfort and abiding love.—Roger L. Owens



MILLER—Sister Zona Belle House Miller was born February 17, 1910 in Clay County, Alabama; she departed this life October 4, 2003 at LaGrange, Ga. In 1930, she was married to Brother E. H. Miller. To this union three children were born: Louise Bowen, who predeceased her father and mother; one son, Bro. Raymond Miller, and Florence Bailey, wife of Bro. Alton Bailey, preacher of the gospel, Florence follows in her dear mother's footsteps. As a young lady, Sister Miller was baptized into Christ under the preaching of Bro. Clarence Teurman, one time publisher of *The Apostolic Way*. Sister Miller's host of grandchildren

and great-grandchildren rallied en masse to honor her. Stalwart great grandsons were bearers. Sister Miller was to this writer a true, exemplary preacher's wife. A preacher's wife is indispensable to his success. I, for one, give my wife credit for whatever success I have had in this arena of my life. In days gone by, it was the McCords' honor to have the Millers stay with us during meetings. My wife says she has never had a woman in her kitchen who knew where everything was as did Sister Miller, knowing exactly what to do. As life ebbed away, with needed strength intact, Sister Miller was thinking of others and their needs. She had stocked her deep freeze in anticipation of this. We all enjoyed these fruits of her labors as we partook of the sumptuous fare after her passing. Singers were Glenn Prince, Tim Prince, Alice Prince Thompson and Leanne Thompson, you know by these names, if you know them, and their talents, how pretty it was. Three men commendably officiated: Allen Bailey, grandson, Larry Thompson, dear friend, and Steve Bowen, grandson. At graveside Young Brother Fancher, great-grandson-in-law, led "Soon and Very Soon." It was this writer's honor to have the prayer at graveside, and have the family ask that I submit this tribute for publication. I comply, with the feeling that I have not done Sister Miller justice.—*Don McCord*

Bonds Of Matrimony

COZBY-KENNEDY—On Saturday afternoon, May 3, 2003 at Lodi, California, a large crowd gathered to witness the joining in marriage of Andrew Layton Cozby and Brooke Nicole Kennedy. It was a sober yet joyous occasion as these two young Christians made their vows and promised themselves to each other for the rest of their lives. Andrew is the son of Steven and Ronda Cozby and Brooke is the daughter of Jerry and Kathy Kennedy. Both were raised in the church in faithful Christian homes and we anticipate theirs will be the same where the Lord is always the honored guest. As requested several years ago by Brooke, I was honored to officiate at this special event in their lives.—*Don L. King*

MCALISTER-CANTRELL—On the evening of December 19th, it was my privilege to officiate at the wedding of brother Cale McAlister and sister Renae Cantrell. A large crowd consisting of family, friends, and wellwishers were present to witness the exchange of their vows. Cale is the son of Ronnie and Valinda McAlister from the Washington, OK area and Renae is the daughter of Rany and Rhonda Cantrell of Bedford, Texas. This fine young couple had the privilege of being raised in Christian homes and bring to their marriage a rich heritage of the faith. We wish for them the very best that this life can provide and have every reason to believe that they will dedicate their home to the propagation of Christian principles.—*Ronny F. Wade*

Field Reports

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953—We are continuing our work with the Olivehurst Congregation in 2004. There have been 2 more baptisms in recent weeks. Olivehurst believes in standing for a "thus saith the Lord." There are several studies going on and we believe these will bring forth much fruit for the kingdom of God. We look forward to this New Year as a year of opportunities to strengthen the Lord's cause in this area. Joann and I appreciate the support of the churches and the encouragement of the brethren. I have recently preached in Escalon, Yuba City, and Bakersfield (Brundage Rd). God bless all of you.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct, Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Dec. 10—This week we had our first big winter snow storm at Kansas City. We had blizzard conditions for hours and the roads were iced over and treacherous. However, today there is little indication of how serious it was. The sun is shining and the winds are calm. We were saddened over the unexpected death of Hazel King of the Stony Point congregation in Kansas City. She was the wife of Dale King. Flu has hit our congregation. I was sick for several days and am still recovering. This is in spite of taking the flu shot. Others are still sick with it. Dec. 17-21, I am scheduled to be at Neosho, MO to be in charge of the young speakers meeting. The year 2003 will be over by the time this report appears in the paper. Are we satisfied with what we have accomplished for the Lord? Time is fleeting and when Jesus comes we will be asked for an account. What will our answer be?

Jonathan Bunner, Apartado Postal #18-01-241, Ambato, Ecuador, Dec. 2, 2003—My family and I are fine though we have been somewhat ill this past month. Last month we visited with Brother Motta and his family in Machala, which is a new work. We were able to visit with some new people and invited them to study with us and two young people did. We hope they will continue to study with Brother Motta. We preached in his home on Sunday morning and though others were invited, our two families were the only ones present. We pray that the work will grow and we feel sure Brother Motta is doing his part to bring lost souls to the truth. We have also held a number of other studies which we pray will bring results soon. The congregation is now preparing for their first gospel meeting the first part of December with Brother Juan Rodriguez. We believe this meeting will be uplifting to us and an opportunity for the lost to hear the gospel preached by someone else. Please remember us in your prayers.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com, December 12—With this issue, we begin our 72nd year of publication. We are grateful for the Lord's blessings and the patience and understanding of brethren worldwide. Our prayer is that the paper can grow and go into more homes this year than ever before. Will you help us do it? The meeting at Covina, CA closed with two confessions of wrong, if memory serves correctly. Our thanks to the brethren there for all their kindness and hospitality. We thank all of you for every good thing you did for us during 2003 as we traveled among the brethren. We are at home now for a short time and making ready to depart for the Philippines on the 24th trip January 2, 2004. Lord willing, Richard DeGough will be with us on this trip and we look forward to being with him again. It will also be good to travel with our old friend, Virgilio Danao who has been working in Hawaii for several years now but lived in the Philippines for most of his life. The work has prospered in spite of those servants of Satan who would seek to hinder. We are to be with the church in Yuba City, CA this coming Lord's Day for two services. We always need your prayers and well wishes.

Melvin Blalock, 214 Pearl St., Cleburne TX 76031, (817)-641-1668, Dec. 8, 2003. We have had a good year in the Lord's work for which we are very thankful. We continue to work with the churches in the North Texas area. Our primary work is with the congregation at Weatherford, TX and the congregation at Cleburne, TX. We also assist the church at Mineral Wells and Duncanville on a limited basis. We have seen growth in this area during the past year with a few baptisms and restorations. In addition, we have been blessed by new families, which have begun attending the congregation at Cleburne. Cleburne is our home congregation. We are blessed with good congregational teachers in this congregation and with good song leaders. We are very optimistic about the future of the Cleburne congregation. We were very uplifted by having Paul and Wilma Nichols with us for a meeting in August. We had a good meeting and Paul and Wilma were so inspirational to all of us. How blessed we were to have them come our way. The church at Cleburne is in the process of remodeling our old building. We are adding two new restrooms to the front of the building. We were required to make every thing handicapped accessible. We have built a new front porch, sidewalk, wheelchair ramp and paved parking. We are excited about these improvements to our meeting place. Besides my local work, I have been blessed with the opportunity to labor in a few meetings through the past year. It was my privilege to be one of the speakers at the meeting in Valliant, OK, earlier this year. This

was my first time to be at this congregation. I enjoyed holding a meeting for the congregation at Amarillo, TX, where Bro. Bob Orear is doing a good work. I helped to start this congregation over thirty years ago. It was good to preach in the little building that we helped to build back in the early seventies. They have since sold this building and moved across town. The Amarillo congregation is a wonderful group of loving Christian people. During the summer we had the privilege of holding a meeting at Grants Pass, OR. We had a wonderful meeting and were treated royally. These people are so friendly and hospitable. It was good to be with Brother Glenn Arnett who is a tireless worker for the Lord. I enjoyed visiting with Bro. Dan Powell, a long time friend. We stayed most of the time in the home of Bro. Clarence Permenter and his wife, Bennie. Their hospitality was just wonderful. In September, we were privileged to be with the congregation at Deer Park, TX, for a short meeting. This was our third meeting at this congregation. What a wonderful congregation this is. Brother Jerry Dickinson calls this congregation home. How blessed they are to have him. It was so good to get to visit with Jerry's father and mother, Bro. Bill Dickinson and his wife, Jimmie. I enjoyed staying in the home of my good friends, Chuck and Martha Morris, and their son, Brent. It has been a wonderful year in the Lord's work. May the Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

Miles King, 8586 Wilderness Trail, Scotland, AR 72141, Email mtking@cei.net, Nov. 4—The fall and winter months are now upon us! We send our greetings for a New Year! I hope we have some good plans for the service of the Lord and for our growth as Christians. We continue to work in the area of Scotland, AR and helping some of the surrounding congregations like Jerusalem (Cedar Creek) and Witts Springs. I have enjoyed some good meetings this year at Pansey, Alabama, Tampa, Florida, Mitchell; Indiana, Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Wynnewood, Oklahoma. We have enjoyed meetings this summer & Fall with Terry Baze (Scotland), J. W. Kornegay (Witts Springs) Brian Burns (Cedar Creek) and Alton Bailey at Dardanelle. We have just closed a good "Study on the Eldership" at Little Rock with several preachers participating. I look forward to going to Indiana for a meeting at Bloomington (Nov. 12-16). Bro. Shelby Taulbee plans to be with us this week and preach at Witts Springs and at Scotland. We are so happy with Bro. Tom Acton who preaches in this area—and all the zeal and encouragement given by Terry Hayes from Little Rock and also Bro. Kevin Huneycutt who is making good progress as a young speaker in the church. I certainly enjoy the *OPA* and will try to be more regular in writing. Thanks to all the brethren who help by encouraging and supporting us as we proclaim the GOOD NEWS!

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THE BACK PAGE...

THE BIBLE AND THE BARD

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Local brother Vaden Morgan was recently doing some evangelistic door knocking and was warmly received by one gentleman who invited Vaden into his house to discuss the Bible. As Vaden entered the house the man excitedly asked, "Did you know William Shakespeare left his signature in the Bible?" He proceeded to tell Vaden that Shakespeare was one of the translators of the King James Version and secretly left his signature in Psalm. 46. He pointed out that Shakespeare was forty-six years old in 1610, the year the bulk of the King James translation was completed. The forty-sixth word from the beginning of Psalm 46 is "shake." Counting backwards from the end of the Psalm (if you omit the final word "selah"—part of the inspired text), the forty-sixth word is "spear." The gentleman concluded that these remarkable facts offer conclusive proof Shakespeare surreptitiously left his autograph in the translation of the King James Version.

I have run across speculation about Shakespeare's participation in translating the KJV before, but I must admit this is the first time I have ever heard the Psalm. 46 theory. While the theory is amusing it hardly merits serious consideration. For one thing, in order to get the perfect 46s out of Psalm 46, the word "selah" must be omitted from the text. Since the word "selah" seems to be a type of punctuation, the proponents of the theory think it would be acceptable to omit it. The word, however, is in the original text of the Psalm and should be counted and thus it foils the entire theory. Using this same methodology I am confident I could find evidence that my twenty-five year old son David left his signature in the KJV also.

The identities of the once-anonymous KJV translation committee are pretty well known today and Shakespeare, the Bard of Stratford-on-Avon, was not one of them. The events and dates in the life of Shakespeare are fairly well known, and in all of the known facts about his life, not a single paper or document puts him anywhere near the translation process of the KJV.

On the contrary, while the theater was widely enjoyed in Elizabethan England (and in the time of King James too) it was hardly respected as one of the serious arts. There was still something unrespectable about the theater, a sense that it was sinful in some way. There were all kinds of laws against actors and theaters, which explains why all the London theaters were across the Thames from the main part of the city and located in an area of "ill repute." A man so closely knit to this community would hardly be the person the King would ask to be on a committee to translate the Bible. Shakespeare's work was popular at the time, but it did not become respected as a serious work of art until after his death.

I never cease to be amazed at the insatiable appetite many people have for urban legend-type codes and puzzles attributed to the Bible. In 1997 Simon and Schuster published a best-selling book by Michael Drosnin entitled, *The Bible Code*. Drosnin's book is about Israeli mathematician Dr. Eliyahu Rips, who claims to have discovered a 3,000 year-old code in the Hebrew Old Testament foretelling specific future events such as the first moon landing, both Kennedy assassinations, Watergate, the election of Bill Clinton as President, and the Oklahoma City bombing. Rips' methodology, however, is so convoluted and subjective that it proves nothing. Using his techniques eager code-breakers can delude themselves into finding about anything they want in the Bible.

The late Ivan Panin devoted fifty years to the study of "Bible Numerics." His theory was that there is in the Bible a mysterious and marvelous numerical pattern that establishes the correctness of the text and proves the divine authority of Holy Scripture. With all due respect to Panin's indefatigable study, his theory has been shown to be invalid. Anyone whose faith in the inerrant, inspiration of the Bible depends upon Bible Numerics is leaning upon a broken reed that will not hold up.

I am reminded of Paul's words of caution to the young evangelist Timothy (1:4), "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do." Paul warns Timothy that he could waste a lot of time examining fables and endless genealogies, and it would not profit him anything as far as salvation (godly edifying) is concerned.

The fact remains today. No controversy, issue, question, secret code or puzzle is of much worth if, when settled completely, it has nothing to do with our soul's salvation. We would do well to study God's word in order to see what it really says concerning His saving plan and righteous living, rather than trying to discover secret codes and mysterious names that are ostensibly hidden beneath the surface. As Shakespeare himself said, "God shall be my hope, my stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet" (Henry VI Act ii, Sc.3).—1400
Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820; carlmj@cableone.net

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXVIII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, FEBRUARY 2004

NO. 2

TRUST YE NOT IN LYING WORDS

By JERRY DICKINSON

"Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these." (Jeremiah 7:4) These words are part of a sermon preached by Jeremiah, standing at the entrance to the newly repaired temple, while throngs of worshippers enter the gates to (ostensibly) praise the Lord. To understand the force of these words we need to understand the historic background of this moment. When young Josiah became king in Judah the nation was in a sordid spiritual state. The temple was in disrepair and the worship of Jehovah was all but extinct. The people had been carried away with the worship of idol gods and, though they kept heathen and idolatrous festivals, even the keeping of the Passover had stopped. But young Josiah loved the Lord and attempted to start a revival in the land. First, the temple was cleaned up and during this cleansing a copy of the Law was found by Hilkiah the priest.

Hilkiah, it appears, was the father of Jeremiah. Jeremiah and Josiah must have been about the same age and Jeremiah was called to be the Lord's prophet in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. Both Jeremiah and Josiah were probably about twenty or twenty one years old when Jeremiah began to preach. The finding of the lost copy of the Law had a profound effect on Josiah. After hearing it read, he determined to reinstate the authority of the Lord in Jerusalem. The temple was repaired, restored, and reopened. For the first time in many years the Passover was kept, and it was kept in a grand and glorious style. In fact, the writer says there was never a Passover like this one kept in Israel's history. With the temple restored and reopened, throngs of worshippers began to enter the gates of the temple. Multitudes of people were swept along with the emotion and novelty of the moment. They enter the gates of the temple crying, "The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!" In many ways, it was a most remarkable scene in the history of Israel. To a casual observer it would appear that a great revival had swept through the land.

But something is wrong! As the crowds make their

way into the temple, we are arrested by the preaching of the young prophet from Anathoth. Jeremiah is seen standing in the gateway facing the multitudes of the people, and rebuking them, in the act of worship, and for the act of worship. He was a lonely man, a solitary and yet heroic figure; a man responding to a Divine commission which must have taxed his courage to the ultimate. In the very hour of worship, in the gate of the very temple, which had been but recently repaired and restored, he said to the people, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these." What is he saying? What do these words mean? What was the problem?

1. **Outward, not Inward Revival.** First, the problem was that the revival was not heartfelt on the part of the people. Josiah certainly loved the Lord and his reformation was from the heart, but the people only went along because of the popularity of the young king and because of the emotional high brought on by the restoration of the temple. This is revealed in these scorching words from Jeremiah, "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith Jehovah." It was a time of reform, but the reform was superficial. King Josiah was perfectly sincere and the people followed him because he was popular, but there was no depth in the national reformation. They praised the temple and its ritual, but their hearts were still attached to heathen altars and festivals. They shouted, "The temple of the LORD!" with their mouths, but in their hearts they clung to the temple of idols. Their words, therefore, were lying words. They trusted in those lying words, too! They thought that by this outward and ostentatious show of fidelity for the God of good King Josiah they would be guarded and protected from harm and from their enemies. "This is a lie!" proclaimed Jeremiah. God wants a real revival - an inward revival that comes from the heart. Surely this message speaks to us today. Just going through the form and ritual of worship does not impress God. Our worship and our praise must

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Editorial

THE MASTER BUILDER

BY GREG GAY

In January 2003 we moved into a brand new house after many long months of construction. We very carefully selected the builder, the location, and the house plan. There were options of carpet and tile and many other things along the way that we agonized over, wanting everything to be just right.

We monitored the construction each step along the way. Every week we toured the construction site to look at the progress. It was amazing to see how the raw materials came together to become a beautiful structure. None of that could have happened without a builder. All of the materials would have just been in a heap where they were unloaded were it not for someone with the knowledge of how to build a house selecting what they needed one product at a time and putting everything together in the proper way.

When we moved in we anticipated everything would be perfect. But, that was not to be. We had no big problems, just little things like a leaky sliding glass door, a bad window, some paint not finished, a crack in tile grout, and a sprinkler system that kept blowing fuses. Again, just little things, but they were still annoying things. The builder evidently anticipates every home he builds will have a few problems like these because he has one employee whose job is fixing the little things people find when they move into their new homes.

Was our builder good? Actually he is considered a very good builder. Why were there some problems? Because that is the nature of building a house, I'm told. There are usually some small things that need to be repaired.

This is not the last new home we plan to live in. We may never have another new home in this life, but as God's children we are looking forward to a new home in heaven!

Jesus told his apostles: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14-2). What a wonderful home we will have in heaven! Some translations use the word "rooms" instead of mansions in our verse. But, that doesn't matter. Whether a mansion or a room, we will be in heaven!

Do we trust Jesus to properly prepare our mansion in heaven? I think we should. We already have proof of His ability as a builder. Jesus said: "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18).

How does God see the church? Paul proclaims the church to be "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5-27).

Let us proclaim Jesus to be the greatest builder of

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QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is "marking" in Romans 16:17 considered withdrawing fellowship?

Answer: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away from them." The word "mark" is from (skopos) which means to "take heed, mark, consider, look at." A.T. Robertson says it means "keep the eye on so as to avoid." Nicoll says they are to keep their eyes on them as "a peril to be avoided." Lenski translates it "look out for." Arndt and Gingrich say "look (out) for, notice, keep one's eyes on." Thayer adds "to look at, observe, contemplate...direct ones attention to..." Hence, Paul writes the church to "look out" for those who were stirring up trouble and causing divisions among them. His reference is no doubt directed at the Judaizing teachers who were the main troublemakers of that time, but was not limited to them. Anyone, then or now, who creates trouble "contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned" is to be so marked and avoided. They are to be eyed closely. "Do not shut your eyes to what they are doing, nor make excuses for them." (Whiteside) By avoiding them they would have no fellowship with them. If brethren and churches today followed Paul's instructions, they would save themselves much heartache and grief.

Question: Why don't we practice anointing with oil today?

Answer: Anointing with oil in order to heal the sick is a common practice among many Pentecostal groups as well as the Mormons and some others. It is not uncommon for television preachers to offer "prayer cloths" that have been dipped in olive oil to viewers that are to be placed on their bodies while prayer is offered in their behalf. This is supposed to result in miraculous healing. Oil, however, was not always used in healing situations in Bible times. Jesus, for example healed people on numerous occasions without the use of oil (Mark 8:5; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 9:38-43; John 4:47-54). Oil in the Bible was used for both medical and symbolic purposes. Prophets, priests and kings were often anointed with oil which symbolized their acceptance and divine approval (1 Sam. 10:19). In Luke 10:34 the therapeutic value of oil is seen when it was poured into the wounds of the man who fell among thieves. In James 5:14-15 the use of oil was obviously symbolic and served as a token of the fact that the healing noted there was by the power of God. The elders in this passage evidently possessed a spiritual gift, given them by the laying on of the apostles hands, which allowed them to heal the individual who was sick. The blessing or healing came through the "prayer of faith" and by the authority of the Lord. The anointing of oil was symbolic of the power that the Lord would exercise

in the healing and raising up of the afflicted man. This event was for a limited time and purpose. It was not widely followed or intended to be a universal practice even in the age of miraculous gifts, since there were a number of saints who were sick and often died from their illnesses (Acts 9:32-43; Phil. 2:19-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:8). In this case, however, those involved received the promise blessing without exception when the inspired instructions were followed. If these instructions were for today, and the sick called for the elders as here directed, and if the elders did their duty, no one in the church would ever die. Yet we are told that "It is appointed unto men once to die..." Heb. 9:27. Since the passage in James involves a miraculous situation belonging to that time frame, we cannot use it as authority for such a practice today. While there might be some situations in which oil has medicinal value, as a general rule such is not the case. If such a benefit could be claimed there would be nothing wrong with using oil. However, to claim that using oil will miraculously heal someone of an illness today is neither taught nor exemplified in the scripture. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, rf Wade@getatlas.com.)

THE CROSS

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The God of heaven who gave His Son Jesus Christ to suffer, bleed and die for the sins of the world never authorized His people to glorify the cross and exalt it as a symbol of Christianity. It is true that the inspired apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." This is a figure of speech. The reason for such a statement was that he gloried in **what was accomplished at Calvary** when Jesus died on the cross. The law was fulfilled. The innocent died for the guilty, reconciliation was made for sin, salvation was procured for the sinner; there Christ purchased our redemption. Paul did not glory in the old rugged wooden cross, but in what had been accomplished when Christ "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

Crucifixion is one of the most cruel and inhumane means of death ever devised by mortal man. Execution on the cross is slow and horrible. It finally results in the suffocation of the victim as his strength ebbs, his muscles ache and he can no longer sustain his weight with his arms and legs. He struggles to breathe, and his torturous pain is indescribable before he finally gives up and dies from lack of oxygen.

The cross was never meant by God to be a decoration for the wall of a Christian, nor an ornament or piece of jewelry to be hung about the neck of a child of God, nor used as a symbol of religion on a place of

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

*(The following article from the pen of Dr. G.A. Trott first appeared in the **Apostolic Way** of 1924. He along with H.C. Harper and W.J. Rice had founded the paper several years earlier. He continued to write for it as well as **The Truth** also published by Brother Harper. His pen was very pointed, and at times he came down on the opposition with great force and plainness of speech. His tract on "The Cup" continues to be one of the best ever written on the subject. Please read with profit the following article on Covetousness.)*

COVETOUSNESS

By G. A. Trott

"And He said unto them, take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15.) There is no more insidious sin than covetousness and never was there a time when a serious consideration of the Savior's warning was more necessary. There seems to be but little knowledge of the full scope of the word, even among them who claim to be the children of God and many are being hurried along the downward road to destruction unawares. There are so many who have the idea that the whole definition of covetousness is the desire for something which belongs to another or something which cannot be obtained in an honorable way. Such a conception is very far indeed from the full meaning of the word.

Paul says that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5) and that expression properly understood, gives us a better conception of the term than any I can think of and rightly so, because it is a divine definition. Anything we love to the extent of allowing it to rise above our obligations to God is an idol; it matters not whether it be luxury, power, wealth, ease, houses, lands, father, mother, husband, wife, children, fame popularity or even life itself. If we love any of these enough to keep us from putting the things of God above the things of self, we are covetous and are unworthy of that supreme love which God displayed when he gave his only begotten son to die for us. When we see men spend thousands of dollars upon their children and dimes for the service of the Lord, they are idolizing their children. When church members spend more money upon their own pleasures than they give to the cause of Christ, they are making an idol of pleasure. When faithful preachers are allowed to suffer for the necessities of life while the land is full of brethren who have more of this world's goods than they really need, we know that some are idolizing their worldly possession. When I see in the papers calls for help to build houses of worship, I often wonder if it is not a matter of covetousness on the part of some. I have actually known of such calls when I knew of some brother in the congregation making the call who could have built

a house with but little or no sacrifice of any comfort.

Such things as this, so plainly stated, hurt; I know they hurt; but nevertheless those who feel the most hurt know they are the simple and undeniable truth. Nothing so hurts and enrages an idolator as an attack on his idol. The reason widows suffer, the gospel not preached, the poor neglected, houses of worship are lacking, good works of all kinds left undone and millions going to hell for lack of gospel knowledge is covetousness—idolatry.

Nothing but pure, unadulterated, unfeigned, unselfish, devoted love for God and Christ can root this covetousness out of the heart; let us pray earnestly and seek diligently for this love; it is the only antidote for the poison of covetousness that Satan is so industriously sowing in the hearts of men.

AN HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

You are reading the words of a man who knows what it is like to be homesick. There are times when I have had an ache in my heart to go home to see my loved ones who were waiting for my return. Many of you reading this article have experienced that same emotion. But do we as the people of God ever get homesick for heaven? Do we long to look upon our Savior's face (as we long to see our natural parents)? Do we yearn to see our mansion that Christ is preparing for us (as we yearn to see the old home-place)? If heaven is real to us and not just a fanciful dream, the following hymn should ring true in our hearts: "See the bright light shine, it's just about home time, I can see my Father standing at the door. This world's been a wilderness, I'm ready for deliverance. Lord, I've never been this homesick before!"

Paul was a man who knew what it meant to be homesick: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain...For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (Phil. 1:21-24) The great apostle had a burning desire to leave this old world behind to go be with Christ, which he declared to be a better blessing than anything this world can offer. All of us need to decide to make the reality of heaven something that is nearer and dearer to us. We do that by concentrating on "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).

There are many reasons why Christians ought to get homesick for heaven, but in this article I want to emphasize what Paul wrote in Phil. 3:20. It is said that home is where the heart is. How true those words are! When young people go out on their own for the very first time, they tend to get homesick because they leave a part of themselves back home. Likewise, when we truly believe and comprehend the affirmation of Phil. 3:20, it is going to make a difference in how we view earthly life: "For our

conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The word "conversation" in this passage means citizenship. It signifies the condition, or life, of a citizen—i.e., heaven is the place where our loyalty lies because we recognize that we are citizens of that heavenly country; it is the homeland or the mother-country of the child of God.

I was born in 1952 in Galena Park, TX. That event was recorded by man. If necessary, I can obtain a birth certificate to verify the veracity of that claim. My birth certificate is proof that I am a citizen of the USA, having been born in the great state of Texas. Since I was born in America and that event was recorded, I am a natural citizen of this country and entitled to all the rights and privileges guaranteed by the constitution. Similarly, I am also a citizen of heaven because many years ago I experienced another birth. I was born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Simply put, I obeyed the gospel of Christ: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pet. 1:23) I was born of water when I was baptized for the remission of sins as the Spirit instructs in His inspired word (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

When I was born anew into the family of God, that event was also recorded, but this time it was recorded in heaven. What a blessed thought to know that my name is written down in "the book of life" (Rev. 20:12)! When my name was recorded that day, by virtue of that fact I became a citizen of that heavenly country, and that entitles me to all the rights and privileges of heaven itself. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1:3) Is your name recorded in heaven? If so, you have reason for great rejoicing: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20) If your name is not recorded in "the Lamb's book of life," you have reason to fear because Rev. 21:27 declares that you will not enter heaven in the great by and by.

Children of God get homesick for heaven because that is their real eternal home, as opposed to this earth that is only a temporary abode. We need to constantly remind ourselves every day that we are but pilgrims and strangers in this world (1 Pet. 2:11). The reason some do not get homesick for gloryland is that they are too attached to earthly things and they have forgotten where their real home is—HEAVEN! Dearly beloved, if you think of earth as your home, just remember that the earth with everything in it is destined to perish by fire when Jesus comes again (2 Pet. 3:10-12).

Christians long for heaven because only that supernal home can satisfy our souls eternally. When you really get homesick in a bad way, there is only one remedy that will satisfy—it's going home! Well,

we have some longings and aspirations that only heaven can meet. It is great to worship God over here, but think of how thrilling it will be to worship God eternally over there. It is a wonderful blessing to live for the Lord over here and have access to Christ's cleansing blood, but over there the tempter will be gone forever and sin will be no more. We love to associate with God's people over here, but think of the grand fellowship we will enjoy over there with the redeemed of all ages. We study our Bibles over here and long to know more of God's will for our lives, but over there we will understand all the secrets of the universe. Over here we have a hope of eternal life (Tit. 1:2), but over there our hope will be a reality (Mark 10:30).

Let us all resolve that we will be devoted saints like those described in the book of Hebrews: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city". (11:13 -16) Myrtle Erickson wrote: Think--

Of stepping on shore and finding heaven,
Of taking hold of a hand and finding it is God's hand;

Of breathing a new air and finding it is celestial air;
Of feeling invigorating and finding it immortality,
Of looking up AND FINDING IT HOME!

—2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803

THE NEW YEAR

By HARVEY HAMMONDS

I've been thinking about the New Year and I want to wish you peace and prosperity, the best of health, happiness, but most of all a sense of well-being in this world and the New Year.

The New Year has (366) three hundred and sixty-six days of unspotted, un-spoiled, and un-used time. Many opportunities and challenges will come our way. It will be like the wind blowing across our paths and no one will really know what's in store for us. We'll begin the New Year with the dignity of good citizens, honest, compassionate and have an interest in the welfare of everyone the world over.

'The beginning of a New Year is psychologically exciting. It is just like all other days, but still, it has a freshness about it that suggests a clean slate, another chance, a new start.

The Apostle Paul told the early Christians long ago to forget that which has gone by and reach forward to those things, which are before. Let's not let by-

goners "DRAG US DOWN." (Phillipians 3:13, 14)

Isn't it amazing that something spoken so many years ago could be so applicable to us today. God's word never wears out or gets old. What an attitude to begin the New Year.

Some good things to do:

1. Practice making a good first impression and make it good all year long.
2. Smile and speak to people. Call them by name.
3. Be interested in the welfare of the world's entire population.
4. Looking back on my 75 years, the most common things that need to be stamped out are: lying, cheating, stealing, self-indulgence, hypocrisy. Stamp these out. Be on your way to a good life and a Happy New Year.

Begin the New Year with a lot of enthusiasm. Work at making a better life as you never have before. SOMEONE NEEDS YOU. Be there. Be available. You will like yourself.

Meet all challenges head-on. You will be a winner. How could you lose with the support that you have? We all have a commodity, most precious, an item all too casually accepted by man, (TIME).

The New Year is coming. READY OR NOT. Let wasted time and lost opportunities be a thing of the past. They can never be recalled or reclaimed anyhow. We cannot rewind the day, turn back the clock or replace a day torn from the calendar.

A careful analysis of God's purpose for our lives will disclose the component parts of true happiness. We stand on the threshold of a New Year.

Whatever hovers over the horizon, we have the promise and assurance of Jesus who said in (Matthew 28:20). "Lo, I will be with you always."

Paul told the Phillipians in chapter 4, verse 13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me."

With such an attitude, how could we fail? The providence of God surrounds and embraces us. Romans 8:37: "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." God has always made provisions for His Children. Hebrews 13:5 "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." How much more support do we need?

Let's get to it. Get up. Come in out of the rain. Hold your high esteem because you are somebody.

A poet once said:

The moving finger writes: and having writ
Moves on, nor all your piety nor wit
Can lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all your tears wipe out a word of it.

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EZRA'S LIFE: A CHALLENGE

By VIRGILIO O. DANA O. SR.

The title conveys the understanding that the life of Ezra offers us a challenge to use our abilities, energies

or resources to follow what he had done. In other words, we should be challenged to emulate the kind of life Ezra had.

Ezra was a scribe, a priest, and a brilliant scholar of the law of God given to the Israelites through Moses. He came from the direct generations of Aaron, a high priest who lived in the Old Testament times. He was one of those who were exiled to Babylon after the fall of the Kingdom of Israel. But Babylon was later conquered by the Persians. During the reign of King Cyrus, the Israelites were permitted by the king to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. Despite many hindrances and obstacles initiated by the enemies of the Israelites, the rebuilding of the Temple was completed and worship according to the laws of God was restored, through the leadership of Zurababel.

After several years the rebuilding of the temple was completed. During the reign of Emperor Artaxerxes, another group of Israelites from Babylon arrived in Jerusalem. They were led by Ezra who was appointed by the emperor to check whether the people were really following the laws of God and their worship was in accordance with His will.

In Ezra 7:10, we read, "*Ezra has devoted his life to studying the law of the Lord, to practicing it, and to teaching all its laws and regulations to the people of Israel.*" There are three things worthy for us to note which would challenge us to emulate the example he left.

Firstly: *Ezra has devoted his life to studying the law of the Lord.* Of course, the word, studying, denotes a continuous action. It comes from the verb word, study, and its primary usage also as a transitive verb, according to the dictionary, is... "*To apply one's mind purposefully to the acquisition of knowledge or understanding of (any subject).*" It conveys the idea of an intended and continuous effort to acquire knowledge. And this was what Ezra did. He was not contented with what he already knew. He devoted his life in an exerted effort to acquire better understanding of the essence and meaning of the law of God. He kept on studying the Scriptures.

The Bereans seemed to have been like Ezra of old. Apostle Paul and Silas found them to be "*more open minded...and every day they studied the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was really true*" (Acts 17:10-12). They did not believe and accept immediately what Paul preached. They studied the Scriptures everyday to check whether the preaching they heard was indeed from God. Sometimes, many God-fearing people are following teachings and they do not even know why they are practicing such. Many knowledgeable people are lost spiritually, because they are following blindly. For they do not study the Scriptures.

How many of us are like the believers in Berea? Like Ezra who devoted his life in studying the law of God?

Second: *Ezra had devoted his life to practicing what he learned from the law of God.* He did not only keep on studying the law, but he also keep on doing what he learned from the Scriptures. He was humble enough to obey and practice what he learned. He knew that the truth he came to know through his diligent studies was useless if he would not obey it. For what worth is the truth if we do not want to believe and obey it? Nothing!

One Sunday morning in December 1982, the wife of a digressive preacher from a neighboring province worshipped with us in Roxas (Philippines). After the service, she requested reading material concerning the Communion, perhaps because she noticed that we used one bread and one cup in the observance of the Lord's Supper. She wanted to study with her husband the "issue." In March the following year, her husband wrote and told me that he studied the article, and he was convinced that our stand is biblical. He and his wife simply wanted to follow and practice the truth they came to learn through their studies of the word of God. They were like Ezra of old!

Do we put into action and practice what we came to know through our studies of God's word?

Thirdly: *Ezra had devoted his life to teaching all God's laws and regulation to the people of Israel.* He wanted to share with his brethren what he learned and what he was practicing.

Again, when the digressive preacher was converted to the truth after he studied the reading material concerning the Communion we gave to his wife, he immediately taught it to the members of his congregation; and the whole church was converted. Then, he went to his co-preachers and taught them the truth he learned, which he and his congregation were already practicing. As a result, several digressive preachers were converted, and the mission of the church in his area rapidly spread. Do we continue to share the good news of salvation that we learned, and are obeying, to other people?

Brethren, do we have the dedication that Ezra had? Are we exerting efforts to study the word of God? Do we practice everyday what we learned? Do we have the desire to share and teach others the gospel of salvation? *"In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise; things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable. Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And God who gives us peace will be with you"* (Phil. 4:8-9).

TRUST YE NOT IN LYING WORDS

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be from the heart or it is a lie. The church at Ephesus was doctrinally and morally pure, but they had left their first love. "Repent, and do the first works," Jesus admonished them, and so he admonishes us all. The revival must be inward as well as outward.

2. **Revival Means a Change in Lifestyle.** Yes, they were shouting, "The temple of the LORD!" as they went to worship, but their lifestyle had not changed one bit. Jeremiah's stinging question was, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" (Jer. 7:9, 10) The problem was that they came to worship but continued to live their sinful lives. Their worship, therefore, was a lie. Surely, the prophet's message speaks to our day. After 911 there was a "Celebrate America" rally held in Yankee Stadium in New York City where speaker after speaker praised the name of God and shouts of "God bless America" filled the air. Sadly, however, the woman who emceed the event is living with a man who is not her husband, and the (then) mayor of New York City was having an affair with a woman while still married to his wife. My friends, to shout, "God bless America," and trust God to protect our country while the nation condones sinful lifestyles is a lie. A revival, no matter how emotional or widespread, is no revival unless it changes the way people live. Revival means obedience! To claim a revival without submission to God's word is a lie.

3. **Numbers Prove Nothing.** Please note that huge crowds thronged the temple crying, "The temple of the LORD!" To many, I am sure, this was evidence that a great revival was in progress. But it was a lie. Numbers do not indicate revival! Reformation of lives and obedience to God's word is the evidence of real revival. I am sure that to many casual observers today there is a revival sweeping across the land. After all, look at all the mega-churches with thousands in attendance every week. But we need to look closer. If there respect for God's word? Is there conformity to the pattern laid down in the Book? In the televised services of these churches I hear a lot of shouting and praising God. I hear a great deal that sounds like, "The temple of the LORD, are these!" but rarely (if ever at all) do I hear doctrinal teaching about the plan of salvation or the work and worship of the church according to the Divine model. It is not how many are coming to the temple to shout praises, but how many have surrendered their hearts and lives to Jesus and his Will.

4. **Being Emotional Does Not Equate With Being Spiritual.** It seems obvious that Jeremiah refers to an emotional outburst of the worshippers as they entered the temple. They cried, "The temple of

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Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these!" It is sort of like some today who shout, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah!" or "Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, praise the Lord!" and thinking that merely chanting those words in an emotional outburst is what it means to be spiritual. Now, dear reader, there is nothing wrong with being emotional in our worship and praise to God, but to think that being emotional is the same thing as being spiritual is a lie. Some seem to think that if a worship service is filled with emotional outbursts - that is, shouts of hallelujah, praise the Lord, amen, the temple of Jehovah, etc., then revival is at hand. But, all the amens and hallelujahs in the world are no substitute for obedience to the Word of the Lord and reformation of lives. True revival is characterized, not by mere emotionalism and feel-goodism, but by humble submission to the authority of our Lord. In 1 Corinthians 14:37 Paul says the spiritual person is he who acknowledges the commandments of the Lord. A truly spiritual worship service, therefore, is that service where the Lord is praised from the heart according to the commandments of the Lord.

5. **True Revival.** Jeremiah not only blasted away at these worshippers because they were trusting in lying words. He also gave God's recipe for a true revival. "For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, neither walk after other gods to your hurt; then I will cause you to dwell in this place." (Jer. 7:5-7) The message of the Prophet Jeremiah is essentially that the value and proof of religion is that of the effect it produces on conduct. The act of worship in the sanctuary is worthless, unless it harmonize with all the life of the other days. The praise and worship of God can become a blasphemous lie if the worshippers refuse to submit to the Lord's commandments and refuse to amend their lives. This ancient message makes its appeal to this hour as surely as to the hour in which it was uttered. Let us be sure we are not trusting in empty, false words. Let us be certain we have our hearts attuned to the Lord and to his message for us today. Let us pray and work for revival, but may it be that true revival that starts in the heart and evinces itself in "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

all times! He is the builder of the church that belongs to him, the church of Christ and he promises those who are obedient children of God a wonderful home in heaven with him.

What will we find in heaven? I don't think there will be any repair people around. There won't be any bad windows or cracked grout or blown fuses. All

will be perfect in that heavenly home.

Isn't it amazing that God would consider letting us into heaven? What wonderful love is displayed in God giving his son, Jesus to die for our sins so we can obey the gospel, live a life faithful to God's word, and by God's wonderful grace and mercy someday be given a home in heaven to rejoice in eternity.

As I write these words I look around and see a new home. But, as the saying goes the new will "wear off." One of these days this house will be old. It will need repaired, repainted, perhaps even replaced.

That will never happen in heaven: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

I hope we all have the goal of having a heavenly home where the beauty never fades!—1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747

THE CROSS

continued from page 3

worship. All of these practices have been borrowed from others, who have made an idol of the cross. It is without the least hint of biblical authority. There is absolutely no scripture in God's inspired word where we find a command, an apostolic example, nor even a necessary inference to justify such use of a cross. Some Christians have an attitude much like that of the children of Israel. In the days of Samuel the prophet they wanted a king to rule over them **so they could be like the nations around them** (1 Samuel 8:5). Some members of the church today want to use the cross like other religious people, but fall to check to see if it is the will of God. Remember, Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). Again, he said "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14).

If a person lost his mother to a sadistic killer who used an axe as the murder weapon, can you imagine his hanging an axe on the wall of his home to remind him of his mother? Or would a woman hang a shotgun on her bedroom wall to remind her of a husband who had been gunned down by a robber? Or would a man hang a knife in his living room to remind him of a brother who was slain by a killer? Absolutely not! Such practices would be condemned by any normal civilized person. So why would any Christian hang a cross on his wall to remind him of Christ, or decorate a church building with such an inhumane implement of death which brought shame to our Lord?

A fact that many Christians do not realize is that the cross was a symbol used by heathens and pagans long before Christ was crucified at Jerusalem. The cross symbol was used among the Babylonians of ancient Chaldea. It was used to honor the false god Tammuz

according to *Vine's Expository Dictionary* (p. 256). The cross in the form of a "T" which was the first letter of the name of Tammuz was used in his honor. Later the beam was lowered to stand for the cross of Christ. This symbol in its most ancient form was revered among the Chaldeans, Phonicians, Mexicans, and other ancient people. In India for centuries the non Christian people have used the sign of the cross to mark the jars of "holy water" taken from the Ganges River. The symbol of the cross has been used for the disembodied spirits of Jaina saints. In South America the pagan aborigines in ancient times used the cross as a religious sign. In Peru ancient pottery has been found that is marked with the sign of the cross, which had nothing to do with the Christian religion. Papal missionaries adopted the cross sign from the heathens and pagans and "Christianized" it.

One theory is that the sign of the cross first began to be used by pagan "sun worshippers" who emerged from their dwellings early in the morning and saw the reflection of the bright sun shining on the dew on the grass which appeared to them as a cross. Therefore, they adopted it as symbol of their "Sun God." Later when missionaries came and "converted them" they allowed them to continue to use the sign of the cross and adopted it themselves, because they could rationalize that it was a fitting, symbol for the cross of Christ. In that way the "converted" pagans could still practice their heathen ways in the name of Christianity. However, remember, God warned his people, "learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2).

Thousands of men and women have died on crosses. According to history in the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans which began in the year A. D. 70 there were as many as five hundred crucifixions a day. This means of torture and death has been outlawed for years now by every civilized nation in the world. And that was the shameful means used to execute our Lord Jesus Christ, "the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy set before him **endured the cross, despising the shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

The Lord gave Christians a memorial called the Lord's Supper for the purpose of reminding us of Jesus and His cruel death on the cross. He does not give His people license to borrow a heathen or pagan practice to help us remember the great sacrifice that was made for our redemption. Crosses on our church buildings, on church pews, and on Bible stands and communion tables are as out of place a "cowbell in a symphony." "Wherefore come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17, 18).—14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012

Announcements

Promoting Unity and Truth

The 21st Street Congregation in Oklahoma City is hosting the second annual study designed to explore ways to promote unity among brethren based upon the truth of God's word. Some of the topics that will be addressed are: *Defining Matters Of Judgment Vs Matters Of Doctrine. Reconciling The Scriptures That Say "Judge Not" With Those That Indicate We Are To Judge. The Role Of Human Organizations As It Relates To The Work Of The Church. The Difference Between Public And Private Teaching. What Is The Role Of Women In Teaching? What Constitutes A False Teacher?* These and other issues will be addressed. We encourage all preachers and interested brethren to attend. The time: February 24, 2004 beginning at 1:00 PM and February 25 beginning at 9 AM until 12 noon. For further information contact James Orten at 918-274-3797 or Ronny Wade at 417-883-2315.

Sixty-two Years Together

On December 25th Wallace and Verlie Kornegay celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary. Wallace is one of our faithful preachers who has been involved in mission work along the Eastern Seaboard for many years. His faithful wife Verlie has been by his side during all his labors. I'm sure they would enjoy hearing from you. Their address: J. W. Kornegay, 1543 Sid Mitchell Rd., Youngsville, NC 27569.



Mr. & Mrs. Kornegay

Our Departed

SUTTON—C.B. Sutton was born Sept. 7, 1914 in McAlester, OK and Merle Sutton was born Oct. 5, 1915 in Ruston, LA. They both passed from this life Aug. 24, 2003, in McAlester as a result of an auto accident. B was nearing his 89th birthday and Merle was nearing her 88th birthday. They are survived by three daughters: Kaylen Ball of McAlester, Sondra Johnson of Victoria, TX and Dianne Munn of McAlester. B is survived by a brother, Ray Sutton and sisters Faye Webb and Rossie Hammerstrom. Merle is survived by a sister, Estha Stein. They are also survived by several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They were preceded in death by their parents, several brothers and sisters and

granddaughter Lauren Johnson. B and Merle were long-time members of the C & Tyler congregation in McAlester. You could always count on B and Merle to be at worship services unless they were prevented by health problems. They were kind, charitable people who were well-known for hospitality. Jack Cutter, who baptized B many years ago, spoke words of comfort and warning to a capacity crowd that gathered at Bishop's Funeral Home in McAlester for the funeral. While we are shocked at the sudden death of B and Merle, and are reminded ever so vividly of Lauren's tragic death in an auto accident five years ago, we are consoled in the knowledge that they were Christians and they died suddenly after living long lives, neither having to survive the other nor having to linger in suffering.—Carl M. Johnson

SHEPHARD—Bobby Eugene Shephard was born December 9, 1928 in Hammond, OK and departed this life November 3 in Oklahoma City, OK. He was married to Violet Orlena Sipes June 29, 1946. He is survived by his wife, Violet, of the home; two daughters, Ruth Hensley, of Ardmore, and Doris Gould, of Ada; four sons, Harold, of Spring Hill, KS, Bobby of Sulphur, OK, James, of Winter Park, FL, Phillip, of Ardmore; 16 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, 1 great-great-grandchild, 1 brother, 2 sisters, and other family members and friends. Bob was a long-time member and leader of the church in Sulphur, OK and is greatly missed in the assembly. Many readers will remember him from the annual meeting there each year. The writer was honored to speak at funeral services conducted from the 14th Street church building December 6 in Sulphur.—Johnny Elmore

RUSSELL—William "Bill" Russell, Jr. was born April 4, 1940 in Sulphur, OK to William and Thelma Russell, and departed this life November 3, 2003 in Oklahoma City, OK. Survivors include a daughter, Tammy Russell, of Ada, and his mother, Thelma Russell, of Sulphur. Many of us remember William leading the singing at Davis when he was just a boy. William was serving as city councilman at Davis, OK at the time of his death. He was restored to duty at the church at Davis not long before his death. The writer spoke at funeral services from Fox Chapel November 7.—Johnny Elmore

RUSSELL—Thelma Grace Russell was born August 26, 1907 in Roberta, Indian Territory and departed this life December 10, 2003 in Ardmore, OK at the age of 96. She was preceded in death by her husband, William Russell, in 1964, and her son, William, Jr. on November 3, 2003. She is survived by one granddaughter, Tammy Russell, of Ada. She was a long-time member of the church in Davis, OK. The writer conducted services from Fox Chapel in Davis December 12.—Johnny Elmore

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, rf Wade@getatlas.com, January 14—The New Year meeting in Dothan, AL was very enjoyable. Around 350 gathered to sing, study, and pray. This regional meeting is especially good for the people who live in the South. A great number of young people came this year, which encouraged us all, sixteen states were represented. The preaching and singing were inspiring. Next we were with the brethren in Hernando, FL for a meeting Jan. 1-4. These brethren have a new meeting place and are working hard to fill it. Our Sunday crowd was in excess of fifty. One sister returned to the church, for which we give thanks. On Jan. 11 we were privileged to preach at the New Salem and Hwy 84 churches in MS. It was good to see everyone there again. At Hwy 84 two returned to the church, and two confessed wrongs. The Lord willing we go to Wichita Falls, TX (Crestview) Feb. 5-8, Dothan, AL March 7-14 and Bandy, KY April 11-18. The work here in Springfield continues to produce good results. We ask for your prayers and trust God for His blessings on our endeavors.

Kevin W. Presley, 106 Whiffletree Way, Dothan, AL 36303, (334) 678-8999, January 9, 2004—The 2003 Alabama New Years Meeting was a tremendous blessing to our congregation and we hope to all who attended. Our crowds were over 300 and were made up of people from all over the South and beyond. Some came from as far as Oregon and California. The preaching was exceptional and he singing was great. We appreciate Bro. Ronny Wade for doing such a fine job in conducting the meeting. We hope that even more of you will make your plans to join us next time. Lord willing, this year's meeting will be held December 26-31. My last meeting in 2003 was in Nashville, TN where I enjoyed the company of Brett Hickey and his family. They are doing a great work in the Nashville area (as they do wherever they go) and the brethren seem to be benefiting from their presence. I always enjoy being with these brethren and wish them well in the work. We were blessed to have Bro. Lynwood Smith with us on the weekend of the meeting. He happened to be in town that weekend and it was good to get to visit with him. In December, I was also privileged to help conduct a series of meetings in Jasper, TN. Various preachers participated in the meeting and I was glad to be able to be there for two nights. Bro. Phillip Patton is doing a great job there working with the church. We are looking forward to several opportunities to preach the gospel in the coming year. Lord willing, I will be at Robertsedale, AL (Feb 6-8) and with the folks in West Point, GA sometime in February. In the spring I plan to be with the church at Fossil Creek in Fort

Worth, TX (Mar 20-28) and Jamesville, MO (April 21-25). Ronny Wade is to conduct our spring meeting here in Dothan, AL, March 7-14. If you can come, we would love to have you!

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Jan. 14—We are just a few days into the new year and I am looking forward to 2004 with courage and optimism. My meetings at Collins, MS and Mountain Home, AR were enjoyable. My association with the brethren at Collins goes back many years and it was wonderful to be with them again. They appreciate hearing old-time gospel preaching. It was a first for me to be at Mountain Home and I feel that I ended my meeting schedule for 2003 on a high note. Many thanks to them for their kindness and hospitality. The work here at Jamesville is progressing well. We are mailing out a monthly bulletin and pray that it will touch lives in a positive way. I want to thank Smith Bibens and Brad Shockley for their help in putting the bulletin together. Dwight and Caron Smith of Brookhaven, MS have moved to our area and are making Jamesville their home congregation. Dwight is an excellent song leader and a good teacher. Their move should prove to be a blessing to the congregation. This was not a hasty decision on the Smith's part. They have talked about doing this for quite a while. The death of Fred Vandekerkove was a setback, for when you lose someone that faithful and influential, it always leaves an empty spot. However, with the Lord's help we are determined to spread the gospel in our community. I am looking forward to a meeting in Oklahoma City, Ok (21st Street) on the dates of April 9-18. Jamesville has Kevin Presley scheduled for April 21-25.

Bruce Roebuck, 1666 E. 2060 Rd, Hugo, OK, 74743, bructan@arbuckleonline.com., Jan. 5—The new year is finally here. We look back and thank God for the blessings of last year. It was a good year for many. We are still living on the joy of the Alabama New Year's Meeting. It was the best yet. Crowds were larger, as it grows each year. Great singing and inspiring preaching made us thankful to be a part of it. The brethren at Dothan did an excellent job organizing the meeting. The work here at Paris is going well. We are forming plans now to evangelize north Texas and southern Oklahoma. There are still many places that the church has not yet gone. Our meetings for this year are already getting underway. Here is our spring schedule: West Monroe, LA Jan. 16-18, Allen TX Feb 6-8, Hwy 84 Church of Christ Brookhaven MS Feb. 26-29, Wayne WVA March 14-21, Ada OK April 18-25, Collins MS May 12-16. Please note the new email address.

Irvin Barnes, 3218 E. Farm Road 88, Springfield, MO 65803, irvinbarns@aol.com, Jan. 14—Many ask

often about my health issues. Such concern is appreciated. I had a yearly visit today with my Parkinson's specialist. He believes I am in a holding pattern: no better and no worse. The church here on the north side has cause for both grief and elation. We are deeply saddened at the untimely and tragic passing of Billy Freeman. We solicit your prayers for Billy's mother, Sister Stella Freeman. We rejoice over the baptism of Henry Crooks, who has been seriously ill for many months. With the help of several men, he was placed in the water on a stretcher, where his son Bro. Danny Crooks baptized him! We are also saddened by the passing of Sister Ardith Ford. She was not only a dear sister in Christ but a dear friend to me and my family. Only eternity will reveal the enormous good done for the cause of Christ by this dear lady. The congregation here is involved in the new work in South America. The work there is growing. Four new churches have been started since July of 2002. We are also involved in the Philippines. We receive good reports from there also. The "fields are truly white to harvest" if we will but lift up our eyes! We solicit the prayers of all the faithful everywhere.

WHAT IF GOD...

What if GOD couldn't take the time to bless us today because we couldn't take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if GOD decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we didn't follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when GOD sent the rain?

What if GOD didn't walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His day?

What if GOD took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if GOD took away His message because we failed to listen to the messenger?

What if GOD didn't send His only begotten Son because He wanted us to be prepared to pay the price for sin?

What if the door of the church was closed because we did not open the door of our heart?

What if GOD stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?

What if GOD would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him?

What if GOD answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?

What if GOD met our needs the way we give Him our lives???

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THE BACK PAGE...

FAR ABOVE RUBIES

By CARL M. JOHNSON

It has often been said that "the person you marry can make or break you." The truth of that maxim is expressed several times in Proverbs and is illustrated in the life of elder Walter Scott, one of the brightest figures in the American Restoration Movement.

Scott was first married to Sarah Whitsett in 1823 at age 26. She was a jewel and the perfect compliment to Walter. She inspired his ministry, overlooked his lack of money sense and endured his poverty. After she died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1849, Scott wrote of her, "Best of wives, tenderest of mothers, the most faithful of friends, a Christian in faith, works and charity."

In 1850 Walter began working with the church in Mays Lick, Kentucky. The loss of Sarah whose encouragement Walter depended upon so much, and the fact his grown children lived in Pittsburgh left him extremely lonely. In an effort to fill the void he married a young woman named Nannie B. Allen. Walter was fifty-four at the time, but Nannie was many years younger. When friends cautioned her that she would outlive him she replied, "I would rather be Walter Scott's widow than the wife of any other man." Annie was beautiful, affectionate, truly pious and deeply devoted to Walter. While he still grieved over the loss of Sarah, Walter learned to love Annie with great affection. It was Annie, however, who died first. After only four years of marriage she succumbed to tuberculosis.

At the age of 60, Walter married Eliza Sandidge, a rich widow who had been a member of the Mays Lick congregation for several years. Walter moved into the Sandidge mansion and for the first time he found himself in financially comforting circumstances. The marriage itself, however, was never congenial. Differing views toward money have been the source of problems for many married couples, and that was the case for Walter and Eliza. Eliza lived all of her days in affluent surroundings and had a strong need for the finest material possessions. Walter, however, did not understand such a lifestyle. He believed money was to use, or even better, to be given away. In financial matters Walter was impractical and impulsive. Often he would go to a store for a basket of groceries, and give them all away before he got home. Once he had two cows and he gave a neighbor one cow, because the neighbor had none. Such impulsive behavior by Walter irritated Eliza at first, but eventually it became unbearable. Blinded to the poetic fineness and spiritual saintliness of Walter, she became shrewish in her role as wife. On occasions Eliza would rage at him, drive him from the house, lock him out and forbid him to return. On such occasions he would spend the night sitting on the doorstep of a neighbor, and in the early morning he would ask, "I wonder if you would take me in for some breakfast this morning? The little lady isn't feeling well." On one occasion after Eliza had expelled him from the house Walter was so depressed he disappeared from Mays Lick and was gone for several days. Eventually, a couple of brethren found him wandering the streets of Cincinnati in a daze of misery.

Fearing a scandal in the brotherhood if one of the great leaders of the Restoration Movement separated from his wife, the brethren persuaded Walter to return home where they helped work out a truce between the two. Subsequently, the two lived together behind the imposing doors of Eliza's mansion in an uncertain marital climate until Walter died with typhoid pneumonia on April 23, 1861.

Scott's marital life vividly illustrates the maxim, "the person you marry can make or break you." In his first two marriages Scott learned the truth of Solomon's words in Proverbs 31:10, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." In his third and final marriage Scott learned the truth of Solomon's words in Proverbs 21:9, "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

In particular Scott's story should serve as a warning to preachers contemplating marriage and to women who are contemplating marrying preachers. While I would not trade my vocation for any other, preaching does involve some sacrifice for all members of the family. Most preachers are required to spend time away from their families, and they are probably not going to be able to afford the very finest in material possessions. However, if you find the right companion, life can be especially gratifying. If I have accomplished anything for the glory of God in the thirty-five-plus years I have been preaching, it is primarily due to the fact God has blessed me with a wife who is the perfect compliment to our vocation. Solomon says, "her price is far above rubies." I know Walter Scott would agree.—1400 Northcrest Drive Ada, OK 74820

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXVIII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, MARCH 2004

NO. 3

APOSTASY AND ITS CAUSES

By JOHNNY ELMORE

Is it possible to apostatize, that is, to fall away from the faith so as to be lost eternally and irretrievably? If not, many of the warnings of the Bible are empty words. A Bible commentator states, "There are more than twenty-five hundred warnings to the saints of the possibility of apostasy in the Scriptures." Such a statement should make us realize the real danger of apostasy for individual Christians and entire congregations.

Christians May Err

The venerable James writes, "Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:16). To err is to fall away or to fall into error. If a brother does err, that is, fall away or fall into error, what should we do? James gives the answer: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him" —what's that? "Convert him." To convert is to change. He needs to have an attitude adjustment. He doesn't need to be encouraged in his error. James continues: "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19, 20). James called the erring brother a "sinner." He needs to be converted to save his soul from death. Converting erring brothers or sisters is not going to save them from physical death; no, the death contemplated here is spiritual death, that eternal casting away from God that John described in Revelation 20:15.

Will The Apostate Be Lost?

Some have denied that someone who errs, that is, falls into error or falls away, will be lost. The old Calvinist doctrine goes something like this: If you seek it, you can't find it, if you find it; you can't get it; if you get it, you can't lose it; if you lose it, you never had it. Some state, "once saved, always saved," as though it were written on every page of the Bible. Others will admit that a person may err or fall away, but argue that God won't let you die in that condition. That has led people to ask: "Can a child of God get drunk?" They certainly have to admit that could happen. According to their logic, if God won't allow a child of God to die in that condition then he could get drunk and stay drunk and live forever.

When faced with evidence that some have fallen away and died in that condition, the usual argument is that they were never really saved, that is, if you lose it, you never had it. The writer of the book of Hebrews addressed people who were on the brink of apostasy. He wrote, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12). Can someone depart from God if they have not been with God?

Can someone fall out of a building if they have never been in the building? The writer of Hebrews uses Israel as an example of falling away, or apostasy, causing God to say, "They shall not enter into my rest" (Heb. 3:11). All through the chapter he has been citing their unbelief. Finally he wrote, "And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:18, 19). Were these people rank infidels who did not believe in God? No, the ASV has "them that were disobedient" instead of "them that believed not." It was not that they didn't believe in God at all. It was because they did not believe in the sense of obeying his commandments.

Churches May Err

Entire congregations may err. Four of the seven churches of Asia were told to repent. The Savior told three of them specific things he had against them and he said that he had not found the works of the fourth "perfect before God." He told the church at Ephesus that he would remove their candlestick if they did not repent, which many commentators believe to be their identity as a faithful congregation. They might continue to open their doors and go through the ritual of worship, but it was not approved or accepted by God.

Could a whole brotherhood be lost? The answer surely must be "yes." Do we realize that most of Israel failed to enter into the Promised Land? There were a few exceptions but the vast majority of the huge number of adults that left Egypt never made it to Canaan. There must have been an average of about

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Editorial

WHAT ABOUT THE LORD'S DAY?

By DON L. KING

Some years ago, quite a lot was published in this paper regarding the Lord's Day and our responsibilities toward it. Years ago, it was not that uncommon for brethren to believe that Matthew 18:20, etc. permitted Christians to gather where ever they happened to be on the Lord's Day and just hold a worship service before moving along. Today, it is relatively uncommon to find that belief among the Lord's people. We have learned better because of Bible preaching, study and writing. Still, it surfaces once in a while in various forms and we all need to be reminded from time to time.

Matthew 18:20 reads; "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." If we just read that verse and take no consideration of the context in which it was spoken, it appears to support the practice of just worshiping where ever we choose to be on a given Lord's Day. With closer inspection, however, it becomes obvious that Jesus had in mind a specific situation.

The Church Had Not Yet Been Established

This passage was spoken prior to the establishment of the church. However, it was obviously spoken in anticipation of its establishment. How can we know this? Notice where the subject begins in verse 15: Jesus was speaking to the disciples regarding problems that would certainly come to pass later. He spoke of problems between brethren in verse 15 and how they must be handled. Interestingly, He uses the term "brother" there. He instructs the disciples that when troubles arise between brethren a certain procedure is to be followed. The offended brother is first to go to the offender alone. If unsuccessful, he is to take one or two more and visit with him again. This way, everything spoken could be witnessed by others and verified. (Verse 16) If this is also unsuccessful, the matter is to be brought before the "church" as per verse 17. We can all see that the Master is giving instructions in anticipation of the church coming into existence. There is no other explanation for Jesus plainly using the term "church."

In the infancy of the church, there was no written New Testament. That would come later. In that interim, inspired men would furnish proof of God's will. This is why as one reads the New Testament, the apostles are often found giving instructions to the churches as to how worship, etc. was to be done. So, Jesus instructs the disciples that when they make a decision regarding the church, God will be with them. (Verse 18) They will be acting under inspiration, so whatever they bind or loose (decide) will be sanctioned in Heaven. Jesus is obviously aware that there will be times when it will not be possible for all

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QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Since singing is an act of worship directed to God, why is it when we sing the invitation song, we direct it toward the alien sinner instead of directing our praise to the Almighty?

Answer: In Colossians 3:16 we are commanded to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The psalms of this passage probably refer to the psalms of David, but are not limited to them. The hymns refer to a song of praise and the spiritual songs designate the type of songs that were to be sung. In Eph.5:19 we read "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." It should be noted that we are to "admonish one another," or "speak to one another" through these songs. Some songs are directed to God or Christ and represent an attempt on our part to praise, worship, and adore these heavenly beings. In some of our spiritual songs, we admonish one another in our Christian duties. Such songs come to mind like "Take Time To Be Holy" and "Watch and Pray." The invitation is an opportunity for the "bride to say come" to those who are in sin Rev. 22:17. It seems perfectly in order to this writer for the congregation to admonish the saint as well as the sinner to "Prepare To Meet Thy God." Even in doing this, we still recognize God as a supreme being before whom we all shall some day stand and give an account. Since Paul said in 1 Cor. 6:2 "...now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" why not sing "Oh Why Not Tonight," as an encouragement for those who are unprepared? Every song should be selected with the utmost care. Every song, however, does not necessarily have the same goal or purpose. Some songs like "Praise Him" are hymns of praise. Others arouse us to service and battle such as "The Fight Is On" or "Never Give Up." So long as the content of our songs is scriptural, and so long as they are either psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs we are within the teaching of the Bible.

Question: Please explain the meaning of Matthew 19:29-30.

Answer: The passages in question read "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first." The rewards are divided into two classes, the temporal and the eternal. The point made by our Lord is that the rewards for the Christian, in this life, outweigh any sacrifices we might make in our service for Him. The return is not to be taken literally i.e. our reward will not be in houses or lands, but in the spiritual relationships and blessings we

enjoy in the Kingdom. These blessings will more than compensate for any thing we might sacrifice in order to be a Christian. Many today teach what they call a "prosperity doctrine." They claim that the Lord intended for His children to be rich, to be abundantly prosperous. Such, however, is not the case as verse 30 shows. The "first" often referred to those who are exalted or viewed as great. In the Kingdom, however, one's greatness will not be determined by what they might have in this world, but rather by their service to others. Those who in this life had little i.e. by the world's standard, and were considered "last" will be "first" in the kingdom in that they will be recognized for what they are spiritually rather than a value based on earthly goods or power. This is a great incentive for all to make whatever sacrifice necessary in order to follow Christ. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, rfwade@getatlas.com)

BIBLICAL MARY V. MARIOLOGY

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

Mary, the mother of our Lord, was a woman of great faith and moral purity, forever to be held in high esteem by those who believe in Christ. She is a grand example of womanhood, motherhood, and godliness. The Bible is plain in declaring that Jesus was born of a VIRGIN. When the angel Gabriel revealed to Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah, she asked, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34) "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) This is a cardinal truth of the gospel that we must believe! Jesus did not have an earthly father, for His birth was the result of a miracle caused by the power of God.

Mary accepted God's decision with courage, faith, and humility. Put yourself in Mary's shoes and think about the dilemma she found herself in! She is a young virgin who is espoused to the man she loves and she is looking forward to spending the rest of her life with him. Suddenly, however, she is going to be with child. When you stop to think about it, due to the misunderstanding that might take place, this situation could put her whole future in jeopardy. That is why the angel exhorted her, "Fear not Mary: for thou hast found favor with God" (Luke 1:30).

Luke's portrayal of Mary shows the greatness of her faith and character. She expresses her desire to be used of God: "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). Also, Luke 1:46-47 shows the JOY she felt in knowing that she would give birth to the Son of God. She declared, "My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

*(The following article from the pen of Alfred Ellmore (Elmore) first appeared in the **Apostolic Way** in 1925, the year of his death. He was a prolific writer and at one time published his own paper **The Gospel Echo** in conjunction with W.J. Rice. W.J. Rice had originally been associated with Dr. G.A. Trott and H.C. Harper in the beginning of **The Apostolic Way**. In 1901 Brother Ellmore published an article in the **Gospel Advocate** stating his opposition to Sunday Schools and the acceptance of Sect Baptism. He also believed Acts 2:42 taught a set order of worship. This article is though provoking and worthy of careful reading.)*

A MIRACULOUS FEAST

By Alfred Elmore

“And when even was come, the disciples came to him saying: The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food. But Jesus said unto them, they have no need to go away; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, we have here five loaves and two fishes. And he said, Bring them hither to me, and he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves and the two fishes and looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake, and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they all ate and were filled: and they took up of that which remained over of the broken pieces twelve baskets full. And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children. And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray. And when even was come he was there alone.” Matt. 14:15.

Now, pious reader what is the impression made upon your heart by the lesson? If I knew it was all a home-made story I could weep with sorrow of heart for more of his sacred work might be false. But believing as I do, I can weep for joy. Could the partakers themselves have been deceived? No, they knew before partaking they were filled, and that their hunger had been appeased. Sinners had seen the small amount of provisions offered, not one-fourth enough to satisfy the guests. But the number who had been fed—five thousand men, besides women and children, who might have increased the guests to ten thousand, then they took up more provisions after feeding the multitudes than had been put down.

After the feast people presented their sick, and Jesus healed them.

Another thing occurred after he sent the multitudes away, which was manna to the saint, who hungers after righteousness. Jesus went up into the mountain to pray! But why should the spotless Son of God pray at all? But we see in this act a crumb of heavenly bread, in that man may bow down and pray, and with assurance that if we pray in the proper spirit, and for things promised, blessings may be expected. But there

are many feasts being held now, not like this one. Let us kindly draw a contrast, and mark some points of difference. While the history of this feast is fresh in your mind, we need say nothing more of it now.

The feast I wish to bring up in contrast with this one is called a mass of people who wear the same name and make up in part the same profession, but in observing their feasts many do not bow down. They use patent music, made by the aid of musical instruments, they clip their hair and their dresses instead of weeping tears of joy. They are gay, and frivolous instead of solemnity, they are worldly and do not bear the semblance of a broken heart.

Unto such feasts our Saviour would not go, except for the opportunity of teaching the true spirit of the gospel. If teaching were all, then he could have done that direct from heaven, but then, as now, they need the character of the peerless, spotless, immaculate, perfect Saviour placed before them, and ground into their hearts in such a manner that they never can obliterate it, hence he taught that men might hear, and he practiced that men might see. And how discouraging that men will not hear, accept and obey. But we are assured that all who will accept will be saved.

Pray for me.

THE PHILIPPINE WORK

By DON L. KING

In January of this year, Brother Richard DeGough and I made a trip to the Philippines to encourage the brethren there. This was the 24th trip since the work began in 1981. Others have also gone there through the years, which has been beneficial to the brethren. The work has grown in many ways. It has grown in the number of faithful congregations now existing, and it has certainly grown in maturity. There are faithful gospel preachers working among the brethren who are well educated and also well read in the Scriptures.

The work has advanced from the Island of Luzon, where it began, to include the Islands of Mindoro, Mindanao and Palawan. A number of faithful congregations are to be found in these places now. We were able to worship, and study, with brethren and preachers from all of these Islands during this trip. What an encouragement they are to us. Though physically poor, they consider themselves rich in Christ. It is humbling to see such brethren.

The Philippine work has not been without setbacks and heartache. While we were there, a faithful preacher, Fernando Alvaro, who had been with us for over 20 years passed away suddenly. He was taking care of five congregations and a radio program as well. Such a man is nearly impossible to replace. We are really saddened at such a huge loss. Also, Satan has done his best to harm, as always. The church is assailed from without and within as it has always

been from the dawn of her existence. However, in spite of all the works of evil, the gospel is producing remarkable results. There were 70 baptisms during our stay and 2 restored. We were also able to preach at a new congregation to a fairly large audience. It was also our pleasure to be present and participate in two day long studies with various brethren and preachers from all four islands. The Lord blessed us with health, safety, opportunity, and saw that the Word produced results.

There are some specific needs we want to present: (1) there is a need for financial support for at least two preachers (perhaps more) in the approximate amount of \$150 to \$200 monthly. Another preacher needs his support raised by \$50 monthly. (2) There is a need of \$1000 to rebuild a church building destroyed by a typhoon last year. The brethren had labored to build it at their own expense the first time but just do not have the money to rebuild it. We promised to try to help them, if possible. (3) There is a need of \$2000 for the rental of the place where the church meets in Manila. This will cover the cost for the next 12 months. Property is expensive in Manila but we hope to be able to purchase a lot and build a place for the church someday soon. (4) There are also at least two preachers who are badly in need of a motorcycle for their travel needs. These are small motorcycles, made in Japan, that normally sell for about \$2000 or a bit less. These vehicles burn small amounts of gasoline, which is expensive in the Philippines, (nearly all gasoline is imported) and are easily maneuverable in traffic. Most of the preachers must travel on Sundays to preach at several congregations and if they have no motorcycle, must go by bus which is time consuming and somewhat expensive.

If you can assist this great work in any of the above mentioned things, please contact us. (Don L. King 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550. Telephone: (925) 454-0530). FAX: (925) 454-8995) We'll be happy to give you details as to where to send the funds and to whom. Philippine preachers, who are supported from the USA, are supported directly by their supporting congregation and report to that congregation. Remember, that no American has ever lived among them and none is needed. These brethren do their own work and take care of their own problems. We have made yearly trips since 1981 to encourage the brethren, hold gospel meetings and studies and assist in any way they ask.

It was a pleasure to work with Richard DeGough in this effort. He was a willing, and tireless worker, who did his best at all times.—*Don L. King*

THE NEW JERUSALEM (CONTINUED)

By C.A. SMITH

In our previous article, we closed with the statement: So Christ and the church are living in the beautiful bond of matrimony, and the marriage of man and wife in a most striking manner illustrates our union with Christ. Let us now look at some of the points of agreement between the two.

First, in taking a husband a woman leaves the house of her father and mother, with all its endearing attractions. She leaves all others on earth to cleave to and love him. So says Christ "Whosoever forsaketh not father, mother, and all that he hath can not be my disciple." Second, The bride must even leave her former name, and be called by the name of her husband. So does Christ write His new name upon us, and henceforth, whatsoever we do in word or deed, we do in His name. Third, The marriage relation is sealed under a covenant of fidelity for life; the husband to love, cherish, and protect; the wife to love, honor, and obey. So does the Christian enter into an everlasting covenant with God in Christ to abandon all for his sake, to love, trust, and obey Him in all things. And God places Himself under covenant obligations to love us for Christ's sake, to preserve us from all evil, and supply all our needs. Thus we see that all the prominent features of the marriage state are fulfilled in our present relation to God when saved in Christ. Further more, Jesus Christ will return some day, not to consummate His marriage with the church, but to receive His wife. Rev. 19:7,8; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17. So it is a positive fact that the church of Christ is the wife of Christ; and she is the holy Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem is the church of Christ.

Such terms as "Zion," "city of God," "holy city," "Jerusalem," "new Jerusalem," "heavenly Jerusalem," etc., are frequently found in the prophecies, and throughout the New Testament. Now do these terms apply to a literal city yet to descend upon earth, or to those who comprise the church of Christ in this dispensation? Let the Word answer. Paul writing to the Hebrew brethren in A.D. 64 testifies thus: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." After this he says "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven." Heb. 12:22, 23. What could be plainer? The heavenly Jerusalem is the church, and in this dispensation we have come "unto" it, and are living in it. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill." Matt. 5:14. "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. " Isa. 60:14. The people of God in this dispensation were to be called "The Zion, the city of the Lord." So they are called, Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:22, 23. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my

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peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and thou shalt be called by a new name"...."And they shall call them, Thy holy people, The redeemed of the Lord:..... Isa. 62:1-12. There is no possible evasion of the fact that the prophet here speaks of the New Testament church. The "holy people," who are "redeemed" by the blood of Christ are here called "Zion, Jerusalem, A city not forsaken." In verses 4 and 5 it is said that Zion would be married unto the Lord. This is all present truth.

But, asks one, in what sense is the church a city which descended from heaven? In Revelation 17:1-5, Babylon is seen in the figure of a woman—called a "great whore"—with her harlot daughters. So in Rev. 12: 1 the true church is seen in the figure of a pure woman, clothed with the sun. In Rev. 17:18 and 18:1-24 Babylon is called a "great city" which is said to be full of darkness and a "habitation of devils." So in Rev. 21:1-27 the church is called the "holy city," which is said to be full of light and glory. Every fully saved man and woman is a house in this city 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

In the new Jerusalem all things are made new. Rev. 21:5. This is true of God's people, or the church. 2 Cor. 5:17. We have in this dispensation a new church, new people, "new name," new kingdom, New Testament, "new creation," new heart, "new spirit," "new and living way"; we "walk in newness of life" and "serve in newness of spirit." Behold, all things are become new.

But, finally, why is the church called new Jerusalem. Notice, please, some points of agreement between old Jerusalem and the church of Christ, as type and antitype. First, it was the dwelling place of God on earth. Now the church is the habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2:22. In Jerusalem was the temple of God; the church is now his holy temple. 2 Cor. 6:16. In Jerusalem God recorded his name; his church is also called by His Son's name. In Jerusalem was a place of continual sacrifice unto God; "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 2:5. As therefore, the church of Christ has taken the place of old Jerusalem as the present dwelling-place of and temple of God, and place of all offering, she is called the new Jerusalem.—810 NW 6th. St., Andrews, TX 79714

APOSTASY AND ITS CAUSES

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80 funerals a day for that tragedy to occur. What a loss! Could our brotherhood be lost to apostasy? Yes, brethren, if we ignore the warnings of the Bible and if we listen to the siren voices of secular society, denominationalists, digressives, and innovators around us, it can be lost. One mature observer among

us warns that we are on the brink of apostasy in three different areas. When we remember the division brought about by the errors of the missionary society and the Sunday school, we should know that our greatest danger might be unscriptural organization. Remember, prophets who warn of doom and gloom are never wanted but they are needed. The practice of giving lip service to the restoration principle while ignoring congregational autonomy and biblical patterns is a trend toward apostasy, whether it is in evangelism, benevolence, or some other area. Will we be warned? John said, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8). Let us not lose that "which we have wrought" at such a price in effort, work, and sacrifice.

A Heart Problem

The cause of Israel's apostasy was in the heart. The Holy Spirit said, "They do always err in their heart" (Hebrews 3:10). He also said, "They have not known my ways." They were ignorant of God's ways and would not be warned or taught. God expects us to learn from the mistakes of those recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Their ignorance and their unwillingness to be taught coupled with their hardness of heart led to their apostasy and their failure to enter into rest.—419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401

EDITORIAL

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those inspired men to be present in dealing with problems facing the church. Hence, He promises that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be there also. In other words, it would not require all of the apostles' presence.

If two or three such men came together to decide matters affecting the church, after its establishment, the Lord Himself would be with them and sanction their decision.

In this case, the context plainly does not support the practice of two or three brethren coming together for worship while they are on vacation, etc. That simply is not what the passage in Matthew 18 is teaching.

Consider these things: If it is scriptural for my family to gather in some far away place for a single Sunday, why wouldn't it also be scriptural for EVERY family to do so? If we could scripturally worship in such a way once, why not every Lord's Day? What passage would forbid it? There is none. If the rules for the assembly are thrown out, there would be no reason to have elders overseeing the congregations. You see, the assembly could be fractured into splinters worshipping anywhere. No one contends for such. One can read of members departing from one congregation's assembly and becoming a part of another. That can be found in the scriptures. However, where is the passage furnishing the pattern one follows to absent himself from an assembly and be part of no assembly anywhere for worship? Brethren,

it simply doesn't exist. What takes place is this: when my family leaves the Fremont, CA assembly and worships as no part of any assembly anywhere, the Fremont congregation has a divided worship. Part of the assembly is in Fremont and part are in some other place but unassociated with ANY assembly. If not, why not? If it is scriptural for us to do that many miles away, perhaps even in a foreign land, why couldn't we just stay at home all the time and worship at home without driving into town for worship? After all, what does distance have to do with this matter? If I can do that one Lord's Day, I can do it every Lord's Day and so can every member every place! That being the case, there is no logical reason for the passages forbidding the forsaking of the assembly, is there? Why tell church members not to forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:25) if they can just stay at home anyway and worship there?

If my family leaves the Fremont, CA assembly and is a part of no assembly anywhere, the Fremont congregation has a divided communion. The group in Fremont worships with one loaf and cup and my divided part, while we are temporarily away, has communion with another loaf and cup. Where are the passages supporting such an action? The Fremont assembly takes up a collection and my divided part takes one up also. What to do with that collection? Where is the passage furnishing a pattern for my bringing it home? It doesn't exist.

Brethren, we cannot consistently contend for an undivided assembly as we have always scripturally done, and then make exceptions for ourselves because we choose to go where there is no assembly with which to worship. It is one thing to go to a far away place for the purpose of establishing the Lord's church but quite another to go to the same place for a Sunday or so with no intention of staying. In other words, we are on vacation and choose not to worship where the church somewhere is worshipping. The Bible supports evangelism but it certainly doesn't support the other. We must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. We must call things by Bible names and do things in Bible ways.

Think on these things. -DLK

BIBLICAL MARY V. MARIOLOGY

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Saviour. "Another thing that stands out about Mary is her HUMILITY. Instead of being lifted up with pride, as many would be in a similar circumstance, Mary praises God for regarding "the low estate of his handmaiden" (Luke 1:48). God's choice of Mary is another example of how God resists the proud and exalts the humble, and Mary stands in awe of God's grace. "For he that is mighty hath done to me great things," Mary declares in Luke 1:49, "and holy is his name."

While we admire Mary for the part she played in the birth of God's Son, we should not elevate her

into a position that the Bible does not give her! More legends have sprung forth concerning Mary than practically any other Bible character. These "legends" are totally without foundation and even contrary to Bible facts. Yet, CATHOLICISM upholds what is sometimes called the "cult of Mariology." Uninspired men have developed a series of intertwining fables that turn Mary into a mythical-like character.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The Catholic Church has built an entire theory around the following passage: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28). It is the above statement by Gabriel that has led Catholics to practice their "Hail Mary's." Highly favored means to make graceful or gracious—to cause to find favor. It simply meant that she was honored by Jehovah. However, Catholicism teaches that "full of grace" means that she was immaculately conceived—i.e., she received the gift of sanctifying grace and was forever without sin. Not only do they believe that she was without sin, they also teach that she had the INABILITY to sin. The Bible teaches no such theory. The same idea is expressed in Eph. 1:6 where Paul writes that "he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Have we been given the inability to sin? No, and neither was Mary!

PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

Catholics teach that Mary was perpetually a virgin, but the Bible shows otherwise. Matt. 1:24-25 implies that Joseph and Mary had a normal relationship as husband and wife after the birth of Jesus: "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus." The Bible shows that Christ had brothers and sisters—Matt. 13:55-56, Acts 1:14, John 2:12, & Gal. 1:19. The context bears out that these were his brothers and sisters in the ordinary sense because they are always used concerning His MOTHER, and not another woman!

THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

Catholics are taught that "the immaculate mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." They believe that she never died in the ordinary sense, but she only fell asleep, whereon her body and soul were taken to heaven. This is not biblical truth, but FICTION—a devised fable of men (2 Tim. 4:4)!

PRAYING TO MARY

Catholicism affirms that "the virgin Mary prayed on earth and prays now in heaven, where she intercedes for mankind, obtaining by her suppliant omnipotence the graces that man needs for salvation. "This false doctrine is based on the fact that Mary had influence with Christ at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2). However, the Bible nowhere

teaches that we should pray to Mary, or any other human being. Christ taught us to pray to the Father in His name (Matt. 6:9; John 14:13-14). Also, there is no example in the Scriptures where the apostles or anyone in the early church ever prayed to Mary. The practice is totally unbiblical in origin!—2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803

Announcements

California Labor Day Meeting

The 2004 California Labor Day Meeting will be hosted by the Brundage Lane Church of Christ in Bakersfield, CA in cooperation with the area congregations. The dates are September 1-5. The first two nights (Wednesday and Thursday nights) will be held at the Brundage Lane Church of Christ Building. The remaining services (with the exception of the Sunday morning services which will be held at the regular meeting places of the area's congregations) will be held in the West High School's auditorium in Bakersfield. Visiting gospel preachers and congregational teachers will be used as much as possible. There will be a special service Saturday at 10:30 A. M. where our young preachers and teachers will be used. For more information please contact Doyle Elliott (1-661-366-5157), or Tracy Osburn (1-661-871-8011).

Changes Of Address

The church at Grants Pass, Oregon has moved to 2027 S.W.G. Street. It is on the corner of Lincoln and G. street. Our meeting times have also changed to 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on the Lord's Day. If you are in this area we would be glad to have your fellowship with us at these services. I have also moved and my new address is 1950 Demaray Drive # 9, Grants Pass, Oregon 97527. My phone number is still 1 (541) 479-7752—Glenn Arnett

Lebanon July Campmeeting

The annual July campmeeting will be held in Lebanon, MO this year beginning on Saturday night June 26th at the Lebanon Civic Center and continuing through the night of July 2nd. Because the fourth of July falls on Sunday this year, the brethren decided to end the meeting on Friday night, allowing everyone Saturday on which to return to their home congregations. The meeting this year will be conducted by the Lebanon congregation with Ronny Wade and Dan Wissinger in charge. Major motels in the area include Best Western, Super 8, Hampton Inn, Holiday Inn Express, and Econo Lodge. We look forward to a good meeting and hope to see you there. For information contact Floyd Massey at 417-532-3760 or Dan Wissinger at 417-862-1132.

Our Departed

WATSON—Eva Lee Watson departed this life on Dec. 20, 2003 at the age of 82 in Dallas, TX. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Sharron Minson and grandson Jeremy Watson. Sister Watson is survived by her husband of 62 years, John R.; son John T. and grandchildren, Wayne and Clay Minson, Angela Siegenthaler and Tyler Watson. Sister Watson was a gracious woman loved by all who knew her. I heard many kind words about her but it was especially nice to hear the love and appreciation expressed by her grandchildren. She was a source of friendship and encouragement to me for many years. The writer made an effort to remember the good things and warn the living. Sister Watson will be sadly missed by many but thankfully "we sorrow not as others who have no hope."—Joe Hisle

CURLEY—Sandra Lou Curley was born Nov. 6, 1941. She departed this life Dec. 20, 2003 at the age of 62 years in Dallas, TX. Her death was untimely and unexpected. She had attended services at her home congregation, Frisco, TX, on Wednesday evening and suffered a heart attack in the early morning hours the following day. Sandy, her husband, Kenneth and son, Chase, were the first converts in the Amarillo work over thirty years ago. It was the writer's privilege to baptize the three of them into Christ. Those who survive her are her husband, Kenneth; her four sons, Chase, Bud, Keith, Chad, and their wives; two sisters and three brothers; three grandchildren and a number of nieces and nephews. Sandy was faithful member who was willing to do all that she could for the church. She will be greatly missed by her family and her church family. The writer, Melvin Blalock, assisted by Bob Johnson, endeavored to speak words of comfort and warning to a large gathering at the Eubank Chapel in Canton, TX. Beautiful singing was provided by members of the church. Her body was laid to rest in the Goshen Cemetery near Eustace, TX—Melvin Blalock

MEARSE—Louis was born Aug. 29, 1937 and departed this life on Jan. 9, 2004. He was 67 years old. Brother Mearse was a faithful member of the Flintville, TN congregation. He is survived by his wife, Ann; a son, Randy; two daughters, Vicky McAlister and Tammy Pamplin; five grandchildren; four sisters and five brothers. His funeral service was held at the Gallant Funeral Home in Fayetteville, TN. Brother Louis was a good man and will be greatly missed by the Flintville congregation where he had served as a leader for many years. May God continue to bless Sister Ann and her children.—Paul Walker

PIGG—Earl was born Feb. 22, 1927 and passed away Jan. 23, 2004. He was 76 years of age. Earl is

survived by his faithful wife, Ida Pigg; two step-sons, Harold and Steve Alverson; one sister; six step-grandchildren and six step-great grandchildren. Earl suffered a stroke about four years ago and his devoted wife cared for him in a beautiful way. Earl and Ida attended the Flintville, TN congregation.—Paul Walker

FORD—On January 13, 2004 Sister Ardith Ford lost her battle with cancer. She had struggled with the disease for over a year. Most of that time she went happily about her duties, seldom if ever did you hear her complain about her lot. Ardith was a woman of great strength and compassion. Her life was marked by deeds of kindness for others and concern for the church. She was born in the State of Nebraska Nov. 1, 1918. A number of years ago she and her husband Merle moved to Springfield where she resided until her departure. She was preceded in death by her husband, and one son. Surviving are one son Larry, two daughters Janice and Eloise, three sisters and one brother. She will be greatly missed in the church here and fondly remembered by us all. This writer and Brother Irvin Barnes conducted the memorial service at the Greenlawn Funeral Home where a large crowd gathered on a cold winter day to pay their respects to her memory.—Ronny F. Wade

Field Reports

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net, Feb. 9—Since my last report we have conducted several meetings in Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas and California. I was especially impressed with the work ethic and the results of the work of young preachers Brad Shockley who works with the Buffalo and Lee's Summit congregations in Missouri, and Matt Trent who works with the Oakdale, CA congregation. Here at home we are thrilled at the restoration of dear brother in Christ Wayne Tiner. Wayne's folks and my folks were very close friends through the years. Wayne moved away from Ada when I was a child and he has lived all over the world since then, including several years in Saudi Arabia. However, he and his family returned to Ada several months ago, began attending services and Wayne was restored. My meetings schedule for the first half of the year includes: Sulphur, OK (Feb. 18-22), Shreveport, LA (Mar. 3-7), Piedmont, AL (Mar. 14-21), Jacksonville, FL (Mar. 24-28), Bakersfield, CA (Planz Rd. April 11-18), Ceres, CA (April 19-25), Spring Valley, WV (May 16-23), Indiana, PA (June 13-20), Killbuck, OH (July 8-11), and McGregor, TX (July 25-Aug. 1). May God bless us all as we serve Him.

Cullen L. Smith, 4200 Prothro Ave.—**NEW ADDRESS**, Wichita Falls, TX 76308, (940) 689-9314, Jan 7—Since last reporting to the *OPA* we have had 1 baptism and 3 restored from digression here at Crestview. We have several visitors and consistent leads from our "Let The

Bible Speak" broadcast with Ronny Wade. The TX Labor Day meeting was enjoyable. It was well organized and crowds were large. We had a good weekend meeting at 21st St. in OKC. Thanks to preachers Edwin, Glenn, Doug, and Brandon for attending. Ratliff City was a good meeting with some visitors as well as preachers Melvin B., Bob J., Johnny E., and Brandon S. We had two good weekend meetings in Athens TX where Bro. Glenn Ballard works and in Amarillo, TX where Bro. Bob Orear labors. Both Glenn and Bob are good men and preachers. They have good works going in both places and certainly have the respect of everyone around them. I enjoyed the meeting in Washington OK where Brandon Stephens lives and works. He has a good work going there. I enjoyed participating in the Preachers' Study in Arlington this year and the OK New Years meeting had excellent preaching this year which always makes a good meeting. I look forward to a meeting in Manteca, CA Jan 16-25. May God bless the brotherhood.

Cullen L. Smith, 4200 Prothro Ave., Wichita Falls, TX 76308, Feb 10—Since last report we baptized 1, and had 2 confessions of fault at Crestview. We just closed a 4 day meeting with Ronny Wade. Ronny sends his "Let The Bible Speak" tapes for us to broadcast locally. We had 47 different outside visitors during this meeting mostly due to the television efforts. Ronny's preaching was excellent for outsider, backslider, and everyone else. Johnny and Sally Elmore were there and we thank God for answered prayers on her behalf She is doing great. Also, thanks to Jimmy Cating for attending. He is doing a great work at the Gardens Edge congregation here in Wichita Falls. It was good to be in Manteca, CA for 10 days. They had excellent crowds, first time visitors, and two confessions. Good things will come from Manteca in years to come. Thanks to Melvin and Lynette Lee for their hospitality. My schedule for the spring is: Mar. 26-28 in Temple, GA, Mar. 19-21 at New Salem in Brookhaven, MS, April 16-18 at the Tyler/Athens YPM, May 14-16 in Huntsville, AR, and May 22-23 in San Angelo, TX. May God bless the brotherhood.

Gerald Barrett, 2140 Old Well Road, Tehachapi, CA 93561, (661) 822-4970, barrettgr@csurfers.net—It's been sometime since I've given a report to the *Old Paths* for which I apologize. The congregation in Tehachapi continues to prosper both spiritually and numerically. Dave and Joann Payne at the beginning of the New Year have made Tehachapi their home congregation. They both have helped tremendously in the work since its inception in August of 2000. Phil and Barbara Kelly have also made Tehachapi their home congregation as well. Both are an encouragement to those of us who are younger here. The help of Jim Downum and Ryan Terwilliger in the teaching of God's word has blessed us. They have from the beginning supported this work on a monthly basis. We thank God for them and Lucille Downum in their faithfulness in this work. Jim and Lucille Downum are like parents to Starlene and me in the faith. They took us under their wing when we first obeyed the gospel. Grace and Randolph Kellems are attending the services faithfully. Grace takes care of Randolph who is her elderly father. Randolph at the age

of 98 years young makes every service if he is not ill. Matthew Barrett my son is a great asset to the work. He drives from his home in Bakersfield to assist the work in Tehachapi and takes a great part in arranging the services and leading in the services. We have several new teachers who now have started teaching for us on a monthly basis. Brian Elliott and Frank Brancato. Both are able preachers of the Gospel and we thank God for their help in our pilgrimage here. If any are passing through the Tehachapi area won't you please stop by and worship with us. May God bless the faithful wherever they are working in the Cause.

Joe Hisle, 18975 CR 1580, Ada, OK 74820, Jan 15, 2004—I have enjoyed the opportunity to be at home for a few weeks but now it is time to begin thinking about my schedule for this year. Follow is my schedule for 2004: Oyster Bay, March 14-21; Opp, AL, March 22-28; El Cajon, CA, May 5-9; Mt. Home, AR, May 16-23; White Bluff, TN, June 6-13; Columbus, GA, June 20-27; Pearlhaven, MS, July 11-18; Deer Park, TX, Aug 1-8; Tyler, TX, Aug 15-22; Ratliff City, OK, Aug 29-Sept 5; Washington, OK, Sept 12-19; Paris, TX, Sept 24-Oct 3; Trussville, AL, Oct 10-17; Davis, OK, Dec 3-5. If you are near any of these places I would be very pleased to see you at the meeting. May God bless the faithful everywhere with a great New Year in the Lord's service. Please pray for me and my family.

Douglas J. Hawkins, 3711 Castlewood Ct., Somerset, KY 42503, 606-678-4347, dougleast@alltel.net, January 8, 2004—We are looking forward to another year of opportunity to preach the gospel and labor in the Lord's vineyard. I like the other preachers, get tired by the end of the meeting schedule, but am generally full of spit and vinegar by the end of February and ready to go again. Now, this may sound like a contradiction, but it's due mainly to time constraints – I haven't set my schedule yet for 2004, but have it on my to do list as an immediate task. I look forward to being involved in all of our efforts this year, if the Lord is willing. My thoughts and prayers at this time are with our preachers overseas. Having been overseas before for an extended stay, I know how your heart longs for home. If they read this issue and this report, I want them to know, how important their work is. I missed the Alabama New Year's meeting this year, but was told it was very uplifting. The local New Year's meeting at Walnut Grove, KY was held by Bro. Alton Bailey and attended by many in our area, as well as friends and loved ones from other areas, like TN and northern AL. It was a joy to see all. My prayers are for the kingdom of Christ and the people of God. May we have a great 2004 in the Lord's work!

Jonathan Bunner, Apartado Postal #18-01-241, Ambato, Ecuador, Sudamerica—We are happy to report the rebirth of the congregation in Portoviejo, Ecuador, This congregation was started by Brother Hernando Motta back in 1999 but was neglected by the cups brethren. After several days of intense studies with various brethren we were able to worship on Sunday morning with them. Though not all the members came, the majority did attend and we had a great service. There

were fifteen adults and many children there. We are sure that the work in Portoviejo is going to continue. However, we do not want to leave these brethren by themselves. One of us needs to move there to help the work continue. If the Lord wills, I am willing to move there but we need a vehicle in order for us to make the move. For the time being Brother Motta and I will take turns going there for studies, etc. There are three who will probably be baptized soon if we can work with them. The congregation is located about five minutes outside the city limits because that is where the brethren live. They are very poor but are loving and caring people. Please pray for this new work.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail: old_paths@juno.com, February 16— During the month of January, we traveled to the Philippines as we have been doing for many years. A report is in this issue and we hope all will read it. If you can help in any way, please, let us hear from you immediately because these needs are urgent. There were 70 baptisms and 2 restored, according to Brother Danao's record. We were also happy to preach at a new congregation recently established. My thanks to Richard DeGough for his tireless work during the trip. After returning home, it was nice to have Brother Frank Brancato, of Bakersfield, CA, preach at Fremont over a weekend. He did a fine job and you will not be sorry if you call him. He plans to preach the gospel for the rest of his life, and we wish him all of God's best. We were with the congregation at Auburn, CA yesterday for Lord's Day and enjoyed it. Lord willing, we are to be at Washington, OK March 7-14 and later at Escalon, CA for meetings. Pray for us in the work.

C.A. Smith, 810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714— Well, another year has past and a new year is ahead. I hope and pray that the Lord's people can look back on 2003 with much thanksgiving for the many blessings privileges, and opportunities that were ours because of the "Amazing Grace" of our wonderful Father in heaven. Too, I trust we can look back with gratification at our labors for the Master, and acclaim assuredly, our labor was not in vain. But more than the above, I hope and pray that we are excited about the prospects of a brand new year, and have already decided that we are going to intensify our efforts to be strong in Him and His might, and zealously work in His vineyard as we have never worked before. Surely you think that would be a worthwhile resolve, so, let us join together, we who are kingdom citizens and "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Since last reporting when I reported that a sister in Christ had been restored to the fold, I am happy to report that her husband confessed his wrongs and requested prayer for forgiveness, and is now in the fold also. On Wednesday night December 24, while others were holding candle-light services, we had our normal mid-week service, which turned out to be much more than normal, for upon extending the invitation, our granddaughter, Kyndall, the daughter of Dyke and Connie, came forward and upon taking her confession, I baptized her into Christ for the remission of sins and Christ added her to the church. O happy day! O happy day! we are still walking on air!

We trust that the Lord will allow us to live long enough to see the other seven obey the gospel as well. May God bless the church and every Christian who makes up this glorious institution is my sincere and humble prayer.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 37073, Lusaka, 10101, Zambia, Africa, Tel. #250-01-215-290, duane@dnlpermenter.com—What a delight it has been to study and train Zambians and Zimbabweans together with Bill Davis. It was a real blessing from heaven to join Bill in the study at Binga, Zimbabwe with about twelve Tonga leaders from Zambia and twenty-seven church leaders from Zimbabwe. The study at Binga took place the week of December 8; we all arrived in Binga on the Saturday or Sunday before. Bill had arranged for us to stay in the Binga Lodge and eat right there along with using the conference room. In fact, there were about forty of us and it ended up costing several hundred US dollars. Bill would not let me share in this at all for he said he planned it and would pay it out of his money. Bill is an asset to the work in more ways than I can even thank him. The study began with the importance of following the proper order in leadership just like the Communion or anything else. We dealt with the qualifications of elders, evangelists, and deacons. We also talked about the work of an elder and that one elder can not rule the church alone nor can his work or authority be in more than one congregation. We also taught the work of an evangelist and the need of training the church along with the young potential evangelists, especially. We pressed the importance of an evangelist working himself out of a job and going to other parts of the country to establish work. We addressed issues of the Holy Spirit and many other parts of the doctrine that are so much needed here in Zambia. We printed out materials before hand that could be used to take notes and keep for future reference. This is very costly but I believe it very important to do since one of the great needs in Zambia and Southern Africa for that matter is to develop printed material. Even though most of the things we discussed were just basic things much of what we said was very revealing to the Africans. Many said at the conclusion that we need more of these kinds of situations where we come together for several days of intensive training. I was convinced already, but even now more than ever, that the greatest work for an American evangelist in this work is to train these people in the doctrine and do the best we can to work ourselves out of a job. I realize that I have only begun and that the work is so vast that there is much more to do, in fact, even though I have worked seven days a week many hours a day it will still take years to do what needs to be done. Please, pray that I have the wisdom and strength to do and be what this great work in Zambia needs. Much more has been accomplished in the last six months than I thought was even possible and I am so grateful to the Lord for such a great work to share in. Thanks and appreciation I also send to Edmond for backing me and helping me in more ways than I know how to say. God has surely blessed our efforts beyond compare for now the count of new congregations' numbers nine and many in addition have come out of digression bringing the total to around 160 to 170 congregations in Zambia. After

the study was concluded, we then traveled to South Africa with Bill and Daisy so that we could buy good tires for the Prado and put an extra fuel tank on the vehicle. Roger had purchased what he thought were very good tires and they looked very good to me. In fact, I believe he had to pay a premium for them. Two had blown out since we arrived and we haul such big loads with six to eight people everywhere we go that I felt a great need to replace them for it was very dangerous if one were to blow out while traveling at a high rate of speed. Several told me that if I bought more in Zambia I would have more of the same problems. We found some very good BF Goodrich tires that are used in one of the races across Africa and they will be very safe. They have three walls on the side which will give greater protection driving over the roads we have to drive on. We have driven over 20,000 miles since July one and now it will be a little safer we pray. When coming back from South Africa it took us more than six hours to get through the border. The starting line was about a mile from the entrance to the border due to a roadblock set up by the army in South Africa. While I patiently waited in line some officers decided to take the people behind me and form three more lines and now I was behind no telling how many cars. It was a real experience in itself but we finally made it to Harare and were able to go home on Monday arriving around noon to our home in Lusaka. All was good and we were safe. This gave us ample time to prepare for all the things that were ahead for us during the preachers study here in Lusaka. I may write next time about the preachers study for it was even better than the leadership study both Bill and I thought. Please if you have questions or inquiries write or call me. I am gone most of the time so to reach me it is easier to write an email. In some places I go I have learned how to access the internet so even when I am out sometimes I can access email but for sure after arriving home I will answer you as soon as possible. Thank you so much for all the response to Don Kelly's plea for Bible money and drip irrigation systems. We have distributed many Bibles already and will continue to do that for many weeks. In the name of Jesus Christ I write these things and it is my prayer that God will bless you in every way.

Ronny F.Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, rfwade@getatlas.com, Feb. 16—The meeting at the Crestview church in Wichita Falls, TX was both enjoyable and profitable. We had 47 visitors for the meeting. Many of the outsiders came several times and had been watching our TV program that shows there each Sunday morning. Brother Cullen Smith works in this area and is held in high esteem. Cullen is diligent, studious, well liked, and an excellent preacher. On Sunday brother Bobby Studer drove up from Granbury to be with us. Bobby has been very ill of late suffering from a form of Leukemia. Bobby and I grew up together in Ft. Worth, and his father Mick Studer was one of the many positive influences in my life at that time. The Lord willing we go next to Dothan, AL March 7-14, Bandy, KY April 11-18, Lovejoy, PA May 2-5, Greenville, PA May 6-9 and St. Albans, WV May 12-16. We look forward to being with the brethren in these places and hope to see many of you there.

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THE BACK PAGE...

BROTHER ABRAHAM LINCOLN?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

As I anticipate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln in two weeks, I recall Lincoln was probably not only the greatest President we ever had, but that he may also have been a secret member of the Lord's church. There is a tradition that says Illinois Evangelist John O'Kane (1802-1881), one of several members of the church acquainted with President Lincoln, discussed the condition of Lincoln's soul with him on several occasions and finally convinced him of the necessity of baptism. Lincoln's wife, however, had strong Episcopal and Presbyterian social ties in Springfield, and would have been embarrassed if word surfaced that a "Campbellite" had baptized her husband. Nevertheless, Lincoln slipped away from the house one night with some extra clothes, met O'Kane and was baptized in the Sangamon River.

The above tradition stems from a letter by G. M. Weimer published in *Christian-Evangelist* in February 1942. Weimer says, I met Brother John O'Kane who was state evangelist in Illinois...at a convention. The Lincoln matter as to whether he [Lincoln] had ever been baptized came up. Brother O'Kane told me one day, "Yes, Brother Weimer, I know all about the affair. On the night before Lincoln was to be baptized his wife cried all night. So the matter was deferred, as she thought. But soon after Lincoln and I took extra clothing and took a buggy ride. I baptized him in a creek near Springfield, Illinois. We changed to dry clothing and returned to the city. And by his request, I placed his name on the church book. He lived and died a member of the church of Christ."

About eight months after Weimer's letter was published, he responded to an inquiry by Clyde Summers concerning his claims. Weimer's letter to Summers is preserved in the Restoration Library at Freed-Hardeman University. He says, "The statement I have about John O'Kane baptizing Abe Lincoln is not something copied from a paper or book. When I lived in Eureka, Illinois so my 2 boys could be in college, John O'Kane stayed with me and my family. I asked him ... if he knew whether Abe Lincoln ever became a Christian. Then he, said, 'I am now going to tell you folks (I and wife and her father) all about the matter. I have kept it in my own memory because when he first had me to arrange to baptize him, his wife assumed a bitter resentment—that it would ruin their social status. So it was postponed ... I then baptized him in a small river near Springfield. Of course, he became a member of the Church of Christ. But I have kept it a secret ... on account of his home condition. Now the people who might be hurt in their feelings are all or near dead. So, Brother Weimer, I'll tell you three folks, but keep it a secret for some years so no storm can be suffered,'

"We promised. Wife and her father lie in their grave in Eureka Cemetery. I, as far as I know, am the only living messenger of the noted incident...My sun is setting. I am almost 86 years of age."

There are some statements in Weimer's second letter that make many Lincoln scholars skeptical of his claims. For example, Weimer says he moved to Eureka so his two sons could go to college, and that it was in Eureka that John O'Kane stayed with them. Weimer was eighty-five when he wrote the above letter, so he would have been twenty-four when John O'Kane died in 1881. That is hardly old enough to have two boys in college. It is possible John O'Kane did indeed baptize Lincoln, but since Weimer, his wife and her father are dead there is no way to confirm or deny Weimer's story.

After Lincoln died many different religions used anecdotal evidence to claim him as a member of their group. Lincoln's law partner William Herndon claimed, however, that while Lincoln's father Thomas was a member of the "Campbellite church," Abe lived as an infidel and died as an unbeliever.

In one public document Lincoln himself says, "That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular."

Seven years after Lincoln's death, David Lipscomb stated in *Gospel Advocate*, "Mr. Lincoln never obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ or rendered that homage to him which his position demanded—never acknowledged before the world his allegiance to King Emmanuel."

In spite of our wishful desire to claim Lincoln as one of our own, Lipscomb is correct. Even if Lincoln had been baptized into Christ, he refused to acknowledge that fact before the world. Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33).—
1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXVIII

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NO. 4

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

By KEVIN W. PRESLEY

"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Genesis 19:17). These are the pleading words of the angel to Lot and his family as they were led out of the doomed city of Sodom. Today, lying somewhere beneath the silent waters of the Dead Sea, are the charred remains of this ancient, evil city. Thousands of unmarked graves dot the ocean floor—graves of men, women and children who were swallowed up by the evil of Sodom and met the wrath of God face to face.

The timely narrative of Lot and the residents of Sodom is one of the more frightening and sobering accounts in all the annals of biblical history. If we could go back in time, we would probably be surprised to find a city that, relatively speaking, would be very similar to the large urban centers of our day. It was doubtlessly a bustling place with all of the frills and excitement that any city of that time could afford. People worked from day to day, children played, neighbors visited, business and commerce went on as usual. It was settled in a rich and fertile plain and was a prosperous center of activity. Lot found it a suitable place to settle and raise his family. Ignoring the wickedness that Sodom was known for, he made a foolish and unfortunate choice and subjected his wife and innocent children to the filth of that environment. Of course, Sodom and Gomorrah's reputations preceded them as being saturated with homosexuality and every other manner of sin and vice. We can assume that Lot was aware of this fact, but the rich, "wellwatered" land offered the shrewd businessman Lot more than he could refuse. Surely he felt that he could insulate his family from the temptations and pressures that life in Sodom would place upon them. Lot lived to regret that decision.

While Lot was a God-fearing man, he made a tragic choice when he and Abraham parted ways. He had the prerogative of going in any direction, but the Bible says, "he pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen 13:12). The results were disastrous. In the course of time, the scripture indicates that Lot came to consider his neighbors brethren (Gen 19:7). He lived among them,

and talked with them and short of becoming overtly evil, like them, he grew complacent and accustomed to the environment. His wife fell in love with the city. When God was raining down fire upon it, she ignored the angel's warning and looked back and was turned to a pillar of salt. Lot not only seared his own heart and destroyed the faith of his wife, but he also lost his good influence. When he warned his children of what the angel had relayed concerning the impending doom of Sodom, "he seemed as one who mocked unto his sons-in-law" (Gen 19:14). The evil of that place polluted the hearts of his beloved daughters. The woeful tale ends in a scene of drunken incest, which betrayed the influence of the city they had fled from.

Sodom finally became so blatantly and arrogantly evil that God cleansed the earth of its wicked influence. As the Lord prepared to bury Sodom in a firestorm of brimstone and ash, He dispatched His messenger to gather Lot and his family out of the city. Verse 16 contains an expression that speaks volumes about the damage that life in Sodom had done to the heart of Lot and the well being of his family. The text says, "and while he lingered..." As Lot's wife brushed away the tears, thinking about the riches, the home, and the friends she would leave behind, and as Lot "lingered" thinking about his sons-in-law, his business, and perhaps his friends, the angels took Lot's wife by one hand and Lot by the other and led them out of the city gate. As a final warning, the angel said, in effect, "Run for your life lest God destroy you too!"

How many well-meaning and otherwise godly parents are moving their families to Sodom—literally and figuratively? Some make a regretful choice by moving to a distant place where there is no faithful church or where the brethren are carnally-minded all to see their children discouraged or lost to the world. Even more of us, perhaps, are unconsciously moving closer to Sodom every day. A modern Sodom is not hard to find. Read what little the Bible says about the moral conditions of Sodom and Gomorrah and you really haven't read anything you can't find on the

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Editorial

WHEN FOUNDATIONS ARE DESTROYED

By DON L. KING

The Psalmist David wrote: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalms 11:3) This is quite a statement, isn't it? The words of David have application in nearly any setting. Whether one is dealing with a physical building, the crumbling of a nation's morals or matters relative to the church, the foundations are vitally important. Nothing can long stand unless a solid foundation is present.

San Francisco, California

The recent shocking developments in San Francisco, California regarding same sex marriages, followed by other places soon after, appear to define a deteriorating moral foundation. The fact that these "marriages" are apparently not actually legal and may very well be put down by the courts is of little consequence. Lawyers are filing suits on both sides of the issue and where it will end is known only to the Lord. However, it is a fact that the homosexual movement in America has slowly desensitized many Americans to the point that it is no longer seen in the same light as it once was. This has been done through movies and television, (among other ways) where such behavior is portrayed as normal. This is not an accident, you may rest assured. Little by little, Americans are beginning to see homosexuality as a civil rights issue. To speak against it is to have some view the objector as a racist. Of course, Christians know better than that. We know that whereas a person has no choice regarding race, (they are simply born that way) all immoral behavior is a matter of choice. A person who has homosexual, or sinful, temptations must resist those feelings just as a heterosexual must resist temptations toward the opposite sex. Just because the majority is attracted to the opposite sex doesn't give license for promiscuity. That is ridiculous. Such behavior is sinful and to be avoided at all costs. The moral foundation of this Country is being eroded by such events. Unfortunately, the moral climate of the world will have an effect in the church. To consider what many Christians allow today as compared with what was allowed fifty years ago is an eye opener. It is time to look within and make some changes.

Doctrinal Weakening

A sense of doctrinal weakening is being noticed by many today as well. Biblical positions once considered rock solid among all of us have been challenged by some. We now hear that Acts 20:20 really doesn't teach the idea of teaching publicly and privately at all. Oh, no, it just means that Paul taught the people everywhere. In other words, Paul was not speaking of public and private teaching but his place of teaching! Now, we realize that Paul taught people

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QUERIST COLUMN

BY RONNY F. WADE

Question: When someone teaches something that is false from the pulpit, is there ever an occasion when he should be rebuked before all?

Answer: As a general rule, it would seem to this writer, that the procedure to be followed, in such situations, would be dictated by the nature of the teaching. If, for example, a teacher says something that is completely out of line, something that if left uncorrected, would cause someone to be misled, then obviously correction needs to be made at that time, in the hearing of all. In the case of an Elder that sins, Paul commanded that he be rebuked before all, that the rest may fear (1 Timothy 5:20). A lesson was to be learned by all from the Elder's sin. In the same way all who heard the false teaching need to hear the truth correctly presented. Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan "that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). Whatever the specific sin of these two men, it was of such a nature that Paul felt compelled to use them as an example, so that others would not make the mistake they did. When Peter became inconsistent Paul rebuked him to his face according to Gal. 2:11-12. The situation was serious enough that Paul felt a public rebuke was in order. Suppose someone should teach that salvation is by grace only with no works on our part, what should we do? It seems that the nature of the teaching demands that someone correct the teaching immediately. Such correction should be done in the spirit of love. But even if the individual who so taught is just honestly mistaken rather than purposefully teaching Calvinism, the teaching still needs to be corrected. The one correcting should do so with care, with an effort to save the one who has mis-taught. To allow the teaching to go uncorrected means that people leave with the impression that such doctrine is correct, when in reality it is not. It seems to this writer that today most people want no confrontation at all regardless of the circumstances. As a result things may be taught that are dangerous and soul-condemning. But rather than have a disagreement brethren are content to remain silent. If, on the other hand, the mis-statement is such that no immediate harm will come from it, then the correction could be made in private. If the correction is received, then the brother will be grateful and he will be the better for it. If on the other hand, he rejects the correction and persists in believing and teaching that which is wrong, he should no longer be allowed in the pulpit. The pulpit of every church needs to be guarded. Brethren need to take care with reference to who fills the pulpit. No teacher or preacher should be allowed there who will weaken the church by his teaching. No teacher should be allowed there who teaches things contrary to Scripture. If brethren everywhere would follow this rule, those who fail to teach what

is needed would soon get the message.

Question: Does Ephesians 5:12 mean that such things should not be mentioned between husband and wife?

Answer: The verse in question reads as follows: "For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret." In the view of this writer this verse has nothing to do with what scripturally goes on between a husband and wife. Paul has reference to the private corruption of the workers of darkness, perhaps more pointedly those involved in the heathen mysteries which were transacted in the darkness of night. Macknight says "For the impure and wicked actions which are secretly done in the mysteries by the initiated, are so abominable, that it is base even to mention them." Paul says that their deeds are shameful. Even those with the least modesty don't want everyone to know all about their private corruption. Even though many of us may not know all about the private sins of the wicked, God does. At the appropriate time he will bring that which has been hidden to light, and all men will face their record and be judged accordingly. (*Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808*)

SOUL AND SPIRIT; JOINTS AND MARROW

BY IRVIN BARNES

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. 4:12.

This verse is frequently quoted to illustrate the fact that the New Testament scriptures are quick. The term quick does not mean to move with sudden and great speed, but rather is to be understood as alive, or having the ability to produce spiritual life in he who believes the word, and acts in obedience to its precepts. Just as a dried and shriveled grain of seed corn appears to be lifeless, so the pages, the paper, the ink of the written word appear lifeless. When a grain of corn is subjected to warm moist soil, the inner, germ of life bursts forth into a living plant. When the message of inspired scripture is planted in a good heart, (James 1:21), it produces spiritual life in the penitent, and obedient believer.

There is, however, a second thing that the word of God is able to do. It divides asunder soul and spirit and joints and marrow. Is the writer teaching us that the soul should some how be separated from the spirit? Is the writer saying that for some reason that joints must be separated from marrow? Soul separated from spirit and joints from marrow makes no sense. What possible value can come from such a separation? What, then is the writer teaching? I am convinced that the truth of this statement can be

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

(The following article was penned by Brother Ervin Waters in November of 1957 and appeared in that number of the Old Paths Advocate. The message is as timely now as then. Many today do not seem to grasp either the meaning or danger of societies and organizations separate and apart from the church or within the framework of the church. Some of the earliest divisions to plague the Restoration Movement were over the societies. Closely related are problems that arise over the support of mission work, especially when monies are funneled through some centralized framework or one man as in this case. Please read the following with care and discernment.)

ONE MAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

By J. Ervin Waters

When I began preaching there was a brother, Don Carlos Janes, an associate of R. H. Boll and of the premillennial movement among brethren, who had for many years acted as a treasurer and custodian of funds of foreign mission work. This work assumed large proportions and this position assumed great importance. Tens of thousands of dollars annually poured through his hands and, intentionally or not, there gravitated to him authority which by divine purpose was never placed in the hand of any disciple, whether elder or evangelist. It is the nature of anything, good or bad, scriptural or unscriptural, to grow, and this did grow.

I have no doubt concerning the good intention of this brother or his associates in initiating this plan. I would not impugn their motives. They wanted to see foreign missionary work done. They did not want to employ the missionary society, given birth to in the middle of the nineteenth century and which had fostered division among disciples. Their work had a small beginning but it grew. If a plan is scriptural, we want it to grow. The larger version does not differ in nature from the smaller version. The difference is only in size and degree.

Don Carlos Janes became a "one man missionary society" and a subject of much controversy. He received funds from many congregations and dispersed those funds to many evangelists on foreign soil. He had at all times in his custodianship a mission fund in being. He was not merely an agent of a congregation or a messenger of brethren.

Congregational contributions lost their identity in a large treasury which was extra-congregational and supercongregational in nature. For it there was no scriptural precedent. Centralized control and oversight, whether in a super congregation such as Highland of Abilene, Texas, which operates the Herald of Truth Radio and TV Program with funds received from thousands of congregations, or whether in the hands of one man such as Don Carlos Janes, or whether in a Mission Fund System such as we once operated in some six states, is foreign to the spirit, tenor and teaching of the Scriptures.

MAKING DISCIPLES

By MATT TRENT

In Matthew 28:18-20 the Bible says, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen" (NKJV). These familiar words are commonly referred to as the great commission. As New Testament Christians we are aware that these words inform us of our great responsibility as part of Christ's body.

The central responsibility within this commission is to "make disciples."

Technically, to make someone a disciple of Jesus is to make them a follower of the teachings of Jesus. According to the words of Matthew 28, this process is divided into two parts. First, we must baptize people from all nations into a relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You cannot be a follower of the teachings of Jesus without this first step. Second, we are to teach those that have been baptized all the things that Jesus commanded. This general statement might seem overwhelming. Jesus taught so many great truths. Where should we start? In an effort to answer this important question we will notice three statements made by Jesus Himself. These three statements, taken from the gospel of John, will help us understand where to start as we make disciples.

In John 8:31-32 Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In order to be a disciple, one must abide in Jesus' word. According to Thayer, the Greek term translated "abide" can be used in reference to a place, to time, and to a state or condition. So to abide in the word given to us by Jesus is to take up residence, spend our time, and mold our character to its truths. Each of these can be said of Jesus. He never departed from God's revealed will. If we are going to teach people how to follow Him, we must teach them to make the word an important part of their life.

Next notice what Jesus said in John 13:34-35. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will now that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." These words are spoken during the last week of Jesus' life. He knows that His life on this earth is almost over. However, in this statement He looks past His death to the time when His people will be left to live without Him on this earth. How will they spread His message? How will they reflect His glory in their lives? The answer is love. Jesus knew before He died that His people would evangelize by loving each other.

There is one aspect of this statement that should be

clarified. Jesus said this is a new commandment. Does this mean that it had never been spoken before? No. It was part of the Mosaic Law according to Leviticus 19:18. Why was it new? Jesus made this commandment new by redefining love on the cross. John later wrote, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). Paul also emphasized the love shown on the cross when he wrote, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). A Christian today cannot think of love without thinking of the cross.

We show our love to each other by being dedicated to the needs of others. According to Jesus this dedication will proclaim to the world that we are His disciples. We cannot honestly claim to be Jesus' followers and then hate each other. Can we be like Jesus and refuse to speak to each other? Can we be like Jesus and try to bring harm to one another? If we are to teach people how to follow Jesus' teaching we must teach them how to be dedicated to the needs of their brothers.

Lastly, in John 15:8 Jesus said, "By this My father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." If we are going to teach people how to follow Jesus, we have to teach them that their lives will be fruitful. If we are really following Jesus' teaching we will have a good heart that will bring forth good things in our life.

Jesus illustrates the relationship of a good heart to a bountiful harvest in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23). A life in sin will bring forth a harvest of discouragement and bitterness. This is what Paul taught when he wrote, "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This is not so for the true disciple. In their life there will be abundance.

What are these good things? Paul gives us the answer in Galatians 5:22-23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, selfcontrol. Against such there is no law." If we follow Jesus we will have these characteristics in our lives in increasing measure.

In order to obey the great commission of Matthew 28:18-20 we must teach people to obey all that Jesus taught. In this study we have pointed out three specific truths Jesus wanted His disciples to understand. If you want to teach someone how to follow the teaching of Jesus, teach them to abide in His word, love one another, and bear much fruit.

THE CHRISTIAN'S APPAREL

SELECTED BY CECIL SMITH

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." (1 Tim. 2:9.)

This verse of scripture is still in the Bible, reading and saying what it did some nineteen hundred years ago when the apostle penned it by inspiration. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) Yet, there is an alarming disrespect for its teaching. This cannot be denied by anyone who is aware of the attire worn by society today. In spite of the fact that the inspired penman wrote to be clothed in "modest apparel," men and women dress immodestly. The abbreviated costumes, shorts, some party dresses and modern bathing attire come in this category.

Christians are not to love the world (1 John 2:15-17), nor are they to be conformed to the world. (Rom. 12:1, 2.) Rather, they are to keep themselves unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27.) Christians are not to talk, dress, live nor act as the world. Christians are different people. When the person in the world curses, engages in filthy conversation, the Christian's speech is pure. When the individual in the world dresses immodestly, the Christian is decent and modest. When the worldling lives a godless life, the Christian lives a sober, righteous and godly life. (Tit. 2:11-12.)

Christians are admonished to "Flee youthful lusts." (2 Tim. 2:22.) Such being the case, they cannot participate in that which tends to excite the lusts, nor can they dress in a fashion which contributes to the arousing of the baser nature of man.

We are taught in Matt. 5:28 "that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." But what of that woman, who, because of immodest apparel, stimulated those evil desires? We affirm that she must bear her part of the guilt!

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) We are influenced in our thinking by what we read, hear and see. This being the case Christians must watch their attire lest it contribute to the origination of evil thoughts and the awakening of lustful desires in the other individual, which things mold one's life and determine his character. "Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny."

Christian women are told to be discreet, chaste and good. (Tit. 2:5.) Does the wearing of abbreviated clothes and the modern bathing attire contribute to pure thoughts, chaste motives and discreet behavior? Who can imagine Mary, the mother of Jesus, Hannah, Lois and Eunice, or Dorcas, being clothed in such fashion?

"But when Paul wrote 1 Tim. 2:9 he was speaking of wearing gaudy, excessive clothing to attract attention," it is affirmed. Well, if such be the case, and such attire attracted too much attention, what about too little clothing? Certainly it would come under the heading of "immodest apparel." If the aforementioned costumes do not come under this heading, what would it take for one to be so clothed immodestly?

But we are informed, "Everybody dresses this way." Oh, no, dear friend. There are still many godly, Christian men and women who do not do so and have no intention of starting. But, even so, does the majority prove a thing to be right? The majority have not obeyed the gospel. Shall we stop preaching to them? In some circles, most all drink intoxicants. Is such all right under the circumstance? The principle still holds true; "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." (Ex. 23:2.)

We are asked, "Can one wear them at home?" In reply we ask, what about the milkman, grocer, postman, etc? Also what of the influence you will have over your children? Yes, even in the home such apparel should not be worn.

"But God never said, 'Thou shalt not wear such clothing.'" That is correct. But neither did He say, "Thou shalt not drink beer." Shall we allow such because we do not have a strict prohibition; "Thou shalt not"? If everything prohibited had to have a "Thou shalt not," then the Bible would be larger than a boxcar.

Be reminded that in Gal. 5:19-21 Paul lists the works of the flesh, among which is lasciviousness. This word is defined as "wanton; lewd; lustful; tending to produce lewd emotions." Any sane person knows that an exposed body tends to produce lewd emotions. Thus, such stands condemned.

Gospel preachers, teachers, and consecrated parents should warn of the dangers of immodest dress at regular intervals.

Yes, it still reads after some nineteen hundred years, "in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel." (1 Tim. 2:9.)-Wendell Winkler

(While looking through some of my grandfather's old periodicals, I ran across the above article in a copy of *The Truth*, dated August 1963. Though the article appeared in the sixties, it seems to me to be even more relevant to our day. As the author commented on Prov. 23:7, I couldn't help but to think of our young people and their role models. If the wise man spoke the truth as he stated "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," what does this say of those who look up to the popular singers of our day, many of whom dress very inappropriately to say the least. Parents, take the time to sit down sometime this week and listen to some of your children's tapes. Even better, watch some of their videos. As stated in the article, "We are influenced in our thinking by what we read, hear and see." I am afraid, many of our young people are just "not that innocent" if this be true. One man once said that if he had control of the music of a nation, he could bend and control the future of that nation. Brethren, we are living in a world where Satan is out to bring us low at every corner. Let us set our affections on things above, not on things of this earth. Let us learn to think, wear, listen to, watch, and do only that which is right and cannot be wrong. After all, Heaven will be worth it all.-Cecil Smith)

FORGIVENESS

By JIMMY VANNOY

Does God command that we forgive everyone who has done us wrong, no matter what? It is very important to understand the will of God concerning the forgiveness of others because both the eternal destiny of our souls and our happiness while we are on the earth are affected.

While Jesus was on the cross, He made this important statement to help us to understand God's will about forgiveness: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34) Jesus asked God to forgive His murderers while they were murdering Him. It is obvious that Jesus forgave them, because He asked God to do so.

The attitude of Jesus toward those who did Him wrong is expressed beautifully in I Peter 2:23. "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously." Even though Jesus was grossly mistreated while He was on the earth, He set an example for us of forgiving and never seeking revenge or threatening those who mistreated Him. He simply "committed himself" to God, knowing that any necessary retribution would be taken care of by Him.

While Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was being stoned to death, he said, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." (Acts 7:60) We find that Stephen expressed the same attitude as Jesus, asking that God forgive his murderers as they were beating his life out of him. This unconditional forgiveness expressed by Jesus and Stephen is a model for us as Christians today and indicates that we are not to hold grudges against those who mistreat us, but we are to forgive them from our hearts, even if they continue to mistreat us.

We understand that for God to forgive a person of his sins, he must repent and meet the conditions of the gospel (Acts 2:38, 1 John 1:7, 9), but we are not God. Jesus and Stephen set examples for us of forgiveness of those who mistreated them, even while the terrible deeds were occurring.

We are commanded to forgive those who mistreat us, whether God forgives them or not. "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. (Mark 11:25) We are commanded to forgive others if we have anything against anyone. This statement is all-inclusive, encompassing anyone who has wronged us for any reason, whether or not they have expressed regret for their actions, and whether they are alive or dead. Ephesians 4:26 teaches us to "not let the sun go down on your wrath." In other words, we are commanded to forgive and let go of anger before each sundown. Yet many Christians are allowing sundown after sundown to pass as they continue to refuse to forgive,

holding on to their anger to their own harm.

Ephesians 4:32 teaches that the reason we are to forgive others is because God has forgiven us. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." The parable of the unforgiving servant, found in Matthew 18:23-35, demonstrates this principle clearly. The king forgave his servant of a tremendously large sum of money because of his compassion and because he knew that the servant could not pay it. The servant then accosted a fellow servant and demanded payment of a relatively small sum of money. When the second servant could not pay, the first servant had him cast into prison until the debt was paid. The king was very sorrowful about the behavior of his servant and said, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?" (vs. 32, 33) Because the servant failed to show compassion, the king delivered him to the torturers until he paid the debt. This parable concludes with an ominous statement. "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." (v. 35) God warns us that "each" of us must forgive others because He has forgiven us of all of our sins. He demands that we forgive, and there is no exception to this commandment.

If we expect to be forgiven of our sins by God, we must be sure that we forgive everyone of everything they have ever done to wrong us. The consequence of failing to forgive others is made clear in the model prayer of Jesus. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:12, 14, 15) The word "debt" in v. 12 is equated with "trespasses" in vs. 14 and 15. Jesus explains that if we fail to forgive others, God will refuse to forgive us of our sins. Jesus says in Luke 6:37, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven." Jesus again says, "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Mark 11:26) James by inspiration states, "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy." (2:13) If we refuse to forgive everyone of everything they have done against us, we cannot expect the mercy of God and will be eternally lost.

As a certified counselor with several years of experience counseling both adults and students, I have found that the main thing I have to help people do is to forgive those who have mistreated them. So many people have been treated terribly, and it is extremely difficult for many to forgive the perpetrator of this mistreatment. They have the irrational attitude that refusing to forgive the person will somehow punish him, and they see it as their revenge against that person, but in reality, the only one they hurt is

themselves. A person who fails to forgive will always have at least some of the following problems: latent anger, a desire for revenge, resentment and feeling hurt. These negative emotions can cause serious problems for the unforgiving person. The effects of failing to forgive can include fits of rage, violence, depression, low selfconcept, unhappiness, low achievement and the increased likelihood for illness and suicide. Negative consequences of not forgiving are inescapable.

God has designed His will so that if we obey it, we will be happy. The word "blessed" found in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:3-12 means "happy." Among those who will be happy are those who are merciful to others. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (v. 7) Note that the condition for receiving mercy from God is being merciful to others, and if we do so, we will be happy.

Luke 17:3, 14 teaches that if our brother sins against us and repents, we are to forgive him, even if he does so seven times in one day. This verse in no way implies that forgiveness is not required of us if a person refuses to repent. Jesus in this verse addresses only the situation in which a brother does repent. Other verses cited in this article show clearly that we are to forgive everyone who mistreats us, even the unrepentant.

Dr. Robert Enright, PhD, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, did a study measuring the emotional state of people before and after forgiveness. He stated, "Those who forgave eliminated feelings of anxiety and depression and boosted their self-esteem and sense of hope." Other researchers have found that forgiving results in better sleep, an improved ability to trust, and an end to the negative symptoms and illnesses which have been found to accompany unforgiveness.

Dr. Enright confirms what we already know: obedience to God's commandments will help us to be happy while on this earth. We have also determined that if we refuse to forgive others, God will not forgive us, and we will be lost eternally.—105 Sunset Circle, Corsicana, TX 75110, E-mail: jvwannoy@yahoo.com

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD

By GREG GAY

The Bible opens with the wonderful words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen 1: 1). These simple words are either accepted or rejected by all who have ever lived and will live upon the earth.

To accept the fact of the God of creation means all that exists has a designer and has been intentionally allowed to exist.

To reject the fact of the God of creation means all that exists must be explained in a credible way without the possibility of God. That would mean there could

have been no designer of the entire universe, only random accumulation of various things to yield the universe as a whole from the smallest particle to the largest star.

For years when discussing this subject one of my favorite questions to ask anyone who does not believe in the God of creation is: "And where did that come from?"

For example, if someone says, "Man evolved from Apes," the respectful reply can be, "Many believe that, but where did the Ape come from?" Whatever the reply is the same question follows: "Where did that come from?" That means one must search for an earlier and earlier origin until the logical conclusion is that something came from nothing.

In a world without God that is not possible. But with God it is easily explained. God created something from nothing, and something has existed ever since and will continue to exist till God decides otherwise.

Of course the message of God the creator is in His word, the Bible. And, not in an apologetic fashion either. The Bible just tells us up front that God exists, "In the beginning God..." (Gen. 1:1). I think that is very appropriate because if one can't accept the fact of God from the very first sentence of the Bible then the rest of the Bible won't mean anything. Oh, but what wonder of discovery awaits the one who believes in the God of the first sentence of the Bible!

David of old tells us the beauty of the heavens declare the message of God the Creator to every one. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Ps 19:14 NIV).

What a wonderful message God's creation gives to all the world! Next time we think to look up into the sky on a clear night let's remember we are seeing God's wonderful work reminding us that He exists!

The writer of Hebrews tells us: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is (that he exists), and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6).—1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

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front page of the newspaper or on the headlines of the six o'clock news. I was startled and reminded of that fact only a few evenings ago.

I am a Fox News "junkie" you might say. When I can, I sit down and watch at least the first few minutes of "The Fox Report" with Shepard Smith. I like his fast-paced, concise, and pithy style. It is almost as though he takes the day's events from all around the

globe and sorts through it and wraps it all up in a neat little package and hands it to you. I like to get my news that way as opposed to the drawn out, 24 hour news cycle with an anchor telling you the same thing a thousand times. At any rate, a few evenings ago, when I turned on ole' Shep and listened to him rattle off the headlines in about 30 seconds or so I felt like I had been bludgeoned with information and was left with a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. It wasn't that he said anything that hasn't been in the news a lot as of late; I just suppose that it was the effect of having it all combined and heaped upon me at once. Allow me to recount those 30 seconds of headlines for you: First on the rundown, was "shocking new video just released" of the two Columbine massacrers preparing for their school shooting rampage that left several students dead in 1999. Completely unedited, these young animals plastered their faces to the lens of their camera and the screen of my television and spewed a chilling and sickening stream of vile expletives and profanity. Next, before you could blink, an unflattering image of Howard Stern, the king of raunchy radio, was on the screen and I was being told that Howard was in hot water for taking to the airwaves and describing in graphic detail an act of sodomy. Are we supposed to be surprised? Of course, all of this comes on the heels of the Super Bowl, half-time show flap. Next in the lineup was the latest on the "Passion of the Christ" movie controversy. Now, while I do not endorse or promote movies, I do sympathize a little with Mel Gibson for the heat he has taken over his portrayal of the crucifixion of Christ. He has become the target of the amoral and atheistic left wing of this country who want to stamp out anything with a reference to God (unless it's profane that is). According to Shepard, the long-time CBS News and 60 minutes commentator Andy Rooney told a radio talk-show host that day that he would not be interested in seeing Mel's movie because he didn't want to "spend \$7 for a few good laughs." Last but not least, it was out to San Francisco where it was a special day for Rosie O'Donnell as she finally wed her longtime female partner. By this time, I had the remote control in hand and was looking for the right button, but I was not fast enough. Fox (like every other media outlet) provided me with a wedding picture of Rosie (to use an old fashioned term for sake of decency) "saluting her bride." Yes, that was my country and my world in about 30 seconds! Just as I was aiming the remote and switching the television off, there was my two-year-old daughter who had dropped her toys and was standing motionless staring at the black screen. Her innocent little eyes had no way of comprehending what she had just seen, but in a few years...What kind of wretched world will she grow up in? The words of the angel unto Lot came to mind at that moment; "Run for your life!"

The world is growing increasingly wicked every day

we live and the influence of the world is growing incredibly powerful. It is frightening to think of the world that our children will have to face. Should the Lord delay his coming, I don't think we can even begin to comprehend the consequences of the moral freefall that our culture is in the process of experiencing. The only hope for the child of God and the Christian home is to flee from the world in thought, word and deed. "Love not the world, neither the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). It is impossible to literally run away from the world and that should not even be our desire. We should be trying to save the world. In order to do that though, we must remain ideologically and morally separated from them. If there is ever a day when the church should be militant against the world, distinct from the world and antagonistic toward the world, it is today. The church desperately needs to be the conscience of this old world, but tragically, in many ways, we are becoming its reflection. We are allowing it to creep into our homes, our way of thinking, our value systems, and our lifestyles. Shouldn't we all stop and evaluate our lives and our homes? Are we embracing trends, attitudes, language, apparel, and lifestyles that smack of Sodom? I am sure Lot thought when he moved his family there that he and they would never become like the wicked neighbors about him. The Bible tells a different story, however. If only we would look at the ancient city of Sodom and see the modern parallel and if we could but look into a "crystal ball" and see the cataclysmic collision course with God on which this world has set itself, we would surely hear the stark warning of that fateful day outside the gate of Sodom; "Run for your life!"

EDITORIAL

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in many places but what would be the point of such a statement? Why would Paul have felt that would be informative and beneficial? Almost anyone can see that Paul draws a contrast in that passage. He said, "...I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." (KJV) The word "publicly" indicates something done in full view of others while the phrase "house to house" seems to indicate the opposite of publicly, or private. McGarvey's commentary has: "...that he had taught from house to house, as well as publicly." (Page 186) Is that not the meaning that is immediately obvious? It is certainly not our intention to be overly critical, and we love all brethren, but the fact remains that such teaching has an adverse effect on the church. No matter how much we love brethren, the obvious weakness needs to be pointed out and corrected. Once the Biblical concept of public and private is destroyed it is but a short step to unscriptural teaching parameters for women. Perhaps that is one reason we

are hearing of attempts to create situations, seemingly questionable at best, wherein women can teach the Bible or scriptural precepts.

Brethren, we cannot simply stand by and allow the foundations to be destroyed under us. Satan never stops working. He has tried to wreck the Lord's church since the beginning. Every generation or so, he tries a little different tactic. From within and without, he is ever busy.

It is unfortunately true that the terrible moral climate in the world has an inevitable effect on nearly everyone. It is also true that the modern doctrinal climate within certain circles among us will have an adverse effect as well. It would be a mistake to believe that weakening trends will just go away if they are ignored. Nothing harmful to the church has ever died on its own. History shows that division usually resulted when questionable things were tolerated by some to the dismay of others who had a conscience against the practice. Even in matters of obvious liberties, the Bible is plain. When such liberties become a stumbling block to brethren with a conscience against them, we are to be willing to discard them in the interest of peace and unity. (See I Corinthians 8:13) In I Corinthians 6:12, Paul shows that even if something is lawful it still may not be expedient or best. It would seem logical to discard any and all non-doctrinal things posing a threat to the peace of the church and brotherhood. Paul said, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another." (Romans 14:19) Brethren, this needs prayerful consideration.

If the future of the church in America is to remain bright and strong, stalwart brethren must stand firm in love. The good fight of faith must ever be waged. It can be done again as in years gone by. In fact, we have little doubt that it will, in fact, be done. Think on these things—DLK

SOUL AND SPIRIT; JOINTS AND MARROW

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clearly understood when we see "soul and spirit" two things that are of a spiritual or heavenly nature are to be separated from "joints and marrow" two things that are of an earthly or a physical nature. This two edged sword shows us how to separate from the spiritual and the carnal.

There is yet another thing that the word of God does. It is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. The word discern here is to be understood simply as to "judge." The idea is simple. We should be familiar enough with scripture that our plans, intentions, our very thoughts, should constantly be compared with the word of God. The word of God sits in judgement of our thoughts and intentions continually.

How wonderful indeed that we have at our fingertips the word of our Almighty Father which is so powerful

that it shows us the difference between the heavenly and the earthly, and is a discerner of our thoughts and intentions.—3218 E. Farm Road 88, Springfield, MO 65803

SHOCK AND AWE

By TAYLOR A. JOYCE

Before the onset of the Iraqi Freedom campaign our military planners said it would begin with something they called “shock and awe.” Although we saw only a small part of it through the lens of a single fixed camera in Baghdad, we had to agree that it lived up to its billing. More spectacular than any Fourth of July celebration, precision-guided bombs and missiles filled the night’s darkness with deafening sounds and huge flashes of light. As impressive as it was to those watching by television, one can only imagine the shock and awe of those on the scene in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities who experienced the terrifying bombardment first hand.

Bible students must have noted the similarity between this display and the descriptions given in God’s word of judgment day when “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:9). That, too, will be a time of shock and awe.

Many will be shocked and awed by the realization that judgment is a reality; that they are actually being called to account for their earthly deportment. These are the ones who, while on earth, have said, “I don’t believe a loving God would actually punish someone in hell for his misdeeds. God is much too loving for that.” They have, however, failed to note that the same passage (John 3:16-36) which most forcefully emphasizes the love of God also warns that those who spurn that love through rebellion and disobedience will be subject to wrath: “He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him” (3:36 RSV). *Wrath* translated the Greek word *orge* which according to several scholars is used to describe the universal, abiding opposition of God to evil.

Judgment day is called a time of “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil” (Rom. 2:5-9). The same descriptive term is found in Rev. 6:17 where those who are unprepared to face God in judgement cry out to the mountains and rocks “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne.” Commenting on this passage, some writers have used words like unthinkable and unimaginable as they pondered the frightful description of this scene when unregenerate men would prefer to be crushed by falling stones than to face God. There will indeed be shock and awe when it comes to pass just as it is written: “As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God” (Rom.

14:10).

On that day some who though they were saved will be shocked and awed to learn they are lost. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out devils: and in thy name done many wonderful works: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23). In this crowd you will find the sayers (“Lord, Lord”) who were not doers (“everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not.”). Here are preachers (“have we not prophesied in thy name?”). Here are miracle workers (“and in thy name done many wonderful works?”) Lost! Everyone of them! What shock! What awe!

It need not be that way. “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 John 2:28). Commenting on this verse Guy N. Wood wrote: “It was the apostle’s hope that all those to whom he wrote as well as himself might live in such fashion as to be able to stand unafraid in the presence of the Lord...those who are ashamed will, that day, shrink from the Lord in guilty fashion, fully aware of the fact that they are unprepared to meet him.” Clearly, it is possible to escape the shock and awe, but only if we prepare now for that awful day.

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, rfwade@getatlas.com, March 16—The meeting at Dothan, AL closed with large crowds and one baptism, one restoration and one confession of wrongs. During the week we had twenty-five outsiders, some attended the entire meeting. Brother Kevin Presley lives and works here. He is respected by the church and community as well. His presence in Dothan is felt by many thousands of people. He is certainly a credit to the work. In addition to Kevin we had fellow preachers Mark Deatherage and Philip Prince present for one or more services. Visitors came from several places in the South to help and encourage us in the meeting. Currently we are at home working in this area. Brother Wayne McKamie just closed our meeting and did some outstanding preaching—the kind of preaching that will save both the world and the Church. Lord willing we go next to Bandy, KY April 11-18, Mtn. Grove, MO April 21-25, Lovejoy, PA May 2-5, Greenville, PA May 6-9, St. Albans, WV May 12-16, and Greenville, SC June 13-20. We look forward to working in these areas in an attempt to strengthen the church and reach out to the lost.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Dr., W. Chester, OH 45069—It has been my pleasure recently to be with the

congregations at Bedford, IN and Springfield, MO (North) I was privileged to spend a little time with Walter Hunter and Irvin Barnes during these visits. My upcoming schedule is as follows: Mar. 27-Apr. 4. Paris, TX: Apr. 14-18 Blue Springs, KY: June 9-13 Nashville, TN (Brookside): June 18-25 Lexington, OK. If you are near where these churches or are planning your vacation in these areas why not make time for us and mark your calendar and help us to spread the gospel. Pray for the efforts.

Kevin W. Presley, 106 Whiffletree Way, Dothan, AL 36303, (334) 678-8999—We just closed a good meeting here at home last night with Ronny Wade. We had 25 different visitors from the community with most of them being the result of our television program. One young man was baptized and another restored during the meeting. Ronny preached some great sermons and we enjoyed having him and Alfreda with us for the week. As of late, I have enjoyed being with the brethren at Robertsedale, AL and West Point, GA. Both meetings were well attended and I enjoyed the hospitality of the brethren. It was especially good to be with Don Jackson at West Point. I am scheduled to begin a meeting this coming week with the church at Fossil Creek in Fort Worth, TX (March 20-28). I am to be with the congregation at Jamesville, MO (April 21-25) and then on to Walnut Grove, KY (May 10-16). I hope to see many of you along the trail. If you are in the Deep South, stop and see us in Dothan. We always look forward to having visitors from across the brotherhood.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, March 15, e-mail old_paths@juno.com.—We just returned from a meeting at Washington, OK. Over all, crowds were good and a fine spirit prevailed throughout. We appreciated having visitors from several area congregations as well as some people from the community. It was good to be with Johnny and Sally Elmore again. Sally is doing well, for which we are thankful. We were also glad to have Jerry and Beverly Harris and Doug and Debbie Edwards present one night along with perhaps others I have forgotten. Washington is where Brandon Stephens is currently working and is held in high regard. I enjoyed spending time with him and appreciate his abilities and dedication to the truth. The brethren treated me with hospitality and warmth. I sincerely thank David and Neva Jo Stephens for allowing me to make my home with them for the meeting. We go next to Escalon, CA beginning there the end of this month, Lord willing. Preachers, don't forget to send us your field reports and articles for the paper.

Frank Brancato, 3012 Cattleman St., Bakersfield, CA 93312, (661) 588-7338, e-mail: tinabrancato@cs.com, March 20, 2004—The past year has certainly been eventful not only for the local congregation at Planz Rd., but also for my family. We have been living in Bakersfield for 12 years, but had been driving to Ventura every Sunday

for worship. We decided that it was time to concentrate on the work here locally about a year ago, and to have the Planz Rd. congregation to be our home. The congregation here has been very supportive in my efforts to try to preach the gospel. It has been a wonderful experience working with the church here, and am very thankful for the opportunity. We are especially happy to report that the work here locally is going exceptionally well. Six people have been baptized over the past six months, and another four have been restored to duty. I am thankful for the collective efforts of all the members here who realize the importance of working together and doing their part. We are working hard together so that we may grow not only in number, but in strength and steadfastness as well. We are looking forward to our meeting with Carl Johnson April 11-18, and also for the Labor Day meeting which will be held by the Brundage Lane congregation across town. Lord willing, I will have preaching appointments in Ventura CA on April 4 and at the Brundage Lane congregation here in Bakersfield on April 25. I also look forward to preaching in Modesto CA on May 30. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Brother Don King and the Fremont congregation, for allowing me to hold a weekend meeting back in February. The meeting was well attended by the local membership, and also from surrounding congregations. I was especially grateful for the preachers present which included Brother Don King, and Brother Richard DeGough.

Brett Hickey, 208 Crosshaven Ct., Antioch, TN 37013, (615) 501-9246, brett-louishickey@juno.com, March 16—The work in Nashville moves forward as we enter our ninth month here. Our evangelistic thrust includes periodic newspaper articles on aspects of the Lord's Supper aimed at our "cups" brethren, reaching out to backslidden members, sending postcards to the community surrounding the building offering free sermons on CD and advertising the upcoming Lord's Day sermon. More importantly the most of the congregation is establishing or strengthening non-Christian friendships so they can work more effectively to bring them to services or initiate studies. These combined efforts are generating momentum resulting in studies and visitors to services. Enough leads have been generated to keep me very busy studying with members and non-members. Last week a Hispanic man was baptized and yesterday another said he wants to be baptized at the next service he attends. One middle-aged sister here humbles me and inspires me. She has had serious and repeated health crises in recent months, but constantly encourages me and prays for the work. I am glad there are others like her here. As this attitude of humble, unpretentious service permeates a congregation growth is unavoidable and peace will prevail. We are excited about our meeting with Phillip Prince that begins this week. Our meeting with Barney Owens will be June 9-13. I look forward to upcoming meetings at Stockton, CA April 11-18 and Lawrence, KS June 2-6.

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THE BACK PAGE...

ASHES TO ASHES

By CARL M. JOHNSON

My brother-in-law has a place south of Ada that includes one of the finest bass lakes in our part of the country. He has worked a lot of hours dredging the lake in order to clean its floor and its shores. He has also built a gravel-bottomed cove for a private swimming area, stocked the lake with thousands of fish, built a boat dock and ramp, and a picnic area with concrete tables and seats inlaid with ceramic tile. It is the perfect place for a big fish fry, and he sees to it that the entire church is invited out for just such an occasion every several months. The picturesque lake setting is serenely beautiful, and the lake itself is a fisherman's paradise. He has invested so much of himself into his lake property that he told me recently he has decided when he dies, he is not going to be buried, but he wants to be cremated and have his ashes spread over the lake. His only concern is whether there is anything spiritually wrong with cremation.

The Bible does not give specific instructions for the disposal of bodies after death. In Bible times, however, according to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, "The Hebrews did not normally cremate, except in most unusual cases of emergency. Later Babylonians burned their dead and deposited their ashes in ornate funerary urns, as did Greeks and Romans. Hebrews in later time, indicated by the numerous ossuaries found in New Testament Palestine, also practiced cremation" (250).

Until 1963 the Roman Catholic Church banned the practice of cremation for its priests and people because church leaders felt cremation would somehow interfere with the bodily resurrection. If that logic is correct, those martyrs who were burned at the stake for the sake of Christ, and innocent saints who have lost their lives in fiery car accidents and house fires are going to have a problem on Resurrection Day. God will have no problem, however, raising bodies that have been cremated, buried, buried at sea, vaporized in atomic explosions, or destroyed in any other way (Rev. 20:13). God's power is infinite and there is nothing we can do to obviate the resurrection (Jno. 5:28-29).

James W. Fraser objects to cremation, arguing that the practice is not "Christian." He contends God punished Moab for burning the bones of the king of Edom (Amos 2:1), and he calls the act an "immoral and unpardoned sin" (Cremation-Is it Christian? 13).

The king of Moab was filled with such hatred for the king of Edom, he dug up his dead body and made lime out of his bones to use as whitewash on their houses and walls. God punished the king because of his maniacal attempt to continue to cause pain to a dead man—a man completely out of the king's reach. It is a mistake, however, to conclude God punished him simply because he burned the king's remains. There is no prohibition in the OT against burning the bones of the dead (cf. 2 Kings 23:4-6, 16).

According to 1 Samuel 31, after the death of King Saul the Philistines began mutilating his body. Some of Saul's brave friends, however, retrieved his body and cremated it in order to keep the Philistines from desecrating it any further. God did not punish them for burning King Saul's body, nor is there any mention of their act being "immoral and unpardoned." On the contrary, the king's friends disposed of his body with reverence and mourning.

Therein lies the key as to how we should dispose of dead bodies today. We should dispose of them with reverence. Even though the spirit leaves the body at death, the body is the physical reminder of what the person meant to us. Furthermore, the body is destined for resurrection, transformation and reunion with the spirit at Christ's return (1 Cor. 15:35-55). Therefore, the body should be treated with reverence.

It becomes a very personal decision as to what procedure expresses the appropriate respect for the deceased. For some people the correct choice is burial, but for others the correct choice may be cremation.

At death the body returns to dust, whether it is buried or cremated (Gen. 3:19). Cremation does speed up the process, however, and some people prefer having their body disposed of quickly, cleanly and efficiently by heat rather than having it decay slowly in a grave. Cremation also allows people such as my brother-in-law the freedom to place their remains in some private place of great significance. If you choose to be cremated you should discuss your plans with your family now. Some family members are disturbed at the thought of death itself, not to mention cremation. They may resist your wishes when the time comes. By educating your family members now you can put their unease to rest and have peace of mind knowing your wishes will be carried out. carlmj@cableone.net

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called. The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO.5

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

By *BENNIE CRYER*

A greater interest is being manifested concerning the subject of this article and rightfully so. I think we are part of a brotherhood that largely desires to know what the Bible teaches about this subject. Therefore I am writing this article with hope and a prayer that it will contribute something to our understanding of this topic. I am sure other thoughts on this matter will be presented in future issues of this journal.

First of all, we need to look at the great commission and understand that we are under the mandate *to teach* (disciple) *all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* (Matthew 28 :19-20). Luke wrote The Acts of The Apostles in narrative form in order to teach how this part of the commission was carried out among other things.

The book of Acts gives us the account of the beginning of the church, how sinners were saved, and examples of perseverance in spite of extreme persecutions. It also provides us with many illustrations of public and private teaching situations that we must compare to situations that confront us in this 21st century in order to establish their validity. Of course there are other instances in the New Testament that we have to consider as well. These illustrations, especially those involving women who taught the Bible (Acts 21:8-9; 18:24:26), are invaluable in determining where a woman may or may not speak the words of life to others. The fact that a woman may teach the word of God under certain circumstances is conceded by all I suppose. The fact that she is restricted in her teaching the Bible (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12) to certain situations should also be accepted by all. Generally speaking, a woman may not teach the word of God in a public situation. She may teach it in a private situation if all the other requirements of the Bible for her are met. For example, she may not teach anyone when she is taking the place God gave to man (1 Timothy 2:11-12). I think it is a good and tried saying that where a woman may scripturally teach she may teach anyone be it a man, woman, or a child.

The problem that exists with “private situations” is the difficulty involved in determining whether a situation is really private or not. The dictionary does not help much

in making these determinations. The English dictionaries I have list as many as eight different definitions for “private” as an adjective and two more as a noun. The Holy Spirit has helped us very much in revealing three situations that were used in the New Testament. Two of these categories are revealed in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. Churches* would refer to any of the called assemblies of the church and in these a woman cannot teach or ask questions. *At home* indicates another category that we might describe as a family situation in which a woman might speak, ask questions, or fulfill her obligation to teach the word of God (Titus 2:3-5). The third category (any public situation that is not a called church assembly) is also under consideration in 1 Timothy 2:11-12. Consider Acts 17:17. *Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.* The synagogue was not an *at home* situation so a woman would have to learn in silence there. She could not speak. *The market* was not an *at home* sort so she would have to refrain from teaching there in the manner that Paul did. He taught those *that met with him*. The purpose of Paul meeting with them was to teach the scriptures. There is no doubt that a woman who went to *the market* to buy or sell goods could incidentally talk about spiritual things such as Mary Magdalene did in John 20:2, 11-17. Women could not teach or ask questions in the school of Tyrannus, Acts 19:9, because such activities for women were limited to the *at home* capacity. In recognition of this principle Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos from the synagogue *unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly,* (Acts 18 :26). I believe the women who were members of the Church of Christ in New Testament times followed this pattern when speaking about or teaching the word of God. Women who are members of the Church of

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Editorial

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

By Don L. King

What did James have in mind when he mentioned the “prayer of faith?” In James chapter 5 and verses 14 and 15, the record says, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

Occasionally, we hear of some brother who sincerely believes this passage applies today. They believe that prayer and anointing with oil is called for in our day and age. We don’t believe it for a moment, and in fact, to our mind it seems incredible that anyone might. However, there are some things we would like to introduce for thoughtful consideration.

Apostolical Epistles by Macknight

According to **Macknight** in his excellent commentary “**Apostolical Epistles**” (page 602); the prayer of faith is to be considered as belonging to the miraculous age. “In scripture” he says, “*faith* sometimes signifies the spiritual gifts in general, Romans 12:3; sometimes the gift of working miracles, 1 Corinthians 12:9; 13:2; and sometimes the gift of healing diseases miraculously, Acts 3:16, in which sense it is to be understood here. The gift of working miracles was called faith because they were always performed in consequence of an impression made by the Spirit on the mind of the person who was to perform them, moving him to undertake the miracle, and working in him a full persuasion that it would be performed. Wherefore, the ‘prayer of faith’ is a prayer which the elder, moved by the Spirit of God, was to make for the recovery of the sick, in the full persuasion that the Lord would raise him up.”

In Acts 3 we find the account of the lame man who was healed as Peter and John were about to enter the temple. He had been carried there by others and was begging alms from those who entered. He had asked for something from Peter and John, and Peter told him “Look on us.” (Verse 4). Peter said, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” (Verse 6). The account goes on to show that the man was immediately healed and was able not only to walk but to leap, or jump.

The multitude was evidently amazed and Peter took advantage of the opportunity to preach to them. In verse 16, Peter said, “And his name (the name of Christ DLK) through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” Peter was not telling the multitude that the lame

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is there not a spiritual side to the work of a deacon (other than setting a good example before others and assuming a leadership role during worship services)? Is so what does it entail?

Answer: Even though elders are to serve the church, they also have the responsibility of overseeing it. Deacons, on the other hand, are not overseers, but they are servants of the church. The very meaning of the word deacon carries the idea of servant or minister. The word is used a number of times in the NT, where the meaning is clearly just that. A few examples follow: In Mt. 4:11 angels ministered unto Christ, in Mt. 8:15 Peter's mother-in-law, after being healed, ministered to them, in Mt. 20:28 Christ came not to be ministered to but to minister, in Mt. 25:44 those who are saved must be those who have served, in John 12:2 Martha served at a supper for Jesus, in Acts 6:2 the apostles said it was not right that they leave the word of God and serve tables, as a result seven men were selected and appointed to serve tables. We find also in Romans 15:25-28 that Paul ministered unto the saints in taking to them the contributions that others had made. There are many other instances where the word is so used, but these will suffice. The bible does not specify exactly what the deacons are to do, however, we may draw some conclusions as to their duties based on the following considerations: (1) Elders are charged with overseeing the flock. This also includes oversight of the deacons. Any work with which the elders need help, that falls within the range of deacon's qualifications, would be a work deacons can perform. (2.) Since they are servants of the church, they may serve the church in any capacity which falls within the range of their qualifications, which does not usurp the authority of the elders. Some suggested areas of service include: benevolence, building upkeep, handling the collection (counting money and banking it), communion supplies and handling the service itself, baptismal services, (assisting candidates and arranging for the supplies,) tract ordering and display, advertising of services and gospel meetings, etc. There are some who have advanced the idea that deacons attend to the material or physical aspects of the work of the church, while the elders are concerned with the spiritual aspects of the work. Such a distinction might not be wise or necessarily accurate. What we usually refer to as "material things" are in reality related to the spiritual. Since the work of the deacon contributes to the well-being of the church and since the church offers the gospel to the world, it would seem inconsistent to say that what the deacon does in this regard is purely material. In answer to the querist we would say that everything a deacon does that contributes to the growth, work, and well-being of the church constitutes a spiritual service. There must be a close working relationship between the elders and deacons. Elders must remember

the valuable place occupied by these men whose existence is authorized in scripture. By the same token the deacons must remember that they cannot usurp or undermine the work of the elders.

Question: An elder in my home congregation told us that we should check with the eldership before attempting to study the bible with an outsider. His concern was that some members of the congregation might be too young in the Faith to take on such a challenge. I always thought that all Christians were required to participate in personal evangelism. Have I been wrong?

Answer: Personal evangelism is a duty of all Christians, a duty that none can neglect or shirk. There are, however, some individuals who are inadequately prepared to confront certain people and certain issues. In such cases the truth and the church often suffer. One who is ill prepared to defend the truth may actually do more harm than good. That, of course, was not the intent of the individual involved, but none the less that may be the outcome. It may well be that this was the reason the elder made the announcement alluded to by the querist. If such were the intent and purpose, I feel it was well within the bounds of reason and good judgment. If on the other hand the intent was to prevent or discourage people from studying the bible with "outsiders," then obviously the statement was out of place. We must remember that an eldership oversees a very diverse group of people. Not all of them are equipped to do what they might want to do. When that is the case, two options are open to the leadership of the church: (1) work with those who would be teachers or personal workers until they are able and ready to go out on their own, (2) caution those not yet equipped to do the work, to wait until they are prepared. It should also be noted that personal evangelism is not limited to extensive studies with people. One can function in such a role by merely inviting outsiders to the services of the church or a gospel meeting. One can also set up studies between outsiders or other members who have a more mature knowledge of the scriptures. In either case they would be operating in the field of personal evangelism. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade PO Box 10811 Springfield, MO 65808 or rf Wade@getatlas.com).

CHRISTIAN ACCESSORIES

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than this? Need we do any more?

Instead of "letting our light shine", there is the risk that in wearing religious jewelry, as Barnes' puts it, we will do so just to show others our "peculiar reverence for the law." The Pharisees were looking for shortcuts and were focusing on man's approval, not God's. We must guard ourselves against the same pitfalls.

Jesus commanded every disciple to "deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." All Christians can comply with this command and never once wear a cross or any other religious icon.

LET THE STANDARD BE DISPLAYED

BY RICK MARTIN

In Isa 59:19 we are told that "When the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him," The metaphor of lifting up a standard for making an arm resistance is common in the book of Isaiah. We find such references in Isa 5:26, Chapter 8:2, Chapter 18:3 and Chapter 31:9. The standard is also referred to as a banner in Psa 60:4 "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of truth,"

The standard was highly prized in war. On it was engraved the names of special victories and fields of renown. It was a disgrace to lose the standard and in many a battle men have died to protect the standard.

If there has ever been a time when the enemy has come in like a flood it is today. For we are involved in a life and death struggle of good versus evil. The Lord has provided a standard and we must rally around it in this great struggle. It is time for us to defend Christianity. Our greatest weapon in the defense of the standard is our sword (Eph. 6:17) "And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God."

Since we are involved in this great battle a good question to answer would be "how do we take up the sword of the Spirit?" We do so by studying the Word. Paul told Timothy to study in order to be approved 2 Tim 2:15. The Bereans avoided believing anything false by searching the scriptures daily Acts 17:11. Could you imagine a soldier going into battle without his weapon? He would be defenseless. The same is true for a Christian who goes into the world without arming himself with a knowledge of the Word.

Since we are living in a world that seems to be so evil some might wonder is it possible to be a good soldier in the Lord's army? The answer to that question is yes. We are all aware that Satan does his best to keep us from living the Christian life. He does everything he can to hinder us in our devotion to Jesus and His cause. We can be victorious soldiers of Christ in the midst of a corrupt and violent world. We can have the philosophy of Paul (Phil 4:13) "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me." We know that he accomplished the goal of being a good soldier in the Lord's army from what he tells us in II Tim 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith."

God has given us strength to win the battle over sin. Even though we may be tempted our convictions can be upheld. In Heb. 2:18 God tell us "he is able to help those who are being tempted." We must trust in God with all our hearts, because if God is for us who can be against us?

Satan will try to convince us that we cannot be good soldiers. He will try to convince us that eventually we will be overcome by the things of the world. He wants us to believe that the pressures will be so great that eventually we will just give in and quit the fight. Once

again he is wrong for we can overcome the temptations (I Cor. 10:13) "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. But will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

If we are to be a good soldier we must love the cause for which we are fighting. A good soldier of Jesus Christ must be devoted to Him and to His cause. One who would enter the fight against evil must be willing to devote soul, mind and body to the cause. The Lord does not need cowards in His grand army. We must trust our leader Jesus Christ and never question his authority. Wherever he tells us to go we must go. Whatever battle he puts before us we must fight.

The apostle Peter gives us a great plan for doing spiritual battle with Satan in I Pet 5:8-10. First he tells us to be "sober". In other words we are to be serious about the fight against Satan and evil. We must not be pulled into a false conception of Satan's power. We must take him and his evil forces seriously. Second, he tells us "to be alert". We must always be aware of Satan's craftiness. Third, he tells us "whom resist steadfast in the faith." A firm faith forms a fortress against Satan. A firm faith becomes a weapon with which to fight aggressively. (Eph 6:16) "Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Fourth, Peter reminds us that we are not alone in this fight. Satan has a way of making us feel totally alone, just as Peter must have felt in that courtyard when he denied Jesus. We must realize that we are not the only soldier in the battle. There are other soldiers from whom we can gain strength, who are defending the standard.

Peter also emphasizes that our fight is not too long and he informs us that we possess a powerful ally who truly cares for us and who will stand with us in the heat of the battle. God will ally himself with us against Satan. His strength will become ours. What a great plan Peter gives us to fight the battle against Satan and defend the standard.

There are some people who will say that we are living in worst of times. That may be true and you could certainly make a case for that premise. As we look around us it is apparent that the enemy has come in like a flood. Satan and his evil forces are winning the souls of man at an alarming rate. Evil abounds and there seems to be a tremendous decline in moral standards. And don't think for one minute that this has not had an effect upon God's people. We are not only in a fight for our own souls and those of our family, we are in a fight for the souls of men.

The moral decline that exists should be of great concern to us all. The divorce rate continues to be

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CHECKING THE BASKET

By RICHARD BUNNER

Jesus often used fruit as an illustration of determining the character of others and the purpose of life. Concerning false teachers He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-20). This illustration seems straightforward and clear: we can tell what a man is by what he produces.

If the doctrine a man espouses puts men into some denominational church or a religious body other than the one Jesus died for we can readily see that he is a false prophet. The fruit that he bears is corrupt. If quarrelling, strife, and division seem to follow a man wherever he goes that should be an indicator to us that he is a "corrupt tree". Since Jesus has said, "by their fruits ye shall know them", a congregation really has no excuse for embracing and supporting false teachers.

The church today here in the United States is facing a much more complex issue. What if the preachers and teachers just are not producing any fruit at all? This seems to be the case in some areas. While we would not label men with empty baskets as false teachers, we must admit that there is something wrong. In John 15:2 Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." As a preacher of the gospel I must be concerned about this statement. The same end comes to those who are fruitless in life as to those who bear bad fruit. Doing nothing and being unproductive in life is no better than doing evil.

A few years ago I helped to organize a massive canvassing of a small town in Pennsylvania. Several preaching brethren, church leaders, and energetic members participated in the effort. In a two-week period we visited every home and talked to thousands of people. We had numerous studies and dispensed large quantities of literature. No one was added to the body of Christ. Needless to say, we were disappointed. At that time some brother consoled us with the words that we had been successful because the city had heard the proclamation of the gospel. I felt relieved, but in my heart I knew that was not true. We planted the gospel, but there was no success.

My wife is quite a successful gardener. I know that because I eat lots of tomatoes, green beans, squash, peppers, and a host of other vegetables that she harvests from her little garden plot. Our neighbors stand in awe as they admire the heavy clusters of pole beans and the large ripe tomatoes. Everyone in the neighborhood talks

about her garden. But if my wife planted seed every year and nothing came up she would not be a successful gardener. The proof of her success is in the produce that she receives.

There are several reasons that can be offered to explain why some brethren are not bearing fruit today. One could be that they are not sowing the seed in the right places. In His parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9), Jesus mentioned that some seed fell along the wayside. The way side was where all the traffic was. The ground was so hard and packed that the seed never had the opportunity to germinate and spring forth. It eventually was eaten by the birds. A good gardener does not choose the roadway to plant his vegetables. We should have the same wisdom when it comes to spreading the gospel. Jesus told the seventy, "But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:10-11). It seems incredible today that brethren who are quite savvy in the business world will send preachers into the same area for years and have nothing to show for it. We need to recognize that some communities and cities are like the way side, and our efforts could be better rewarded in some other place.

Sometimes preachers are not bearing fruit because they have not been trained and properly equipped. I began studying to preach at a little congregation in West Virginia. After a couple of years some brethren asked me to move to a struggling congregation in St. Louis, Missouri. The brethren in West Virginia were not totally convinced that I was ready for such a task, but I was sure that I knew everything I needed to know. For the next three years I fumbled around because I was not ready. There was no real progress made for the church during my stay there, and when I left someone else had to move in to take my place. Thirty years later I see brethren still making the same mistake. Young men are being sent into some very difficult situations. They think they are ready, but many of them are ill equipped for the job. To borrow another metaphor, they have not yet learned how to be fishers of men. Check out their baskets to verify what is being said.

A third reason that may not be very common, but we would be naive to think that it does not exist, is that some of the laborers are sleeping under the shade tree while it is day. Some preachers feel that they are accountable to no one. They come and go at leisure, and seldom are involved in spreading the gospel at their post any more than the Christian who is not being paid to do such work. Solomon once observed, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man

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CHRISTIAN ACCESSORIES?

By BRETT HICKEY

The infamous Brittany Spears had her picture in the Nashville newspaper this week. She makes the news frequently, but this was different. Nothing was said about her racy song lyrics; there was nothing involving immorality or shocking impropriety. The topic was fashion, but not the provocative attire that has become her trademark. The article was entitled, "Christian symbol of faith becomes a hot accessory."

It seems that Miss Spears is jump starting a celebrity trend - the sporting of "jumbo-sized and jewel encrusted" crosses. The article quotes the spokesperson for the National Jewelry Information Center: "In 2004, expect to see layers of crosses dangling from multiple chains around trendy necks, a look already spotted on actress Lara Flynn Boyle."

Has Hollywood discovered an evangelistic tool that Christians have too long neglected? Although the cross is central to the gospel message (I Cor. 1:18), it is hard to see this fashion trend as a meaningful sign of spiritual revival overlooked by the church of the New Testament. Paul reminds us that the gospel itself is the power of God (Rom. 1:16). He also urges in Rom. 12:2a, "Be not conformed (fashioned - ASV) to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

But are there any other Biblical principles that could lead us to tiptoe away from using "Christian accessories" to spread the gospel? In prophesying of Jesus' coming kingdom, Jeremiah writes, "After those the days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts' and I will be their God and they shall be my people." Really, Jeremiah was contrasting the fundamental flaw of Judaism - the preoccupation with religious showmanship - with the beautiful simplicity of those living under the new covenant who would not stress the superficial sanctity of religious robes, titles and amulets, but the inner qualities of compassion, character and commitment. Jeremiah could see the dawning of a new day when God's people would have more than a mere head knowledge of God. Instead, they would have a deep, vibrant spirituality that needed only the tangible, visible emblems divinely appointed in the Lord's supper to remind them of their God-given responsibilities and to spur them on to good works.

Jesus picks up where Jeremiah leaves off in Matt. 23:5, issuing a stern rebuke to the religious elite "But all their works they do to be seen of men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments."

We may have legitimate doubts about whether Brittany and the other celebrities are really trying to promote Christ, but I suppose only they know for sure. We cannot read hearts, and so, cannot judge others' motives. Jesus did not have this limitation. There were surely some Pharisees who had their heart in the right place (men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea),

yet Jesus corrected the group in general for substituting empty externalism for genuine substance.

Albert Barnes in his commentary on the Gospels, says of Mt. 23:5, "The word phylactery comes from a word signifying to keep, preserve, or guard. The name was given because phylacteries were worn as amulets or charms, and were supposed to defend or preserve those who wore them from evil. (The practice . . . was founded on a literal interpretation of Ex. 13: 1; Pr. 3: 1, 3; 6:21. They were basically scriptures bound in leather worn about their faces and arms.) The Pharisees enlarged them, or made them wider than other people, either that they might make the letters larger or write more on them, to show, as they supposed, that they had peculiar reverence for the law."

More recently, D. A. Carson, expressed a similar understanding in the Expositor's Bible Commentary: "The particular term (phylacteries) used here only in the New Testament has pagan associations ("amulet") and may insinuate that the totopot ("frontlets") had become like pagan charms. . . To show their piety to the world, these leaders made large, showy phylacteries." Simply put, whether or not their individual hearts and conduct supported this outward display of devotion, they wanted everyone to see their badge of righteousness.

Did Jesus Condemn the Wearing of Phylacteries?

Are phylacteries - a new and "improved" version - making a comeback? Should we wear phylacteries or a modern day likeness? Would doing so be drifting towards Judaism, the world or both?

Paul wrote in I Cor. 11:1, "Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ. " While Jesus may not have issued a wholesale condemnation of phylactery-wearing, all He says on the subject is negative. Neither Jesus nor the apostles command or suggest the wearing of phylacteries or anything like it. There is a great difference between wearing a cross and bearing our cross.

Alfred Edersheim (1825-1829) had the unique perspective of viewing Christianity through Jewish eyes. The Vienna-born biblical scholar who converted from Judaism to Christianity, wrote in his book, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, "It is impossible to believe Jesus ever wore phylacteries. . . There was certainly no warrant for them in Holy Scripture, and only Pharisaic externalism could represent their use as fulfilling the law. . ." We are more likely to glorify God in avoiding this kind of Pharisaic externalism than in imitating it.

This is an individual's decision, but from a brief survey of the scriptures, the best plan of action seems to be to distance ourselves from Pharisaic practices and to move toward the modest example of Jesus who "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). Can we do any better

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LET THE STANDARD BE DISPLAYED

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astounding. We are confronted everyday in the newspapers and television with violent crimes. Premarital sex has been called, "the sin America winks at." People are being manipulated and molded by television and movies and you can be sure that Hollywood doesn't love the Lord. Many states throughout our country have some form of legalized gambling. Millions upon millions of innocent babies are killed because a woman has the right to choose. Not a very pretty picture is it? That is what we are fighting against.

Our Lord came into this world to seek and to save the lost He often cried over Israel's refusal to repent and turn back to God. He was the greatest restoration leader in history because He showed people the way back to God. His business should be our business.

Jesus has challenged his people to make a difference in society and better the world. He tells us to be salt and light. Instead of responding to the challenge and gathering around God's lifted standard to battle evil, many have taken the role of Pilate and washed their hands of the matter.

Children of God must influence those around them, but before others can be influenced our own house must be set in order. The issue of our own spiritual well-being must be addressed. It would serve us well to take an inventory of how the ways of the world are influencing our lives. We need to decide what type of person we want to be (Pro 23:7) "For as he thinketh in his heart so is he." Excessive influences from the secular culture leads us to be no different from the world around us.

We cannot follow blindly the latest fads of modern culture. We must hold the line against evil and heed the admonition of the apostle Paul. (Rom 12:12) "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The apostle places the first emphasis upon each individual being brought into harmony with the teaching of the Gospel. This is done when one's heart is centered on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Many want to accept Him as Savior, but not as the Lord of their lives. As our minds are transformed through a daily effort to follow Christ we will begin to have an influence on those around us. We will influence fellow church members, our families and people of the world.

We must draw the line on secular influences in our life. So many have failed to do so, and we are now reaping the consequences. Satan's forces have fought for and gained more ground, more influence and more of our families. While the battle rages on, many have thrown their swords to the ground and have left the standard undefended. We can no longer remain silent and passive in this fight; our convictions should lead us to speak up for the Christian values we hold so dear.

We are involved in a war today, "a real war" against Satan and all his evil forces. Satan would have us believe that we cannot win, but that is not so. We are soldiers empowered by God. Let us remember "*There's a royal banner given for display, To the soldiers of the King; As an ensign fair we lift it up today, while as ransomed ones we sing. Tho' the foe may rage and gather like a storm, Let the standard be displayed and beneath its folds, as soldiers of the Lord, for the truth be not dismayed.*" - Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189, mmartin@bellsouth.net.

WHILE MEN SLEPT

While men slept - that's the explanation Jesus gave for the presence of weeds in the wheat in Matthew 13:25. "While men slept, the enemy came and sowed weeds in the wheat," - abortion became an acceptable means of population control, homosexuality became an acceptable lifestyle, sex outside of marriage became common behavior, teenage pregnancy reached epidemic proportions, our society grew addicted to pornography and gambling, and alcoholism became our Number One health problem - while men slept.

Individualism, pluralism, secularism and apathy rendered American religion impotent, totally incapable of doing anything about our moral and spiritual crisis. No one seemed to know what was right and what was wrong. Most people didn't think there was any right or wrong, and those who did, didn't seem to care one way or the other. So everyone did what felt good to him at the moment, or made him feel good about himself later on. While men slept the weeds grew.

Don't you think it's time we awaken out of our sleep? New Testament Christians "turned the world upside down" by preaching Jesus Christ. They went everywhere doing it - in the Jewish synagogues, then the market places. They made a great impact on the world around them and thousands of thousands of people became followers of Christ. But that was their Number One priority!

Will our church historians write about the church in our times that, "while men slept," America became a godless nation, forbidding the mention of God in public education and at public affairs? Will they say that on our watch our national motto, "In God We Trust," became unconstitutional? Will they write that while New Testament Christians slept false religions so dominated the airways that like Israel of old, we abandoned God and worshipped our Baals?

The Lord says, "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead. And Christ will give you light" (Eph. 5:14).

~ SELECTED BY MILES KING

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

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Christ today should continue following this pattern.

Paul recognized the different arrangements for teaching the word of God in Acts 20:20. *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house. Publickly* included the church assemblies, teaching in the markets, synagogues, and in the school of Tyrannus. *House to house*, when contrasted with *publickly* in this verse, would refer to the *at home* situations above.

That this was a pattern followed in their teaching habits is seen in Acts 5:42. *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. The temple* generally would be considered a public place such as *the market. Every house* would be considered as an *at home* arrangement unless it was a called church gathering. Here we have to be careful and we can learn a valuable lesson so far as this subject is concerned. A family home could be considered an *at home* arrangement or it could easily become a church assembly with certain changes. For example, Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos *unto them* in an *at home* situation. Priscilla seemed to have a part in this. However, their home in Ephesus also became the meeting place for the assemblies of the church (1 Corinthians 16:19). When the church assembled in their home it was no longer an *at home* situation. It then became public with the rules of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 applying. So that which was private became public. It took only a few changes for that which was private (an *at home* situation) to become public. I fear that a number of instances that brothers and sisters are calling private are really public. I pray for the tribe of Aquilla and Priscilla to increase in the Church of Christ today.

There are yet dangers facing us in the future about this subject. Let me quote from an article written by a sister in the church and published in a religious journal. This article was not written last year or the year before. It was written June 25, 1888 and it tells us what lay ahead for the church that had already gone into some digression. This woman was trying to expand the role women had in the church. A brother in the church had written an article trying to correct her. She responded with these words. "Do you think it right for women to go to heathen countries as missionaries? I refer especially to those countries where it is impossible to reach women through men preachers on account of their secluded lives? Do you think it would be proper for women to hold a prayer meeting if no men were present? Might a woman talk of the gospel to a crowd of women only without violating Paul's injunction? In a neighborhood where there were few men and none belonging to the Church might a number, say a dozen or so of devoted women meet together, organize a church and worship God, without the assistance of a man, without violating Paul's

injunction? I have recently read of such a church. Do they sin in so trying to worship God though they have no male member in their congregation? Do you think it was a mere accident with no meaning attached, that Christ appeared first to a woman after he had arisen, and that a woman received the first commission to tell the tidings of the resurrection?"

This is a partial list of what this sister in the church was trying to do 116 years ago. Was she successful? Yes she was. The role of women in church activities began to expand and it seems that everything she wrote about has come to pass in the digressive church plus much more in some of them. Let us be warned and see that such things do not happen to us.

CHECKING THE BASKET

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void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, *and* considered *it* well: I looked upon *it*, *and* received instruction. *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth; and thy want *as* an armed man" (Proverbs 24:30-34). The lazy man will not have anything to show for his time spent here on earth. He is to those who send him *as* "vinegar to the teeth, and *as* smoke to the eyes" (Proverbs 10:26), and though he may make excuse, his Lord will say in that final day, "*Thou* wicked and slothful servant, . . . cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:26-30).

While all Christians are to bear fruit, he who is called a preacher should bear more. That is part of his job description. To those faithful preachers of the gospel: If nothing is happening where you are, and your basket has been empty for quite some time, ask yourself what the problem might be. Do not console yourself with the cliché, "Nobody is interested in the truth;" we are hearing about hundreds of people obeying the gospel each year in other places. Preachers of the gospel and churches that send them need to work together to achieve the greatest harvest possible for the Master.

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Announcement

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Our Departed

HOWARD - James (Jim) Howard of Dora, MO was born March 2, 1924 in Ozark County, MO, and he died March 26, 2004 at the age of eighty years. He is survived by his wife Jessie; children, Gayle Barnes of Springfield, MO, Linda Smith of Cuba, MO, Billy Howard of Ava, MO and Ronnie Howard of Dora; thirteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren; two brothers, Joe Howard of Dora and Charles Howard of Mountain Home, Ark.; three 'sisters, May Gilley, Council Hill, OK, Lorene Dobias, Rolla, MO, and Irene Frazier of Mountain View, MO. Jim was preceded in death by his parents Joe and Helen May Howard, one sister, Hazel Cobb, two infant daughters and two infant sons. Jim was a hard-working, hard-driving man who lived life at full-throttle. He worked several professions including operating dozers and other heavy equipment, cattle rancher, saw mill worker, insurance salesman and house mover. Of all his professions, however, Jim was most passionate about doing personal work for the church. He did a lot of personal work through the years in northern Arkansas, southern Missouri and in the St. Louis area. I knew Jim almost 34 years and loved him for his big heart and for his passionate concern for the souls of others. A large crowd, including preachers Ronny Wade and Irvin Barnes, gathered in Dora March 30 to pay their respects as we laid Jim's body to rest. - Carl M. Johnson

JOHNS - Charles "Chase" James Johns the young son of David and Tawnya Johns passed away on March 12, 2004. Chase was born December 7, 1999 in San Diego, CA. His death came very unexpectedly about 3 1/2 weeks after being diagnosed with a brain tumor. During his short life Chase was very much a fixture at the congregation at El Cajon where he and his family regularly attended worship. Forever etched in our hearts and minds is the picture of little Chase standing at the communion table before services with a songbook in his hand wanting to lead a song, or standing behind the pulpit with a bible in his hands. Indeed a poignant reminder of the power of influence and example. At the

service David reminisced about all the special times he and Chase had shared. We were moved to laughter and tears as he shared so many touching moments that defined the life and relationship they shared with their precious child. He noted that Chase would never know sin and he would never know how messed up this world can be. Tawnya wrote, "Chase was a lively boy who was full of love, mischief, and a kind heart. He was taken from us too quickly but left us with many precious memories." We thank God that our sorrow is not as those who have no hope. Chase is survived by the parents David and Tawnya Johns, a sister Aaryn of Temecula, CA; paternal grandmother Ilene Johns of Edwards, MO; maternal grandparents James and Juanita Walker of West Plains, MO; and many other relatives and loved ones. The writer and Chris Allen were honored to share in the tribute to little Chase which was conducted at the El Cajon church building in San Diego. A second service and burial were presided over by Smith Bibbens in Missouri. - Larry Lay

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

continued from page two

man had been healed because his faith was so strong. After all, verse 5 plainly tells us that the crippled fellow was only expecting to receive some small gift, or alms. There is no reason to assume he was a believer in Christ. He was just there to beg alms. Peter was telling the people that it was a miracle produced by their faith, the faith of Peter and John. He said, "the **faith** which is **by Him** hath given him this perfect soundness..." Apparently, Peter here alluded to this miraculous gift called "faith." That "faith" allowed those who were so empowered to miraculously heal the sick and infirm. This is the "faith" that **Macknight** writes of in James 5: 14, 15.

Look at the passage once more, please. James said, "...the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." (James 5:15) Is there any room for failure here? None whatsoever. James promises, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that if this procedure is followed the sick **will** recover. Brethren, when there is no possibility of a failure, it has to mean a miracle is taking place. Natural law has been suspended and something miraculous takes place. If something is within the realm of natural law, such as a physician treating a sick person, failures may happen. People sometimes die while under the treatment of doctors, but the Great Physician never lost a patient.

James 5:14, 15 obviously belongs to the miraculous age and we have no reason to believe it still applies today, hence, no reason to anoint anyone with oil in the name of the Lord.

There will almost certainly be more written along these lines in coming months and this article is by no means exhaustive, nor was it meant to be. However, we trust it may give cause for further study.

Think on these things. -DLK

Field Reports

Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189, mmartin@bellsouth.net, The congregation here in Marietta just concluded a weekend meeting with Doug Hawkins. He did some excellent preaching and the congregation was built up. There have been many meetings in our area lately and I have had the privilege of hearing Brad Shockley, Kevin Presley, Cullen Smith, and Carl Johnson. I continue to preach at several congregations in the south. I am looking forward to a new songbook from Lynwood this year. I am sure he will do his usual excellent job. We have an annual singing here every fall and it is something that everyone seems to enjoy. This year's singing is scheduled for September 25. If you are considering a move, why not consider the Atlanta area? It is an excellent place to live and the congregation here would welcome you. May God continue to bless you and we solicit your prayers.

Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com, April 7, 2004. I closed a 9-day meeting at Hamilton, Ohio on March 28. The meeting was well attended by members and surrounding congregations with some community interest as well. The congregation was very hospitable so I had many good visits. Bro. Keith Bullock took me to the Cincinnati Museum to see the tour "St. Peter and the Vatican." I saw some things there I plan to write about later. I stayed with Bill and Ruth Ferguson who work with the congregation and could not have been treated better. Bill and I share a love of books, especially Restoration materials. A good number of preachers in the area attended two or more times including Barney Owens, Stan Owens, Richard Bunner, Michael Kidd, Tony Melton, and Brian Burns. Richard was my ride from the airport to the meeting so I enjoyed getting to visit with him and have a meal in his home. Bill took me to see the old Cane Ridge building built in 1791 outside Paris, Kentucky where Barton W. Stone worked and is buried. Wyn Baker, my brother-in-law, and family came up from West Virginia to visit with me there. Our work at home continues with the 64th. St. congregation in Sacramento.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct, Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, April 8 - In the congregation at 79th and Kansas Ave. in Kansas City our younger congregational teachers continue to improve in their abilities. They study and when they are in the pulpit they are not afraid to tell us what we need to know. They recognize their responsibilities; first to God, and then to their hearers. I was in meeting at Ratliff City, OK, March 14-21. It was my second meeting there, and Wilma and I enjoyed it. We had visitors about every service, some non members and

a lot of fellow Christians from various congregations in Oklahoma and Texas. It was good to have Johnny and Sally Elmore at some of the services. It is very encouraging to hear of the good results taking place in this and other countries of the world. Jesus said, "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24: 14). Brethren, the kingdom is spreading!

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, April 13, e-mail old_paths@juno.com - The first Sunday in April was the closing Lord's Day for the meeting at Escalon, CA. Since it was fairly near Livermore, we drove back and forth. This was about the 12th meeting we have held there over the years. The first one was in 1967 if memory serves correctly. Time has brought many changes to the group but we enjoyed being with them and there were two confessions of wrong. We appreciated the cooperation from other area congregations and very much enjoyed the good visits with the brethren. Last Lord's Day we were at home for both services and spoke to a good crowd. The home church seems to be doing well and is at peace. We have a large number of children for which we are thankful. Pray for us.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, March 23 - Springtime is finally here and in a couple of weeks I will be leaving for my first meeting of the year. I will be with the 21st street congregation in Oklahoma City, OK. on the dates of April 2-11. Also, I am looking forward to meetings at Cassville, MO (May 14-16) and Brazil, IN (June 13-20). I attended the "unity study" in Oklahoma City back in February and I participated in the study at Miami, OK last weekend. I especially enjoyed the Miami study. The presentations I heard were timely and delivered well. The theme this year had to do with the existence of good and evil. Doug Edwards, Randy Tidmore, Dan Wissinger, and John Anderson did an excellent job with their respective topics. I have no doubt that the others I didn't have an opportunity to hear-Roger Owens, David Griffen, and Dan Paulson delivered edifying lessons. Several meetings have been in progress in our area with more on the way. I enjoyed hearing Reg Kinser at Cassville and Jerry Dickinson at the Northside congregation here in Springfield. Jerry stayed with me during his meeting and it afforded two brothers an opportunity to visit and be together. I consider Jerry my closest friend in the world and look forward to other meetings he has in our area this year. It is hard to believe, but the month of May will complete a year's work with the Jamesville congregation. I feel like we have made progress in different areas. With the Lord's help, we want to build on what has already been accomplished. Our meeting with Kevin Presley at the end of April will surely help us in that regard. Remember the church here when

you pray! Let's pray for the faithful everywhere. *Received too late for April issue, our apologies DLK.*

Virgilio O. Danao Sr., 94-371 Ikepono Street, Waipahu, HI 96797; Telefax No. (808) 680-0249; April 1, 2004 - In the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, greetings to all faithful brethren everywhere. It has been quite sometimes since I last reported in the OPA. The Lord's work here in Hawaii is trying hard to move towards growth, spiritually and numerically. As you perhaps all know, most of the members of the Church here are Filipino veterans of World War II, and are already senior of age. Although they have been living here for sometimes being American citizens already, some of them are planning to go back to the Philippines to spend the rest of their lives there. Actually since last year, two couples have already left and have been living there. And this challenges us to work harder. Our efforts during the past days were concentrated in making further follow up to those who are attending our Sunday worship services but are not yet members of the Church. As a result of this endeavor, one was baptized on March 30, 2004. It is very encouraging to see brethren sharing whatever they could do for the Church. Bro. Edimar Daguio -who has undergone studies with me on subjects concerning sermon preparation and other vital teachings- is now proving to be very helpful during Sunday worship services in the morning and in the afternoon study. Brethren from the mainland U.S. worshipped with us during the time that they were having their vacation here in Hawaii. We appreciate their dedication for despite they were in the other Hawaiian islands, they still have time to come here in Waipahu and worshipped with us. Their presence indeed helped us advertise in the community that we are not alone, and that we have brethren even from other U.S. states. We invite brethren in the mainland to come spend their planned vacation here in Hawaii, "a paradise in the middle of the Pacific Ocean", and worship with us. We also continue to have visitors from the area during Sunday worship services. Brethren, we urge you to please mention us always, especially the Lord's work here, in your prayers. God bless!

Joe Dan Morgan 60597 E130 Rd., Miami, OK 74354-7477, March 22, 2004 - The 23rd Annual Preachers Study held at Whispering Hills Church of Christ in Miami, Oklahoma is now only a pleasant memory. The Miami congregations desire was to sound the alarm about the conflict going on between good and evil. Over the course of the study eight well prepared speakers delivered topics related to the theme, Good Vs. Evil.

Doug Edwards opened the study by **Defining Good and Evil** - Doug proclaimed God's command to adhere to the good and shun the evil. 3 John 1:11 "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.

He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." Many people today are calling evil good. Rom. 16:19 "but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil".

Randy Tidmore put into plain words the **Author of Good and Evil** - Some have decided that since God created all things, He must have created evil. Randy quoted several scriptures to prove that God is the originator of everything good and Satan is the originator of everything evil.

Billy Dickinson gave information on **The War In Heaven** - Since Satan's fall there has been a competition or battle, between good and evil, both in heaven and on earth. Revelation 12:7 tells of how a war broke out in heaven and God ultimately prevails.

Dan Wissinger made clear **God's Plan to Overcome Evil** - God anticipated evil and created THE plan to overcome evil. Galatians 4:4 "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son".

John Anderson gave details on **Christ's Temptations** - The text was taken from Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:14-16). Hebrews 2:18 "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

Roger Owens explained the finer points of **Man's Temptations** - We are not born into this world to break God's commands, nor are we compelled beyond our means to resist. We have the means to meet and beat life's temptations. 1Cor.10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

David Griffin enlightened us on **How God/Satan Influences Man** - God influences through His Word (Bible), the example of others, and the glory of nature. Satan influences through false teachers or doctrines, lusts and persecutions/ridicule. God's influence is more powerful so that those that are lost are without excuse.

Dan Paulson presented facts on **How To Overcome Evil with Good** - We are constantly confronted by this conflict between good and evil. We all struggle no matter how strong or spiritual we are. From time to time we do those things we do not want to do (Romans 7:15). In order for us to be victorious in this ongoing struggle we must: Recognize, avoid and escape sin. Romans 12:90 ... Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. - 1 Peter 3: 11 "Let him turn away from evil and do good".

All participants left the building better equipped to serve God and to obey His commands.

Received too late for April issue, our apologies DLK.

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THE BACK PAGE...

THERE IS A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD

By CARL M. JOHNSON

The current buzz throughout the country has been about Mel Gibson's new movie, "The Passion of the Christ." The film is highly controversial and has been embraced by some and feared by others for the same reason—the graphic portrayal of the brutal killing of Jesus. Some Jews charge the film with being anti-Semitic and fear a backlash against the Jewish people. Others criticize the movie for containing too much violence. One movie critic faults the movie for emphasizing the bloody death of Jesus over His message of "love and faith." She obviously fails to understand that Jesus' death is the ultimate expression of His love for mankind and His faithful obedience to the Father in heaven (Jn. 15:13; Heb. 5:8).

CBS's Andy Rooney, reportedly a devout secularist, calls Gibson "a nut case, a real wacko," and implies Gibson is a mercenary selling blood and gore for money. Other critics join in castigating the film's "gratuitous violence." The word "gratuitous" means "unnecessary or unjustified." The expression refers to violence added to a film solely for the purpose of satisfying the blood lust of an audience. I am amused at the predictable duplicity of some film critics who have praised excessively violent films in the past, but now criticize "The Passion of the Christ" as being too violent.

While I have not seen Gibson's film, I know that in modern times the Passion of Jesus has been sanitized in art and film. Because so much time has elapsed since the crucifixion, and because we live in a culture far removed from First-Century Palestine. It is difficult for people to understand the actual anguish, fear and brutality experienced by Jesus during the Passion. Most famous paintings of Christ on the cross show a small incision in His side and small rivulets of blood trickling from the crown of thorns and the nails in His hands and feet. Such portraits fail to capture the true essence of Jesus' suffering. Isaiah says the people who saw Christ at Calvary were horrified because He suffered until He no longer looked human (52:14). "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities" (53:3) and "by his stripes we are healed" (53:5).

Most hymns today have been sanitized as well, phasing out those hymns that include heart rending depictions of the wounds and sufferings of Christ. Many professed Christians feel it is just too morbid to sing William Cowper's classic hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood. / Drawn from Emmanuel's veins." Others contend that we should not dwell upon the horrific details of Jesus' morbid suffering, but that we should move on quickly to dwell upon the glorious Resurrection.

The fact remains, however, that the Savior wants us to remember His suffering and death, and He has instituted the ordinance of the Communion for just that purpose (I Cor. 11:24-25). While there is a tacit reference to the Resurrection in the Communion ("till he come," I Cor. 11:26. Jesus cannot come again if He is not resurrected), the primary focus is upon Jesus' death (11:26). Paul says eating the bread and drinking from the cup allow us communion with the body and blood of Christ (I Cor. 10:16). The Apostle adds that if we do not contemplate the bloody sacrifice of Jesus' body for our sins as we commune, we are guilty of eating and drinking damnation to ourselves (I Cor. 11:29). The Communion, therefore, is a weekly reminder of the horrible suffering and death of our Savior. Lynwood Smith's hymn "We Believe" captures the essence of what should be in our hearts as we commune, "We cannot touch thy body so mangled torn and scarred, / Yet we believe and worship Thee who for our sins was marred."

Another reason many people have difficulty contemplating the morbid nature of Jesus' suffering is because of a failure to perceive the seriousness of sin. We have virtually eliminated "sin" from our vocabulary. We balk at accepting the sheer depth of sin, the judgment of sin, the righteousness of that judgment and the seriousness with which the Lord regards iniquity.

If you want to understand how God feels about sin just contemplate what He required of Jesus to effect the atonement. Jesus was slugged, slapped, beaten, whipped, lashed and shredded. In most instances death would have been merciful, but crucifixion adds its own category of torture. Jesus took upon Himself the punishment we deserve for our sins (1 Pet. 2:24). However, if you choose to reject the atonement made possible by the sacrifice of Christ, there remains an eternal lake of fire and brimstone prepared for the devil and his angels (Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41, 46).

Thank God we have a choice between the two. Glory to God in the highest for providing us a "fountain filled with blood,/drawn from Emmanuel's veins/And sinners plunged beneath that flood/Lose all their guilty stains!" - 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 carlmj@cableone.net

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called. The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 6

OPEN OR CLOSED COMMUNION?

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod, and some other religious sects believe and practice “closed communion”. And now we have members of the Church of Christ who are also advocating this practice. To some, the term “open communion” means open to anyone, saint or sinner; anyone who wants to partake is welcome to do so. The term “closed communion” means to some, that it is only open to the ones they judge worthy, and they have the authority to make that determination. Neither position is right.

The fact is, the Lord’s Supper belongs to the Lord, and only He has the authority to either open or close it. No man has been delegated such authority. We have been given an example and all the instructions we need to observe it in the way that pleases Him. These instructions apply to all alike. Jesus is our King, and if we are given an invitation to the King’s table, it is His doing, and we are His guests, invited to eat and drink with Him and with one another. If we eat and drink without His invitation or in a way which displeases Him, it is He who will deal with us; not the other guests. They have no such control. It is the “Lord’s table.” (1 Cor. 10:21).

Only Christians are supposed to partake of the communion, that is, only those who have “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine” (Rom. 6:17). When a person is baptized, no one but the Lord knows whether he does it from the heart. And if he does not, the Lord makes no mistake by adding him to the church. That person has only gone down into the water **a dry sinner** and come up **a wet sinner. He is not a Christian.** Therefore, he has no right to eat at the Lord’s table. “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (2 Sam. 16:7). Only God knows if the person was sincere or not. I am not responsible for that man who partakes without the Lord’s approval, **nor is any other Christian.**

If a member who is not living a Christian life partakes of the Lord’s supper without God’s approval, no one but that person is responsible. Other Christians will not be condemned for his sin. **He communes it to his own damnation.**

The word of God teaches that we must worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23, 24). To worship the

Lord in spirit means to be sincere of heart and spiritually minded. One cannot simply go through a form or ritual, and call it worship. This has to do with the “inner man.” To worship God “in truth” is to worship the Lord according to what He has specified in His word. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3 :3). Ours is a spiritual service, done according to God’s directions. Each worshiper is responsible for his own attitude in his service to God. If he does not worship in spirit, his worship is vain. But no one else is condemned for his wrong. In the instructions for the proper observance of the Lord’s Supper the apostle Paul taught the Christians at Corinth that each person was to scrutinize himself.

The communion service is a congregational duty (1 Cor. 11:18, 33). We do it in memory of the great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. By communing we show the death of Christ because we believe He is coming again (1 Cor. 11:26). While it is a congregational observance, yet each communicant is told to “**examine himself**” before participating. Paul warns that if one eats and drinks “**not discerning the Lord’s body**” that he does so “unworthily” and in so doing he condemns himself. Because of the failure to commune in a proper way many of the Corinthians were spiritually weak and some were sick and others were already dead as far as salvation was concerned (1 Cor. 11:28-30).

Some seem to misunderstand and therefore misapply what the apostle teaches in first Corinthians chapter five. No where in this chapter is Paul teaching about the Communion in particular. He is giving instructions about fellowship and personal association in general. The terms “not to company” (v9) and “not to keep company” (v11) and “with such one no not to eat” all have reference to the same thing. Associating and socializing with unruly and sinful members of the church (and the writer specifies those sins) may suggest to them that they are acceptable in their sinful state. A person has control over his own table and can invite and can refuse to invite whomsoever he will. But **what person in a**

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Editorial

SPECIAL PLACES

By DON L. KING

About a week ago we returned from a journey into Italy and Greece, with a trip into England for Lord's Day worship. This was not the first of such trips for us. About two years ago, we were able to go into Turkey (Asia Minor in Bible times) and see nearly all of the ruins of the seven churches of Asia mentioned in the first three chapters of Revelation. To walk the streets of ancient Ephesus where Paul labored to establish the church and where he taught daily in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9), etc., was an experience for which we were not ready. To see the theater mentioned in Acts 19:29 and the Jewish synagogue where Paul preached, mentioned in Acts 18:1; and the temple of Diana where Paul condemned the worship of idols in Acts 19, made the Bible come alive for me in a way I had never imagined could occur. What a beautiful city it was with streets paved in marble still there after two thousand years. The pavement is severely worn from the centuries of foot travel by those ancient people. To walk where so many Bible characters had trod was amazing to say the least.

In Greece, we traveled to Athens. The city is frantically making ready for the Olympics this summer. However, our interest was in seeing the ancient city where Paul preached to the Epicureans, Stoics and others about the foolishness of worshiping idol gods. (Acts 17:18) We went to many of the places where he and others preached the gospel in such a powerful way the city was stirred up against them. We stood on a hill and looked over at Mars Hill where in Acts 17:22, we are told that Paul preached to them of God Jehovah whom they knew only as an unknown god. As Paul preached of the resurrection in Acts 17:32, they were moved to be guilty of mockery. Verse 33 tells us that the apostle left them and eventually, according to Acts 18:1, arrived in Corinth.

We also were able to visit ancient Corinth where so many wonderful things occurred. As in Ephesus, we were struck with soberness to realize Paul spent quite a lot of time in that city making tents with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:3). As we walked from place to place, one's mind was constantly wondering, "could it have been this house where Paul lived?" To see the synagogue where Paul reasoned every Sabbath (Acts 18:4) was incredible. I found myself looking around and wondering where Paul might have stood as he preached the gospel so many take for granted today. To think that so many people who are specifically named in the Scriptures were there in the city, walked those streets, lived in perhaps some of the very ruins of houses we were viewing, preached the gospel, and feared for their lives because of it,

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Do such passages as Mt. 18:19; 21 :22; and Mark 11 :24 teach that regardless of what we ask of God in prayer, we will receive the request if we believe?

Answer: The context of Mt. 18: 18-20 involves matters of fellowship, and should be limited to that. In the preceding verses Jesus deals with a situation where one brother has trespassed against another. The procedure for resolving the issue is given by our Lord (vv.15-17). The promise that the request shall be granted assumes that (1) it is a request of someone in Christ (John 15:7), and (2) that it is in harmony with His will (John 14: 13-14). The fact that the "it shall be done for them of my Father" is a promise that adds solemnity to the withdrawal of fellowship in matters of discipline (1 Cor.5:11; 12:2; 2Cor.6:17; 2Thess. 3:14, 15). Such actions, carried out according to the scriptures, will be ratified in heaven. Further proof that the context here concerns actions involving sin and discipline are seen in that Peter then asks "how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Those who apply the statement "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," to worship, miss the point and to make such an application is a mistake. The context is not about worship, but rather about dealing with brethren that sin.

Mark 11 :24 "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Matthew 21 :22 " All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Regarding the teaching of these two verses, H. Leo Boles summarizes their meaning about as well as anyone when he writes "...it also means that God will furnish everything to his people today that they may need to live faithful Christian lives. It is not a promise that God will satisfy all of the wants of people, nor answer every prayer that is made to him. There are conditions of acceptable prayer and these conditions must be met before one has any right to expect an answer. Prayers are offered in the name of Jesus, in faith, and according to the will of God (1John 3:22; 5:14)." Hence, the Lord is not saying that regardless of what we ask of God in prayer, we will receive. We should remember that Paul prayed three times for God to remove his "thorn in the flesh," and three times God refused to grant his desire (2Cor.12:7). Jesus prayed for "this cup to pass from me," and then added "nevertheless not my will but thy will be done" (Matthew 26:39). As we know such was not the will of God. Christ had to die in order for our sins to be forgiven. Today there are many things we might want desperately. With all the fervency we can muster we ask God for them. If it is His will and we pray in faith, He will grant the request. If not, then it

will not be granted. Many times prayer is offered in behalf of a sick person and the person does not recover. We must remember that "it is appointed unto man once to die..." None of us can live forever, someday we must die. Regardless of how many prayers one may offer that time will eventually come to us all. When someone young departs it is especially perplexing and we often ask "why?" The answer is not always apparent or easy. Since the Lord sees what we cannot see, and knows what we cannot know. We must leave it up to Him with the knowledge that He doeth all things well. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, MO 65808 rfwade@getatlas.com)

OPEN OR CLOSED COMMUNION?

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congregation is authorized to examine others who partake of the Lord's Supper? The only person anyone has any control over in this matter is himself. He can refuse to eat with one he thinks is unworthy, but in so doing he deprives himself. If an individual unscripturally partakes of the Communion, he alone is accountable to the Lord. No one in a congregation has the authority to control another person's partaking? "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4). "So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another anymore..." (Rom. 14:12, 13). "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11:28).

The Lord's Supper is a serious and sacred matter, and everyone should be properly instructed before the observance. All need to understand who and who is not eligible and scripturally qualified to sit at the King's table to commune with Him and His faithful servants who are citizens in His kingdom. Concerning this matter the apostle says, "For if we would ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11:31). Amen.

THE SACRIFICE OF PREACHING

continued from page four

If the evangelist gives up the preaching, the brethren are ready to tell him that he has sinned, or that he will be lost. Now, is it true that all the responsibility rests upon the preacher? Certainly not! Please, read 1 Tim. 5:8. If brethren would give more to the cause of the Lord and spend less for the pleasures of this world, there would be more preachers in the field, more souls saved, and more loyal congregations established. Yes, and the preachers and their families would, at least have the necessities of life. Although the preacher's living and traveling expenses have increased the last few years, yet many of the loyal (?) churches are supporting less for their meetings. Why is this? Possibly, the evangelists have neglected to teach as they should. Let us speak out brethren, and "declare the whole counsel of God."

- Clovis T. Cook.

PAGES FROM THE PAST

(In 1938 Brother Clovis Cook penned his first article for publication in the Old Paths Advocate. At the time he was twenty-four years of age. In June of 2004 he will turn ninety. He is still in reasonably good health. His mind is clear and he leads an active life for a man of his years. He is able to preach two or three times every month and continues to study the bible on a regular basis. For years he traveled through-out the United States, preaching. Please read with profit the following article, his very first.)

THE SACRIFICE OF PREACHING

By CLOVIS T. COOK

Though inexperienced with the pen, and somewhat in the field as an active evangelist, yet I have observed some things, concerning the work and sacrifice of the evangelist and his family in carrying out the "Go preach the gospel" (Mk. 16:15). There is more involved in the term "Go," than the mere leaving of his family. If that were all it would not be quite so bad, since Jesus says, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but that he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time; houses, brethren, sisters, mothers, children, and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life" (Mk. 10:29, 30). This we have experienced pretty well, but what of the family?

We often leave them at home in a little log hut, assuming the responsibilities, which rightfully belong to the husband. Had it ever occurred to you just how gloomy and sad it must be for them in the absence of the father and husband? We see the mother as she goes about her daily routine of toil, as she cares for the cows, chickens, pigs, house work; but greater still, the training of the children, which is such a great responsibility for one. She must economize, so as to help meet the obligations of the evangelist. For a few days every month or two the family is permitted to be with its head, but even during that time, they are not permitted to enjoy that time as they would like, since the work has piled up until the evangelist must devote the greater part of that short time in working and making ready to leave again, and there is little consolation in his being at home, because he and the family are ever conscious of the fact that he must soon leave again.

Soon the time arrives for the preacher to take his leave. He must look into the face, wet with tears, of the one who makes the greater sacrifice, while at the same time he feels the children clinging about his knees, and he hears a faint whisper in sobs, "Daddy, don't go!" Evidently, the wife and mother makes the greater sacrifice. Brother Alfred Elmore, in the dedication of his third edition of Maple Valley Poems to his beloved wife, said: "The companion of my youth, and the sharer of my toils for thirty-three years; who has been a keeper

at home, and raised up her children in the faith of the gospel, and thus aided me in my arduous toils in the ministry." Think of the tired business man—how he rejoices to see the hour come, when he can walk out of the office and join the family circle at home, but this is an every-day affair with him. If he is called on to work over time, he does not like it, as it makes him late getting home. Then, think of the evangelist, who has his time booked a year ahead or more; when he nears the close of a meeting, looking forward to the glad hour he can greet his loved ones again, having been away for a month or six weeks; only to hear the brethren implore: "We think we now have the best chance to do good and gain a harvest, we have ever had, if you will just stay a few more days." As usual, he is persuaded to stay a few more days, which may, or may not, be the thing to do, but at any rate, his visit at home is cut short, his expenses are increased; but when he is finally handed the support, nothing is added for the extra time, and many times no appreciation shown for his sacrifice.

The evangelist works hard all summer, many times spring and fall, trusting that his support will be sufficient to meet his obligations and to tide him over the winter months, when the brethren are frozen in and are too dead to have any meetings; only to be disappointed by the meager support he receives, and must go out among the world, looking for some job of work, with an ax, on the rock crusher, saw mill, road building, etc., etc. Many times he fails to get sufficient work to tide him over, and he is forced to go in debt to get through. Brother J. D. Tant says that many churches treat the preacher like some farmers do their milk cows—"milk them all summer on the grass, turn them out on the range to make it through the winter as best they can, and round them up in the spring, expecting them to start in with a good flow of milk again." (This may not be his exact words, but it is, at least, the substance of the thought). Anyway, he is called out in the spring, about 1000 miles from home, for a meeting, and he barely makes expenses, and, so, it goes most of the year. Now, it appears to me, that if the brethren can thus treat the evangelist and his family, and at the same time, they enjoy the abundance of this world's goods—"faring sumptuously every day"; and then be saved in Heaven; surely, the evangelist can be saved, if he quits the field, and gets him a job, in order to support his family. But, we know that the Lord intended that the "church is the pillar and ground of the truth," that "by the church the manifold wisdom of God should be known," and that the evangelist should preach this gospel to the world, for, "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14, 15). Paul said, "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). This shows that the church is to hold up the preacher's hands, while he gives his life as a sacrifice for others. If he gives all his time to preaching, he must be supported by the brethren.

continued on page three

FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

By GEORGE BATTEY

"I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20).

The above passage has commonly been used to demonstrate two ways of teaching the scriptures: (a) publicly and (b) privately. Brother James Orten, in his tract, "Teaching: Public and Private," made the following pertinent observation, "One translation states, 'I have taught you in public and in private.'" (p. 5). He went on to write, "Since teaching is such a central part of God's plan, it is not surprising that He has regulated the process. All Christians agree there are regulations concerning how teaching should be done. The writer believes those regulations are based on whether the teaching is done publicly or privately." (p. 4). This is an accurate and scriptural observation.

Recently, however, an argument has been advanced which removes Acts 20:20 from the discussion. The argument is actually composed of the following five sub-arguments:

1) Acts 20:20 was never intended by either Luke (the writer of the Book of Acts) or Paul (the speaker in this verse) to become a "paradigm" (pattern) for teaching the word of God.

2) The prepositional phrase "from house to house" may not actually be a reference to how the apostles taught, but merely a reference as to where they taught. Simply put, Acts 20:20 may only be saying, "I taught you in public places and in houses where the church assembled for worship."

3) Although the word "publicly" is an adverb (describing action), the phrase "from house to house" is a prepositional phrase. The contrast is therefore unusual and the prepositional phrase is probably referring the place where the teaching occurred (privately owned houses) rather than a description of how (the nature or manner) the teaching was done.

4) If the phrase "from house to house" is taken to mean "privately," it would be hopelessly confusing to Christians living in the first century, because public worship assemblies were conducted in those days inside the private houses of the brethren. (See for example 1 Cor. 16:19).

5) There is no information given in any of the epistles showing that certain rules apply in public teaching situations and other rules apply in private teaching situations. If Acts 20:20 was intended to be a "paradigm"

(pattern) for how teaching was to be done, there would have been rules given in the epistles.

Are these valid arguments and observations? Have brethren actually been guilty of ignoring Biblical context and using Acts 20:20 to teach something which was never intended by the apostles of the Lord?

THE INTENT OF THE WRITER

Look at the first sub-argument above. It is argued that neither Luke nor Paul intended Acts 20:20 to be viewed as a "paradigm" (pattern) for teaching the word of God. Is this a valid observation?

The context of Acts 20:20 is actually more revealing and enlightening than some think. Notice verse 18, "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you." Paul is here asking the elders of Ephesus to look specifically at the "manner" of his life. Paul draws their attention to how he himself conducted his business in their presence. He wants the Ephesian elders to take note and follow the example which they saw with their own eyes. Look now at verse 28, "Therefore take heed to yourselves." The word "therefore" indicates that what was spoken before has a direct bearing on the instructions now given. (a) Just as Paul served God with all humility, with tears and through trials (v19), the elders were to follow his example; (b) just as he "kept back nothing that was profitable, but ... taught publicly and from house to house" (v20), the elders were to follow his example; (c) just as Paul "testified to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (v21), the elders were to follow his example; (d) just as Paul was determined to "finish the race" in spite of great opposition (vv22-24), so the elders were to take note of this and follow his example; (e) just as Paul was "innocent of the blood of all men" because he "did not shun to declare the whole council of God" (vv25-26), even so the elders are to take note and follow Paul's example. As one continues to read further into the chapter, the words "therefore" (v31), "so now, brethren" (v32), "you yourselves know" (v34), and "I have shown you" (v35) all cry out in unison: Paul is presenting this material as a pattern for the elders of the church to follow. He uses his own life, work ethics, and modes of operation as a divinely approved pattern for the leaders of the church to follow. Indeed, the argument that "nothing contextually indicates either Luke's or Paul's intentions" is completely incredible. The context itself becomes an insurmountable defense to the standard interpretation brethren have always maintained in regards to Acts 20:20. This passage is undeniably a "paradigm" (pattern)

for how the word of God should be taught.

Finally, think of the implications that are being made when men argue against pattern authority. If the Book of Acts is merely a historical narrative without indicators of when a pattern is given, the church of our Lord would not know when or how often to commune. The scriptures clearly indicate that the communion should be eaten "often" (1 Cor. 11:26), but the only indication of how often is the example of Acts 20:7. The only way the Lord's people know that elders should be ordained in "every church" is the example of Acts 14:23. D. R. Dungan writes the following:

But the question recurs, How shall we determine what is an approved precedent? How shall we be able to separate the many things done in the times of the apostles which are merely incidental, from those that were meant for our benefit, that we may know what to do? (1) Those actions performed by the apostles or other disciples in their day, which had a divine approval, or, if done by an apostle, nothing has been said by inspiration in opposition thereto. (2) Customs of the Church under the eye and sanction of apostles. For if, in an unguarded moment, an apostle should turn aside, he would not continue in that condition. And if it could be possible for one apostle to continue to err in his public character, it would not be so with all of them. A general custom is established in harmony with that which is allowed, taught, approved by the many. If we shall find the whole church engaged in a common custom in religious service, no matter how we may come to that intelligence, if we can certainly know that such was the custom everywhere among the disciples in the days of the apostles, such practice will show certainly what was the will of God. (p. 97).

Long ago Brother Roy E. Cogdill outlined seven criteria (pp. 22-28) which must be met in order for an action to be classified as a binding example. Those seven rules are as relevant today as when first outlined by Brother Cogdill and should be reviewed by all.

THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Part 1)

Consider the second sub-argument against Acts 20:20. With timidity it is argued that the prepositional phrase "from house to house" may not actually be a reference to how the apostles taught, but merely a reference as to where they taught. Make a mental note in regards to the words "may not actually be a reference." There is good reason for using the words "may not," because the argument is known to be weak by the very proponents of the argument.

The most casual reading of Acts 20:20 reveals a contrast, "I taught you publicly and from house to house."

"Publicly" is clearly being used in contrast with "from house to house." "Publicly" is an adverb. Adverbs describe how actions are performed. Adjectives describe places. Paul did not use an adjective to describe a place where he taught. He used an adverb to describe how he taught.

Publicly teaching the word would include teaching situations in the "school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9), in the synagogue (Acts 19:8), and also in the worship assemblies of the church where unbelievers were welcome to enter (1 Cor. 14:23ff). The phrase "from house to house," in contrast, describes teaching situations done privately. To take the phrase any other way would have Paul making the redundant statement, "I have taught you publicly and then I taught you publicly again from one church service conducted in a house to another church service conducted in another house." Obviously, the contrast is between two manners of teaching and not between two types of places.

THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Part 2)

The third sub-argument focuses on the fact that "from house to house" is a prepositional phrase while "publicly" is admittedly an adverb. The reasoning is that somehow the prepositional phrase negates the force of the adverb and the conclusion is that Paul was contrasting places where he taught, not two different methods of teaching.

The reasoning used is invalid for the simple fact that prepositional phrases can be used either adverbially or adjectively. Webster defines a preposition as, "a linguistic form that combines with a noun, pronoun, or noun equivalent to form a phrase that typically has an adverbial, adjectival, or substantival relation to some other word" (p. 902). In other words, a prepositional phrase can be used as an adverb. (a) Since "publicly" is obviously an adverb and (b) is being used in direct contrast to the prepositional phrase "from house to house" (c) the logical conclusion is to take the phrase "from house to house" as an adverbial phrase. Adverbs of course describe action; they tell how something was done. The contrast in Acts 20:20 is not "unusual" at all. The contrast is between two methods of teaching - not two places of teaching.

IS THIS CONFUSING?

The fourth sub-argument, in the overall approach to neutralize Acts 20:20, plays on the imagination. It calls upon men to use creative thinking and imagine how confused everyone would be in the first century if "from house to house" described how teaching was done. In other words, since most Christians were having their worship assemblies in houses, to use the phrase "from

house to house” would only naturally mean “in your worship assemblies which are conducted in your houses.” To take the phrase any other way would be hopelessly confusing (supposedly).

The reasoning may at first appear *prima facie*, but it is in appearance only. When Paul wrote the Corinthians, they may well have been conducting their worship services inside someone’s house. Yet Paul could still write, “Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?” (1 Cor. 11:22). Paul would write, “if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home” (1 Cor. 14:35). Was anyone confused by these instructions. Can anyone honestly believe the Corinthians were confused saying, “What does Paul mean? He says we should eat and drink at home and that women should ask their husbands at home, but does he not realize we are already meeting in a home for worship services? This is all terribly confusing and we have no idea what he means.” To the contrary. These were not confusing statements even if the congregation met in a house for worship. Everyone understood the difference between worship services conducted in a house and private matters done “from house to house.”

RULES FOR PUBLIC & PRIVATE TEACHING

The fifth and final sub-argument in the attack on Acts 20:20 revolves around what the rest of the New Testament does not say. This is an argument based on silence. It is reasoned that since no rules were given in any of the other books of the New Testament regarding public and private teaching situations, Acts 20:20 could not possibly be a “paradigm” (pattern) for how teaching was to be done. In other words, for Acts 20:20 to be a binding example, there must be a background rule given elsewhere in scripture. After all, how can Acts 20:20 be exemplifying how to obey a command if there was no command given in the first place.

The point is well taken. There must indeed be a background rule. However, it is assumption to say background rules are missing. There actually are background rules to support Acts 20:20. That is, Acts 20:20 illustrates how to obey commands elsewhere given and therefore it becomes a valid “binding example” which must be followed by the church today.

Consider 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Here men are instructed to pray “everywhere” (v8), but in contrast women are told to adorn themselves in modest apparel (v9) and to be silent learners (vv11-12). Does this mean women must be clothed modestly at all times or that they must be silent at all times even in the privacy of their own homes? Of course not. The holy scriptures teach that in private settings between husband and wife the “bed is undefiled” (Heb. 13:4). At home, in private settings between husband and wife questions can be asked

(1 Cor. 14:35). Hence, the instructions of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 are instructions regarding public teaching situations as opposed to private teaching situations. “Everywhere” (v8) points to all public situations - including church services, but not limited to church services alone. Thus, 1 Timothy 2 constitutes rules for teaching done in public. Acts 20:20 constitutes the example of how to carry out instructions for teaching. The apostles themselves divided teaching into two categories: public and private. In any public situation (whether church services, television, radio, etc.) men are to be the spokesmen for the occasion and women are to be silent learners. In private (“from house to house”) women may ask questions and even teach (Acts 18:26; 21 :9; Tit. 2:3-4; 2 Tim. 1 :5).

BIBLE CLASSES

Because of the apostolic distinction between public and private teaching, simultaneous Bible classes conducted by congregations are wrong. Such Bible classes are advertised to the public. Everyone is invited to come. It is public knowledge that such classes are being conducted. Bible classes constitute public teaching and consequently women should remain silent in such classes. Yet, instead of remaining silent, women freely ask questions and, in many cases, are actually teaching the classes. For years those using Bible classes have argued the classes are not public assemblies conducted by the church. Why do advocates of classes make such preposterous claims that go against all sound reason? Because it is painfully obvious that, if the classes are public teaching situations, the women are in violation of 1 Timothy 2: 11-12.

Please note: Bible classes are wrong for more reasons than for the simple fact that women speak out in those classes. For a full discussion on all the reasons Bible classes are wrong, consult the book *Debate Notes - Bible Classes*.

CONCLUSION

It is not the scope of this present article to consider all the ramifications and implications of Bible class teaching. Suffice it to say, 1 Corinthians 14:23-40 sets forth the rules governing all assemblies conducted by the church - “whenever you come together” (v26 - NKJV). There are other occasions which are public (e.g. television, radio, street corners), but are not assemblies conducted by the church. First Timothy 2: 11 - 12 sets forth the rules governing these situations - “everywhere” (v8). First Timothy 2 is broader in scope than 1 Corinthians 14. Bible classes violate both passages on numerous points and are therefore not only unscriptural, but anti-scriptural.

The argument that Acts 20:20 should not be used as a

“paradigm” (pattern) for teaching was the primary focus of this present study. That argument is composed of five sub-arguments and all five of those sub-arguments have been examined and shown to be invalid. Acts 20:20 stands firmly as an approved, apostolic example. All teaching situations will either be public or private (“from house to house”). There are rules which govern public teaching situations and there are also rules which govern private teaching situations - let no one forget this last point.

Acts 20:20 was spoken by Paul and recorded by Luke for a purpose. This is not worthless information inserted merely to fill up space. There were “many other things which could have been written” (Jn. 21 :25), but only those which were necessary (Acts 15:28) for “life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1 :3) were recorded in scripture. Acts 20:20 is a necessary passage which stands as a binding example for the church today.

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Am I Growing Better?

*Is the world growing better?
Is a question that is frequently asked,
Are the people of this generation
Any better than those of the past?*

*But a more important question
One that brings it closer to home
Am I growing better,
Scattering sunshine where I roam.*

*Am I more studious of the Bible,
Do I read it every day,
Am I a light that's leading,
Others from their erring way?*

*Am I more dutiful
Than I was one year ago?
Do I always stop and think,
Or sometimes judge before I know?*



SPECIAL PLACES

continued from page two

was both sobering and wonderful.

We were also able to visit Rome, Paul's last stop. The places we have mentioned in this little piece were almost completely idolatrous when Paul came to them. Today, they are still very much that way as I see it. Yet, Paul made a huge dent in those ungodly places by his preaching. The Vatican, the very seat of the Roman Catholic Church, is a place so completely immersed in opulence that it beggars description. Nothing could be more removed from the meek and lowly Savior who had no place even to lay his head. As we toured the Church edifice there, a place two football fields in length and perhaps a hundred feet high inside, the guide proudly said: "if you see a place where it looks like gold, it is gold!" I thought, "all of us together could not afford a square inch of this place." One of the greatest, if not the greatest, collection of priceless art to be found anywhere in the world is right there. Again, it is so far removed from what our Lord ever intended.

Not far from the Vatican is the prison where it is believed Paul spent his last days. A few of us went there. If one may believe the tale, the cell where Paul (and it is claimed Peter also) was kept is open to the public. Now there is a stairway hewn out of the rock down into the cell which must be about 20 feet across. However, in Paul's day no such stair existed. Prisoners were lowered through a small fresh air vent in the rock ceiling and that was also the only way out. It would have been impossible to escape. A small hole in the floor contained water when we were there. The cell was very cool, even chilly, and damp in early May. Perhaps, from that very cell Paul wrote the words we find in 2 Timothy 4: beginning at verse 9. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.... (Verse 13) The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.... (Verse 16) At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: ... (Verse 21) Do thy diligence to come before winter. . ."

As we stood there a quiet came over us all for we were all thinking of Paul imprisoned there, cold, wishing for his cloak, (coat) and knowing the end was near. There was likely not a dry eye among us as we somberly made our way out and up into the bright sunshine and fresh air.

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Announcements

OPA on CD

We still have some copies of the OPA on CD from 1928 to 2002. The cost is \$80.00. If you already have the first half of this project, the second part (1971 to 2002) is \$40.00. We also have a small library of books consisting of debates, commentaries, and other writings that are very difficult to find. There are 6 CD's for \$30.00. Orders may be sent to Richard Bunner, P.O. Box 340395, Beavercreek, OH 45434. Your orders help to benefit the OPA.

Labor Day Meeting

The 2004 California Labor Day Meeting will be hosted by the Brundage Lane Church of Christ in Bakersfield, CA in cooperation with the area congregations. The dates are September 1-5. The first two nights (Wednesday and Thursday nights) will be held at the Brundage Lane Church of Christ Building. The remaining services (with the exception of the Sunday morning services which will be held at the regular meeting places of the area's congregations) will be held in the West High School's auditorium in Bakersfield. Visiting gospel preachers and congregational teachers will be used as much as possible. There will be a special service Saturday at 10:30 a.m. where our young preachers and teachers will be used. For more information please contact Doyle Elliott (1-661-366-5157), or Tracy Osburn (1-661-871-8011). - Bennie Cryer 1-530-790-7151

Fifty Years

Fifty years! One can scarcely imagine it. But that's what the years tell us. Johnny and Sally have been married for fifty years. It happened May 20, 1954 in the little white block building in west Ardmore. Attending them were June Word Pope and Vernon Elmore. This marriage has been a blessing to all. It is proof that a rented chapel with ornate fixing is not necessary. These folks married like they lived - in a simple and beautiful way. Present were adoring and well-wishing friends; there were loving and caring families. Also with the sweetest singing "this side of heaven." The singers were Cletus Tate Nesbitt, Carolyn Tate Briscoe and Glenna Elmore Howard. This couple has contributed completely to the good of the brotherhood. Johnny has been a gospel preacher, preaching far and near. He has held many singing schools, teaching thousands to sing and conduct singing. Sally's mellow alto has been a big help. They lent so much to any congregation. Whenever they walked into a singing group, the singing went up "ninety degrees in the shade." I consider Johnny the "Dean" of singing school teachers. Their union has been blessed with three children: Joni Linn Harrison, Stanley James Elmore and Kim Suzanne Hamblin. Grandchildren are as "olive plants around the table": Jonathan Elmore, Stephen Elmore, Katy Elmore, Clay Harrison, Hillary Hamblin and Sophie Hamblin. For these dear ones we wish a happy anniversary and many more years. May God bless them. These names "Johnny and Sally" just go together - sort of like "bread and butter", "bacon and eggs" - that's the way it should be. So much more I could say - I'm a little emotional right now. But some day we will all

say goodbye to Johnny and Sally and all who have been so blessed as to have enjoyed the loving estate. I have a little poem that I used to hear in the bus stations as I traveled as a young preacher. It was done by two great singers - I close.

"Should you go first and I remain,
One thing I'd have you do:
Walk slowly down the path of death,
For soon I'll follow you.
I'll want to know each step you take
I'll want to walk the same,
For some day down that lonely road
You'll hear me call your name."

~Albert Rowswell

-Lynwood Smith
Wesson MS



Our Departed

RICHARDS, DORTHA - was born Oct. 29, 1919. She passed away March 29, 2004 at the age of 84 years and five months. She was laid to rest at the Ridgelawn Cemetery, Collinsville, OK next to Bill, her husband of 65 years. She is survived by three sons, Clovis, Billy Joe and Jack; two daughters-in-law, Vivian and Betty; a host of grandchildren and great-grandchildren; brothers and sisters in Christ and friends. They were charter members of the 11th Street Church of Christ in Tulsa. Yes, we are all going down the valley one by one. I was privileged to speak words of encouragement - Ed Bullard

DENTON, THERESA, was born Oct. 9, 1937 in Neusiedle, Germany and departed this life April 12, 2004 at her home in Columbia, SC. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband by 23 days. Brother Dewey G. Denton formally of Raleigh, NC. They were long time members of the Church in Raleigh. He was a good teacher and was active in the church work until he became disabled. Brother and Sister Denton will be missed by all that knew them, especially the Church. They were always faithful in attendance despite their serious health problems. She is survived by one daughter, Charlotte Denton Nixon; two sons, Tony and Davey Denton; and six grandchildren. They were laid to rest at the Church of Christ Cemetery in Raleigh, NC. The writer assisted Brother Robert Holt in speaking words of comfort to the family. -J.W. Komegay, Sr.

BARWICK - Sister Amaryllis Barwick passed away the morning of February 15, 2004. Sister Amaryllis was a long standing member of the Live Oak Street Church of Christ in Walterboro, SC. She was born October 6, 1928 and left this life at age 75. Though she was in bad health, her faith was as strong as it could be. She was always faithful to be at every service of the church and spent many hours a day reading, studying and talking about the bible with anyone who would give her an ear. It was such a pleasure and a source of encouragement to know her and be around her. She will surely be missed, not only by the congregation in Walterboro, but also by those who knew this dear sister. It was my honor, at sister Amaryllis request to speak words of comfort to the worldly family as well as her Christian family. - Phillip G. Prince

Field Reports

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953, May 9, 2004. Since last reporting I have preached in Yuba City, Lodi, Stockton, and the Olivehurst congregation with whom we have been working with the past four and one half years. It was good to be with these brethren again. The work with Olivehurst continues and we are growing stronger each month. Several studies are going on at this time. All of us in this area were saddened by the death of Bro. A.C. Perrin who was one of the leaders in the Yuba City congregation. We will miss his talented singing, teaching, and the leadership role he had in that congregation. Our condolences go out to his wife, Luatrice, and their family. May God bless all of you.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820, May 10—I enjoyed a good meeting at Shreveport, LA in March. Wayne Fussell baptized seven souls the week before the meeting so the congregation was still enthused when I arrived. Billy and Angie Woods allowed me to stay in their beautiful new home and I enjoyed their hospitality immensely. Next I was with the brethren in Piedmont, AL, staying with long-time friends Terry and Angie Studdard. It was especially good to have Charles Hurst and Vernon Law at the meeting and to see them doing so well after they recovered from near-fatal illnesses last year. After the meeting I spent three days with Rick and Jane Martin and their sons Matt and Ben in Woodstock, GA. Their place has been like a home-away-from-home for us for nearly 30 years. Next, I was in Jacksonville, FL. We had a wonderful meeting and I benefited very much from time I spent with preaching brother Phillip Prince. April 11-8 I was at the Planz Road congregation in Bakersfield, CA. It had been several years since I had been with these brethren, so it was good to see the congregation doing so well. I was especially impressed with Frank Brancato, a young family man with a successful painting business who is making a move to preach the gospel fulltime. Frank is obviously talented and sincere and I wish him God's richest blessings as he pursues his desire to preach. While no one was baptized at any of the meetings, there were several who confessed sins and we trust some good was accomplished. Lord willing, I begin a meeting at Huntington (Spring Valley), WV this coming Lord's Day (May 16-23).

Douglas T. Hawkins 3711 Castlewood Ct Somerset, KY 42503-douglast@alltel.net-(606) 678-4347 - I've recently been involved in a couple of meetings. My appreciation goes out to the churches in Marietta, GA and Linnville, OH for allowing me the opportunity to preach the word of the Lord. While in Marietta I was able to stay with Rick and Jane Martin. Their hospitality lives up to its billing and I enjoyed them very much. I also was able to become acquainted with the brethren

at Linnville, OH. While there I made my home with Bro. Harold Burd. He's well advanced in age, but still quite spry and active. He really brightened my week and I've come to appreciate him very much. My next meetings include: Duncanville, TX (June 6-13) and Henryetta, OK (July 4-11) Come be with us if you can. May the Lord bless you.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com, May 14 - Since last report we have been at home except for the two weeks we spent in Italy and Greece with various other brethren. What an experience to go where several of the apostles, including Paul, went during the early days of the church. It will be our pleasure to be at home during the rest of May and then to 64th St. in Sacramento for a short meeting in June. We have some meetings scheduled for the summer months which we'll mention as time goes along. We look forward to attending the annual Memorial Day meeting at Turlock later this month. We were saddened to hear that our beloved Brother Danao, his good wife, Lucena, and two others who had visited the services on Sunday, May 8, were seriously injured in a car accident in Honolulu, Hawaii as Bro. Danao drove them home afterwards. They are still in the hospital and hurting. They need your prayers. If you can send a card, please do so. Their address is: 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96797. Pray for us in the work.

Kevin W. Presley, 106 Whiffletree Way, Dothan, AL 36303 (334) 678-8999, May 10, 2004 - We have enjoyed some good meetings as of late around the brotherhood. I was privileged to be with the church in Fort Worth, TX at the end of March. The congregation there continues to "hold the line" and they are an encouragement to me. We had good crowds and good interest from the folks who worship there. We also had a few of the preachers from the area to support us a night or two, which I appreciate. One young lady confessed fault during the meeting. In April, I was glad to be with the brethren in Jamesville, MO. This is where Billy Dickenson labors. He loves the church and contributes great knowledge and ability to the preaching field. It was good to get to visit with him and Judy. The church seems to be doing well there and I was the better for having spent the time with them. Lord willing, I am to be with the church in Gadsden, AL for a two-day meeting in June and then with Marietta, GA and New Salem, MS for full meetings this summer. The work here at home is doing fine with our television program enjoying continued success. Pray for us.

Greg Maluga, Ilocos Norte, Philippines, April 7 - The work in Cagayan is going on smoothly. Not like in Ilocos Norte that other churches has disturbed us sometimes particularly the mini-cups. This resulted to a written debate, which is presently going on between Roger Nonog, a mini-cup preacher and an Editor-In-Chief of their religious paper and I. The Debate will end at the

end of this month. Our plan is to send the copy to brother Virgilio Danao and let him translate it into English so that you will also read it along with other brethren. We will accept comments and recommendations from you since this is our first time to engage with a debate and I have no formal scholastic knowledge about debates but for the sake of the truth, I have to defend the truth. I thanked brother Dario Estavillo for he is my partner in conducting research and help me in all matters regarding this debate. We hope that we can clearly show the will of the Lord and the truth will prevail.

We are glad to sponsor the National Lectureship and Fellowship this year. The churches in Ilocos Norte, Sta Praxedes and Apayao jointly hosted this affair to be held at Gabut Norte, Badoc, Ilocos Norte on April 12-16, 2004. We have good speakers discussing present issues and it will be highlighted by the young preachers hour where our youth will be delivering their sermons/messages. It is a good thing to have fellowship with the brotherhood from different congregations who will attend. Actually, the preaching brethren in Ilocos Norte went to Badoc this morning to prepare the place. So we are now prepared for this and we hope this event will be a success and finally beneficial to all of us.

Joe Norton, Mindanao Island, The Philippines March 5-16, 2004 - Outstanding growth and wonderful opportunities describe a new work that has opened up in the southern part of the Philippine Islands during the past three years. "The work actually began in May, 2000 when Bro. Nestor Naldo, a preacher from Mindanao, the southern most large island in the Philippines, got in touch with David Risener through the NewTestamentChurch.org website and said he had been studying articles on the website and had committed to the use of one cup on the communion table. He also requested study materials for himself and others. David has maintained constant communication with the work since that time, and it has grown from two preachers and two congregations in south Mindanao in January 2001 to more than 60 preachers and aspiring preachers and perhaps as many as 100 congregations.

Hoping to establish closer ties with the work in south Mindanao, four brethren from the U.S. went there March 5-16 to become acquainted with the brethren, to evaluate the success of the work, and to conduct studies. Going on the trip were David, Arlington, Texas; Mike Whitworth, Wichita, Kansas; James Orten, Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Joe Norton, Arlington, Texas. Findings were overwhelmingly positive. These four believe the Mindanao brethren to be sincere and fully convinced about scriptural worship, that they are some of the most unselfish diligent workers for the Lord they have ever seen, and that some of them are worthy of assistance from U.S. churches.

More than 550 people registered for the five-day study in General Santos City, demonstrating the culmination of a great deal of diligent work by our

brethren there. During the first two days of the study, the teaching was directed toward digressive brethren and others who do not agree with us in doctrine. Included in those registered, besides many faithful brethren, were cups brethren and members of several different denominations. The last three days were directed toward our preaching brethren and church leaders. The U.S. brethren had an opportunity to visit five different congregations in the General Santos City area on the Lord's day. They also interviewed every preacher in attendance at the studies and had several visits and meetings with some of the more experienced preachers. By the end of the week, a total of 119 people had been baptized into Christ.

The Heartland Church of Christ of Wichita, Kansas, has decided to oversee the work. There is great work already in progress and an even better work that can be accomplished in the future. The field is white unto harvest in that area of the world. Our brethren are already moving into the middle island of the large islands to establish the faithful church there. As well, there is a large work on Luzon, the northern most large island, and in some other areas of the Philippines, as reported in a recent OPA article by Bro. Don King, who has worked diligently there for many years. Even though the areas are quite separated geographically, brethren from the different areas of the work have already established communication and are committed to working together in the Lord's great vineyard.

SPECIAL PLACES

continued from page eight

So many think so little of the church today. Many will miss the services for ball games or other frivolous things. Yet, in that prison cell, we were all thinking of a fellow who would never consider such a thing.

Brethren, we all need to think of what has been done to bring about our salvation and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us take it seriously and cherish our heritage as we make our way to eternity. Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent. Let us call things by Bible names and do things in Bible ways. Think on these things.
DLK

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THE BACK PAGE...

SOME NAMES THAT STUCK

By *CARL M. JOHNSON*

The late B.F. Leonard of Huntington, WV was a diminutive character, standing about five-feet and five-inches tall and weighing about 130 pounds in his prime. His best-known sermon is entitled "Short Jabs," and that title describes his style of preaching perfectly. He was very animated in the pulpit. Bespectacled and with thinning hair on top, he would move slowly behind the lectern, sort of like a bantam-weight boxer sizing up his opponent, and then suddenly he would lunge forward, his raspy voice rising to a crescendo as he aggressively jabbed out his point. Many years ago while preaching at the Sulphur, Oklahoma Camp Meeting, B.F. was lamenting the woeful attendance numbers at some congregations on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. He observed that sometimes visitors from the community would attend those services, while the very members who invited them failed to attend themselves. In exasperation, he concluded that such occurrences were so embarrassing to him they made him feel like "crawling into a peanut." The audience found the mental picture of this feisty, small man crawling into a peanut shell uproariously humorous, and many brethren good-naturedly began addressing B.F. as "Brother Peanut."

It is a very common phenomenon for people to be nicknamed for some significant event in their lives or for some outstanding personal feature. One of the most colorful nicknames worn by Restoration Era preachers was "Raccoon" John Smith. That period in the church's history had its share of well educated leaders, but the vigorous, self-educated frontier evangelist who could speak the language of his pioneer neighbors made a tremendous contribution to the movement. Raccoon John Smith was typical of such preachers, and he got his unusual nickname from his own introduction of himself after a sermon he delivered at Crab Orchard, Kentucky around 1815. A large audience started to get up and leave when Smith stood to preach because his appearance was so unkempt. Smith called out aloud and baited the departing audience with the sayings of some great men of history. Then he said of himself, "I am John Smith, from Stockton's Valley [Kentucky]. In more recent years I have lived in Wayne, among the rocks and hills of the Cumberland. Down there, saltpeter caves abound, and raccoons make their homes. On that wild frontier we never had good schools, nor many books; consequently, I stand before you today a man without an education" (John Williams *Life of Elder John Smith* 89-90). Subsequently, Smith was referred to as "the guy reared among the coons of Stockton Valley and in Wayne County," and the nickname of "Raccoon" stayed with him.

Nicknames were common even in Christ's day. Jesus nicknamed James and John, the "Sons of Thunder" (Mk. 3:17). These two fisherman brothers were characterized by an impetuosity and zeal that prompted them to suggest calling down fire from heaven to consume an inhospitable Samaritan village (Lk. 9:54). This fiery zeal also resulted in James' becoming an early victim of martyrdom (Acts 12:2), and it can be detected in the thunders of John's Apocalypse.

Hippolytus (170-236 A.D.) says John Mark the author of "The Gospel According to Mark," was nicknamed "Stump Finger." The reason behind this name is obscure but several possibilities exist. It could be that Mark's fingers were abnormally short in comparison to the size of his hands. Some authorities believe Mark may have cut off a finger after his conversion so he would not have to serve in the Jewish priesthood. Others believe "Stump Finger" describes Mark's style of writing. His gospel is the least polished, stylistically, of all the gospels. While the words employed by Mark could be easily understood by the man-in-the-street in Rome, his writing is clipped, quick moving and sometimes awkward.

According to Jerome (342-420 A.D.), the Lord's brother James was called "Camel Knees" because "he went into the Temple alone and prayed on behalf of the people, so that his knees acquired the callousness of a camel's knees." James unquestionably considered prayer to be extremely important. He is the one who said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally" (1:5). He adds, "You have not because you ask not" (4:2), and "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (5:16).

I am confident most of us have had some sort of descriptive nicknames given to us during our lifetime. I assure you that I have. Some of the names given me have been very creative. Some have been flattering while others have been unkind. There is only one descriptive title I am really concerned about, however. When I stand before the Judgment seat of Christ in the final day, my heart's one desire is to hear the Righteous Judge describe me as a "good and faithful servant," while adding the commendation, "Well done!" (Mt. 25:23). 1400 Northcrest Drive Ada, OK 74820 carlmj@cablone.net

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations: and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXVIII

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NO. 7

THE EPISTLE OF PRACTICE

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

Bible students are universally impressed with The General Epistle of James because of its *practicality*. Since it is one of the most intensely practical books of the New Testament, it is unquestionably worthy of the superlatives used by men to describe it. Guy N. Woods: "The Letter, because of its eminently practical character, has been quite properly styled '**the Gospel of Common Sense.**' It is a wonderful demonstration of the fact that the principles of Christ, properly applied and fully assimilated, will adequately meet the needs of every generation, whatever the period in history may be." Henry H. Halley: "It seems like a **book of Christian Proverbs**, about a number of subjects, bearing on the Practical Phases of Christian Life." Curtis Vaughan: "Few things would do more to revitalize present-day Christianity than a determined effort on the part of believers to take James seriously and put his teaching into practice. It has a special relevance for those who are long on theory and short on practice . . . James is '**The Epistle of Practice,**' the Amos of the New Testament."

The relevancy of James' epistle becomes apparent when one sees how it resembles the Sermon on the Mount. Our Lord's ministry is in full bloom at this time, as shown in Matt. 4:23-25, for Christ is healing the sick and His fame is spreading abroad. Matt. 4:23 declares that Jesus went about "preaching the gospel of the kingdom."

What did He preach? "**The gospel of the kingdom!**" What did that consist of? First, it obviously involved an announcement of the *glad tidings* [what "gospel" denotes] that the Messianic kingdom was soon to be established (Matt. 4:17). Also, the Sermon on the Mount is a continuation, or an enlargement, of that theme. Christ was now ready to start educating the people about the nature of His kingdom by explaining the principles that it would be founded upon. Consider how in the Beatitudes, as well as elsewhere in this sermon, Christ places repeated emphasis on the **kingdom**: Matt. 5:3, 10, 19, 20; 6:10,33; 7:21.

The following is not an exhaustive list, but it shows how James dealt with many of those topics

that represented the very heart of Christ's teaching: (1) Jas. 1:2-3; Matt. 5:10-12-*Adversity*, (2) Jas. 1:10-11; Matt. 6:19-21- *Wealth*, (3) Jas. 1:26-27; Matt. 6:1-7-*Mere profession of religion*, (4) Jas. 1:22-25; Matt. 7:15-27-*Saying and not doing*, (5) Jas. 1:5-8; Matt. 6:6-13- *Prayer*, (6) Jas. 4:4; Matt. 6:24- *Love of the world versus the love of God*, (7) Jas. 2:12-13; Matt. 6:14-15- *Forgiveness*, (8) Jas. 5:12; Matt. 5:34-37- *Oaths*, (9) Jas. 3:11-12; Matt. 7:16-20-*A tree is known by its fruits*, and (10) Jas. 4:8; Matt. 6:22-23- *Singleness of aim*.

We commend this special issue of **Old Paths Advocate** to our readers because the articles are dealing with subjects that are just as pertinent today as when James wrote them. The Epistle of James is an epistle of imperatives -in the 108 verses of the letter there are 54 imperative verbs! It should be of no surprise, therefore, that the articles in this issue are not about trivial, irrelevant matters. Instead, they discuss things that men of the 21st century need to ponder:

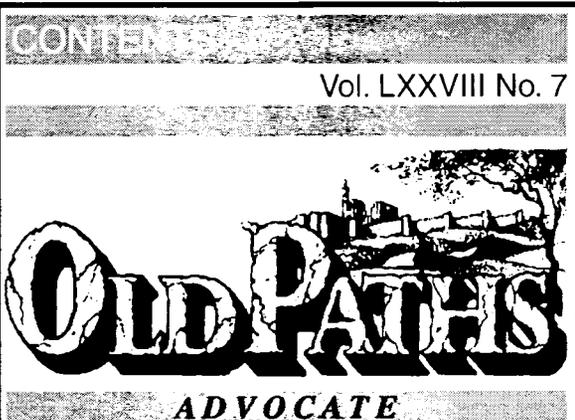
"PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY"

It is amazing how James anticipated the false doctrine that exists in our religious world. It is not uncommon for people to argue that we are totally under grace without any kind of law. The affirmation of Jas. 1:25, however, exposes this anti-law, antinomian, anti-obedience attitude for what it is- a rejection of Christ's authority! Richard DeGough discusses the importance, and beauty, of "*the perfect law of liberty*" - a rule of action that sets one free (John 8:32).

"BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED"

We are hearing uncertain sounds from some in the church today. No, I take that back! It is blatantly false, denominational concepts that some are pushing, and it is certain that they have embraced Baptist doctrine [no works of any kind necessary to salvation]. The teaching of Jas. 2:14-26 remains an obstacle for those who teach salvation by faith alone because James declares that "faith without works is dead." Jimmie Smith shows that man is not saved by faith at

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THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY

By RICHARD DEGOUGH

We live in a golden age, the age of the “perfect law of liberty.” a law that teaches us how to obtain forgiveness of sins and be justified in the sight of God. James writes: “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deeds” (Jas. 1:25). There are some definite facts stated here which are: It is a complete law, it must be looked into and continued therein, we can not be a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, with the promise of being blessed in our deeds.

Another fact is this: **It is a law!** The cry of so many claiming to be a part of Christianity today is: “We are not under law, but grace, and it is the grace of God that saves us !” This mind set is in direct conflict with James’ words. Law is restraint, and to believe we are not under law is to say there are no prohibitions for us. Sin is a transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). If there is no law, there can be no sin and man is not guilty nor condemned before God. Paul said: “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). If there is no sin, then the death of our Lord meant nothing, for Paul states: “that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). It will be our purpose to consider the Bible teaching relating to what the law of liberty is. It is the “law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25), the “royal law” (Jas. 2:8), the “law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2), the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2), and the “law of faith” (Rom. 3:27). Also, 1 Cor. 9:21 speaks of being “under the law to Christ.” All of these designations describe the law of liberty and apply to the present age or dispensation in which we live. The opposite of liberty is bondage. Those in bondage become servants. The Jews were told by the Lord: “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34). When one is in bondage to sin, he must be emancipated in order to be free. Paul writes about two types of bondage- the bondage of the law of Moses and the bondage of sin.

THE LAW OF MOSES

The law of Moses could not justify one in the sight of God. Only the “faith in Christ” can bring justification (Acts 13:39; Gal. 2:16; 3:11)! The law was not “of faith,” but the just shall live by faith (Gal. 3:11-12). Under the law sacrifices were made for sin, but the sacrifices were not sufficient to take away sin, nor relieve the worshipers from the consciousness of sin. There was a **remembrance of sins** every year (Heb. 10:1-4).

Thus, those under the law were still in bondage. It would take a new covenant, one that provided the forgiveness of sins and justified man before God. Jesus came to “**fulfill**” the law (Matt. 5:17). He nailed it to His cross (Col. 2:14). “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are

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BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED

By JIMMIE C. SMITH

Jas 2:24 “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only”. NKV.

This subject of *Faith* and *Works* is introduced by James in the 14th verse when he asked: “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?” With this twofold question James introduced his inspired discussion of the relationship between faith and works as they pertain to salvation. He set forth a hypothetical man who claimed to have faith, but was inactive and did not work. That the man did indeed have faith appears in James’ tacit admission of it in “can that faith save him?” So banish the denominational thought that the man “didn’t really have faith”, because James admits that he did, of what benefit was it?? What good would it do?? The implied answer is a resounding negative “None Whatsoever”! This is a refutation of the heresy that men are saved by “faith only”. James did not allege any deficiency in the man’s faith, but makes his denial of the man’s salvation to rest on the absence of works. It is certainly clear enough that James did not here teach that a man was not justified “*by faith* ~ but that he could not be justified by “faith only”. James was asking if a *do-nothing, inactive, all-talk-and-no-work* “faith” could save. Again, the implied answer is definitely, “No. it cannot”!

VERSES 15-16

James illustrates how worthless a non-working faith is. Did not Christ himself deny salvation to those who would not confess him, even though they “believed on” him? (Jno. 12:42). Did he not also teach that those who will not repent cannot be saved? (Lk. 13:3,5). Did he not also declare that unless one is baptized (born of water and of the spirit) he cannot enter the kingdom of God? (Jno. 3:5). Be it observed that such things as confession, repentance and baptism are a “work of faith” only in the sense that “*the faith*” commands them.

VERSE 17

“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” The **dead do not do anything**, the same being analogous with **trust/faith** without works. James Coffman in his commentary on James ask: “But is this not equivalent to the proposition that faith without works is not ‘real faith’? Indeed no. Is a dead body no longer a body? Is a dead body not real? Is a dead body different in nature from a living body? Is a single characteristic of a body lost by the mere fact of death? Thus, a faith that is genuine enough in itself, when dead is not essentially different.” And as the KJV adds “...being alone.” In this verse James introduced a thought to which he repeatedly returned in the remainder of this section of Scripture: “faith without works is dead.” A dead faith is incapable of saving anyone.

VERSES 18-19

“If any man say..” The grounding of justification upon anything so unprovable as “faith only” has the inherent flaw of being predicated upon something which is not only undemonstrable to others, but which also is incapable of being certainly known by the claimant himself. A faith without works, unproved by any act of obedience, cannot ever be known certainly to exist by anyone supposing that he has such faith. Our Lord spoke of justification (Lk. 18:14), and of being justified by words (Matt. 12:37), and of faith saving (Lk. 7:50). Despite this fact, no one ever accused Jesus of teaching that salvation is by “faith only.” or of contradicting himself when he said one shall be justified “by his words”. By means of this reference to the faith of demons, James demonstrated the folly of thinking that mere intellectual assent or belief is sufficient to save. The devils have such a faith, but they do not serve or obey God. Such faith does not avail to salvation, whether in demons or men. I cannot imagine a stronger demonstration of the argument.

VERSE 20

Tasker said of this verse: “The vain man addressed is anyone who is so devoid of spiritual understanding that he does not see that faith which never results in works is merely a sham.” The language calls upon the believer in “faith only” to be willing to recognize or acknowledge the truth, and he expects him to concede his error.

VERSES 21-23

To illustrate that living faith requires action, James introduced Abraham and his faith. How as he justified? Not merely by a **profession**, but by a **proof** of his faith. When Abraham raised his knife to slay Isaac for the commanded sacrifice, God’s angel told him, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: **for now I know that thou fearest God**, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Gen. 22:12). “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” v. 22. Abraham’s faith would have been unperfected, incomplete, thus dead, had he not done the work God commanded him to do. “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” v. 23. While a degree of faith in the sense of belief or trust may reside in one before obedience, it is not a perfected, saving faith until it proves itself in obedience, as with Abraham—“faith without works is dead”.

VERSE 24

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” The weight of this is seen in the extension to include all men who shall ever be

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THE LITTLE MEMBER

By *JOHNNY ELMORE*

Someone said that the third chapter of James should be required reading for Christians every day. That is because of the tremendous potential for weal or woe in the power of that little member—the tongue. It is vitally important that the tongue be restrained. Follow carefully the teaching in James 3:1-12.

Be Not Many Masters

Teachers (masters, KJV) have taken upon themselves a special responsibility and therefore greater condemnation if they misuse or fail in that responsibility. Many have coveted the prestige and honor of the teacher, but James reminds us of the awesome responsibility that goes with it. James does not condemn those who are “able to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:2), but he warns those whose motive is notoriety. The teacher must be careful to do two things: (1) Teach the truth and not his own opinions or prejudices; (2) Live his life so as to not contradict his own teaching.

In Many Things We Offend All

The ASV renders this passage: “For in many things we all stumble.” On occasions, I have been taken to task for some lapse or some ill-advised remark, and perhaps that is as it should be, but please notice that James says we all stumble. If we are so ready to correct someone else, we should take into account our own vulnerability for James includes himself saying, “We all stumble.” James also teaches that the one who does not keep on stumbling has reached perfection or maturity. That is truly a goal toward which we should all aspire. Since it is so easy to stumble in speech, James argues that the one who does not stumble is able to control his whole body.

Horses and Ships Are Controlled

James adduces that horses are controlled by small bits and ships by small helms and in the same way, if we can control the tongue, we can control the whole body. The tongue is a small member, too, but oh, the damage of an uncontrolled tongue. In a third illustration of the power of the tongue, James says, “Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire (v. 5, ASV)!” Think of the thousands of acres of forest sometimes consumed by a fire started by a small cigarette.

The Tongue Is a Fire

Just as a devastating, raging fire can be caused by a careless spark, so can the tongue open up a world of iniquity. False accusations and slander may ruin a reputation. Intolerant words, rumors, and inflammatory speech may turn church members, communities, states, and even nations against each other. Brother H.M. Covert once told about a man who went to the door of a woman who had slandered him with a pillow in his hand. When she came to the door, he ripped the pillow apart and the feathers flew everywhere in the wind. “Go gather up all those feathers,” the man said. “Why that is impossible,” the woman said. “I’d never be able to gather all of them.” “No,” said the man, “and neither can you make right all

the lies and slanders you have spoken against me.”

The Tongue No Man Can Tame

James points out that all kinds of beasts, birds, serpents, and sea creatures have been tamed of mankind. I have seen men who trusted the taming of lions and tigers enough to put their heads in the beasts’ mouths. I have seen huge elephants obey the demands of their trainers. I have seen men pet and play with deadly serpents, but James warns that the tongue no man can tame. That is, brute beasts may be tamed to such a degree that they are no longer dangerous, but there is never a time or an occasion when the tongue may be left unrestrained or unguarded. Now someone may think that this fact excuses him, but it does not, and God does not demand something impossible. We may have to do as Job who said, “I will lay mine hand upon my mouth” (Job 40:4).

An Unruly Evil, Full of Deadly Poison

God has bestowed upon man a regal gift—the ability to speak. There is a vast chasm between the most intelligent animal and the lowest specimen of humanity in that men can speak, but how terrible to use the kingly talent of speech improperly. Unguarded, unrestrained speech is an unruly, restless evil that corrupts the hearer as well as the speaker. A lying, deceitful, blasphemous, filthy tongue is full of deadly poison, affecting as well as infecting, its hearers.

Blessing and Cursing

It is unfortunate that men use the same mouth to bless God and to curse men who are made in the image of God. Guy N. Woods says that the original word for curse is “an address to God in the form of a prayer that he will bring evil upon men.” Actually, as Woods points out, such a man has a high estimate of himself. “He considered himself as able to look up to God, and bless him; and down to men and curse them.” Such a person is an anomaly of nature! James states that a fountain does not yield both good water and bitter water. A fig tree does not bear olives, and a vine does not bear figs. James’ conclusion is that “these things ought not so to be.” Actually, the sin of wicked speech is a heart problem. Jesus said, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34). My twelfth grade English teacher had this epigram etched upon the blackboard in front of the class: “Language is the dress of thought; each time you speak, your mind is on parade.” The way to clean up speech is to clean up the heart. How do we do that? We can force water out of a jar or a glass by filling it with rocks and sand. We can clean up a sinful heart by filling it with faith in Christ (Acts 15:9). For Christians who stumble, John says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Because of our weakness and tendency to stumble, how marvelous is that fact.

PRAYER IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES (OLD CAMEL KNEES)

By JERRY DICKINSON

The knees of James did not look like human knees. They were so calloused that they had more of the appearance of the knees of a camel. He thus acquired the nickname, "old camel knees," and it was a well known fact that the reason his knees were so calloused was because of all the hours he spent on those knees in prayer. There are three references in the Epistle of James to prayer, and these references are all the more meaningful to us because they were written by a man who obviously had experienced in his own life the truth that, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

James 1:5-8

"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering..." We need not expect anything from the Lord, James explains, unless we ask in faith. The word "upbraid" is an interesting word. The New King James supplies the word "reproach", and the idea is that God gives without scolding or reproaching. Often when we give we reproach and scold the receiver. "You wasted and misused what I gave you last time and now you are asking for another favor?" Or we might reprove by saying, "If I give you this favor you won't appreciate it." But, God does not scold or upbraid us when we ask a favor. He does not take into account how we squandered the last favor He bestowed, nor how we might neglect the favor we are presently asking for. Thank God for that! God, James declares, is a giving God, and He is waiting for us to ask that He may bestow liberally and generously the blessing we petition, provided, that is, we ask in faith and according to His will. If we lack wisdom, and we all do, let us ask of the giving God, but let us not forget to do our part by studying and meditating on God's word. After all, David exclaimed in Psalms 119:97-99, "Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation." Meditate and pray - pray and meditate, and the Lord will give, without reproach, understanding and wisdom.

James 4:1-4

"Ye lust and have not: ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." In this passage James shows how worldliness can affect prayer. There are two reasons, he affirms, why prayers are not answered. First, some prayers are never offered! "You have not because you ask not." A prayer is not a prayer until it is prayed. Yes, God knows what we need before we ask him, but he wants us to ask. If you need forgiveness as a child of God you better bend your knees and ask or you will not be forgiven. If you desire a certain blessing you need to bow and pray or that blessing will never come from the Lord. Nothing is too small or too great to ask for. But, secondly, some prayers are not answered because

we ask amiss. Our prayers must be offered according to the will of God. There is such a thing as an unscriptural prayer. Prayers offered to the virgin Mary, to angels, to saints, etc. are vain petitions. We offer our prayers to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Praying the so called "sinner's prayer" instead of obeying the gospel plan of salvation is to pray amiss. And certainly, as James declares in this passage, to pray for something that will satisfy a worldly desire or lust is to ask amiss. The key is affirmed by James is verse eight. "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." Stop committing spiritual adultery with the world, draw nigh to God, ask according to his will and the promise is God will draw nigh to us and answer our prayers.

James 5:13-16

"Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." This is admittedly a controversial passage of scripture because of the reference to anointing with oil. Mormons and Pentecostal groups claim this passage supports their practice of anointing sick people with oil today so that they can be miraculously healed. The Roman Catholic church claims this passage as the basis for the sacrament of Extreme Unction where the priest anoints the sick with oil in preparation for death. What does this passage teach us about prayer? Are we to anoint with oil today?

Actually, there is a greater principle involved here than whether we should anoint the sick with oil. The real issue involves how to interpret difficult and obscure passages of scripture. What do we do when we come to a passage of scripture that is controversial and difficult to interpret? For example, Paul refers to "baptizing for the dead" in I Corinthians 15:29. Mormons use that reference and baptize living persons in the place of people who are now dead. If you talk to Mormons and ask them why they do this they will point you to Paul's words. "It says baptize for the dead," they will tell you. You might respond, "Yes it says that, but we have to understand what Paul meant by baptizing for the dead." A Mormon might answer, "It means what it says!" How do we answer that? How do we interpret difficult and obscure passages?

Always interpret difficult and obscure scriptures in harmony with plain scriptures. Admittedly, Paul's reference to baptizing for the dead is a difficult and obscure passage, but it must be understood in harmony with plain passages about baptism. Whatever he means, and there are many differing ideas about his meaning, we cannot array that reference against plain scriptures that show we baptize living people who are able to believe and repent

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THE GENEALOGY OF SIN AND DEATH

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

If we are having a problem with sin dominating our lives, that means that we are actually having a problem with **temptation!** Indeed, before sin is ever committed, we are first beguiled and lured by our passions that give birth to sin. James makes that clear in his epistle: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:13-15). As Guy N. Woods observed, James presents in these verses one of the most remarkable pictures of sin in the Scriptures.

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE

We must begin by understanding that the word "temptation" is used in two senses in the Bible: (1) In the sense of **proving, trying, or putting to a test**- God does sometimes test our faith and loyalty to Him as in the case of Abraham (Gen. 22:1). (2) In the sense of **enticing to do evil**- God does not tempt any man in this sense and neither can He be tempted to sin. As James deals with the subject in this sense, he lets us know that all temptation is from the devil. After all, he is identified in the Scriptures as "**the tempter**" (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5). Here is where we need to sharpen our sensitivities! Satan is the culprit behind the fall of man and who provides us with opportunities to sin. He is the one who stirs up our passions and desires and who encourages us to transgress God's will.

When I visited congregations in Malawi a few years ago, I used an illustration repeatedly that always received a good response from my audiences. I once heard Bill Davis say that African brethren love animal stories, so here was the tale that I related: One time a man was walking in the snow on a wintry day and he came across a snake frozen in the ice and almost dead. It was a poisonous reptile, but it was also a beautiful specimen with bright, orange skin. The man was moved with compassion for the creature and he decided to take it home and nurse it back to health. In time the snake became his "pet" and he learned to love it. One day, for no apparent reason, the snake buried its fangs into the man's left arm and pumped venom into his body. As he was dying, the man cried, "Why have you done this to me? I took you into my home and nursed you back to health. You have returned my kindness by biting me and now I am going to die!" "To that the snake replied, "S-s-shut up you s-s-silly man. You knew I was a s-s-snake when you took me in!" **So it is with the devil!** If we compromise with the devil and don't recognize him for whom he is, "that old serpent" (Rev. 20:2) will gain an advantage over us that will lead to our destruction.

THE PROCESS

Satan is such a smooth operator that he can run us through the process of temptation before we fully comprehend what has taken place. Do we recognize temptation for what it is? Do we really understand what

temptation is all about? James breaks it down for us in great detail: We are tempted when we are "**drawn away**" of our own lust. Yes, it begins with an evil passion, or desire, to do what is forbidden. That desire is what Satan uses to lure us astray. Vine gives this explanation: "To draw away, or lure forth, is used metaphorically in Jas. 1:14, of being drawn away by lust. As in hunting or fishing the game is lured from its haunt, so man's lust allures him from the safety of self-restraint."

Once our lust is stirred up, then we are "**enticed.**" This is actually a fishing term, literally meaning "to lure by a bait." It is the same word used in 2 Pet. 2:14 where Peter writes of "**beguiling** unstable souls." What great visual symbolism James is using for our edification! A fisherman wants to pull in a fish by hooking it, but first he has to disguise that hook by giving the fish a reason to bite. Hence, he chooses some kind of bait that will lure the hungry fish in. Likewise, Satan "baits" us with an opportunity to sin by making sin appear attractive and pleasurable!

WHEN SIN IS FINISHED

A key to resisting temptation is to see what is really happening beneath the surface and to see sin in its true light. James strips sin of its alluring power: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." While Satan would have us to view sin as pleasurable and desirable, James assures us that sin and death go together. Someone has said that this is the LSD of the Bible- lust, sin and death. **MacKnight** says, "And sin being brought forth, it immediately acts and is nourished by frequent repetition, till at length it gains such strength, that in its turn it begets death, which destroys the sinner. This is the true genealogy of sin and death. Lust is the mother of sin, and sin is the mother of death, and the sinner is the parent of both."

"YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION"

How can we find the strength and help to overcome temptation? One of the keys is to get our minds off of the present moment and focus on the **eternal**. A fleeting moment of self-indulgence or self-gratification is certainly not worth jeopardizing our souls over! Let us be like Moses who was able to see the big picture. How did he have the commitment and good judgment to resist the temptations associated with the power and riches of ancient Egypt? The answer is found in Heb. 11:24-26: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

"Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin; Each victory will help you some other to win; Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue, Look ever to Jesus: He'll carry you through. Ask the Savior to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you though." Amen!

THE EPISTLE OF PRACTICE*continued from page one*

the moment he believes, or mere mental assent, but when faith obeys.

“PRAYER IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES”

Jerry Dickinson points out that prayer was important to James. In fact, you only get five verses into the epistle before the subject comes up! In the opinion of this writer, the exegesis of Jas. 5:14-15 deserves even a second reading, especially since brethren are studying this passage with renewed interest. I would like to offer a few comments of my own: (1) I have always believed that Jas. 5:14-15 is dealing with the miraculous, and after further study I still believe that. (2) I recognize that brethren through the years have taken different positions on the passage. However, if people are going to claim that this is the pattern to be followed today, why don't they do what the passage actually says and stick with the pattern? Thayer and Vine define the word “call” as to call to one's self; to bid to come to one's self. In no way does this involve an assembly of the church! I am weary of brethren climbing out on a limb and leading the church down paths that are questionable at best. (3) If Jas. 5:14-15 is the pattern for today, why anoint the person only once? If it is prayer that is answered in a providential way, why wouldn't the elders keep praying and anointing the sick with oil repeatedly (like we pray for the sick continually under normal circumstances)? It is obvious to me that the passage is dealing with a special circumstance.

“THE GENEALOGY OF SIN AND DEATH”

The Bible warns us not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:11). The process involved in temptation needs to be understood by every Christian, and James explains it in a colorful and helpful way (Jas. 1:13-15). This article discusses the connection between lust, sin, and death.

“THE LITTLE MEMBER”

James' discourse on the tongue (Jas. 3:1-13) is a masterpiece! Johnny Elmore writes on a subject that is always timely. Who among us could not learn to bridle the tongue in a more effective way? May this article, and all the others in this issue, help us to submit ourselves unto God and resist the devil in all things (Jas. 4:7).

THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY*continued from page two*

sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:9-10). Why the law? What purpose did it fulfill? Paul tells us that “it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Gal.3:19). It was a “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). Since the law is “not of faith,” and the “just shall live by faith” (Gal. 3: 11-12), it is evident that the law of Moses could

not free men from the bondage of sin.

THE BONDAGE OF SIN

Freedom from sin is offered only through Christ. Within the perfect law of liberty is the Gospel plan revealed. The Gospel “is the power of God unto salvation,” for therein is “the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom.1: 16- 17). The Gospel must be obeyed or we will face the wrath of God in the final day (Mk.16:16; Rom.10:14-15; 2 Thess.1:8-10). This wonderful plan is the New Covenant of the Lord, the New Testament, the “law of liberty” that is sealed with the blood of the Son of God that was shed for the remission of sins (Heb.9:12-15; Matt.26:28). The Gospel is the preaching of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the blessings that are promised therein (1 Cor.15:1-4). We become dead to sin when we “obey from the heart that form of doctrine”- baptized into Christ's death, buried with Him in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life (Rom.6: 1-7,17-18). Paul says, “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

CONTINUING IN THE LAW OF LIBERTY

James emphasizes that we must be **doers** of the word and not hearers only (Jas. 1:22-25). If we are just a hearer and not a doer, we are like the man who beholds himself in the mirror, casually looking but soon forgetting who he really is. If that is our attitude, we will not render obedience to save our souls, nor be a doer of the word at all, soon forgetting that we are lost in sin. The word “looketh” in Jas. 1:25 implies a serious, sober, and conscientious consideration of the Perfect law. It is not being a forgetful hearer, but attending to the work of the Lord. It is **continuing** therein!

Yes, under the law of liberty we have a **work**. God has ordained that we should walk in good works (Eph. 2:10), maintain good works, and be ready to do them (Tit. 3: 1,8,14). We will be judged according to our works (2 Cor. 5: 10; Rev. 22: 12). We shall be judged by the Son of God (Acts 17:31) and the word of the Lord will be the standard used (Jno.12:48). James warned: “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be **judged by the law of liberty**” (Jas. 2:12). We must stand fast in this liberty, for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (Gal. 5: 1; 2 Cor.3: 17).

DOES THE LAW OF LIBERTY**PERMIT US TO SIN?**

We are not at liberty to do as we please, nor can we override the will of God! Paul wrote: “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). Peter said: “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God (1 Pet. 2:16). We encourage all to look into the law of liberty and continue therein, knowing that our lives will then be pleasing to the Lord in all things.

BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED*continued from page three*

saved. "A man" has the function of moving James' teaching away from Abraham as an illustration of it and making it inclusive of all men forever. James Coffman said "What screams of outrage would arise if one dared to amend James' statement here to read, "By works only is a man justified"! And yet, that is exactly what men have done to the teachings of Paul in their false allegations that he taught "justification by faith only." There is just as much Scriptural authority for one of these propositions as there is for the other, namely, none at all. There is another grave error which should also be refuted, namely, that the acceptance of what James here said makes such an acceptance tantamount to a man's thinking he can "earn salvation," or that humble recipients of God's word in this passage are guilty of making themselves "their own saviour," or that faithful working Christians think they are placing God in debt to them. How ridiculous is such nonsense! Even when Abraham met the test of offering his son Isaac upon the altar, he was still a sinner, the unworthy recipient of the grace of Almighty God; and so it is with all who ever were or ever shall be saved. Roberts summed up this verse as follows: "It was because Abraham had done this that the blessings followed. So works justify, not in themselves alone, but still they justify."

Conclusion

For any and all who would array Paul's writings in the Roman letter concerning "faith/works", I would remind you that Paul placed safeguards against this at the beginning and end of his epistle to the Romans in Chap. 1:5 "Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for *obedience of the faith* among all nations for His name." And in chap. 16:26, "but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for *obedience to the faith*—"NKJV.

PRAYER IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES*continued from page five*

of their own volition. Just so with James' reference to anointing with oil. Whatever James refers to, and there are various ideas about what he means, we cannot array this passage against plain references. Having said that, I want to point out that there are **only two passages in all the Bible** that refer to anointing the sick with oil and praying for them. One is here in James and the other is Mark 6:13 where Mark tells us that Jesus sent out the apostles, "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Is there anyone that would deny that the healing in Mark 6:13 was miraculous? If the reference to healing in Mark

is miraculous why is not the reference in James also miraculous? I believe it is. Many in the early days of the church had the miraculous gift of healing and it seems only reasonable to conclude that the elders who James refers to possessed such a gift and hence did exactly as the apostles did in Mark to miraculously heal the sick. We must interpret James in harmony with the only other reference to anointing the sick with oil, a reference which is clearly miraculous.

Please do not overlook the distinct difference in the language used by James in the reference to prayer and anointing with oil. The difference in the phraseology used is obvious and distinct. Verse 13 reads, "Is any afflicted? Let him pray." The word "afflicted" is also rendered "suffering". The reference seems to be to suffering caused by persecution, nevertheless, whatever is causing the suffering, James says the sufferer should pray for himself. He does not say the sufferer should call for the elders to pray for him. Why not? In verse 16 James says if we have faults we should confess them to one another and pray for one another. Again, he does not say confess your faults to the elders and let them pray for you. Why not? (Of course, it goes without saying that it would be permissible to confess faults to elders and request their prayers, but we can confess our faults to Christians other than elders as well.) But, in verse 14 James says that if someone is sick he should call for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil. Why the distinction? If I have faults can I confess them to the elders and have them pray for me and anoint me with oil? If I am suffering due to persecution shall the elders pray and anoint me with oil? Or, even more intriguing, can I pray for myself when I am sick and anoint myself with oil?

The language used implies that James is referring to something distinctly miraculous in verses 14 and 15. Certain disciples possessed the gift of healing in the early days of the church and no doubt James refers to elders in the churches who had the gift. Note closely, dear reader, the language used by James with reference to the result of the prayer of these elders in this reference. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." That is a positive statement that the result of the prayer and the anointing with oil will be a miraculous cure. It is not, "Perhaps the Lord will raise him up," but, "The Lord will raise him up." The distinctive language used by James and the fact that the only other passage in the Bible on this subject is clearly miraculous leads to the logical and inescapable conclusion that James

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Announcements

MISSOURI STUDY 2004

“LORD TEACH US TO GROW”

The Missouri Study will be conducted under the leadership of Reggie Kinser, Billy Dickinson and Roger Owens. The study will be held at the Aurora church building July 28 through 30, 2004. For directions please consult your church directory for best way to get there. This study is for all members desiring to learn more about how we as congregations can learn to grow. The subjects are timely and the information covered will be helpful answering many questions while attempting to provoke new interest in the Lord's work. If you would like a copy of the times and subjects by preacher simply let us know and we will send them out to you. 1-417-847-6629.

LABOR DAY MEETING

This year the Brundage Lane Church of Christ in cooperation with the surrounding congregations is hosting the California Labor Day meeting. The Wednesday and Thursday services will be held at the Brundage Lane building at 7:30 pm. Then the meeting moves to the West High School Auditorium, 1200 New Stine Rd., for the Friday service at 7:30 pm; Saturday services at 10:30 am and 7:30 pm; and Sunday at 6:00 pm. The Sunday morning services will be held at the various surrounding congregations. More information including maps can be found on the internet at www.californialabordaymeeting.com. For further information contact Tracy Osburn at tracyosburn@sbcglobal.net, or 1-661-833-6818. You may also contact me at trucryer@aol.com or 1-530-790-7151. All are invited. You will be able to enjoy great hospitality, hear a number of our gospel preachers and some great singing. Bennie Cryer.

Bonds of Matrimony

May—Barnes

Daniel May, son of Kent and Phyllis May of the Northside Springfield, MO congregation was united in Holy Matrimony to Supriya Barnes, daughter of Irvin and Barbara Barnes, on May 29, in a beautiful ceremony at Mission Hills in Springfield. An overflow crowd of family and friends came to witness this special event in the lives of Daniel and Supriya. The singing was done by a group of five men led by Supriya's

older brother Charles, and it was beautiful. I was honored to be asked by the couple to officiate the ceremony. Irvin, a highly esteemed preaching colleague, and Barbara have been friends of ours for over thirty years, and Kent and Phyllis have been dear friends of ours for almost that long. My prayer is that God will bless Daniel and Supriya with long and happy lives, and that their home will be a foretaste of the eternal home in heaven. Carl M. Johnson.

Our Departed

FENTER—Earl William Fenter was born September 27, 1908, in Shannon, Texas, the son of Charlie and Annie Stephens Fenter. He departed this life May 22, 2004. He was 95 years of age. He married Jewell Kelley in Haskall, Texas, on October 31, 1931. She preceded him in death less than a year ago, on September 13, 2003. He is survived by three sons: Darrel of Billings, Montana, Kenneth of Naples, Florida, and Mark of Coos Bay, Oregon; by two daughters: Betty Burkeen of Bakersfield, California, and Eva Snyder of Cottage Grove, Oregon; by a brother, Vernon of New Mexico; and by 11 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. He moved here to Cottage Grove, Oregon, about 40 years ago. Out of that 40 years, he spent a few years in California. He is to be appreciated for his manifestation of faith and love. He has been a blessing and a help to the church here. On Lord's Day mornings, he was at the church house early and saw that the building was unlocked and the lights were on. He was often the first one there. If any repairs or work was needed to be done on the building, he was ready to do it or was there to work with others. He had experience in several types of work. He had been a surveyor, welder, farmer, carpenter, auto and truck mechanic, along with other talents. I was continually amazed and in appreciation of his talents. Whenever he chose to do a job, no matter what the obstacles he might confront in doing it, he usually came out with successfully solving of any problems and with a product that worked and well served the purpose for which he made it. When doing furniture or cabinet work, his finished work was beautiful. In appreciation to Earl, I want to mention here one job done at the church house. The church here was getting ready to pour concrete outside on both sides and in front of the building. At the time of pouring, I had to be gone because of preaching responsibilities elsewhere. Several brethren were going to help. I suggested to one of the brethren, that he ask Earl to oversee the job because I knew Earl knew how to do the work. That was done and the product was a beautiful job. We miss him.—Gayland Osburn

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com. June 14 - The church here is doing pretty well and is at peace, for which we are thankful. We closed a short meeting at the 64th St. congregation in Sacramento last night. There were no visible results but crowds were good with area congregations helping out and a number of preachers as well. It was refreshing to see a number of outsiders attend as a result of work the brethren had done prior to the meeting. Some indicated they were interested and we pray for good to come perhaps at a later time. Greg Gay works among this congregation and has done a remarkable job. He is held in high esteem by all and they seem to realize how fortunate they are to have him in their midst. It was our pleasure to stay with him and Cassie in their new home and enjoy a nice visit. Lord willing, I am to speak at both services here next Lord's Day and then we hope to perhaps get down to Covina to hear Lynwood before leaving for Missouri and the 4th of July meeting. We are to begin at West Chester, Ohio on the 4th for a week's meeting and then to Temple, GA. Lord willing. We hope to see many of you this summer and we ask your prayers.

Miles King, 8586 Wilderness Trail, Scotland, AR 72141, mtking@cei.net. June 9, 2004 - We enjoyed having gospel preachers with us during the month of May - Shelby Taulbee from Kentucky and Greg Robbins of Texas - They did some very good preaching at Scotland, Witts Springs, Cedar Creek (Jerusalem) and Pottsville. During June several gospel meetings are scheduled in this area. Witts Springs and Pottsville with Bro. J. W. Kornegay, Dardanelle with George Battey, and Scotland with Terry Baze. I'm looking forward to being at Paducah, KY (July 7-11) and working with Gene Grant while there. Then Aug. 1-8 I will be at Mozier, Illinois. I am grateful to Greg Jordan for opening the meeting at Mozier the first Sunday as I have other obligations, preaching at Scotland, my home congregation. I'm looking forward to attending "4th of July meetings" at Lebanon, MO and Sulphur, OK. This summer Donovan Furr from Athens, Texas will be traveling with me, studying to be a preacher. Donovan has been given some good instruction and encouragement for Bro. Glenn Ballard and other leaders at the Athens, TX congregation. Greetings to all. Please keep the Lord's work in your prayers.

Roger Owens, 204 W. 18th St., Cassville, MO 65625. June 11 - The work at Cassville, Missouri moves forward with determination and desire to seek the lost. The congregation continues to show

and make improvements even though they be slow. The brethren are working and bringing folks out to hear the word of God taught. This is how congregations grow. i.e., when all the members get involved. We plan a meeting in Aug. 2004 18-22 with brother Ronny Wade. We just completed two wonderful meetings this year one with Reggie Kinser and the other with Billy Dickinson. I have been working with folks in and out of the area to regain some old ground. Recently we gained back a sister that had slipped away. I have a study set up with a young woman and family in Rogers, Arkansas in the near future. We are corresponding with several in the local area and hope to see results in the future. My meeting in April with the Brumely congregation of Missouri was well attended and visitors were with us at each service. Some of the visitors came to about every service. I was greatly encouraged and the congregation is one that certainly knows how to prepare for a meeting and demonstrates exceptional hospitality. Thanks to those that continue to support the work here we are still able to make ends meet. Perhaps the most difficult times are when we have five weeks in a month and then it is a strain to make it all work out. This is something congregations need to consider when supporting a preacher. When the month has five weeks the money seems to run out before the month ends. The work moves on and we ask that you pray for us every day.

Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804 June 11- The meeting at Bandy, KY closed with good crowds and five confessions of fault. The brethren there are working hard to advance the cause of our Lord. The meeting at Mtn. Grove, MO, April 21-25 was very encouraging. Crowds included a number of outsiders as well as brethren from surrounding churches who came to help. Brother Don Puritt was present for several nights which we greatly appreciated. Next we were at Lovejoy, PA where we were privileged to work with Brother Eugene Lockard. Gene is a pillar in that area and it is always encouraging to be around him. We went next to Greenville, PA, where one was baptized and one confessed wrongs. Here we enjoyed the hospitality of Don and Eloise Bee. They have been our friends for years and it is always a pleasure to be around them. At St. Albans, WV we made our home with Sean McAlister, who treated us with kindness and respect. The church here is actively working in the community as they try to reach the lost and strengthen those already saved. They have a difficult battle, but are determined to persevere. The Lord willing we go next to Greenville, SC June 13-20, Lebanon, MO June 27-July 2 for the annual July meeting, then to West Point, GA July 7-11, London, KY July 14-18, Napoleon, AL Aug. 1-8, and Cassville, MO Aug. 18-22. Please remember us when you pray.

PRAYER IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

continued from page eight

refers to an act which was practiced in the early days of the church when miraculous gifts were present. If you do not expect a miracle when you anoint a sick person with oil why do you do it? What does it represent? Is it not an empty sign? Please read the following quotations thoughtfully.

"Let them use oil who can by their prayers obtain recovery for the sick; let those who cannot do this, abstain from the empty sign." (Whitaker) "Now that miraculous healing has been withdrawn, to use the sign where the reality is wanting, would be unmeaning superstition." (Jameson, Faucett, & Brown) "The anointing of the sick with oil was a sensible token to the sick person himself and to the others present, that a miracle was going to be performed. Where no miracle is to be performed, to use anointing as a religious rite is a vain superstition." (MacKnight) "When miraculous powers ceased, it was reasonable that the unction should also cease. Even the form or memorial, however touching and beautiful should be abandoned, rather than we should seem by it to be at one with the false teaching of that church of man's tradition, Rome." (Ellicott)

The last remark by Ellicott should not be dismissed lightly. Who anoints with oil today? Mormons, Catholics, and Pentecostal groups - and they do so because they believe in miracles, too! For churches of Christ to anoint with oil will identify us in the minds of many with the teachings of these groups. Surely that concerns us. I pray to the Lord it does! I am afraid for brethren who boldly say they do not care what outsiders think and they are going to practice what they want regardless of how it appears to others.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that there are many scholars and commentators that believe James refers to oil as a medicine. Oil was certainly used medicinally in Biblical times (the good Samaritan poured oil and wine on the wounds of the man left for dead in our Lord's parable) and many believe that James was simply telling the elders to pray for the sick man and then use oil as a curative agent to aid in his recovery. If that were the true interpretation it would still mitigate against anointing sick people with oil today in some ritualistic or symbolic way. Whether it was for a miraculous or natural cure, a ceremonial anointing with oil is inappropriate and uncalled for today. And, certainly not in an assembly of the church! Even in that time James said for the sick to "call" for the elders of the church, obviously meaning that

the elders went to the sickbed and in a private setting prayed and anointed with oil. Where in all of the New Testament do we find the elders in an assembly of the church ceremonially anointing anyone with oil? Where is the scripture? Where?

James concludes by giving Elijah as an example of prayer. Elijah prayed earnestly, and then he prayed again, and the Lord answered. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) Prayer is both inworking and outworking. We can move Him who moves the universe if we pray earnestly, faithfully, and consistently. But, prayer also motivates and cleanses inwardly the man who offers the prayer. Let us emulate "old camel knees" and reinvigorate our prayers. The giving God is anxiously waiting to bless us and use us if only we will ask.

WERE YOU THERE?

It was the mid-week meeting,
The quiet hour of prayer:
The Master of Assemblies
Patiently waited there.
A look of pain and sorrow
Shadowed His face Divine,
"I cleansed ten," He murmured,
"Where, then, can be the nine?
Have they so soon forgotten
The sins I washed away?
Has not their weakness taught them
The need to watch and pray?
On mountain and in desert,
Beset by Satan's power,
For them I prayed and fasted,
Can they not watch one hour?"

They had not meant to slight Him
Because they did not go:
Their heart had never told them
That He would miss them so,
And so the Master waited
In loneliness and grace,
While they, alas! neglected
The holy gathering place.
Oh, Savior dear, forgive us,
We are so slow to come
To seek the blest communion
Of the quiet upper room:
Lord, give us clearer vision,
Thy loveliness to see,
Till naught shall so delight us
As fellowship with Thee.

~ Homer A. Gay, 1938

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THE BACK PAGE...

THEY SAID IT

By CARL M. JOHNSON

"Upon these principles, my dear son, I fear you will have to wear many a ragged coat." **Thomas Campbell** made this response to his son **Alexander** in 1809 when **Alexander** announced he was going to spend his life preaching and would never accept financial compensation for that preaching. **Alexander** remained true to his pledge, however, and supported himself by farming, raising Merino sheep and investing in property. When he died he was one of the wealthiest men in the new state of West Virginia with an estate valued at a quarter of a million dollars.

"I plead guilty to them all!" **Raccoon John Smith** eagerly acknowledged being guilty of the charges brought against him by his brethren at the annual meeting of the North District Association at Cane Spring, Kentucky in 1827. **Smith**, a Baptist preacher, began having difficulty harmonizing the teachings of Calvinism with the Gospel. At the same time he began studying the writings and debates of **Alexander Campbell** and became convinced that simple obedience to the Gospel can save anyone. **Smith's** brethren were very upset with him and charged him with three heresies at the annual meeting. They charged that while it was the custom of Baptists to use the King James' translation, **Smith** had on two or three occasions in public, and often privately in his family, read from **Alexander Campbell's** translation. They opposed **Campbell's** translation because it refers to **John the Baptist** as "John the Immerser," thus eliminating the Baptists' name from Scripture. Next, they accused **Smith** of saying, "I immerse you" instead of "I baptize you" when administering baptism. Finally, they accused **Smith** of allowing Christians to break their own bread when partaking of the Lord's Supper instead of having the preacher do it for them in advance.

"Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites. New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights. But let us all come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the Light we need." **Raccoon John Smith** made this appeal in 1831 to a large group of teachers, preachers and brethren who assembled from abroad for a four-day union meeting in Georgetown, and later Lexington, Kentucky. The meeting was for the purpose of ironing out some of the differences hindering the complete fellowship of all the groups who left denominationalism during the Restoration Movement.

"Some of our brethren are fearful of discussion of questions that continually arise. They seem to think if there are differences of sentiment, they had better not be discussed—as it makes a bad impression upon the world. Do you wish to make the impression that there are no differences when differences do exist? That would be to perpetuate a deception upon the public, to act a falsehood. And yet when conducting a discussion, it must be done in the proper spirit in order that the greatest good may be effected. Personalities, bitterness of feeling, and unkind innuendoes are unworthy of Christian men, and always harm the cause they are used to sustain." **David Lipscomb** made these observations in **Gospel Advocate** in 1868 about the role of religious journals in airing controversial issues. **Lipscomb** maintained that periodicals possess no authority, but serve as clearing houses for ideas that allow brethren to come to a mutual understanding.

"Though St. John the Evangelist saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creatures so wild as one of his own commentators." **G. K. Chesterton** makes this observation about some of the commentators of the Apocalypse who go to fanciful extremes in their interpretations. I have over fifty works on Revelation in my own library and I agree with **Chesterton**.

"I have been caressed, abused, entreated, mistreated, talked to, talked about, driven out, locked out, all but knocked out and dragged out. I have been called a crank, ignoramus, sore-head, hobbyist, half wit, nit wit, crazy, heretic, disturber, demented, a pest, a wart, an old fogey, moss-back, back number, *non compos mentis*, liar, pee wee, stumbling block, anti, notoriety-seeker, bluffer and egotist. But none have ever said I did not have the courage to state in plain, unmistakable terms just what I teach and practice." **Dr. G.A. Trott** was feeling the strain of combat over the Sunday School controversy when he wrote these words in **The Apostolic Way** (May 1, 1923). While he was frustrated by his failure to get anyone to agree to a written debate concerning the issue, he was "at least getting a few lessons about enduring hardness."

"There you have it in black and white—baptism is for the remission of sins!" **Cicero Goddard** made this colorful declaration during a meeting about forty years ago in Detroit, Michigan after first asking a black brother sitting in the audience to read aloud Acts 2:38, then turning to a white brother in the audience and asking him to read aloud the same passage. carlmj@cablone.net

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXVIII

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NO. 8

FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE BIBLE

By JAMES D. ORTEN

How awe-inspiring that God—the creator of the universe—has spoken to man. Furthermore, He spoke in human language, clearly intending that we should understand His words and know His will. God said, “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I did not say to the seed of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in vain’” (Isaiah 45:19).

In the New Testament, God spoke in the Greek language, through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2) and through the apostles whom Jesus chose and inspired (John 16:12-15). History has revealed God’s wisdom in this choice. Greek was the most widely known language of the world at the time, the Old Testament having been translated into it. This allowed Gentiles to read about the Messiah, who was to be their Savior too. That Greek became a dead language soon after the Bible was completed, insuring that the meanings of inspired words would never change.

There was yet another benefit in this choice that is even more relevant to our present purpose: The Greek language was highly developed and capable of expressing Divine thoughts better than other languages of the time. One example of its complexity is the use of figures of speech. All languages contain them, but classical Greek excelled in figures of speech which Bible writers used liberally.

Here are examples of figures of speech used in the Bible. Parables, which lay down an illustration by the side of the story, were favorites of Jesus. The prophets made frequent use of metaphors and similes. A metaphor is an implied comparison to the idea or object being discussed and a simile is an open comparison of it. Hosea (7:8) employed a metaphor when he described Ephraim as “a cake not turned.” The people then baked cakes of bread on hot stones and turned them so as to cook both sides. The Israelites had allowed themselves to be influenced by heathen peoples. Their loyalty to God was uneven so, in the prophet’s eyes, they were like a half-baked cake. Hosea did not name their disloyalty but it was powerfully suggested. David (Psalms 1:4) used a simile when he described

ungodly persons as “like the chaff which the wind drives away.” Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part of a thing is put for the whole. The word Ephraim as used above by Hosea is an example. This large tribe was often named to designate the entire nation of Israel.

Most people learn figures of speech intuitively by hearing them as they grow up. But occasionally confusion develops and it is necessary to go back to original definitions. The means by which figures of speech are learned is unimportant, but one must understand their use in order to gain a clear knowledge of the Bible. How could we ever comprehend the lessons of Jesus without His wonderful parables? And the Lord’s Supper can not be understood properly without knowledge of metonymy.

There are good reasons for using figures of speech. One is that they can make complex matters clear. Jesus took advantage of this power when He compared His kingdom to things people understood, i.e. “the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea,” “like a pearl of great price,” and on and on. A second benefit is economy; it is easier to say “the kettle is boiling” than “the water in the kettle is boiling.” And still another reason is the variety they add to language.

Because our interest here is in the Lord’s Supper, we will look closely at metonymy. In this figure of speech, one thing is named in order to suggest another. This can be done when two objects have a known relationship so that the mention of one naturally brings the other to mind. A common example is a container and its contents. When some one says, “the kettle is boiling,” we know immediately that he means the water in the kettle is boiling.

Characteristics of Correct use of Metonymy

1. The thing named and the thing suggested are both literal. In the foregoing example, the kettle and the water are equally real. It must be that way. One can not put literal contents into figurative containers or vice versa. When Paul said, “As oft as ye... drink

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Editorial

SEEKING FOR PEACE

By *DON L. KING*

As Paul wrote the brethren at Rome, he spoke of things that might destroy the peace of the church in Romans 14. He specifically mentioned the eating of various things and how that liberty could be used to destroy the faith of others. He argued from the standpoint that the Kingdom or church is not validated by what the members eat. Whether they were people who ate everything or only vegetables was unimportant to the Lord. As long as the one eating, or not eating, was "fully persuaded in his own mind," (Verse 5) he could be pleasing to God. In other words, we must not do anything which violates our conscience. Then, in verse 19 he wrote: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Obviously, this peace making principle is always to be kept in mind. There is no reference here to things of doctrinal import. We, of course, do not have the liberty to allow, or indulge, in things that are unscriptural and Romans 14 doesn't teach that we should. However, trouble in the church is often not the result of what the Scriptures actually say or forbid. It is often because of things that are not doctrinal at all. Brethren may fall out with one another because of the buying of new song books, painting the church building, doing construction work either on the building or the parking lot, the choice of a preacher to hold their meeting, (the preacher may be sound but is just not their personal choice) the time of services, or even the order of services, etc. Brethren are to love each other to the extent that they will obey what Paul said and "follow after the things that make for peace."

Some seem to enjoy speaking of the Holy Spirit and telling what things He does, or doesn't do. However, one thing we know for certain is that the fruit (or product) of the Spirit is ". . . love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance...." (Galatians 5:22, 23) The world is not likely to see within us the meek and lowly Savior when we seem to always be at odds with one another. One thing we can know when we see brethren treating one another badly over personal things, or matters of liberty, is that they are certainly not producing the fruit of the Spirit! Even if we must disagree over matters of doctrinal importance, we can still treat one another as brethren whom we love. Yes, we must contend for the faith, of course, but there is never an excuse to be rude and mean spirited to anyone.

In our day, it is sad to notice that some insist

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: 1 Corinthians 11:27 says "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Would you please explain what eating and drinking unworthily means?

Answer: "Unworthily" is an adverb of manner that modifies the verbs "eat" and "drink." It describes "how" one eats or drinks and is not a description of "who" eats and drinks. The word is describing the action of eating and drinking in an "unworthy" or "careless" manner. This is exactly what the Corinthians had been doing when they treated the Lord's supper as if it were a common meal. Some have misunderstood the meaning of this verse and have refused to partake of the Lord's supper thinking that they are unworthy to do so. I don't suppose that any of us are worthy of the sacrifice made in our behalf by the Lord. This verse, however, is not teaching that we as individuals must be worthy before we can partake of the supper. This being true, how then does one eat and drink unworthily? We do so when we fail to give the supper the respect which it deserves. Verse 28 and 29 says "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." We as individuals are to examine ourselves before eating the Lord's supper. If we do not discern the body and blood of Christ properly, we eat and drink damnation to ourselves. The word "discern" means to "distinguish" or "judge correctly." We fail to discern the body and blood of Christ when we do not partake of the supper with the frame of mind that it is a memorial of the Lord's body and blood. In a situation like this, the damnation or judgment comes to us because we failed to properly discern the purpose of the supper. Those who serve at the table and say "let everyone examine themselves to see whether they are worthy to partake of the communion," miss the point of the teaching here. The examination is not to see if we are worthy to partake, but to see if we are partaking of it for the right purpose i.e. as a memorial to the body and blood of our Lord.

Question: How much authority do elders have in leading the flock? Should they seek input from the flock? Is it right for them to rule the church with no consideration for the desires of the members?

Answer: There is an old saying that decrees "there can be no government without the consent of the governed." Many have tried but most, if not all, have failed. There is little doubt that the elders in a congregation have authority. That authority comes from the scriptures. Duties of elders include: such things as feeding the flock Acts 20:28, ruling well 1

Timothy 5:17, watching in behalf of souls Heb. 13:17, administering discipline 1 Thess. 5:2-14, helping the weak Acts 20:35, watching for wolves Acts 20:29-31, and acting as official representatives of the congregation Acts 11:29-30, Acts 21:17-18, and Acts 20:17-37. The authority for so acting is inherent in each command. In other words elders have the authority to act in behalf of the congregation in the matters listed above because the command for them to do so authorizes such actions. It would be foolish indeed, however, if elders acted without consulting the congregation in matters where appropriate. There are numerous situations where input from the congregation would be invaluable. Men properly qualified and suited to the office of elder realize this and create a working relationship with the entire congregation. Getting to know, evaluate, and appreciate the flock over which they rule is essential to successful government. Abuse of power or authority always leads to discontent and eventual anarchy. This can and should be avoided by wise elders whose care and concern for the flock over which they rule is evidenced by their actions. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Rayness St. Springfield, MO 65804 or rf Wade@mchsi.com)

SEEKING FOR PEACE

continued from page two

on advancing ideas and events that are not in the interest of peace. Several things might be mentioned specifically but it is not necessary to do so. However, let us go on record as saying that when an individual involves himself, or herself, in things deemed questionable, someone is likely to challenge the practice. We should not be surprised when brethren ask for Bible proof of anything we are doing. There is nothing wrong with that. If we are advancing an idea, event, or practice, questioned by brethren, we are duty bound to show proof that we are within our Scriptural rights to do so. Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21) Thayer says the word "prove" means to examine the thing to see whether or not it is true. So, if I advance any idea, practice or event, the burden of proof is upon me to prove it is right. It is not my brethren's job to prove it wrong. Rather, it is my responsibility to prove it is right.

In the light of this plain scripture, what should be done when a thing is questioned by honest brethren as being wrong? If one is asked to provide Scriptural proof for any practice, it should be done immediately, and without quibbling. If it can't be Biblically proven, and is threatening the peace of the church, **abandon the thing even if you feel it falls within the realm of "liberty."** Why on earth would anyone insist on advancing something, even a liberty, at the cost of peace and unity?

We can't read the mind of anyone, of course,

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

Following is the first article from the pen of Brother Fred Kirbo to appear in the Old Paths Advocate. It was published in January of 1939. At the time it was written he was twenty-seven years of age. Fred had not only a winsome personality, but possessed a style of delivery that captivated his audiences. He seldom, if ever, spoke from notes. Traveling this country, usually with a small suit case in hand, he often hitch-hiked from place to place. The younger generation of today who never heard him speak missed a treat indeed. The following captures some of the flavor of his preaching style.

THE GOOD CONFESSION

By FRED KIRBO

This "good confession" is prominently brought out in a conversation between Christ and his disciples near the coast of Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13-18); "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Several answers were given; "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias: and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." But notice Christ's still more pointed question and Simon Peter's reply: "But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou** art the **Christ**, the son of the living God."

No greater answer could have been given, for this mounts up to the very climax of possible confession and at one bound leaps to the very highest ground regarding Christ's personality and immediately places him on the God level. Notice Christ's reception of the answer: "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." By this we know it was the true answer for Jesus even pronounced a blessing upon the one who uttered it, thus testifying to its greatness. "And I also say unto thee, That thou art Peter (Petros), and upon this rock (Petra) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

From this it is evident that it was the purpose of Christ to build his church on the fundamental truth, that he himself is the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God, by requiring all who would become members of his church to confess this truth as did Peter. If so, the "good confession" of Peter is really the "good confession" of the church, the same that was made by Timothy "before many witnesses" (I Tim. 6:12).

All early Christians recognized this confession as a prerequisite to baptism, for Philip required the eunuch to make it before he would baptize him (Acts 8:36-38): "Then said Philip, if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." In response to his inquiry the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Thus, upon this

confession, "Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptized him." He evidently made this confession audibly, and not by merely nodding his head for Paul says, "With the **mouth** confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). Immediately after the eunuch was baptized, he "went on his way **rejoicing**." Why? Because, "If thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus**, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be **saved**" (Rom. 10:9).

The pleadings of our Savior should serve as a strong incentive to cause one to confess Christ. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, **him** will I **confess** also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). Without making this confession no sinner can become a Christian; and without living in accordance with what is included afterwards, no man can be saved in heaven. Like the planets in the realm of space revolve around the sun, so do all the great principles of the Bible cluster around this "good confession." Yet, I have heard men professing to be ministers of the gospel belittle this "good confession" and substitute in its stead the telling of curious feelings, funny experiences, grave-yard yarns, and "ghost stories." Oh, thou eternal and righteous God! How long wilt thou withhold the exhibition of thy wrath against the "doctrines and commandments of men?" "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."

Many great men have confessed that Jesus is the Son of God. John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (Jno. 1:29). Peter said, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). The eunuch said "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Timothy confessed Christ, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the **good confession** in the sight of many witnesses" (R.V.) I Tim. 6:12). Christ confessed Himself to be the Son of God (I Tim. 6:13). Finally, God placed his own seal of approval on his Son, when his voice thundered from the portals of glory, "**This is my beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17.

In the sight of such scriptures all should confess the name of Christ. For it is written, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. 14:11).

There is no better way to entrench the soul in righteousness than by an open avowal that commits the individual to a right line of action. When crises come to try the soul, he who has committed himself to God in open confession before men has an immense advantage. Many a man, just for the want of this, has gone down in everlasting shame and ruin. While on the other hand many by reason of

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MY FRIEND MOHAMMED

By BRETT HICKEY

Going door-to-door a few months back, I met the 30 year old son of a Muslim scholar from Nigeria. To my surprise, Mohammad (no relation) agreed to a future Bible study.

I strive to "be ready always to give an answer." Ordinarily, that means a study covering the plan of salvation or the Lord's Supper based on whether it is a denominational man or a brother worshipping in error. But how do you prepare for a study with a Muslim? Where do you start?

Do Muslims Really Believe the Bible?

Muslims claim to believe the Bible, but by that they mean only the Old Testament and the Gospels. They argue that Paul is ringleader for what they consider the "errors of Christianity." In addition, they believe that we do not have the Bible in its original form. They say that the Jews corrupted the Old Testament to shore up their beliefs and that Christians likewise manipulated the New Testament text to promote Christianity. The uninspired text of the Koran has a myriad of problems, but these are glossed over as if they do not exist.

One Islamic inconsistency is that Allah (the Arabic word for God) supposedly made the Koran a holy, miraculous book, preserved it from error and put it in the hands of the people while allowing only the "corrupted" text of the Old and New Testament to be preserved and then multiplied into millions of copies and hundreds of languages. When pressed on this point, my friend Mohammad said that Allah *did* preserve the Old Testament and the Gospels, but that it is very difficult to obtain a copy of this "genuine" copy of the Bible. Mohammad spoke with great admiration of the "people of the book" who purportedly possess and live by the original message. I expressed great interest in meeting some of these mysterious folks, but was not surprised to learn that they are difficult to track down. There was never a good answer given for the abundance of accurate copies of the Koran and the scarcity of "accurate" copies of the Bible.

Mohammad was as interested in converting me as I was in converting him. His strong preference for talking over listening enabled me to learn much about Islam. I remembered that the Koran teaches that Abraham offered up Ishmael - not Isaac - on the altar, but was surprised to learn that the Muslims still offer sacrifices at least once a year. My acquaintance said these did not forgive sin.

The Deity of Christ

Muslims most despise Christianity because they worship one God (Allah), and maintain that we worship three gods. Since Muslims equate Roman Catholicism to Christianity, my friend

Mohammad thought we worshipped the "trinity of God, Jesus and Mary." I assured him otherwise. Mohammad insisted that it insulted the holy nature of God to declare that Jesus was the Son of God. To Muslims, Deity is incompatible with the weakness and filthiness of human flesh. I told Mohammad later that Christians believe that God's wisdom and power is beyond human comprehension. I asked him if Islam had so high a view of God. He assured me enthusiastically that Islam teaches at *least* that much reverence for Allah. "So, you would not place limitations on God?" He agreed. "That," I said, "is *exactly* why Christians believe that God could live in a human body." As was rarely the case, he had no response.

God is Love

In light of recent history, Christians are not surprised that one of the Koran's greatest deficiencies is its teaching on love. I asked Mohammad if the Koran taught about the love of God. He shook his head in the affirmative but emphasized the mercy of Allah. I read a passage overflowing on the subject of love from I John 4 and asked Mohammad to show me one of the most significant passages in the Koran on love. He could not produce one, but assured me he would locate one for next time. I think he got the point.

The Last Twelve Verses of Mark

It was not easy to listen to Mohammad make extreme and insulting statements about the Holy Scriptures. He said that we were missing large chunks of the original Scriptures. He specifically cited the last twelve verses of Mark's gospel. He listened respectfully as I explained that some inferior translations of the Bible appear to omit the passage, but that an overwhelming amount of evidence supports the passage and most Christians do not reject the ending. While only three Greek manuscripts omitted the ending, a host of Greek manuscripts, ancient versions of the Bible in various languages and quotes from Bible scholars from as far back as the second century validate the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20.

The Bottom Line: The Crucifixion

Prior to our next study, I realized that we would get nowhere denying each other's assertions. We first had to determine which book was the legitimate standard - the true word of God. It was apparent that the truth boiled down to the accuracy of the New Testament's testimony of the death, burial and resurrection.

Mohammad gave a false, but fascinating, account of the events leading up to the crucifixion. He said Judas led the authorities to Gethsemane to seize Jesus, but that God took Jesus up to heaven. When he was searching for Jesus, Judas went just out of sight behind a tree. Mohammad said that God

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FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE BIBLE

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this cup..." (I Corinthians 11:26) he used metonymy because he named the cup to suggest the fruit of the vine, both of which were real.

There is a difference between a figurative cup and the use of a figure of speech to refer to a literal cup. For example, Jesus asked His quarreling disciples "Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of...?" (Matthew 20:22). Here Jesus spoke of His death metaphorically as a cup to be drunk. There was no actual cup and no literal contents. In the Lord's Supper both the cup and the contents are literal, and the use of a figure of speech to refer to the cup does not change that fact.

2. The thing named and the thing suggested must agree in number. A speaker may not use metonymy to name one object and suggest several different ones. Ezra (4:15) said, "This is a rebellious city." That was appropriate use of metonymy. He named one city, Jerusalem, to refer to the people in that city. If Ezra had referred to people in several cities he would have said, "These are rebellious cities." Just so when Jesus said "take this [cup], and divide it among yourselves," (Luke 22:17) one can not correctly assume He meant for the disciples to take many cups and pass them around. He used a figure of speech because He named the cup to direct them to share its contents. If He had given them several cups, He would have said "Take these and divide them among yourselves."

The singular form may be used to refer to a single class of objects, but not to several specific objects. Abner, the commander of Israel's army, said "Shall the sword devour forever?" (2 Samuel 2:26). Here the singular word was used to speak of a class of weapons. He could not have used this statement to refer to many individual swords, nor several classes of weapons, such as swords, spears, clubs, etc. Use of the singular form to speak of a class of objects is not comparable to Jesus' example in which He took a specific cup, gave it to the disciples, and told them to all drink from it.

3. Direct references to specific objects and metonymy may be used together, even in the same sentence. Some people have assumed this may not be done. Thus they assume that Jesus' use of metonymy when He said, "Take this [cup], and divide it among yourselves," means that other statements about the cup, such as "He took the cup and gave it to them and they all drank of it," can not refer to a literal cup. This assumption is wrong. In metonymy both objects are always real. And we often refer to those objects directly and by figures of speech side by side, as did Bible writers.

Consider this exchange. A woman hears her electric kettle boiling and calls to her husband who is near it. "The kettle is boiling; please, switch it off." The first phrase is metonymy, as noted earlier. The

second is a direct reference to the literal kettle—it is not possible to switch off water. Paul used a similar statement when he said, "For as oft as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He comes" (I Corinthians 11:26). "Eat this bread" is a direct reference to eating literal bread, as all Christians agree. "Drink this cup" is metonymy referring to drinking literal fruit of the vine from a real cup.

Pronouns in Figures of Speech

Pronouns seem to cause some persons difficulty. It is sometimes assumed that a pronoun must come after the noun it designates. For example, Luke 22:17 says, "Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves.'" We are told that the pronoun "this" must refer back to "cup," and since a literal cup can not be divided among disciples, the cup must be figurative. We have already proved this assumption false because it is not possible to have real fruit of the vine in a figurative cup.

But the preceding argument is wrong also because a pronoun does not have to follow the noun to which it refers. David said, "Thy flock found a dwelling in it..." "To what does "it" refer? It refers to the goodness of the Lord mentioned later in the verse. "In thy goodness, O God, thou didst provide for the needy" (Psalms 68:10). Similarly, "this" in Luke 22:17 refers to the fruit of the vine mentioned in the latter part of the sentence which concludes in verse 18. Not only may a pronoun come before the noun, the noun does not even have to be present as long as it is clearly implied. "He smote the rock so that the water gushed out and streams overflowed" (Psalms 78:20). The "he" here refers to Moses, whose name is not mentioned at all in the context. It is implied, however, since David is discussing the Children of Israel's salvation from Egypt.

Figures of speech, such as metonymy, are not difficult to understand. We use them daily with no problems. If we study the Bible with the same common sense we use in ordinary conversation, we will not likely go wrong.

THE GOOD CONFESSION

continued from page four

this confession have risen a triumphant conqueror over the forces of hell and have been able to say with Paul, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Then let every one be admonished by the pleadings of God, by the wooings of the Holy Spirit, by the admonition of Christ, by the examples of the apostles and martyrs, by his obligation to the church, by the gratitude he owes the Saviour, by the debt he owes the world, by the duty he owes himself, and let him without fear, and without hesitation, and in the consciousness that he will never do a nobler deed, stand up before the Lord and declare, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

SEEKING FOR PEACE*continued from page three*

but there seems to be a spirit of change in some quarters. We naturally assume all intentions are honorable unless we actually know differently. However, it is really sad when questionable matters are called into question by honest brethren, who truly fear departures, and the matter is perhaps pushed even harder, rather than just letting it go in the interest of peace. In order for our brotherhood to really, and actually, have peace, brethren everywhere must seek the truth of God's Word while advocating anything. Paul said, "...and be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thessalonians 5:13) Peace is obviously going to be elusive until, and unless, the will of the Lord is prayerfully considered.

James wrote, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James 3:16-18)

In view of these few passages, it is no small wonder that Jesus declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Matthew 5:9 Think on these things. -DLK

MY FRIEND MOHAMMED*continued from page five*

miraculously gave Judas the appearance of Jesus, so that when Judas reappeared before Jesus' would-be captors, they seized Judas thinking they had taken Jesus. So, Muslims explain, the crucifixion and the cruelties surrounding it were actually the meting out of a well-deserved punishment on Judas. I asked Mohammad if he understood why Judas went to the garden in the first place. He contended that Judas was sent merely to locate Jesus. I countered that Judas could have given the authorities directions to the garden, but they needed Judas to positively identify Jesus. The Muslim explanation misses this point altogether. They make the wild claim that all the prophets - including Jesus - were not only incredibly handsome, but they also had a glow about their face - a combination that made Jesus stand out in the crowd.

A Jewish Prophet Points to Jesus

Mohammad dominated the conversation of our second study, rarely giving direct answers to my questions and interrupting me frequently. I allowed it hoping that I would be allowed to make one strong point. The opportunity was presented. I was amazed at how one passage of Scripture so dumbfounded

this Muslim man. It left me in even greater awe of God's great revelation.

I double-checked to see if I understood Mohammad. He reiterated the Islamic belief that the Jews corrupted the Old Testament and the Christians corrupted the Gospels to promote their teachings. I suggested that the debate between Christianity and Islam boils down to who is right about the crucifixion; those who bore witness to the resurrection in our New Testament or a man who came along six hundred years later denying their testimony in the Koran. I explained that the writings of the prophet Isaiah were among the greatest proofs that Jesus truly was beaten and crucified, buried and resurrected.

My friend Mohammad thought I was referring to Isaac and objected for some reason that now escapes me. I handed him my open Bible and showed that Isaac was in Genesis and then turned to Isaiah to show how much later that was - emphasizing that it was still 700 years before Jesus. I turned to Isaiah 53 hoping he would allow me to read it aloud. To my delight, he read it aloud himself. I was stunned to hear the powerful reproof of his false prophet from Mohammad's own lips - an experience that can only be appreciated by hearing someone read the chapter and imagining that they were a Muslim.

It was all I could do to contain my enthusiasm. I reminded Mohammad that the Jews and Muslims agree in denying that Jesus is the Son of God, yet in this book - supposedly corrupted by Jews to bolster their own beliefs and hence insulated against belief in Jesus - is a remarkably detailed and accurate prophecy about Christ and his crucifixion.

My extremely talkative acquaintance was obviously overwhelmed. I asked if he had ever read this passage before. He said sheepishly that he thinks he has, but that it must have been long ago, and did not remember it. After recovering, Mohammad said he would find an answer and send it to me by e-mail. Weeks later, I have yet to receive that e-mail.

These are among the words that Mohammad read aloud that afternoon from Isaiah 53: "Who hath believed our report?...when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. . . Surely he hath borne our griefs. . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...with his stripes we are healed... [T]he LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. . . by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. . . he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Announcements

MISSOURI LABOR DAY MEETING

The Church of Christ in Columbia, MO will host the 2004 Labor Day Meeting. We have scheduled a line up of seasoned preachers from four different states and are anticipating great gospel preaching. Our goal in this meeting is aimed specifically at reaching the lost. We are advertising extensively in Columbia and surrounding communities, and are expecting a good response. We ask that all Christians within driving distance support us in our efforts to reach out to our neighbors with the gospel.

Meeting dates are Sept. 3rd, 4th and 5th. Service times are Friday at 7:30 pm, Saturday at 10:00 am & 7:30 pm, and Lord's Day at 10:00 am & 3:00 pm. We have secured a special rate of \$49.00 per night at the Ramada Inn (573) 448-0051, in Columbia. Reservations need to be confirmed by Aug. 23rd in order to get this rate. The services will be conducted in the Launer Auditorium of Columbia College campus. For further information or assistance in transportation, lodging, etc., please contact one of the following brethren: Reggie Kinser (573) 874-3535, rkinser@msn.com - Bart Shaw (573) 445-1708 - Bill Smith (573) 696-1691.

TENNESSEE LABOR DAY MEETING

The 22nd annual Tennessee Labor Day Meeting hosted by the Chapel Grove Church of Christ will be held this year from September 1st thru 5th. The meeting will be conducted by Brother Allen Bailey from Irving Texas. As in the past, the meeting will be conducted in a large tent on the property of the congregation located on the Old Military Road which is 10 miles north of Lawrenceburg taking a left off of Hwy. 43 at Three Oaks and going one mile. Brother Bailey will preach at each service along with visiting preachers and teachers. The theme for the meeting will be **"Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom."** Our objectives are: To Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Mark 16:15-16, To Worship Him in spirit and in truth! John 4:24, To better understand His will for our lives! I Timothy 2:4, To encourage one another in the most holy faith! Hebrews 10:24, To do all in the name of Jesus Christ! Colossians 3:17. We hope that many of you will make plans now to attend this meeting. We will do all we can to accommodate your needs and make this an enjoyable and memorable occasion. For information on places to stay contact Steve Patton 931-829-2485. Many homes are open to our guests if they would like a place to stay. Other accommodations are readily available in the area. For additional information contact Don Keeter 931-762-9869 or Ed Daniel 931-964-3458, e_daniel@bellsouth.net.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Alaska: Anchorage congregation now meeting in the home of Robert Campbell, 235 Fireoed Dr., Anchorage, AK, 99508, phone 907-338-3200 Sun. 10:00 am.

Arkansas: Change both Fort Smith congregation area codes to 479. Also change Taylor Joyce's area code to 479 in the preacher's section of the directory.

California: Change Raymond Fox's email: fmly4jc@sbchlobal.net. Change Matt Trent's address: 508 N. Pierce St., El Cajon, CA 92020, phone 619-440-6691.

Louisiana: South Shreveport. Remove Harold & Randal Coon. Add Latorris Webb, 653 Pickwick, Shreveport, LA 71108, phone 318-687-5112.

Massachusetts: A new congregation has been established in Groveland, MA about 30 miles north of Boston, MA. For information contact David Johns at 978-373-5342 or Bill Page at 512-619-5874.

Missouri: Anderson. Change Nelson Nichols address to 2645 Moss Church Rd., Anderson, MO 64831, phone is the same (also correct in preacher's section). Drop Derald Boman. Add Bradford Nichols, 1133 McMillan Rd., Anderson, MO 64831, phone 417-775-2302. Doniphan. Change Ed Ball's address: 410 Grand Ave., Doniphan, MO 63935, phone 573-996-3526. Springfield - Mission Hills-Change Ronny Wade's email: rf Wade@mchsi.com (also in preacher's section).

Oklahoma: Add Cimarron Church of Christ, P.O. Box 862, Cimarron, OK, Sun. 10:00 am & 2:00 pm. 1 mile north of Highway 33 or 4 miles south of Crescent. Phone 405-969-2246.

Texas: Dallas, Loop 12 congregation has moved: 104-A Brothers Blvd., Red Oak, TX. Change Cory Sanders phone 972-977-8088.

SIXTY YEARS TOGETHER

D.O. and Aliene Ercanbrack plan to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on August 7. They were married on that date in 1944 in L. A. California. They are now members of the Church of Christ at Broken Arrow, OK. For many years they lived on a farm north of Prague and attended the congregation at Seminole. They moved to Broken Arrow in 2002. They have adjusted very well and are enjoying city life. They are blessed with the following children: Ladell Click, Lisa Hollis, Lexis and Jardan Allen, James and Teresa Fields, Ron and Patricia Harmon, Michael, Christy and Brooklynn Fancher and Donald Ellison. . . What a heritage. - D.O. and Aliene Ercanbrack

Announcements cont.

BOB & TOY ANDERSON

55TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Bob and Toy (Bryant) Anderson of Glendale, Ohio, members of the Greater Hamilton Congregation in the Cincinnati area, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on August 13, 2004. They are known far and wide for their hospitality of providing lodging and good company for many gospel preachers and folks who come to town for meetings or other events. They have been blessed with two children, Sandy, who is married to Duane Fancher, an elder in the Irving, Texas congregation, and Bobby, a leader in the Greater Hamilton congregation, who married Melissa Morel, from Baton Rouge. They have 4 grandchildren, Matthew Fancher, Michael Fancher, who married Hannah Permenter, daughter of Duane and Laurie Permenter, Sarah Fancher, who is married to Nicholas Clowers, and Megan Anderson. Michael and Hannah have 2 children, Caleb and Nathaniel. Bob and Toy have expressed how thankful they are that all of their children, grandchildren and their spouses are faithful members of the church, and they rejoice at having had 55 wonderful years together. As Toy says, "Our cup runneth over! To God Be the Glory!"



Bonds of Matrimony

Turner-Cox

In the afternoon of June 5th a large crowd of family, friends, and fellow Christians gathered to witness the exchange of wedding vows between Kelly Turner and Melissa Cox. Kelly is the son of Gary and Joni Turner of Springfield, MO and Melissa is the daughter of Lyndon and Lynn Cox of Keller, TX. This fine young Christian couple pledged their love to each other in a simple but impressive ceremony. They both bring to the relationship years of training by godly parents. We wish them well as they begin their journey to forever together. The writer was honored to officiate. - Ronny F. Wade

Our Departed

Death of Geneva Roe, Geneva Roe of Mesquite, Texas went to meet the Lord on May 19, 2004 after many years of illness. She leaves her husband, James Roe of the Duncanville Church of Christ; her son Terry and his wife Karen Roe of Wylie, TX; and a daughter, Robyn McKinney of Mesquite, TX. James and Geneva were stalwarts in the church in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Even though she had been in failing health for a long time, she never missed an opportunity to attend church and the many gospel meetings throughout the Dallas area. Geneva was born on April 8, 1933 in Lenna, OK to the late Myrtle and Elmer Rose. She was 71 years of age when she won her battle over pain. It was my privilege to have had Geneva as my aunt and it was an honor to assist the family in conducting her memorial service. May God bless Uncle James and the entire Roe family and may Aunt Geneva's godly example continue to inspire all those who knew her. Many thanks to all who have expressed their condolences. - Mike Criswell

CROWDER - L.L. 'Joe' Crowder was born March 10, 1941 and passed from this life January 10, 2004 in his home. Joe was the son of Lyndle 'Buck' and Nora Daniels Crowder. He and Ruth Anderson were united in marriage on August 30, 1959 at Pleasant Hill, Illinois. To this union, two sons were born. Joe was preceded in death by his father. Joe is survived by his wife, Ruth of the home; his mother, Nora Crowder; two sons; Roger and Ryan; two daughters-in-law; Diane and Cindy; and three grandchildren, James Martin, Carrie Martin and Marcus Crowder. Joe was a long time member and leader of the Mosier Church of Christ. Joe was a friend, a community leader and a business man for many years in the Pleasant Hill area. During gospel meetings, Joe would always have questions or want more information about a particular subject. He had been unable to attend services since last June because of his battle with cancer. Joe was a friend to many and will be missed by the church, his family and many others. The writer offered words of comfort and Miles King assisted at the cemetery. A special thanks to Dave Doing who drove me to Pleasant Hill for the service. - Ron Alexander

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Field Reports

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, July 7 - We recently had a meeting at 79th and Kansas Ave., KS with preaching by Aaron Risner of Bentonville, AR. He did a good job of presenting the truth, and we were pleased with his efforts. The Lord willing, we begin a meeting at Sentinel, OK this coming Lord's day. My first meeting with these brethren was 48 years ago and I look forward to seeing and working with them once again. Later we are to be at Blue Springs, KY and Lexington, OK. Here at home we can see growth and improvement in our local teachers. They study and are improving in their ability to present the truth. They take their responsibility seriously. We do not encourage them to take speaking appointments at other places. They are needed at home, both to learn from the other teachers and to give to the congregation the benefit of their own studies (1 Cor. 14:31) "that all may learn and all may be comforted." Greetings to all the faithful everywhere. May the Lord continue to bless all our righteous efforts.

Cullen L. Smith 4200 Prothro Wichita Falls, TX 76308 (940)689-9314, cullensmith@hotmail.com July 6 - Since last report we have baptized one sister into Christ here at Crestview. I enjoyed a weekend meeting in Temple, GA and appreciate Bro Ricky Martin for attending. It was good to be with my great-uncle, Garland T. Smith at the New Salem congregation in March. Crippled knees and other health problems did not keep him away! His great-grandson was baptized the last night along with another confession. It was great to see Lynwood and Aunt Ivey doing well and we so appreciate Lynwood's new song book. The first East Texas camp meeting was an enjoyable meeting and we look forward to next year. Thanks to Glenn Ballard and Tyler/Athens congregations for having it. In Huntsville, AR I had a nice weekend meeting. Glad to see Daddy and Dennis Smith there. They are anxiously awaiting Daniel Smith to begin working with them in late July. San Angelo, TX continues on but some pews are empty. Some have passed on to their reward and they miss Bro. Jack Jones who was a great encouragement there and now is a great asset in Levelland. It was great to see Curtis Morrison recovering well in answer to prayers. I thank all the preachers in the OKC area for their great attendance during Capitol Hill's annual ten day meeting which went well. Sulphur was great. Let it be known far and wide that merchants were thrilled we were in town and the Chickasaw hotel operator stated, "those were the best young people ever." There were fifteen confessions during the meeting and at least 15 different visitors from the community. Bro David stands did an excellent job conducting the meeting and we thank all the preachers and brethren who came and participated. We had about 750+ and there was good preaching. I will have completed a meeting Modesto, CA by this writing and the rest of my schedule is Oct 27-31 in Sharonville, OH; Nov 3-7 in Nashville, TN; Nov. 21 -28 in Salem, OR.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail: old_paths@juno.com, July 15 - Pat and I enjoyed being at the Lebanon 4th of July meeting, as usual. It is encouraging to see others who have the same goals and are of like precious faith. We began a meeting at the West Chester, Ohio congregation on July 4th Since we lived there years ago, it is always a treat to go back and be with them again. Crowds were very good with the building close to full on Friday night. Neighboring congregations were good to cooperate also which helped the crowds. We appreciated a number of preachers who came several times including Richard Bunner, Brian Burns, Barney Owens, and perhaps others. We enjoyed also visiting with Tony Melton who currently works with the congregation. We made our home with our old friends R.H. and Leora Renner who treated us royally as always. We were glad to have an opportunity to drive into Kentucky one day to visit my sister, Nola, who has been ill for some time. We were thrilled that she immediately welcomed us and asked many questions about the family, etc. We wish for her the best. We were able to also visit briefly with another old friend, Zade McClure, who has been a part of the Blue Springs congregation for many years. The West Chester effort closed with several confessions of wrong and Tony Melton baptized one during the meeting as well. Lord willing, we are to begin at Temple, GA this coming Lord's Day. We need your prayers, always.

Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com, July 15, 2004. I closed a meeting at Jasper, Tennessee on June 20. The meeting was well attended by members from near and far with good community interest as well. I had a great time staying with my cousin, Reggie Spradley and his family. I enjoyed seeing preaching brethren Jim Hickey, Bret Hickey, Mark Detheridge, and also Wayne Turner, a young man from California studying with Bret for the summer. I was especially glad to meet Philip Patton who works with the congregation with good cooperation. It certainly appears the congregation has good potential for the future. The ride back to Atlanta with Nathan Battey was interesting when we broke down and had to get help with repairs but all ended well. I attended several days of the July 4th meeting at Lebanon. I am always interested in hearing so many preachers from around the country and was pleased with the many admonitions of doing all things based on a "thus saith the Lord" and standing strong against those things that would lead us astray. You know, the first steps away from the truth can still look a lot like the truth. After the Lebanon meeting I preached at Houston, MO, where Dean Gentry and Ervin Baker, my father-in-law, ably serve as elders. Our work at home continues with the 64th. St. congregation in Sacramento. We recently had a weekend meeting with Don King that was very good for the congregation and produced leads for future studies.

Frank Brancato, 3012 Cattleman St., Bakersfield, CA 93312, (661) 588-7338, fbrancato@cs.com, July 7 - The work here locally continues to move forward. Since our last report, five more souls have been restored that had been out of duty. Some of these brethren have been away for almost twenty years but were receptive to us in our attempts to reach them. I am very thankful for all of those who took an active roll in restoring the fallen. Our regular bible studies continue each week with new members as we try to grow not only in number, but in strength, steadfastness, and knowledge as well. Our evangelistic thrust continues with our bible correspondence course that we have advertised in the Penny Saver, and through personal contacts. We are still finding that personal contacts are by far the best leads, and are directing most of our efforts toward them. Carl Johnson held a meeting for us back in April and did a great job. His topics were timely, and as always his presentation was excellent. We also enjoyed having Richard DeGough preach for us last Lord's day, and look forward to Don King preaching for us on September 5th. Lord willing, I will have preaching appointments in Ventura, California on July 18th, Stockton, California on July 25th and Sanger, California on August 29th. Please pray for us in the work.

Reggie Kinser, 501 Peabody Rd., Columbia, MO 65202, rkinser@msn.com, June 7 - In March I held a meeting in Cassville, MO where Roger Owens now works. Crowds were good, and support from the Neosho and Mountain Home congregations was much appreciated. Preaching brethren Billy Dickinson, Roy Criswell, and John Anderson attended one or more services. There was one baptism and one confession of faults. I appreciate Roger Owens and his hospitality during our stay, but most of all I am thankful for his dedication to the truth and all that he does for the cause. I am looking forward to working with him, and Billy Dickinson, during the Missouri Study on church growth the end of July. More recently, it was my privilege to conduct a gospel meeting at West Plains, MO at the AB Highway congregation. We enjoyed our time with the brethren there. It was especially good to spend a day with Jack and Ryan Reed discussing issues that pertain to the Lord's work. Although the church at West Plains is small it seems determined to hold to the truth. For this we are thankful. Here at home the work in Columbia continues to progress well, especially in recent months. Our congregation continues to grow both spiritually and numerically. Three more from the community have obeyed the gospel in the past couple of months. With our building nearing capacity we remain committed to our goals of developing men for the eldership, and establishing another congregation in a surrounding community in the near future. We continue to spread the gospel via the TV program, which is recorded and broadcast locally. We are looking forward to hosting the Missouri Labor Day Meeting this year, with the hope that brethren from far and near will attend. We solicit the prayers of God's faithful.

Don McCord, Box 1773, Covina, CA -- Meetings 2004 to date have taken me to Tucson, AZ, Broken Arrow, OK, Waterloo, Iowa, and Muskogee, OK. These meetings to me were indeed a blessing; I will always stand in debt to my brethren and sisters who grant to me the honor of doing what I love to do best, and that is preach the gospel of the everlasting Kingdom. What a great privilege bestowed! I am scheduled, Lord willing, at Mt. Home, MO, July 5 - 11; San Antonio, TX (Nacogdoches), July 18 - 25; Manteca, CA, July 30 - Aug. 8; Tulsa, OK (11th St.), Aug. 15 - 22; Lubbock, TX, Sept. 26 - Oct. 3. Due to Wanda's health situation, I do not like to be gone from home for more than a week or 10 days at a time. Our precious children are such a blessing at this time. Wanda's attitude is so sweet - I must preach is her sentiment; God bless her! To date this year, we have had 2 meetings at home. Ron Alexander was here April 11 - 18, with his integrity and sincerity showing in every sermon. June 23 - 27, Lynwood Smith was here for the first time in many years; people came from far and near, showing their love and respect for him, and their love for his preaching. Taylor Joyce will come Sept. 8 - 12, and Don Pruitt, Nov. 7 - 14. Meetings 2005, Lord willing, will bring us Wayne McKamie, Johnny Elmore, Carl Johnson and Joe Norton.

Conrado V. Libertino, 790 Turno, Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte (Mindanao) Philippines, cvlibertino@yahoo.com, May 15 - The Lord's work was started in the province of North Cotabato part of Central Mindanao, several preachers and congregations was converted to the Lord's Church last March 16, when we went there. We had Bible studies with several preachers from different areas just to know the truth. After the whole day study of the topics. The one true Church, Lord's Supper and Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage, they were enlightened through the light of scriptures. Our theme of that study was the truth. There are 8 preachers from the no exception group and digressive Church of Christ who took their stand and became members of the Lord's Church. Last May 6, I visited them again in North Cotabato and encouraged them to be faithful to the faith. We had already 11 preachers and 12 congregations as listed by Bro. Rodrigo Aguan Sr. in North Cotabato. We also plan to have a public gospel meeting on May 28, in the area of Kidapawan City, North Cotabato to be attended by our preachers and members and visitors from the towns. Our preachers there are not receiving financial support and they are financially poor. In spite of the persecutions and trials, we go on spreading the gospel to lost here in the island of Mindanao. At present generally, congregations here in the province of Zamboanga Del Norte are going smoothly and fine. I continue to work with my radio program every Sunday rain or shine we traveled with our motorcycle for several hours and served the congregations here in the province of Zamboanga del Norte. We made Bible Studies with the cooperation of Church leaders with their prospects in their respective places. I had also an exposition debate with the preacher of the Seventh Day Adventist Church last April 17. I defended our stand through the light of the scriptures. We scheduled again for the next Saturday afternoon but they didn't appear. Please pray for us here, in the Island of Mindanao, which we had started since the year 1998. God Bless you all.

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THE BACK PAGE...

ON PULLING THE PLUG

By CARL M. JOHNSON

One of the most difficult decisions my brothers, sisters and I have ever faced came in December of 1991 when our aged mother lay dying in her hospital room. The doctor explained that her life would soon be over. It was just a matter of time. He indicated that any efforts to reverse her condition would be futile, that her life was irretrievable. But, he needed to know if we wanted to hook her up to life-support machines that would cause her lungs and heart to function artificially. I was stunned. I was not prepared to make such a decision. My mind was torn. On the one hand it was unthinkable that we would not exhaust every possible means at hand to extend our mother's life. On the other hand, we did not want to maintain her physical body artificially if she was beyond any hope of recovery. We agonized over what we should do.

In 1983 twenty-five-year-old Nancy Cruzan was in a car accident in southwestern Missouri. Paramedics arriving upon the scene were able to restart her breathing, but she was without oxygen so long she never regained consciousness. Doctors inserted a feeding tube into the stomach, but otherwise she was not on life-support systems. Over the next few years Nancy did not die, but she did not improve. She was perceived to be in a permanent vegetative state. Nancy's parents went to court to get permission to remove the tube and let her die, as they believed she would want. Their request was at first granted, then denied by a higher court and eventually ruled upon by the U. S. Supreme Court. The highest court denied the parents' request because there was no "clear and convincing evidence" that Nancy would have wanted to stop the artificial nutrition. The court stated, however, that if Nancy had signed a living will to that effect or granted power of attorney to her family to make decisions on her health care, the petition would have been granted.

As a result of the Cruzan case thousands of people have resorted to stating clearly in living wills or "Durable Power of Attorney" documents, precisely what kind of resuscitation efforts they would like performed on them as they are dying. Some people have expressed a desire to go into a full-court press against death using every last bit of high-tech heroic treatment available, even though the situation is futile and burdensome. Vernon Jarrett, retired columnist for the Chicago Tribune, says that when he was a child there was a little ritual in the semi-rural South for sick folks lying in bed at home. "After they decided you were beyond hope, they would take the pillow from under your head. I remember my brother, when he heard that, he said, 'Don't ever take the pillow from under my head!' I said, 'Me either! Leave that pillow under my head because something may happen that I come back to life!'" Some people exhibit that same attitude toward life-support systems today.

According to the Surgeon General, however, most people do not want life support systems used if death is imminent and a person is beyond reasonable hope of recovery. The American Hospital Association estimates that seventy percent of the six thousand daily deaths in the USA are "already somehow timed or negotiated with all concerned parties privately concurring on withdrawal of some death-delaying technology or not even starting in the first place."

My siblings and I decided not to have our mother hooked up to life-support machines. While life is to be cherished as a gift from God, devout Christians should not dread or fear death (Rev.2:10, 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Phil. 1:21-23). We also know our mother confidently believed in the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:35-57), and the doctor had explained that her death was imminent (Heb. 9:27).

We continued the vigil around her bed that we had kept for several days. We held her hand and alternately watched her chest as it rose and fell with each belabored breath and the heart monitor beside her bed. As her breathing became more shallow and erratic, my sisters would sometimes plead wistfully, "Breathe, Mama! Please!" Those pleadings were expressions of hope beyond hope.

Even after our mother breathed her last breath that night, I wrestled with my own understanding of God's will and my own conscience about whether we made the correct decision. I have learned that a lot of headaches and heartaches can be avoided if people will just take the time to think through carefully and prayerfully health-care decisions now. Then when the time comes, a wise decision can be reached by having a basic understanding of God's will, a patient who has expressed clearly his or her wishes, a caring physician who knows the facts, and a family who is looking out for their loved one first and foremost.

1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820 carlmj@cablone.net

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXVIII

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NO. 9

PAGES FROM THE PAST

The first article to appear in this paper from the pen of Brother Lynwood Smith follows. It was published in January of 1943. At the time Lynwood was nineteen years of age. It was soon evident that he possessed unusual talent not only as a speaker and dedicated exponent of the truth, but as a song writer as well. Through the years he has preached, with success, all over the United States. He is the author of numerous songs and has for many years published song books that the brotherhood uses as well as individuals and other groups throughout the country. He has been able through his songs and sermons to affect the hearts and lives of thousands of people.

FROM CROSS TO CROWN

BY LYNWOOD SMITH

From studying the Scriptures we learn that "crosses" and "crowns" are both literal and figurative. Cruden's Concordance tells us that "crosses were so common among the Romans as a penalty, that pains, afflictions, troubles, and unprosperous affairs, were called crosses." We are also told that "crowns" in a figurative sense, "signifies honor, splendor or dignity, and was given to conquerors and those who had won certain victories." But they are in a certain order: first, the cross - then the crown. Our Lord obtained his **crown** by first suffering a **cross**. In Philippians 2:8, we read: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Yet, in the next verse we find, "Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him." We see that now He is being exalted, and in Rev. 19:12, we see him as the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and on his head is many crowns. Thus it was, that through the cross he obtained the crown.

Peter tells us, (1 Pet. 2:21) "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps." Then, why should the Christians think some strange thing had happened to them, when they meet with trouble and afflictions? Why should many turn and "walk no more with their Lord,"

when the crosses seem heavy? Our Lord tells us in Matt. 16:24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." He also says in the tenth chapter, thirty-eighth verse of the of the same Book, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." We must deny ourselves of all the sinful pleasures that we would desire. We must submit to whatsoever afflictions and persecutions might be thrown upon us. We sometimes must even submit to death itself.

Peter wrote unto the Christians (1 Pet. 4:12), "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which is to come upon you as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice, insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." He then tells us in verse sixteen, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this behalf." It surely is nothing to be ashamed of to bear a cross for Christ, and partake of his sufferings. For if we would some day receive a crown, we must bear a cross as our Lord did.

Regardless of how many crosses we bear, or how many pains we suffer for Christ, if they are not for the right purpose, in right way, they will avail us nothing. For in 2 Tim. 2:5 "a man is not crowned except he strive lawfully." So, we should examine ourselves and see if the crosses that we are bearing are for the glory of God, and will they bring us any profit?

As we daily bear the crosses and grow weary and faint, we should find courage enough to keep following on, by reading those consoling words in Rom. 8:18: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

In Rev. 2:8, 10, there is a message to the church of Smyrna from Jesus Christ. He informs those people that he is aware of the crosses that they had borne for his name: they were poverty stricken, (yet rich), they were suffering tribulations, and they were the victims of blasphemy. He also informs them of the forthcoming sufferings that they must endure: they were to be cast into prison, they were to suffer more tribulations, but he closes the letter by encouraging them to "be faithful unto death,"

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Editorial

CHANGE AGENTS

By DON L. KING

Many have been aware for sometime that we are living in a time of crisis. This is mentioned by preachers in meetings all across the brotherhood from time to time. The choice must be made by all members as to the direction the congregation is to go. The majority of brethren, thankfully, still choose to stay with the old paths and insist on the Bible as the only source of authority in religion. They always ask for book, chapter and verse before making a decision regarding the church.

However, there are a few who have become bolder. Though they may maintain that they have not really changed in any fundamental beliefs, etc., a look at their history will prove otherwise. That is usually the case because the changes are often small and far apart in time. It may only be obvious when a retrospective view is made over several years of their lives. When one reads the history of the church and her falling away in the first centuries, it is plain to see that the brethren would never have allowed the apostasy to happen if they could have seen where it would finally lead.

Some may recall when the problem with liberalism visited our brotherhood in the sixties. Several who were directly involved claimed they had not changed in any significant way. We were told that we were making "much ado about nothing" and that the thing was as a "tempest in a teapot." Yet, the problem was real and resulted in some leaving the truth to embrace liberal positions and even denominationalism. It is pretty simple to look back over that period and see how some were slipping in small increments, accepting only a little each time until finally, the obvious change was visible to all. Suddenly we were forced to accept the fact that some who had been brave soldiers for truth in yesteryear were now willing to fellowship digression openly. Some even who had been debaters for years turned their backs upon the things they had fought so valiantly to uphold.

The time always comes when the change agents are no longer silent and unwilling to publicly state their views. In the sixties that also happened. There were the gatherings where many came together to hear celebrated speakers spout their new leanings. They claimed an advanced knowledge beyond some others. Was there harm done? It goes without saying that harm was indeed done. When the apostle Paul wrote to Titus he warned him about allowing those who were "deceivers" to have an audience. He wrote: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Please explain about the "bible heart." What is it, and how does it function?

Answer: When God enjoined Israel to keep his law, he demanded that they put it into their hearts. "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" Deut. 11:18. Unfortunately Israel failed in this very important matter. After the time of the captivity God said he would give them a new heart "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people" Jeremiah 31:33. This new heart of which the prophet spoke was supplied in the New Covenant era, the New Testament. Hebrews 8:8 "For finding fault with them, he saith. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." This new heart was not the blood pump in our left breast. Unfortunately some people are more concerned about that heart than the new heart spoken of in Deut. 11:18. This spiritual heart consists of our intellect or understanding, our will or determination, our emotions, and our conscience. That being the case, the only way we can have a change of heart is for our intellect, will, and emotions to undergo a change. When speaking about a change of heart, many people today think only in terms of an emotional experience. One that affects only their feelings. This causes some to pound their chest and declare "I wouldn't trade what I feel in here for all the water in the ocean." Such a statement belies a mis-understanding of true heartfelt religion. When one's heart is changed more than the emotions are affected. It is a complete change brought about by an understanding of and obedience to, the scriptures. With our intellect or mind we think Mt. 9:4, understand Mt. 13:15 and believe Romans 10:10. Our intellect or mind is changed by testimony. When we hear or read the scriptures our intellect is changed so that we believe and accept the testimony of God's word. The change of our will is evidenced by our obedience to the word of God Romans 6:17 "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered to you being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." With our emotions we love, trust, desire etc. All feelings and emotions must be controlled according to the will of God. One's heart is changed when the love of God constrains us to do His will. Once we have

complied with the will of heaven, our conscience will be changed from one that condemns us to one that approves. Paul wrote that he had "a conscience void of offence toward God and man." Acts 24:16. When our conscience is trained by the word of God, we will walk accordingly. A conscience not trained by the word of God will give a false sense of security. This is why it is so important that we learn the will of the Lord. The gospel of Christ as God gave it is adapted to the heart as He made it. The gospel contains facts that are to be believed! Corinthians 15:1-2 "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved if you hold fast that word which I preached to you unless you believed in vain." The gospel also contains commands to be obeyed. We are to believe Heb. 11:6, repent Luke 13:3, confess Christ Romans 10:10 and be baptized Acts 2:38. There are also promises to be enjoyed. Peter tells us that we are given "exceeding great and precious promises..." 2Peter 1:4. Hence the gospel as God gave it changes our heart by changing our intellect, our will, and our emotions. This results in our conscience being changed through the knowledge that we have obeyed the will of God and are thus accepted by Him. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804 rfwade@mchsi.com)

Am I Growing Better?

*Is the world growing better?
Is a question that is frequently asked,
Are the people of this generation
Any better than those of the past?*



*But a more important question
One that brings it closer to home
Am I growing better,
Scattering sunshine where I roam.*

*Am I more studious of the Bible,
Do I read it every day,
Am I a light that's leading,
Others from their erring way?*

*Am I more dutiful
Than I was one year ago?
Do I always stop and think,
Or sometimes judge before I know?*

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WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

By RICK MARTIN

The time in which we are living today could be described as the “feel good “time. People are encouraged to “get in touch with their feelings”. The primary concern of so many today seems to be “feelings” and this has become a guiding principle in morality as well as religion.

Logic and reason have long been the standard in determining the direction in which one should go and in establishing those customs and habits that produce acceptable moral conduct. Reason tells us that God’s Word carries authority in religion and morality and that the precepts found therein should be considered to be the safe guide that is binding on every generation. The last few decades produced schools of thought such as the “New Morality” and “Situation Ethics”. The individual became the center of the universe and everything revolved around oneself. What might be right for one person might not be right for someone else and each person became his/her own standard. In other words there are no absolutes. Everything was based on feelings. If it feels right or makes one feel good then do it. We have fought and continue to fight the battle against the so-called “New Morality” and the time has now come when we must fight the battle against “feel good” worship.

It is disappointing to hear that some are departing from the “old paths” and seeking that which is new and feels good. These things are new in the sense that they are being added to the worship of the Lord’s Church. They really aren’t new in religion because some have long been practiced in the sectarian world. Some brethren are adding things to the worship simply because it feels good for them to do it. Surely this has to be the reason, because it is apparent they are not basing these things on the Scriptures. Maybe they are just not thinking clearly or just doing things on the fly. Perhaps they just do not respect the patterns that have been given. We have reports of brethren doing things in worship for which there is no Scriptural authority. Some of these things are; 1) having a song between the loaf and cup when observing the communion. There is no authority given in any of the examples of the Lord’s Supper for such a practice. As an example notice Paul’s account of the Supper. **1 Corinthians 11:23-25 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament**

in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 2.) Another addition is having all the men and women of the congregation stand and quote or read from the scriptures. This would be a clear violation of Paul’s prohibition on women speaking., **1 Timothy 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.** 3.) Still another practice which is clearly sectarian would be special prayer services in which someone comes forward in the assembly and asks the elders to anoint them with oil. The practice of anointing with oil belonged to the days of miracles, not today, and without question James teaches that the sick should call for the elders. **James 5:14 Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:** These are a few examples of the “feel-good” worship that is being practiced by some today. It feels good, looks nice, can draw a crowd, and makes for what some are calling an exciting and spirit-filled worship, so why not do it?

Are these views wrong because they are new to the Church or make one feel good? Of course not. It is a good thing to put some feelings into our worship. The wrong part comes in when feelings replace the authority of God’s Word and add things to the worship that are not authorized.

We need to also understand that old ways are not right just because they are old. If an old way is based on tradition, rather than Scripture, it has no more authority than some new thing. A practice is right only if it is found in God’s Word.

We need to answer the question. “How can we avoid misunderstandings and division?” The answer is the same as it has always been, whether it was in a first-century congregation or one in our modern age. We must focus on Jesus and the authority of the Scriptures. The Scriptures tell us what we can and cannot do in worship. We have been given a pattern. God gave Moses a pattern to build the tabernacle and he gave Noah one in the building of the ark. We should carefully consider and cultivate an appreciation for what God has taught us to do in worship according to His Word. To let “feelings” override the authority of the Scriptures and dictate our worship is wrong and will deal a devastating blow to our brotherhood. Families and friends will also be affected. There are people right now who are gravely concerned about their children and grand-children and the direction in which they are headed. Friends will be saddened and broken-hearted should a division occur. We cannot afford to let this happen. Let us always demand a “Thus saith the Lord” for everything we do and practice. If no scriptural basis exists for a practice in the worship, get rid of it. Do not let it become the basis

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MISCELLANEOUS

By CLOVIS COOK

In Isaiah 28:10 the prophet said, (New International Version) "For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule, a little here, a little there."

From time to time I read miscellaneous things and I observe a lot. The more I read and observe, the more perplexed I seem to become. Some of the things I read are difficult to harmonize with the Word of God or prove with a "thus saith the Lord." As the late Tom Allington used to say, "It's time we get our ducks in a row," and this is exactly the way I see it also.

I like what Don King is doing in publishing "Pages of the Past" in the OPA. Much of what those men wrote is what they also taught me as a young man when I spent time studying and traveling with several of them. Their idea was if you can't read it in the Book, leave it alone. After more than three score and ten years of doing just that, (to the best of my ability) sometimes under adverse circumstances, I don't regret a single day spent in that endeavor. Following are some observations.

Drifting

Are we drifting? Probably not generally, at least in every place. However, this is not to say that some individuals and even some congregations have not moved a little to the right or left of center. Recently, we read from the pen of a good writer who believed all is well now because we have some of the best preachers and writers, teachers and singers, and people in general that we have had in many years. About the same time we were reading all that, there appeared a letter to many congregations written from a well known congregation, who had learned of misbehavior among some young people. This had occurred during an annual meeting attended by many from all quarters of the brotherhood. The local brethren had taken care of the situation in an admirable manner and are to be commended for having done so.

Little Things

The word "little" means: "less, least, not important, "etc. We read from another well-known writer who said, "We can't all agree on every little thing, but especially on Biblical things that are not germane to our salvation." This may be true in domestic affairs. However, we wonder how small does a "Biblical" matter have to be before it is unimportant or not germane to our spiritual well-being. The apostle Paul said, "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6) Solomon said, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." (Song of Solomon 2:15) Do you suppose that one could convince the owner of such a vineyard that "little things" were not germane to his well-being if he had lost his entire

harvest?

Fellowship

Fellowship means "sharing in common, partnership," etc. I like the way Paul used the term in Philemon, verse 17: "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself." Alexander Campbell wrote: "Every man that is born into the kingdom of God is a citizen of the kingdom of God, and is entitled to a citizen's rights." (John 3:5; Ephesians 2:19) Paul said in Romans 12:6, "Having then gifts differing..." "Gift" indicates a talent according to Webster. W.E. Vine tells us the original word "Talanton" has provided the meaning of the English word as a gift or ability, especially under the influence of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Can we measure "fellowship" by degrees or numbers? Some seem to think so. They have been known to recognize a fellow's gift in four, more or less, of the five items of service but deny his right in one item though the fellow may be qualified to do them all. The question is: "What saith the scriptures?" Where is the passage teaching such behavior? If it concerns the whole church, does it please the whole church? (See Acts 15:4-22; 1 Corinthians 11:20 and 14:23)

Church Autonomy

This means "self governing." However, this does not mean that a congregation has the scriptural right to form and structure their own laws and rules other than the Scriptures. It also does not mean that other congregations must accept their human rules for taking care of the church business by some political means such as voting. Alexander Campbell wrote: "In receiving and rejecting members in or out of the church, it is not left to the law of expediency, or man made rules. Inspiration has settled this matter." Our brethren have always opposed voting on those who want to come into the church, for the Bible tells us that when people obeyed the gospel they were added to the church. (Acts 2:47) The question is: if we can't vote them in, how can we vote them out? No congregation in the brotherhood would be obligated to accept such a rule made by anyone.

Band-Aid Treatment

We read from one of our promising preachers and writers how to treat dry skin on your index finger. He says to use a little ointment and put a band-aid on it. That will probably do very well on a finger but it is obviously not the way to treat a cancer. We can't afford the band-aid treatment when in the church we find a lump of leaven. Paul said, "...reprove, rebuke..." (2 Timothy 4:2) How is this done? "What saith the scripture?" The Bible says "all scripture ...is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16) Unless those who need treatment refuse to accept sound doctrine it will relieve the problem. Daniel said, "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness." (Daniel 9:9)

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FROM CROSS TO CROWN

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and he promises them a crown of life.

Paul was also a bearer of many crosses for the Lord. In 2 Cor. 23:28, he enumerates the crosses he had borne. (Are we bearing any greater than these? Then why should we give up?). Yet, when came his time to depart and be with Christ and receive his everlasting reward, he wrote to Timothy and said: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6, 8).

As we go upon this earthly pilgrimage, and our crosses and trials are many, we should look away with the eye of faith to the beautiful crown that awaits the faithful in that glorious home of God. "Look away from the cross to the glittering crown

From your cares weary one, look away.
There's a beautiful home where no sorrow can come,

And where pleasures will never decay."

MISCELLANEOUS

continued from page five

We can't afford to sweep wrong doing under the carpet or just gloss it over because "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad." (Ecclesiastes 12: 14; 2 Corinthians 5: 10)

Slanderous reports

In Romans 3:8 we read of a slanderous report having been circulated against the apostles. W.E. Vine tells us this means: "Blasphemeo - to speak slanderously, impiously, profanely, to injure," etc. For one man or a coalition of men to reject a brother from fellowship (without scriptural cause) and defranchise him of his citizen's rights is matter for which the guilty must answer. According to the scriptures, the defendant has the right to rebut the charges. Even King Agrippa granted Paul that liberty (Matthew 26:1)

What Saith the Scriptures?

The Scriptures mean what they say. "Let us all walk by the same rule." (Philippians 3:16) Can we do this? Every citizen of God's kingdom has a citizen's rights. This may be the most important portion of this subject because some men "say and do not" (Matthew 23:3) Notice this: to be joined together in the same mind or to be of one mind mean the same thing. (1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 15:6) To glorify God with one mouth and to speak the same thing are also equal. (Romans 15:6; 1 Corinthians 1:10) How can it be possible to render the same judgment against a wrong or person unless we all have the same mind and speak

the same things? The command to "mark and avoid them..." (Those who cause division) does not mean that some have to obey the injunction while others do not. That sort of behavior is ambiguous and makes the inspired writers guilty of double talk. (So said Roy E. Cogdill) Alexander Campbell said, "The minority demands respect." If one may think that the majority can rule over the minority, please read Matthew 7:13, 14 and see what Jesus said about the "few" and the "many."

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is a part of language. When it is properly used it can cause the subject to be understood with great clarity, force or elegance. Notice the following example; "When controversy and differences are on every hand, and when the peace of God's people is jeopardized, it is highly proper that churches may wisely conduct earnest and careful studies of controverted points, sifting truth from error, striving constantly to bring forth the exact teaching of God's Word on all matters of difference. The two fundamental concepts with Christians have always held (1) the absolute authority of the Word, and (2) the firm conviction that the Word can be understood; make it forever impossible that God's people shall divide over any point of Bible teaching. For when any differences arise among them, they immediately resort to the Bible with the query, 'What saith the scriptures?' And they continue their study until there is unity of understanding as to Bible teaching. Once that unity is reached, the matter is settled." This is the foreword to Roy E. Cogdill's book **Walking By Faith**.

We believe "what saith the Scriptures" should settle any differences that might arise among us. We also believe that such an approach will help us in "keeping the unity of the spirit, in the bonds of peace. What better way to settle our differences? To borrow from the denominational world, or to invent rules of our own at such times, is ludicrous. We need to get our ducks in a row.

212 W. Morningside St., Springfield, MO 65807-3528

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

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for an unneeded division. When people are not willing to put away unscriptural practices division will happen. **Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?** Let it be noted that should division come, the responsibility for it will not rest on the shoulders of those who stand firmly on God's Word. Unity is possible only when we all follow Christ. Brethren, carefully and prayerfully consider where we are headed if unscriptural or questionable practices are allowed to continue.

Rick Martin 300 Clubview Terrace Woodstock, GA 30189 mmartin@bellsouth.net

CHANGE AGENTS*continued from page two*

and vain talkers and deceivers. specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses. teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Titus 1: 9-11)

Notice that Paul did not wish for those who were subverting, or turning upside down, whole houses to be heard. He said their "mouths must be stopped." Now, brethren, suppose we are made aware of a preacher's liberal leanings today? What should we do? Should we use him anyway for meetings, etc.? To ask such a question is absurd in the light of what Paul wrote to Titus isn't it? Their mouths need to be stopped rather than encouraged.

We Need To Learn From the Mistakes of Others

In reading the various religious papers of the day, we are informed of the problems our erring brethren are encountering. They are now pleading for their brotherhood to "ask for the old paths." (Jeremiah 6:16) According to their writers, the last twenty years have brought about "sweeping changes." Some of their preachers are openly critical of the Scriptures and question the Biblical foundations upon which the church rests. Old Testament writers are called into question and their writings openly criticized. Twenty years ago that would never have been tolerated but it is today, at least by some.

Some of those brethren are having problems with the name of the church also. They want to change the name because they feel the local population would more readily accept a church called by something other than Church of Christ. A Church in Texas has dropped the name "Church of Christ" from its sign and now they just call it "Oak Hills Church." It is said that when the name "Church of Christ" was dropped from the sign the attendance went up dramatically. Can you see this happening among Church of Christ people? It's unbelievable that anyone who knows the Bible would ever allow the name of the Lord's church to be left off the sign on purpose so that a greater attendance could be realized. The church is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23). All the saved are in the body, or church, of Christ. Paul showed in Ephesians 1:3 that ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places are IN CHRIST. If all the spiritual blessings are IN CHRIST, (in His body which is the church) it logically follows that there are NO blessings out of Christ and His church. That being the case, why would anyone want to leave the name of the church off the sign? What can the people be offered that is greater than the Lord's Church?

Of course, those brethren have had problems with the worship of the church for many years now. They long ago allowed the use of individual cups in the Lord's Supper and Bible classes as an arrangement for teaching the Bible with women teaching some of

those classes. (Scripture?) Now, however, more changes are showing up. Preaching has been softened and abbreviated. Only a short time is allowed for that in some places. Now, in some of their congregations, there are drama and musical presentations put on by what is called a "praise team." (Scripture?) Songbooks are set aside while the audience looks at an overhead projection screen containing only the words of a song while the praise team supplies the melody. In some cases, instrumental music is being used also.

Churches of Christ have always been known for their reverent worship. Now, however, hand clapping or applauding by the audience is occurring. People who call themselves "Church of Christ" are lifting their hands in worship as the Pentecostals and other sectarians do. All of this adds to the absence of divine order during worship which has, in years gone by, been strictly adhered to by the Lord's people. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." I am personally not a fan of the NIV but I like the way it translates this passage. "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."

We could go on and on with other examples which are documented in their papers. However, the point of all of this is that twenty years ago many of these departures would never have been tolerated. Those who are allowing it today would have denied they had changed only a few years ago. The truth is, they had indeed changed but they saw the changes as so small that it was not worth mentioning. Given the years of time, however, the changes have advanced until anyone can see there has been change in a big way!

Are there changes where you worship? If there are, wake up to the danger and speak out against them. Small changes, brought about by change agents, will grow into obvious departures from the truth. We can learn from the mistakes of others. Once we accept change, it is very difficult to bring things back to where they once were. It is far easier to keep the church pure from the outset by rejecting the counsel of the change agents. Be thankful that you worship as your forefathers did with no changes having been made. Be thankful for the sign on the meeting house which proudly proclaims that the Church of Christ worships there. Don't be embarrassed that your brethren sit quietly and are edified by sound Biblical preaching, where every point is proven with a book chapter and verse, and brethren find no reason to wave their hands in the air as denominational people do. There is no spiritual benefit to be gained by mimicking the vain worship of the denominations. What a blessing to worship as the Lord has directed where women are silent, the worship dignified, the communion scriptural, the Bible taught reverently and the praise in song done with all singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord. Thank God for the Church. Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

The 2004 Missouri Study hosted by the Cassville Missouri congregation and conducted in the Aurora building is now history. The meeting was in the minds of most a tremendous success. The preaching was some of the best I have enjoyed in a long time. The subject matter was timely, well presented by each of the speakers. Perhaps the two most important thoughts to surface from the meeting surrounded the terms Responsibility and Accountability. The crowds were moderate to very good and enthusiastic. The question and answer sessions were a treasure of great wealth that proved to be enlightening and motivating. The crowds seem to have as many young folks as there were elderly. Many if not all the young folks were at every service and commented on how much they learned. I can't remember when I have witnessed so many young folks so eager to listen and learn. Many gospel preachers came to attend and add to the lessons with thought provoking questions. Brother Reggie Kinser and Billy Dickinson were so wonderful to work with adding their knowledge and expertise to the meeting. Two responses came about as the gospel invitation was offered to those in attendance. Currently we are looking for a congregation willing to host the next study. If interested in hosting next years Missouri study please contact us at the address provided. Roger L. Owens, 204 West 18th St., Cassville, MO 65625, rowens700@yahoo.com, 417-847-6649.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Ada, OK - Change of address for Vaden Morgan to 13065 C.R. 1556, Ada, OK 74820, Phone: 580-235-0123, E-Mail: vmorgan@adacomp.net, Fayetteville, OH - The congregation has moved to a new location. Please note the following new location and the times of services: Blanchester, OH, Southside Church of Christ, 317 Bourbon St., Blanchester, OH 45107, Sunday 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. Please contact Michael Kidd, PO Box 32, Fayetteville, OH 45118 for more information.

GOSPEL MEETING IN OUR NEW BUILDING HEARTLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST - WICHITA, KANSAS

We are excited to announce that our new building is finally complete. You are invited to attend our special Gospel Meeting in the building at our new location: Heartland Church of Christ, West Maple at 162nd Street, Wichita, Kansas. Brother Wayne Fussell will be our speaker for the meeting. Dates: September 22 - 26 (Wednesday through Friday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday at 6 p.m., Sunday at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.). For more information contact Mike Whitworth (316-722-0895, mlwhitwor@aol.com) or Bob Loudermilk (316-722-6724, bob@quantumexpo.com).

WORDS OF THANKS

In behalf of my family, I would like to express heartfelt gratefulness to all the brethren and friends everywhere who sent cards to, and called, us when we were in the hospital in connection with the car accident we - my wife and I, and a couple - encountered on the evening of May 9th. I am glad to say that we are all now in stable condition. Thanks for the manifestation of love and concern you have shown us. My wife and I are strengthened by your prayers and comforting words. It is indeed very encouraging to hear faithful brethren everywhere say they do care. May God bless you all!

- Virgilio O. Danao

Our Departed

TIDMORE - Cecil Andrew Tidmore was born in Chula Vista, CA Dec. 21, 1961, the son of Cecil and Billie Lackey Tidmore. It was this writer's honor to say the wedding ceremony for Andrew and Zena Marie Hopkins at Sanger, CA Oct. 20, 1979. Three sons were born to them, Jeremiah, Jared and Jason. Along with Zena, the parents and the boys, a grandson, Dusing, a brother, Paul, 3 sisters, Carol, Ruth and Kathy survive, along with a host of other relatives and friends. Andrew was a most blessed man; this he knew and would tell you. During meetings 2003, it was my honor to visit him one on one; this is to me unforgettable for which I am a better man. It was my honor to return to Valliant, OK to officiate for my brother, assisted by John Tidmore, William St. John, Randy Tidmore and Bruce Roebuck. So sad it is that a man in his youth, beyond his control, must bow to the Grim Reaper. He was buried among his people to await the resurrection. Death found him in Christ; how precious indeed. - Don McCord

TIDMORE - Alfred Tidmore was born Sept. 2, 1956 at Mt. Shasta, CA to Cecil and Ruby Stout Tidmore. He was married to Debbie Empy, Dec. 19, 1992. Besides Debbie he is survived by his mother, step-son, step-daughter, and 5 brothers. John Tidmore, who preached the funeral, was certainly instrumental in seeing that Alfred was ready, so young, to cross over. It was this writer's honor to know Alfred during his last trying days; he faces the inevitable with such manly resignation. I am glad I knew him. He was buried at Valliant, OK, among his people to await resurrection. My heart goes out to his dear wife and dear mother, and brothers, all who needed him so. - Don McCord

HARPER - Della Marjorie Wright Harper was born Dec. 5, 1906 at Manchester, Indian Territory, OK to Thomas and Shirley Scott Wright. She passed from this life May 29, 2004 in Elk Grove, CA. She was married in 1925 to Granville Clair Harper; at his death they had been married well over 60 years: what an example worth remembering and following. Della is survived by daughters, Marjorie Galatioto, and husband, Gary, whom she loved as a son, and daughter Clairadell Butler; and son, Billy Harper, and wife, Nancy; 9 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and 10 great-great-grandchildren. One daughter, Shirley Joy Kiler, preceded Della, as did 2 brothers and 1 great-grandson. Della and the Wright-Harper family had been dear friends to this writer for well over 50 years. It was indeed an honor to be in Sand Springs, OK to preside at the funeral. Until the end down here, Della remained strong in the faith. She was a member of the church for about 85 years. She was buried at Oak Hill Cemetery, in rural Mannford, OK to await the resurrection. - Don McCord

(EVERETT) SCOTT—Mary Arzelea (Everett) Scott, was born August 30, 1924, in Elida, New Mexico, to William and Ellen Bailey. She departed this life during her sleep at home July 21, 2004. She was 79 years of age. She married Herbert Everett in November 1940. Mary and Herbert lived in Pinehurst, Idaho, until 1949 when they moved to Kennewick, Washington. Herbert passed away in 1966. In 1969, Mary married Earle I. Scott. Earle passed away in 1994. She was preceded in death by her parents; both husbands; sister, Sylvia Bossingham; son, John R. Everett and grandson, Tom (Everett) Coats. She is survived by her brother, Ed Bailey and wife Stana of Post Falls, Idaho; daughters, Kaaren Bean of Jonesboro, Arkansas and Sharon Carpenter of Newport News, Virginia; sons, Ed Everett and wife Carol, Herb Everett and wife Cindy; 14 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren and numerous other relatives. Mary was considered by all the members of the church in Kennewick, Washington, as a dedicated faithful member of the church. When there were services being conducted there, whether it was every Lord's Day or a series of gospel meetings; she was always there, unless something beyond her control prevented. The building is over 55 years old, and I can assuredly say that no other person has been in that building more than her. She was also active in helping others when she had the opportunity. I, personally and as an evangelist, was a recipient of her care and concerns concerning my needs in the preaching of the Gospel. The church will miss her. I was privileged to speak words of comfort and encouragement - Gayland L. Osburn

McCOMBS - Harry Ray McCombs was born April 29, 1950. He passed from this life Sunday, July 4, 2004 at the young age of 54. Harry had attended services at the Church of Christ that meets at Lovejoy, PA with his father and mother since the day he was born. Harry remained faithful until the moment of death. He was an active member of the congregation, taking part in the services; he never missed services for any reason other than sickness. Harry was a good man and exemplified Christianity in the life he lived. Harry married his wife Shirley October 14, 1978, she also is a strong member of the church. He is survived by his wife Shirley, his mother, two sisters and one brother, also nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his father Oliver McCombs, February 1, 2003. The overwhelming crowd of people from other congregations and the neighboring communities attested to the fact that this man was highly thought of. He worked for Poly Vision Corp. for more than 30 years, most of the people who work there came to pay their last respects to him. Eugene Lockard spoke words of comfort, consolation and hope to all who attended the service. His death leaves a great void in our congregation.

DENTON, DEWEY GARRISON, JR. - formerly of Shelly Rd. died Saturday, March 20, 2004 in Columbia, SC. He was born in Durham, NC on Dec. 15, 1932, the son of the late Zena Buckwell Denton and Dewey Garrison Denton, Sr. and was preceded in death by three sisters and one brother. He was a long-time member of the Church of Christ 7705 Falls of Neuse Rd. in Raleigh, NC. Brother Denton is survived by his wife Teresia Bruesenbauch Denton of Columbia, SC; two sons, Tony Denton and Davey Denton, both of Lawrence, KS; one daughter, Charlotte Mixon of Columbia, SC; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; two brothers and one sister; and numerous nieces and nephews. Brother Denton was laid to rest in the Church Cemetery in Raleigh, NC. It was an honor to be asked to conduct the services of this beloved brother in Christ. Brother Bobby Holt and Brother J. W. Kornegay spoke words of comfort to the bereaved. Our prayers are for his loving family and friends. - J. W. Kornegay

MORGAN, ANNIE MARGARET - "Nanny" Morgan, age 91 was laid to rest in the Forest Hill Cemetery in Birmingham, AL July 6, 2004. She was a dear Christian lady; a member of the Crescent Ridge congregation. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her daughter, Dot Berry, and to each member of the Morgan and Berry family. - Paul Walker

HULEN, DONALD - was laid to rest in the Bumpass Cemetery on July 1, 2004 in Lawrenceburg, TN at the age of 85 years. He is survived by his wife, Mable; three sons; two daughters; and three sisters. Donald was a member of the Chapel Grove, TN congregation. We extend our sincere sympathy to the family.

Field Reports

Gregory S. Robbins, 7440 Hwy. 6, Apt. 1012, Hichcock, TX 77563 - I have been with the La Marque congregation for a year. The work is very challenging, because the church is mainly in an all black neighborhood. I am hopeful that we can work toward unity as far as the race matter is concerned. There are some who are willing to come and worship with us, but are afraid of how their people will perceive them. On another note the church is very encouraged and excited about the work. The Parish family has moved here from Paris, TX, Jeff and Melinda have brought a new zeal to the church. Pray for the work here in La Marque and where ever the Church of Christ meets in spirit and truth.

Matt Trent, 508 N. Pierce St., El Cajon, CA 92020, mtrent3@aol.com, June 17, 2004 - My family and I have recently relocated to work with the Church of Christ in El Cajon, in the San Diego area. Before moving here I worked with the congregation at Oakdale, CA for six years. My work there started out as a part time work while I went to college. Over time it grew into a successful and busy full time work. I truly enjoyed being a part of that growing congregation. Without question, leaving there was a difficult decision. However, we felt that this move was a good opportunity for us to grow in a new area. Our work in El Cajon has started off well. We have several open doors already, and are hoping and praying for more. If you know of anyone in this area that would be interested in a contact from us, please let us know. May God's grace abound toward all of the faithful! - *My apologies for this being late. - DLK*

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA - We continue to labor with the Olivehurst, CA congregation and pleased to report that things are going well. Right now we are engaged in doing some much needed repair work on our little building and the members are really pitching in and doing most of the work. September 1-5 we will be working with the Brundage Ln. church in Bakersfield, CA in the annual California Labor Day meeting. They are hosting this meeting in cooperation with the surrounding congregations. We will be with the Knoxville, GA congregation in a meeting September 17-19. This is our first visit there and we are looking forward to it. Our next meeting will be in Harrodsburg, IN October 3-10. I have not been there since 1952. From there we come back to California for a meeting in Escalon, CA. We are looking forward to being with Bro. Homer Sallee. Homer and I have worked together in different efforts for many years. I recently have taught at Lodi, Manteca, Turlock, and Yuba City. The churches in California are doing well, generally speaking, and striving to hold the line against error.

Miles King, 8586 Wilderness Tr., Scotland, AR 72141, 501-592-3956, mtking@cei.net. August 10, 2004 - Donavon Furr from the Athen, TX congregation has been with me this summer and it seems he has made good progress as he studies to become a gospel preacher. Today he returned home to Tyler, TX where he plans to attend college. We returned home yesterday from Mozier, IL where we had a real good meeting. We had a good audience each service with brethren attending from Missouri, Iowa, Indiana and Kentucky. We were also happy to have local visitors and two precious souls made confessions; returning to the Lord's fold. I have been to Mozier many times and sure appreciate the good hospitality and work of these brethren. In July we were in a meeting at Paducah, KY and was so glad to be associated with these brethren and visitors from Tennessee, Missouri and Illinois. We were glad of the good association of Morgan Stripling and the Gene Anderson family and others. I'm looking forward to our meeting in St Albans, W. VA Sept. 15-19. I will sure miss Donavan Furr - he will continue his studies with Bro. Glenn Ballard and brethren in the Tyler-Athens area. We enjoyed Terry Baze being here at Scotland, AR during June. Also the 4th of July meeting at Sulphur, OK was very enjoyable. We are thankful for good reports and articles in the Old Paths Advocate.

Bruce Roebuck, 1666 E. 2060, Hugo, OK 74743, bructan@arbuckleonline.com, July 2 - This spring has been enjoyable and busy. We began in West Monroe, LA where we enjoyed the hospitality of Royce and Mary Jane Garman. Next we were in Allen, TX for a weekend. The church there was doing well. In March we were in Wayne, W. VA for a week. Brother Wyn Baker is working there and seems to be doing a good job. The meeting closed with one restoration. Ada, OK was the next stop. We had good turnout each evening and visitors at most every service. It was great to be with Joe Hisle once again. The meeting ended with one making confession. May took us to Collins, MS. This was my first trip there and it was great. Good crowds were present throughout the meeting. Most recently we were in Cleburne, TX for a meeting. Melvin Blalock continues to do a good work there. The crowds were excellent throughout the meeting. A large number of cups and no classes people attended repeatedly as well as a young couple who expressed a desire to study with Melvin. I must say the meetings this year have been encouraging and well attended. The remainder of my schedule is as follows: Mountain Grove, MS July 21-25, Norman, OK August 1-8, Hwy. 84, Brookhaven, MS Oct. 7-10, Walnut Grove, KY in the Fall.

Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell St., Springfield, MO 65804, rfwade@mchsi.com, August 11 - Since last reporting we have enjoyed meetings at Greenville, SC, West Point, GA, London, KY with one baptism and two confessions, and Napoleon, AL. At Napoleon Brian Raughton, the son-in-law of Ronnie Prince was baptized. As a result all of Ronnie's children and their spouses are now Christians. What a wonderful accomplishment. Lord willing our next meetings are as follows: Aug. 18-22 Cassville, MO; Aug. 25-29 Lebanon, MO; Sept. 5-12 Garrett's Creek, WV; Sept. 29-Oct. 3 Hartwell, AR. We look forward to working with all the brethren in these places. Please remember us when you pray.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net, Aug. 9 - We just closed a meeting with the congregation in McGregor, Texas. I am impressed with the large number of fine young people in the church there. We had some visitors from the community, and I am hopeful we accomplished some good. I stayed with Wayne and Jean McKamie and enjoyed their hospitality very much. Wayne has an excellent library and a keen knowledge of the history of the church in his part of Texas, and I benefited from both. We even drove out to President Bush's ranch near Crawford one day. Even though the President was home, we really didn't expect to gain an audience with him and invite him to services, but you never know. We were happy to have John David Modgling, who has been studying with Bennie Cryer over the last year, attend most of the meeting. John David is to begin working with the church in San Angelo, Texas, October 1st. We were saddened, however, by three deaths affecting the McGregor congregation during the week. Brother Weldon Morgan's mother, Sister Betty Elliott's mother, and Brother Ronnie Wallace's father passed away during the meeting. May God's richest blessings of consolation be upon these families. Since my last report we have also conducted meetings in Indiana, PA and Killbuck, OH. Both of these meetings were enjoyable and I hope we accomplished some good for the Lord's cause. My schedule for the next several months includes—Bridgeport, TX (Sept. 9-12), Hamilton, OH (September 18-26), St. Louis, MO (Oct. 1-3), Jamesville, MO (Oct. 17-24), Indianapolis, IN (Nov. 7-14), and Davis, OK (Dec. 3-5).

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, August 14 - We closed an enjoyable meeting with the church at Temple, GA since last report which resulted in one confession of faults. I had not preached there since 1960 so it was a treat to go back. The hospitality of the brethren was wonderful and we appreciated the help of other congregations with their backing and attendance. It was good to see some who were preachers attending, including Rick Martin and perhaps others. Sickness

hindered some in the meeting. Brother Joe Bass was in the hospital much of the meeting and Josh Karr was also sick but able to attend. Our prayers are with them for God's blessings. Our next, Lord willing, will be in Neosho, MO September 12-19 and in October we are to go to LaGrange, GA. We are presently in a good meeting here at home with Johnny Elmore. Crowds have been good as well as the preaching. We look forward to making a short trip to Hawaii soon to help the brethren. Brother Danao is slowly regaining his health after the car accident in early May which caused serious injuries to himself, his wife and one other. We are going to try to help him purchase another vehicle as well as help the church for a short time. We look forward to the California Labor Day meeting which is to be held by the Brundage Lane congregation in Bakersfield this year. They have asked Bennie Cryer to hold it. Pray for us.

Cullen L. Smith 4200 Prothro Wichita Falls, TX 76308, (940) 689-9314 cullensmith@hotmail.com, July 6 - Since last report we have baptized one sister into Christ here at Crestview. I enjoyed a weekend meeting in Temple, GA and appreciate Bro Ricky Martin for attending. It was good to be with my great-uncle, Garland T. Smith at the New Salem congregation in March. Crippled knees and other health problems did not keep him away! His great-grandson was baptized the last night along with another confession. It was great to see Lynwood and Aunt Ivey doing well and we so appreciate Lynwood's new song book. The first East Texas camp meeting was an enjoyable meeting and we look forward to next year. Thanks to Glenn Ballard and Tyler/Athens congregations for having it. In Huntsville, AR I had a nice weekend meeting. Glad to see Daddy and Dennis Smith there. They are anxiously awaiting Daniel Smith to begin working with them in late July. San Angelo, TX continues on but some pews are empty. Some have passed on to their reward and they miss Bro. Jack Jones who was a great encouragement there and now is a great asset in Levelland. It was great to see Curtis Morrison recovering well in answer to prayers. I thank all the preachers in the OKC area for their great attendance during Capitol Hill's annual ten day meeting which went well. Sulphur was great. Let it be known far and wide that merchants were thrilled we were in town and the Chickasaw hotel operator stated, "those were the best young people ever." There were fifteen confessions during the meeting and at least 15 different visitors from the community. Bro David stands did an excellent job conducting the meeting and we thank all the preachers and brethren who came and participated. We had about 750+ and there was good preaching. I will have completed a meeting Modesto, CA by this writing and the rest of my schedule is Oct 27-31 in Sharonville, OH; Nov 3-7 in Nashville, TN; Nov. 21-28 in Salem, OR

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THE BACK PAGE...

RACCOON'S ODYSSEY

By CARL M. JOHNSON

In November of 1814 Calvinist Baptist preacher Raccoon John Smith moves with his wife Anna, four small children, and his wife's young brother from Kentucky to near Huntsville, Alabama. Some friends of his father have already moved into the area and upon Smith's arrival they invite him to come preach for them. On Saturday, January 7, 1815, Smith saddles his horse and rides approximately twenty miles to meet his father's friends. Upon arriving at his destination Smith is welcomed like a son. His father's friends reminisce until late into the night about old times, and discuss the prospects for the countryside and especially the church. Finally, Smith retires to bed with a heart full of pleasant memories and hope for the future.

The next morning at dawn, however, two men arrive at the house where Smith is staying and give him a message that will change his life forever. "Mr. Smith we are sorry to bring you bad news from home. Your house took fire last night and everything is lost. Two of your children were also lost in the fire "

Smith screams in horror, sinks down upon the steps, and buries his face in his hands. He cries out. "Which of my children?" "Did Anna have to stand and see it all?"

They bring him his horse and he quickly sets out for home. As he rides he tries to prepare his mind for what he will see when he arrives. As a Calvinist he also tries to prepare himself to answer the question he knows will be foremost in his wife's mind—"Are our children among the elect of God?"

Frenchman John Calvin was one of the most influential religious figures to come out of the sixteenth century Reformation. The seminal doctrine Calvin is associated with today concerns predestination. Basing his conclusions upon the fact of God's sovereignty, predestination according to Calvin means our sovereign God ordained the member and identity of "the elect" (those who are saved) before the beginning of the world. Christ's atonement for sin is thus limited to the elect; salvation is not possible for all humanity, but only for those predestined to be saved (*Institutes*, p. 238). He concludes that we are not free moral agents and that we have no choice in the matter of accepting or rejecting salvation, but that the choosing is done exclusively and arbitrarily by our sovereign God.

Sooner or later the obvious question of every true Calvinist has to be, "How can I be certain I am among the elect God has chosen to save?" While Calvin was confident in his own election, he offers little comfort to others who are trying to make the same determination. Calvin says there is no objective evidence to determine who is saved or lost—that you cannot distinguish the elect from the damned by their conduct, subjective experiences, or any other external criteria. You just sort of have to conclude intuitively that you are among the elect and then believe it.

As a Calvinist, Smith knows of no tangible, objective way for determining whom God has saved. Therefore, he knows nothing he might say to his wife that will console her. If he tells her, "Our babies are glorified," then just the thought of the possibility they might not be among the elect will only increase her anguish. Upon arriving home Smith does his best to console Anna, but she cannot be consoled. Days pass and soon Anna passes away too, having grieved herself to death. Smith buries her beside the buried ashes of their two children.

It is this horrible tragedy that causes Smith to rethink his beliefs about Calvinism. In March of 1822, while preaching at Spencer's Creek urging sinners to "repent and believe the gospel," Smith becomes confused himself. "Suppose the elect do not believe, will they be saved anyway? Suppose the non-elect do believe, will they be saved?" He abruptly concludes his sermon by telling his brethren that something is wrong with the message he is preaching and he confesses that he is "in the dark."

He begins studying the writings and debates of Alexander Campbell and becomes convinced that contrary to the pure teachings of Calvinism, simple obedience to the gospel can save anyone (2 Thes. 1:7). He comes to see that in one sense we save ourselves when we make the choice to obey the gospel (1 Tim. 4:16; Acts 2:40). He learns further that the Bible provides objective criteria for determining whether we are the children of God or the children of the devil (Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Jn. 3:10), and therefore, whether we are saved or lost (1 Jn. 5:11-13).

Today, we thank God for the end results of Raccoon John Smith's spiritual odyssey, and we join him in thanking God for the glorious gospel light that leads us out of darkness concerning our eternal condition and replaces the terrible angst of Calvinism with the reassurance of genuine hope. *1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74820 carlmj@cableone.net*

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 10

OUR LONG HOME

By TAYLOR A. JOYCE

"Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets" (Eccl. 12:5).

Both the Bible and experience teach us that if the Lord tarries we will all die. In every community there is at least one "silent city of the dead." An obituary column in the daily newspaper lists the names of its growing population. Somewhere in a bed of clay there is one reposing whom each of us has "loved long since and lost a while."

The Bible is replete with references to this universal experience. The fifth chapter of Genesis contains a brief biographical sketch of almost a dozen of the patriarchs beginning with Adam and each concludes with the somber words, "and he died." The writer of the letter to the Hebrews pointedly affirmed, "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9:27). In all the centuries that humans have inhabited the earth there have been only two exceptions.

When we are young we seldom entertain any thoughts of death. As we grow older we can no longer avoid such thoughts, and many of us actually begin to look forward to the ending of life's journey. There is even an air of excitement about the prospect of entering the valley of the shadows leading to the land from whose "borne no traveler has ever returned."

Job reached that stage. He said of life "I loathe it," and then added, "I would not live alway" (7:16). David very likely felt the same way. "Oh that I had wings like a dove!" he cried, "for then would I fly away, and be at rest" (Psa. 55:6).

The apostle Paul expressed a desire to "depart, and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23). Such a longing may arise from one of two sources—the debilitating effects of the aging process or contemplation of what the long home will be like.

Solomon describes in poetic language the infirmities that often accompany old age. "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be

brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners shall go about the streets" (Eccl. 12:3-5).

The Good News Bible, as well as numerous commentators, found in these verses references to human anatomy and their inability to function as they did in the days of youth. "That is when the light of the sun, the moon, and stars shall grow dim for you, and the rain clouds will never pass away. Then your arms, that have protected you, will tremble, and your legs, now strong, will grow weak. Your teeth will be too few to chew your food, and your eyes too dim to see clearly. Your ears will be deaf to the noise of the street. You will barely be able to hear the mill as it grinds or music when it plays, but even the song of a bird shall wake you from sleep. You will be afraid of high places, and walking will be dangerous. Your hair will turn white; you will hardly be able to drag yourself along, and all desire will be gone" (verses 2-5). One may quibble about the meaning of the details but without question the Preacher is describing the approach of death when those who are left behind will be expressing their grief as "the mourners shall go about the streets." Further evidence of this is seen in verse 7: "Then shall the dust return to the dust as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

As the advancing years weaken our ties to earth "the long home" and all that it entails draws us with increasing strength heavenward. Adam Clarke cited a translation that read: "The house of his everlastingness." The New International Version has "Then man goes to his eternal home." Whether it is called "the house of his eternity" or "his everlasting habitation" it serves as a reminder that life on earth is a prelude to life in eternity. Our curiosity about that place is not fully satisfied in the scriptures, but we are given enough information to know that it is a place of transcendent beauty and glory. The Lord says it's a house of many mansions (John 14:1-3). He also says it's a place fellowship with numerous Old Testament worthies, (Matt. 8:11) and that sin can never enter there (Rev. 21:8). Paul assures us that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (Phil. 1:23). And John says, "We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). It was also John's conviction that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more

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Editorial

LESSONS FROM EPHEBUS

By *DON L. KING*

The congregation at Ephesus spoken of by the Lord in Revelation 2: 1-7 is an excellent source of learning. Ephesus, of course, was a very busy place in Bible times. It is now in ruins and much of the ancient city still lies covered by the centuries of time. However, some is now exposed by archaeologists and one may walk some of the streets of Ephesus where so many Bible characters walked in the long ago. The city was paved with marble, and many of the buildings were built of that material also. It is obvious, even from seeing the ruins, that it was once a fabulously beautiful place. The streets were lined by covered marble sidewalks so that it was somewhat similar to our modern shopping centers today

However, our interest in this writing comes from the spiritual lessons we may learn from a visit to the city in the Bible. The Lord seems to compliment the congregation in several ways, though a severe fault was also mentioned in verse 4.

A Working Congregation

It appears that the congregation was made up of some who were workers. Jesus says, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." (Revelation 2: 2) Scholars are convinced that this language shows that the congregation was a working one. Their "labour" implies that they were very busy in the Lord's work and God was pleased with it. Their "works" were pleasing in God's sight. The word "patience" as used by the KJV shows their steadfastness. It appears then, that they were not drifting away as a result of change agents which we mentioned in the last issue of OPA.

Ephesus Practiced Discipline

The church could "not bear them which are evil," and this shows they were not willing to fellowship evil deeds of others. 1 Corinthians 5: 6-11 gives ample proof that we ought not to do that either. There are some sins, such as fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, (evil speaking, such as blasphemy etc.) drunkenness and extortion which, when committed by a brother or sister in Christ, forces us to abstain from even eating a common meal with them. In other words, we must not socialize with such "Christians" who have fallen into those sins. Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." Much could be spoken here, but it is obvious that our social and spiritual behavior must change toward those who are guilty of such sins, and it needs to remain different until such time as their behavior changes.

continued on page three

THE QUERIST COLUMN

BY RONNY F. WADE

Question: Who are the cloud of witnesses referred to in Hebrews 12:1?

Answer: In the eleventh chapter the writer has extolled the virtues of a long list of heroes of salvation history, concluding in verse 40 which says "God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us." He then begins chapter twelve "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." These witnesses surrounding the church should be thought of as witnesses and not spectators. They are the people to whom God has "borne witness." The word witness (martus) is used in the verb form (martureo) in 11:2, 4, 5, and 39 for God's activity of "bearing witness." The cloud of witnesses are the past heroes of chapter eleven who are examples of perseverance for the church, then and now, to follow in its race. The significance of these witnesses is the subject of much debate. It is the view of this writer that, since these people were dead, and the dead know nothing at all under the sun (Eccl. 9:5-6) they could not actually look on as the Christians were running their race. Zerr explains, "Those persons were dead and hence could not actually be looking on as the Christians were running the race. The idea is that the examples of faith that were performed by those characters should serve as an incentive for us to do our best also." MacKnight says "By using this figure the apostle did not mean to insinuate, that the saints in the other world know what we are doing in this; but to teach us to think of them often, that by recollection of their trials and virtues we may stir ourselves up to greater diligence in our Christian course." Barnes said "It is a figurative expression, such as is common, and means that we should act as if they were in sight."

Question: What are the consequences when one fails to warn a wicked man of his sin according to Ezekiel 3:18-21?

Answer: These verses deal with the respective responsibilities of a watchman and those over whom he has been appointed. The principles involved are such that should give all of us reason for concern. Essentially the message is if we do not warn wicked people of their sin, we will be held accountable for not having done so. If we do warn and the wicked man refuses to hear, he will be lost but we have delivered our souls. Two things are important to note: (1) each man is responsible for his own conduct. One cannot relieve himself of responsibility by blaming other people or claiming he has not been warned of sinful practices. We all have an obligation to study and learn the will of the Lord. We all have the responsibility of acting upon the truth when we hear it or learn it, we are accountable to God if we fail to do so. (2)

Those who know the truth also have the responsibility of sharing it with others. We must warn the wicked man of his way. We must point out the right way to others so that they will know. To fail to do so places our own souls in jeopardy. What a warning. How sobering is such a message. We must warn people of the impending doom they face if they continue in sin, away from God. Preachers, teachers, and church leaders should especially view these passages with great concern. How sobering to think that someone might be lost because of our failure to warn them of their sinful condition or practice. May God help us all to realize the seriousness of being watchmen over others. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804 rf Wade@mchsi.com)

LESSONS FROM EPHESUS

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"Thou Hast Found Them Liars"

The congregation had also put some false men to the test. There were some who had claimed to be apostles but the brethren were suspicious and when they tested the men they found them to be frauds. It has always been of interest to me that when this testing was finished, the false "apostles" were said to be liars! When we find out a fellow has been fraudulent regarding the church, he ought not to just be called on anyway. He should not be allowed to simply move to another congregation either. He has been lying and there should be no "ifs," "ands," or "buts" about it. Discipline is in order here just as it was in Ephesus. The men were branded liars. Now, we know that would not have been the case if they had admitted their sin and made things right with the Lord. The Bible would have recorded their conduct much differently had they been repentant. They presented themselves as something they were not and they were, apparently, too stubborn to admit their deception. Is there not a good lesson for all here?

Rejected the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans

They also hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans according to verse 6. The Lord complimented them for that because He said He also hated their deeds. It is believed that the people spoken of here were disciples of a man called Nicholas who taught that the sexual or physical passions of the human family were perfectly honorable since we were created with them as a part of our physical makeup. He argued that since that was the case it would not be sin to engage in any thing one desired. This sounds very much like the cry of those who argue for homosexual acceptance, etc. today. They say that God has made us all what we are and that our passions came from Him in our genetic code. It is completely false, however, because those who are heterosexual (prefer the opposite sex) are also forbidden to engage in intimate activity with the opposite sex outside of marriage. Fornication is forbidden in any number of passages. Homosexuality is a sinful practice period. There is no place for it to be found acceptable in the Word of God anywhere. We know from this passage in Revelation,

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following article by Brother Paul Nichols appeared in the March 1942 issue of the *Old Paths Advocate*, the first from his pen to appear in print. At the time he was a young twenty years of age. Upon graduating from high school Paul left on a preaching tour and has been preaching ever since. He was the first of our preachers to venture into foreign work, going to Africa (currently Malawi) where he helped establish and ground the work that continues there today. Since then he has preached in a number of foreign countries as well as in a greater part of the United States. Currently he resides in the Kansas City area where he works with the 79th and Kansas Ave. church in Kansas City, KS. Through the years he has published articles in this paper as well as others.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Thus comes the teaching of the beloved Apostle Paul found in Rom. 8:6. At one time the man who wrote this was the “chief of sinners.” And if anyone should be able to give such teaching, it certainly would be one who had roamed in sin for as long as Paul did. To be carnally minded simply means to be fleshly minded; and he tells us plainly that it is death to be carnally minded.

Again in Rom. 8:13, the Apostle Paul says, “For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.” If we are going to have the mind of Christ, we are going to have to mortify the deeds of the body that are carnal. And if we are to keep our deeds from being carnal, we are going to have to incorporate the word of God in our every-day lives.

If we have the mind of Christ, what will our minds be dwelling on? Will we be thinking of new ways and devices of making more and more money so we will have a large sum to draw from in our old age, or will we be thinking of ways to send the gospel to the people of this lost and dying world? Will we be thinking about ways of pleasing our neighbors and friends, or will we be thinking of how we can please our omnipotent Heavenly Father? And if we are spiritually minded what will our conversation be like? Will we always be speaking of world events and world conditions, or will we discuss scriptures as well as the things that are taking place in the world? Christ said in Matt. 12:34, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” If a person never speaks of things pertaining to life and godliness, of course you naturally get the idea that he doesn’t think much about those things.

In Col. 1:10 we read, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every

good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Yet there are some in the body of Christ who claim to be living the Christian life who have increased either not at all or very little in the knowledge of God. Do these people believe that the knowledge that the writer was speaking of in this passage of scripture is a spiritual gift that one receives out in the corn-field, or in the cabbage patch? If not what is wrong with these people? How can a person possibly have the mind of Christ if he knows nothing of Christ?

Knowledge is one of the graces that Peter tells the Christian to add to his faith in 2 Pet. 1. Solomon said that, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” (Prov. 1:7). If you would increase and grow in the knowledge of God, fear the Lord first, and then go to work and study. What must you study? Study the word of God; it’s there that the knowledge of God is revealed.

“They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:5). Then if we have the mind of Christ, we must be minding the things that pertain to Christ and his kingdom. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2). The only way we can serve God acceptably is to be transformed by the renewing of our minds and not be conformed to this world. The trouble with so many people is that they want to be both transformed and conformed at the same time. But James said, “A double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways.” (Jas. 1:8).

The Christian life is either worth living wholeheartedly or not at all. We ought to instill the importance of having the mind of Christ in the heart of every one who is a member of the body of the Savior, so that nothing could remove it.

OUR LONG HOME

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death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). David assures us that “Weeping may endure for a night, but Joy cometh in the morning (Psa. 30:5) And the song writer captures the tenor of scripture in its entirety by declaring that “Earth has no sorrow that heav’n cannot heal.”

On judgment day the Lord will say, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . And these shall go away . . . into life eternal” (Matt 25:31, 46) John Newton had it right when he wrote:

“When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun.
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we first begun.”

—1713 Savannah Dr., Fort Smith, AR 72901

BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER

By GREG GAY

Teachers are the backbone of every congregation. Time after time these men humbly serve the Lord by doing their best to explain God's wonderful truths to their local congregations when the church comes together for worship. Their great service is rarely recognized and often taken for granted.

Teachers have been necessary since the beginning of the church. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..." (1 Corinthians 12:27-28). Other passages that refer to teachers include Ephesians 4:11-16 and Romans 12:6-8.

Teachers in the early church.

Those who taught in the assemblies of the early church included the apostles and those men who had the gift of prophecy. "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1 Corinthians 14:31). Then and now, evangelists and elders were also required to teach (2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Timothy 3:2).

Others who taught in the early church were men who were not apostles, elders, or prophets and are simply called teachers. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers..." (Acts 13:1).

Adam Clarke describes these teachers as "persons whose ordinary office was to instruct the people in the Christian doctrine" (Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by BibleSoft).

Scripture authorizes teaching in worship. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them..." (Acts 20:7).

Teachers are to be listened to very seriously. All are told to "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7).

Barnes comments on the word "rule" that the word used here means properly "leaders, guides, directors." It is often applied to military commanders. Here it means teachers-appointed to lead or guide them to eternal life. It does not refer to them so much as rulers or governors, as teachers, or guides . . . The duty here enjoined is that of remembering them; that is, remembering their counsel; their instructions; their example" (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

Teachers in the assemblies of the church must be men.

Those who teach in the assemblies of the church are to be men. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Corinthians 14:34). "Let the woman learn

in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Teachers in the assemblies of the church must be faithful men.

All who teach in the worship of the church must be described by the following verse. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). This is God's plan for the continuance of the church till Jesus comes again.

Every generation of the church has the baton of truth to receive from the previous generation, to treasure, cautiously maintain, and then carefully hand off to the next generation. Every congregation is involved in the passing of the baton through all they do including the teaching from the pulpit.

Teaching the word of God to God's people is a sacred trust and should be considered a great honor and privilege. It should come as no surprise that God insists that the men sharing these truths are men who are reliable and worthy of trust.

Congregations make grave errors when they use men as teachers who are not reliable. We can say of such men that their behavior is so loud their words can scarcely be heard. Such teachers can only say "do as I say, but not as I do." That has never been God's intention for those who lead the church.

Jesus condemned this attitude in the Pharisees. "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:1-3). Faithful teachers can use the words of the Apostle Paul: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

How can a man become an effective teacher?

Every teacher should want to be able to perform the task of delivering a discourse competently and effectively. Paul told the brethren at Corinth who were eagerly seeking spiritual gifts that they should ". . . seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Corinthians 14:12). What follows are some suggestions for teachers to be effective in their work to help build up the church.

Consistence Attendance of worship.

A teacher can increase his effectiveness by being a good example in attending the worship services of the church.

The Lord commands and exemplifies necessary attendance at the weekly assembly that includes the Lord's supper and contribution (Hebrews 10:25, Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). This is the assembly we commonly call the Lord's Day morning service. Additionally, each congregation's leadership can convene more assemblies for the continued building up of the congregation (Acts 5:42). Since there is different authority for Lord's Day morning worship versus the other services the valid reasons for missing Lord's Day morning

worship are fewer than the valid reasons for missing the other services.

Lord's Day morning worship should not be neglected unless someone is hindered by events beyond their control. Those who teach must be above reproach in their attendance of Lord's Day morning worship and should want to be exemplary in their attendance of the other services.

We don't censure a brother who works the night shift and misses the evening services. But if the only time a brother attends Sunday evening or midweek services is when he is scheduled to have the lesson then he is exhibiting selfishness and disrespect toward God, the other leaders, and everyone in the congregation.

A Teacher must be a man of good morals.

One who speaks the words of life needs to lead a moral life. If a brother insists on leading an immoral life he has no business in the pulpit of the church. We are not told that he did, but imagine the brother in 1 Corinthians 5 as a teacher while he was being openly immoral. That is just repugnant. But, it is just as repugnant today for any brother who is involved in immorality over and over again to ascend the pulpit of the Lord's church to teach God's wonderful truths. It is possible for continued problems to so ruin a man's influence that his presence in the pulpit is not appropriate even though he has repented of his error.

Sometimes declining congregations have to make a choice between using speakers who really should not be teaching or ceasing to have Sunday evening or Wednesday evening services. While these services are wonderful to have I would rather see a congregation drop a service than to resort to using men to teach who lead inconsistent lives.

A Teacher must be willing to study the word of God.

Diligent reading, studying, and meditating upon the word of God should be a daily part of a teacher's life. Paul's instructions to the evangelist Timothy include "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2 :15).

The word study is "be diligent" in other translations and speaks of the great effort Paul expected Timothy to put into making sure he was correct in his knowledge and applications of the word of God. A man who would share God's truths with others must pay his dues to first learn them himself.

There are many great study helps that can aid us in our pursuit of knowledge of the Bible. I encourage the use of good study books but let us make sure we remember to read the Bible first! Peter reminds us that we are "born again . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1 :23).

One way to make sure the Bible is first and foremost is for a teacher have a goal to teach his way through the New Testament, book by book, verse by verse in his lifetime. Congregations are wise who insist that chapter

studies are an important part of their teaching. Then each generation of leaders can say with the Apostle Paul that the group has heard "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

A teacher must teach the truth.

It should go without saying that if a teacher insists on presenting false doctrine he must be taken off the list of approved speakers and the congregation warned against his teachings. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

Every brother can make mistakes in his teaching. Years ago a brother corrected me after the service for calling Luke an apostle. Those types of mistakes are easily corrected without consequence other than embarrassment. But if a teacher insists on continually teaching "contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. . ." (1 Tim 1:10-11 NASU) he cannot continue to teach the congregation till he repents and is proven faithful.

False doctrine

One way to detect false doctrine is to ask if what is being presented represents new and larger truths than are usually taught in the church. To discover new and larger truths than the generations before us may sound wonderful but it is highly unlikely to be correct.

For example, it is usual and customary for our teachers to present salvation is by grace and that our required response to God's grace is our continued obedience to every known applicable Biblical truth. It is not usual however for our teachers to present that salvation is by grace and that God's grace excludes the need for any obedience on our part.

The difference between the two statements about grace may seem slight but in the latter case the teacher needs to be set down and the congregation warned to avoid his teachings. The second statement when carried to its logical conclusion will lead straight to denominationalism where such things are taught routinely. Even though this may sound new and exciting to some of our people the ultimate conclusion of such teaching can only lead to disastrous results if not checked.

Some may think this is making a mountain out of a molehill but there are areas of the country where congregations have been shattered in years gone by as dear brothers and sisters in Christ have turned their backs on the truth and embraced these new liberties they have supposedly found.

Errors of this type are not new. One error refuted in New Testament books was the error of Gnosticism which comes from the Greek word for knowledge, gnosis. "The Gnostics believed that knowledge was the way to salvation. For this reason, Gnosticism was condemned as false and heretical by several writers of the New Testament. These Gnostic teachings also had a disruptive

effect on fellowship in the church. Those who were “enlightened” thought of themselves as being superior to those who did not have such knowledge” (from Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright (c)1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers).

Anytime a congregation sets itself apart in the brotherhood as the only place that really understands these new truths they are headed in a direction that is very, very dangerous. Such promotes an elitism that allows sin to grow and flourish under the very noses of those who think they are only doing God’s will.

Paul told Timothy “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they hear to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3).

The responsibility of teaching.

Often well meaning leaders ask brand new Christians to start teaching almost immediately after conversion. While it is intended as a compliment and encouragement it is unlikely the new convert will be able to contribute much to building others up and will likely be harmed himself.

Even the new converts at Jerusalem stayed in town for a while after Pentecost to be taught before they were dispersed back to their homes to begin worshipping (Acts 8:1-4). Even though they were extremely knowledgeable of the Law of Moses the apostles still distributed spiritual gifts to be able to help the new Christians who did not have the advantage of the written words of the New Testament.

Today, new converts need to spend a lot of time learning before they think about spending any time teaching. The best possible presentation style can’t make up for a lack of knowledge. Just because a man is a wonderful leader in his industry does not mean he is ready to teach in the church. He may say a lot of motivational things, but God’s church is not built up with mere motivational speeches. Instead, it is actually harmed by those who would turn a worship service into a pep rally.

Once a man has spent a good deal of time, likely several years, proving he has a consistent, growing, spiritual life, then it will be time for the congregation’s leaders to consider him for teaching. A good way for new teachers to begin is by sharing a lesson with an older teacher. Sharing lessons is also a good way for large congregations with many teachers to be able to use more of the talent that the congregation is blessed to have.

Strict judgment for teachers.

Not every male member should be expected to become a teacher. “My brethren, be not many masters (teachers, NKJV), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation” (James 3 :1).

There are at least two ways teachers are judged strictly. One will be in the final Day of Judgment. Jesus told the Pharisees:

“ . . . for out of the abundance of the heart
the mouth speaketh. A good man out of

the good treasure of the heart bringeth
forth good things: and an evil man out
of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

But I say unto you, That every idle word
that men shall speak, they shall give
account thereof in the day of judgment.
For by thy words thou shalt be justified,
and by thy words thou shalt be
condemned (Matthew 12 :34-37).

After all, when a man stands in the pulpit he is representing God to the hearers. What a tremendous responsibility!

Another way that teachers are judged strictly is an immediate judgment when the audience compares what they hear to what they know from the scriptures.

Audiences have an obligation to audit the teacher’s remarks no matter how uncomfortable it may be to the speaker. Years ago when I was just a teenager I had a monthly appointment to preach at a congregation. One dear older sister used to just look at me and shake her head from side to side as we shook hands on her way out. On one well-remembered occasion she stopped, looked me in the eye and said, “Better than usual.” I was thrilled!

Hearers must audit lessons for content first.

While presentation skills are important they are not as important as whether or not what is being said is true. Paul said regarding himself: “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:4). Basically Paul is saying he was not a persuasive speaker when he came to Corinth and it is likely no one was impressed with his great speaking ability. Yet, who would dare say Paul wasn’t one of the greatest teachers ever in the church?

For the opposite style of preaching Apollos likely comes to mind. The scripture says of him that he was “eloquent” and “mighty in the scriptures” (Acts 18:24).

Readers may find it somewhat surprising that while it is true that the word eloquent can mean that someone is a fluent and skilled orator Vines says the word “primarily meant learned” in Acts 18:24. He also adds “the RV is almost certainly right in translating it “learned.” It was much more frequently used among the Greeks of one who was erudite than of one who was skilled in words. He had stores of “learning” and could use it convincingly (from Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers).

Teachers need to avoid extreme emotionalism lest the audience grow accustomed to needing a lot of emotion to think their worship is acceptable.

Emotion coming from truth is wonderful, because it will always be properly contained. Emotion for emotion’s sake leads to needing excitement regardless of truth. Such is addictive and harmful to the church. A false doctrine

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Announcement

SPANISH FORK, UTAH

The faithful Church of Christ is now meeting each Lord's Day at 10:30 a.m. in the home of Bruce and Betty Orr, PO Box 145, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660. If you are in the area, you will be welcome to worship with them. Please call for directions to their home (801) 873-3286. For more information you may also contact Ed Bullard, Rt. 1, Box 26, Tupelo, OK 74572 or call (580) 845-2239.

Our Departed

GREEN, ARNOLD - The church at Neosho, Missouri lost a long-time member when Arlie Arnold Green passed away on May 22, 2004. Arlie had suffered with various health problems for the last few years, and especially within the three months prior to his passing. Arlie was born in Konawa, Oklahoma on October 6, 1911, and he passed from this life at the age of 92 in Neosho. He was preceded in death by his wife, Marjorie Lankford Green, on October 8, 1996. Arlie is survived by 2 sons, 4 daughters, 16 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, and 8 great-great-grandchildren - most of whom still reside in the Southwest Missouri region (Neosho, Seneca, Joplin). The majority of those are faithful members of the churches in that region, so Arlie and Marjorie certainly made a significant impact on the growth of the church. My wife was one of the granddaughters, and I have been fondly associated with the Green family for over 20 years now. Those familiar with Neosho and surrounding congregations are most likely acquainted with the Greens, Owens, and Lankfords - most of whom are connected to Arlie or Marjorie. It was my honor to express a few words of comfort on behalf of Arlie and the family. He will be missed. - Dale Wellman

MORRIS, BERYL - was born Oct. 16, 1927 and passed away June 2, 2004 at the age of 76. She was a long time member of the Church of Christ at Indiana, PA. She was a loving mother and grandmother. Her two daughters, Mary Lou and Louise deserve to be commended for their untiring, loving care and devotion they gave their mother during her long illness. Beryl always attended church services regularly and enjoyed the Christian fellowship. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ronald Morris in 1997. Prior to his death, they enjoyed traveling to various gospel meetings. She was laid to rest at the Greenwood Cemetery at Indiana, PA. The large group of family, church members and friends that attended the service attested to the fact that she was well known and loved by all who knew her. She will be sadly missed. Eugene Lockard spoke words of comfort and hope to all who attended the service.

MILLER, LEROY - was born July 15, 1932 in Centrahoma, OK and died July 9, 2004. He was married to Loretta Frye on July 24, 1959 in Ada, OK. She preceded him in death on December 26, 1985. Leroy is survived by a daughter, Reta Kay Kovene and her husband Tom of Tulsa. Leroy is also survived by a sister Hazel Miller and a nephew Billy Teel of Purcell. Place of interment was Rosedale Cemetery in Ada. The writer attempted to speak words of comfort and warning to all. Leroy was a member of the Church in Ada. - Vaden Morgan

COZBY, VONDA - was born to Floyd and Ermal Ferrel in Sanger, California on March 6, 1938. She passed quietly from this life on the morning of July 24, 2004, surrounded by her husband and son. She was one of five children. She was married to Clinton Cozby on August 10, 1957. To this union were born three children. Tim Cozby, Tom Cozby, and Tandra Valadoa. There are five grandchildren, Alisha, Benjamin, Crystal, Kaley, and Hannah. Vonda was preceded in death by her parents, her brother Bernard, and her sister Wanda. Vonda was baptized into Christ at the age of 12, and remained a faithful member of the Church of Christ until her passing. She lived in the Fresno area most of her married life. The Lord blessed her with a full and happy life for all those who knew her. At her bedside her loving husband Clinton said this, "The Lord gave Vonda to me for 54 years, and now I am giving her back." The service was held at the grave side at Sanger Cemetery. I was honored by the request of the family to speak at the service. I did my best to speak a few appropriate words of comfort and hope to the crowd that had gathered. Steve Cozby led congregational singing that was very fitting for the occasion. - Geary Trent

BENTCH, JUANITA - Sister Juanita Bentch of the Cable Ridge congregation near Edwards, MO departed this life August 17, 2004 at the Lake of the Ozarks Hospital in Osage Beach, MO after an illness of several months. At the time of her passing she was nearly eighty-two years of age. Juanita was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother and above all an exemplary Christian. She and her husband Hugh were known for their unselfish hospitality. Their home was always home to the preachers who came there. Hugh is an Elder in the Cable Ridge church and Juanita was an asset not only to him, but the church as well. She will be greatly missed by the whole church, as well as by friends and relatives, and all who knew her. Juanita is survived by her husband Hugh, two daughters, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. May God bless this good family in their grief. The writer conducted the memorial service. - Ronny Wade

Our Departed cont.

HOPKINS - Edith Berniece Hopkins was born at Dora, MO September 21, 1934 and passed away August 19, 2004. Her parents were Elisha Howard and Iola Elliott Howard. She was married to Gene Dale Hopkins at Tulsa, OK, December 20, 1952. I met them soon after they were married and we were close friends through the years. Berniece studied her Bible as few women do. She had strong convictions and endeavored to live by them. She was a big help to Gene, and he depended greatly on her. Their home was one of hospitality, and they always made their guests feel welcome. When they built their house, one room was designated as the preacher's bedroom, and many preachers through the years made use of it. I was honored to be asked to conduct her memorial service assisted by Ronny Wade. The singing by fellow Christians was beautiful and well rendered. Berniece made all her own funeral arrangements, selecting the location, the officiants, and the pallbearers; preachers to bear the casket. She was preceded in death by her mother and father and one brother, Verlin Elliott, of Bakersfield, CA. She leaves to mourn her passing her husband, Gene; Loretta Jones, of Broken Arrow, OK; Marlet Howard, Dora, MO; Rozetta Howard, Tulsa, OK, three sisters-in-law, and a number of other relatives and friends. She will be missed by those who knew and loved her. - Paul O. Nichols

ALEXANDER - Clema Lucille Alexander won her victory over life on August 6, 2004, at the age of 90. Clema was a long time member of the Lord's church that meets in Niangua, Missouri, and was well known to those in the Springfield/Lebanon area. She was the mother of Ron Alexander, a faithful gospel preacher. Clema was preceded in death by her husband, Dempsey Alexander. Clema was a gentle soul who never had anything unkind to say. She constantly encouraged her children and grandchildren and exhibited the characteristics of a godly wife and mother as found in Proverbs 31. She was an enthusiastic quilter, loved baseball (especially her husband's semi-pro game), and everyone enjoyed the hospitality of her kitchen. Her gentle presence will be greatly missed by the members of the Niangua Church of Christ. She leaves behind a son, Ron Alexander and wife Carolyn of Marshfield, MO; a daughter, Linda Hannah of Marshfield, MO; and six grandchildren which include Beth Criswell and husband Mike of Kansas City, MO. It was my privilege, as a grandson-in-law, to be able to address a host of friends and family at the funeral service. A special word of thanks to all those of the church who were so very kind to us in our time of loss.
- Mike Criswell

BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER

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presented with excitement is still false. The dullest presentation of the truth is still true. Paul said "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). The word decently means their worship was to be conducted decorously, in a seemly manner.

Presentation style

That does not mean that a persuasive style of teaching is incorrect but it does mean that the message content is more important than the style of presentation.

A teacher should not distract from the truths he is teaching by his style of presentation. The message of a teacher is not about the teacher, it is about God's great truths. If he is too loud or too soft, if he paces, if he has poor use of words, if he repeats certain words like hum or ah between every thought, if he is crude or uses suggestive innuendo's, etc., etc., then his listeners can easily be so distracted by the messenger that they will fail to hear the message.

Personality reflections in teaching.

A man does not cease to be who he is just because he stands in the pulpit. Individuals who are naturally persuasive in their demeanor will teach the same way. Others who are more naturally authoritative in their demeanor will be prone to just tell us what we need to do. Some will love to dig into minute, microscopic details in their lessons while others will gravitate to broad, overview concepts.

There is no "best" way to present the scriptures. We need all of them. The different approaches to preaching may not appeal to us the same but we should never tire of hearing the same scriptures explained over and over again. Everyone can learn something from every teacher who is doing his best to explain God's truths to the best of his ability.

If the teacher does his part to prepare himself and his lesson then whether or not we get anything out of his lesson may well depend on who we are when we walk through the door. If we are there to hear the word of God explained and to think about ways to apply God's truths to our life then the lesson will likely be helpful to us.

If the lesson is on the basic doctrines of the church that we may have heard hundreds of times before remember, that is the point. We need to hear them again and again.

In fact, when a congregation's teachers stop teaching the plain, simple doctrinal truths of the church problems will eventually erupt in those very areas that have been neglected.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).

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LESSONS FROM EPHEBUS*continued from page three*

then, that the Lord does not agree with such false teaching.

What Was Wrong At Ephesus?

Jesus said Ephesus had left their "first love." (Revelation 2: 4) Please notice that He didn't say they had drifted away in doctrine or teaching. They obviously had not digressed from the truth we read today. There is absolutely no indication that their worship had changed as far as what they actually did during the worship. We may be sure that instrumental music had not been added. The Lord's Supper apparently had been left as we read it today with one loaf and one cup. There was undoubtedly no "Missionary Society," or any other innovation with which we are familiar today among the religious world. No reason to believe they had gone into "left field" in any particular matter. No, they had just left their first love. They still did everything right, as far as the item was concerned but it meant entirely too little to them! Their love had waned. The church was no longer as dear to them as it had once been.

What is "first love?" It appears logical that first love would be characterized by "first works," in verse 5. Jesus commands that they go back and do the first works! If they do not, He promises to remove the candlestick. This just indicates that the church would cease to exist at some point. One thing is certain, and that is that there is no vestige of the church left there today. The area seems void of the Bible way.

It seems plausible that their first love would be much as ours today. When one is first baptized, he is energized to the maximum. He wants to attend every service of the church. He will drive far to attend a gospel meeting and not neglect his Bible reading and study. Every area of his life has been affected by his obedience to the gospel. He will put aside recreation, sports, games or whatever it might be in order to give his full attention and fervor to the church. Later, however, that may change for some members. They grow cold and indifferent. They would rather go to a ballgame than hear a gospel sermon, perhaps. Now, they would never allow the worship to be changed! While they choose to miss the midweek or Sunday evening services; they would never agree that those services should simply be dropped. They want somebody to attend, anybody, as long as it isn't themselves. They have more important things to attend, etc. What's the problem? They have left their first love. In the case of Ephesus, it seems the most of the church was caught up with that problem. Jesus promised that He would not always continue to be patient with them. Someday soon, unless they repented and did the first works, He would remove their candlestick out of its place. Today, the candlestick is gone. The Lord has been true to His word. Is there a lesson for us here?

Think on these things. -DLK

Field Reports

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Grosshaven, Houston, TX 77015 - June and July were busy months for me. I held six meetings in eight weeks. First, I was in Cable Ridge, MO and I always love to preach for those wonderful folks. Tim and Tammy Thomas kept me in their home and their hospitality, as well as that of all the brethren. was wonderful. Next, I was in Birmingham for the first time in many years with the congregation at Irondale. If fact, Sister Howell gave me a copy of a picture she had taken 25 years ago on the front steps of the church when I held a meeting way back then. There I stand, a little bit younger, with Judy and our four little ones all smiling as if we had not a care in the world. Ah, the good old days! The brethren in Birmingham love to sing and they have some of the best singing I have heard in a good while. I made my home with Don and Patty Osborn who I learned to love and appreciate when they lived in Houston. During the meeting Harlan Howell and I went to visit Joe Bass in Temple. Joe has been a steady guide at the Temple congregation for many a year and we pray the Lord will bless him during his present illness. My next meeting was at Dothan, AL where I found an active and zealous group of brethren. It was good to be with Kevin Presley who is well respected in South Alabama. Also, Larry Parker came and stayed for the entire meeting. Larry and I have been friends since I was a teenager and I love and admire him as much as anybody in our brotherhood. I made my home with Troy and Sabrina Spradley and I have not stayed in a more impressive Christian home. Pleasant Hill, MO was my next stop where I have preached more times than I count through the years. The home of Clayton and Joyce McDavitt is one of my favorite places to stay on this earth. They are like family to me and their home is my home. I think that only eternity will show how many have been influenced for good by the perseverance of this congregation. My next meeting was in Springfield, MO (Mission Hills) and how impressed I was with this congregation. They are blessed with some strong older brethren, but they also have some young men who are able, wise, and deeply concerned about the spread of the gospel. Ronny Wade was away in meetings of his own and we missed him. It was good to be associated with several other preachers during the meeting whom I will not name for fear of overlooking someone. I had the added pleasure of staying with Billy (my brother of course) and Judy. It is always fun when he and I can spend some time together. I really do not know of any man who is more knowledgeable about the scriptures than Billy. I certainly know of no one who is more dedicated to the defense of the truth! What a joy to be with him and Judy! Finally, I was in Valliant, OK where I stayed with John Tidmore. John loves the church and his influence is easily seen in

Valliant. He and I had some good talks about the dangers facing the churches in our brotherhood and the challenge we face for the coming generation. Again, it was good to be associated with preachers in the area. I am finally home and we have begun a meeting with Joe Hisle who is doing some good old fashioned preaching. I am enjoying it! May the Lord bless our brotherhood.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Sept. 5 - We held a meeting at Sentinel, OK July 11 - 18. I held my first meeting there in 1946, and have been there several times since. We enjoyed the meeting and the association with the brethren as always. We had digressive people attend the services several times. We also had visitors from out of town. The congregation made Wilma and me feel welcome as usual. That congregation is doing much for the cause of Christ in Africa. They are to be commended. I spoke once at the recent study held at Aurora, MO. It was good to see fellow preachers and other brethren there. Sept. 19 - 26, I am to be at Blue Springs, KY for a meeting. We will be associated with Brother Zade McClure, who has a great influence for good in that area. Oct. 17 - 24, the Lord willing, we will be at a meeting at Lexington, OK. Please pray for our efforts, and may the Lord bless the brotherhood.

Douglas T. Hawkins, 3711 Castlewood Ct., Somerset, KY 42503, (606) 678-4347, douglast@alltel.net, Aug.8, 2004 - At the time of this writing I'm preparing for the final day of our meeting in Strong, AR. It's been a joy to be among these brethren again and to see the progress that they are making. Several good things have happened since I was here last. It's easy to see the momentum that they have going. I appreciate these brethren very much and always enjoy being with them. The summer has been busy and over the last few months I have been in Duncanville, TX and Henryetta, OK. Our prayer is of course that good was done in each place. I've enjoyed the company of several preachers over the summer and thank them everyone for their work's sake. Bro. Wayne Mckamie held our meeting at Blue Springs and encouraged us greatly with his timely preaching. We next are looking towards Paul Nichols' meeting in September. Before coming to Strong, I was with the brethren at 84 Hwy for our leadership study. While in the area, I was able to hear Bro. Kevin Presley at New Salem, MS. There is not anyone that I love and admire any more than him. My schedule for the remaining part of the year includes Mt. Home, AR (Sep. 12-19); Bunner's Ridge, WV (Oct.8-10); Brumley, MO (Oct.13-17); Fossil Creek, TX (Oct.24-31); and Fayetteville, OH (Nov.7-14). We pray the Lord's blessings to be with all of his children.

Brett Hickey, 208 Crosshaven Court, Antioch, TN 37012, (615) 501-9246, brett-louisehickey@juno.com, September 10 - Since last reporting we have been bolstered by meetings with the faithful in Stockton, CA, Lawrence, KS, Salem, OR, and Harrisonville, MO. The Mason's, Denton's, and Wilsey's opened their homes to us. I was glad to work with Justin Owen. While in Lawrence, we picked up some evangelistic tools that we've begun to implement at home. Dennis Wilsey and the Salem brethren prepared extensively for their meeting and we were glad to share in the harvest. The building was packed almost every service including 17 different "cups" brethren from the area. Several of them came several times. The support from the Northwest congregations was incredible. We were also blessed to share in a leadership study in Bandy, KY. I appreciate the desire among younger and older brethren in the area to grow for the kingdom's sake. I was glad I could attend the 4th of July meeting in Lebanon and the TN Labor Day meeting. It was a pleasure to have one of Turlock, CA's fine young men spend the summer with me. Wayne Turner wants to preach and did all I asked and more to help him move in that direction. Each congregation we were at spoke highly of Wayne. Our meeting with Barney Owens shook us up in Nashville - and we're the better for it. Michael recently preached for us and we anticipate a great meeting with newlywed Cullen Smith November 3 - 7. We have had several conversions in Nashville since last writing. Some of these are making great strides. We have had a surge of spiritual growth and evangelistic involvement in recent months and expect to gain even greater participation as we mature as a united body (Eph. 4:11-16). I leave for a meeting in Collins, MS in a week and look forward to our meeting in Lawrenceburg (Springer Rd.) October 22 - 24. We preach at Birmingham in January.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com, September 8 - We recently were invited to speak at the Western Preachers Study in Fair Oaks, CA regarding the hair in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. A nice crowd was present and a fine spirit prevailed. The California Labor Day meeting in Bakersfield (Brundage Lane congregation) was well attended and the preaching very good. Bennie Cryer held the meeting for Brundage Lane and did a fine job along with various preachers from the State. My understanding is that it will be at Oakdale next year. We stayed with Darrell and Gail Brewer and appreciated their hospitality very much. Johnny Elmore held Fremont's meeting this past month and it was well attended from various places. We appreciated the job he did. Lord willing, Billy Dickinson will hold our next one. We are to begin at Neosho, MO this coming Lord's Day for a week and later, in October, at La Grange, GA. We look forward to both of these meetings and pray God's blessings on them. It is time to ask for help once again with the foreign subscriptions. If you are willing to donate toward this expense, let us hear from you. Pray for us in the work.

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THE BACK PAGE...

CODES WORTH CRACKING

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Last year while waiting for my connecting flight in the Salt Lake City airport I was browsing in a bookstore and ran across a book that really caught my attention entitled, **The Da Vinci Code**, by Dan Brown. I have been a long-time fan of Leonardo Da Vinci and his famous works of art, including “the Mona Lisa” and “The Last Supper,” so I picked up a copy of the book and began to thumb through it. I soon discovered the book has little to do with the actual works of Da Vinci, but is a work of “historical fiction” claiming Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, that they had children, and that their lineage is still in existence today. The book claims Da Vinci knew of Jesus’ biological lineage, that he helped protect these descendents during his lifetime, and left codes that would ensure the secret of the Holy lineage would be kept and passed down from generation to generation. The book also claims Mary Magdalene is the true identity of the “Holy Grail.” I thought to myself in irony, “That’s all we need—another Bible code book to titillate the fancy of our postmodern society.” I put the book back on the shelf and caught my flight.

Since that day the book has become a runaway best seller and has clearly struck a nerve with many readers. It has been on the **New York Times** bestseller list for a year, has been number-one on Amazon.com’s sales list, and has generated numerous online chat groups discussing the book. In view of the book’s success, a movie is certain to follow. But when brethren from around the country began asking me what I think about the book, I figured I ought to get it and read it for myself.

The book is a very well written thriller. It is as good a page-turner as any novel on the market today. The chapters are short and leave you hanging in suspense at the end of each one. I can see why it has such an impact upon its readers and why it might weaken the faith of anyone who is Biblically illiterate and ignorant of church history. I agree with the proposition that if you can come up with conspiracy theory, withhold much of the evidence, and implicate a major institution such as the church, you have the makings of a potent mix. This proposition is true especially in a culture already obsessed with conspiracy theories, whether they are about the government, the church, or anything else.

Certainly the book would not be as intriguing if it were presented as a work of pure fiction. It begins, however, with a page entitled, “FACT,” claiming that “all descriptions of . . . documents . . . in this novel are accurate.” This statement, however, is simply not true. For example, Brown’s claim that the earliest historical documents portray Jesus as a simple man and that it was not until the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. that Jesus was finally declared to be divine is laughable. Such claims, however, give many readers the impression the novel is based upon sound historical research and give the book a veneer of credibility. The truth is the book is closer to pure fiction than it is to fiction based upon historical fact.

In recent months there has been a plethora of books published debunking the claims made on the “FACT” page by author Brown, so I do not feel compelled to refute them here. Strangely, though, in the midst of Brown’s mishmash of myths and misinformation, there is one statement that jumps out at me and resonates as being absolutely true. When one of the characters in the story is asked how many drinking glasses are on the table in Da Vinci’s painting of “The Last Supper,” she replies, “One cup. Jesus passed a single chalice...just as modern Christians do at communion” (236). While the character is mistaken about the number of cups in Da Vinci’s painting, she is correct about the number of cups Jesus passed to His disciples as He instituted the Communion—one.

The New Testament says, “And he took the cup...” (Mt. 26:27, Mk. 14:23, Lk. 22:20). Paul exhorts the Corinthians to “keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you” (I Cor. 11:2), and apparently the earliest Christians did just that. Church leaders such as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Cyprian, Chrysostom, and Augustine, who lived in the interval between the first and fifth centuries wrote about one cup being used in the Lord’s Supper.

One definition of the word “code” is, “a system of symbols, letters, or words given certain arbitrary meanings.” Using that definition there are many symbols or codes worth cracking in the Bible. Check into the meaning of such symbols as the rainbow, circumcision, the cross, baptism, unleavened bread, the cup of the Lord, and the fruit of the vine. As thrilling as Brown’s book is, it cannot hold a candle to the thrill of discovering the meanings of these symbols because in them you can unravel the secret to the mystery of eternal life.

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Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things: hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations: and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 11

ENTERTAINMENT RELIGION

BY STANLEY R. OWENS

Jesus said in (Jn. 4:24) "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Many today want to fight apathy and materialism in the Church by feeding people's appetite for entertainment. Jumping on the show-business bandwagon is a troubling trend that is luring the Church away from Biblical priorities. Church buildings are being constructed like concert halls. Instead of a pulpit, the focus is a stage. Some feature massive platforms that revolve or rise and fall with colored lights and large sound systems. Leaders of congregations are giving way to media specialists, programming consultants, stage directors, special effects experts, and choreographers. The idea is to give the audience what they want. Tailor the service to whatever will draw a crowd. As a result, preachers are more like politicians, looking to appeal to the public rather than giving what is needed. The congregation is served a professional show, where drama, pop music, and a soft-sell sermon constitute the worship service. The emphasis is on entertainment rather than worship, and that is not what Jesus had in mind. Underlying this trend is the notion that the Church must sell the Gospel to unbelievers. Churches accordingly compete for the consumer on the same level as Frosted Flakes or Coca-Cola. More and more, congregations are relying on some type of marketing strategy to sell the Church that Jesus Christ purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28).

Many imagine that if one packages the Gospel right, people will obey it. It views conversion as nothing more than an act of human emotion. Its goal is an instantaneous decision rather than a fundamental change of the heart. This whole corruption of Christianity presumes that Church services are primarily for recruiting unbelievers. Many are abandoning worship, while others have abandoned straight preaching to some small group setting on a weeknight. We're missing the point. (Heb. 10:24-25) says:

"and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." I'm not implying that the Plan of Salvation should never be taught when the congregation comes together, for we all need to be reminded of that from time to time. But if that is all we teach, we are failing to declare "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), we are being slothful about giving the congregation the diet of "meat" that it so desperately needs (Heb. 5:12-14).

We Are To Go To The World

(Acts 2:42) shows us the pattern the early Church followed when they met. It was clearly to worship God and to edify the congregation. Worship and edification; it dispersed to evangelize the world. Our Lord commissioned His disciples for evangelism in (Mt. 28:19) where He said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,". Christ makes it clear that the Church is not to wait for a Gospel meeting to come around to invite the world. We are to go to the world. That is a responsibility for every Christian. I realize that everyone is not able to preach or teach in a public manner, but we can all try to instruct those of the world in private. I fear the idea that a gospel presentation within the walls of the church building, absolves the individual from his personal obligation to be a light in and to the world (Mt. 5:16).

We Don't Need To Find Creative Or Innovative Ways To Present The Gospel

We have a society filled with people who want what they want, when they want it. They are into their own lifestyle, recreation, and entertainment. When congregations appeal to those selfish desires, they only fuel that fire and hinder true Godliness. Some of these congregations are growing exponentially while others that do not entertain are struggling. Many want numerical growth and so they are buying into the entertainment-first philosophy. Consider what this does to the Gospel. Some will maintain that if Biblical principles are presented, the

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Editorial

**DEGENERATE WOMANHOOD -
THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN**

By **JERRY DICKINSON**

“Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of Jehovah, all Judah and all that are in the land of Egypt: thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: ye and your wives have spoken with your mouths, and with your hands have fulfilled it, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her; establish then your vows, and perform your vows.” (Jeremiah 44:24,25) These sad and tragic words were spoken by Jeremiah to the remnant of people who had fled to Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.

This return to Egypt, of course, was in outright disobedience to the word of the Lord as proclaimed by Jeremiah. Jeremiah had prophesied that Jerusalem would fall and when it did many Jews were carried into captivity by the Babylonians. Gedaliah was appointed governor over the cities of Judah and Jeremiah counseled the people to submit to the rule of the Babylonians. Instead, Gedaliah was murdered and the people fled to Egypt, taking the protesting Jeremiah along with them. “They came into the land of Egypt; for they obeyed not the voice of Jehovah. . .” (Jer.43:7) Thus the descendants of Abraham returned to Egypt after nine hundred years. Nine centuries earlier God had, with a high hand and outstretched arm, delivered them from the yoke of Pharaoh, but now they return, a remnant of exiles, fleeing in fear and rebellion, the very act of their coming to Egypt one of definite disobedience to the most recent message of the prophet of God.

Even more inexplicably tragic was the fact that this remnant in Egypt persisted in idolatrous worship. They were worshipping and making offerings to Astarte, the so called queen of heaven, a female fertility goddess. This seems to have been an ongoing sin in Judah throughout the time of Jeremiah’s preaching, and really was the root cause of the fall and desolation of the kingdom of Judah. In Jeremiah 44 we have the last prophecy of Jeremiah to these people and it is a sad and terrible word. In response to Jeremiah’s denunciation of their idolatrous practices, the people in essence declare that they have vowed to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and they are going to keep that vow no matter what the cost. Jeremiah answers by telling them to go ahead and perform what you have vowed, but be assured that the doom and desolation that will follow will be swift and complete.

Perhaps the most striking and remarkable element revealed in this story, however, is the fact that the women participated in open defiance of the word of God. As a matter of fact, this participation by women is referred to more than once in the Book of Jeremiah. There is an eye

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: (1) Is asking God to bless the bread and cup the same as giving thanks for them? (2) Does the cup on the communion table represent the new testament ratified by the blood of Christ? (3) Does the cup on the communion table represent the blood of Christ shed to ratify the new testament?

Answer: (1) Serving at the table of the Lord is both an important and serious function. Those who undertake this task need to proceed with care and in harmony with the instructions given us in the scriptures. Unfortunately some seem to overlook what the scriptures have to say about how both Jesus and Paul address this topic. Their instructions are clear and concise. One cannot go wrong saying what the scriptures say, and doing as they instruct. We are told in Mt.26:26-27 "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said "take eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying "drink from it all of you." Luke 22:19-20 "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, "This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. Likewise he also took the cup after supper saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you." Paul in 1 Cor.10:16-17 says "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Two accounts tell us that Jesus took bread and "blessed" it (Mt.26:26; Mark 14:22); and Paul speaks of the "cup of blessing which we bless" (1Cor.10:16). There is no evidence that Jesus or the early Christians asked the Father to "bless the bread," neither should we. It was Jesus who blessed the bread, and it is "we" who "bless the cup." This is done by giving thanks for it (Luke 22:19). Both Matthew and Mark say that Jesus "blessed" the bread of the Lord's supper and gave "thanks" for the cup. The two expressions seem to be used interchangeably. In our prayers at the table we need simply to give thanks for the bread and cup of blessing. If we choose to say more about the Lord's death and suffering, this thanksgiving should not be overlooked or neglected.

(2) According to Jesus in Luke 22:20 "Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you." and Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:25 "In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

This do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me," the cup (containing wine) is said to be an emblem of the new covenant. On page 15 of his Lexicon J.H. Thayer says "Moreover, since Christ's dying blood served to establish new religious institutions and a new relationship between men and God, it is likened also to a federative or covenant sacrifice: the blood by the shedding of which the covenant should be ratified, Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24 or has been ratified, Heb. 10:29; 13:20 (cf. 9:20) add, 1Cor.11:25; Luke 22:20 (in both which the meaning is, "this cup containing wine, an emblem of blood, is rendered by the shedding of my blood an emblem of the new covenant), 1 Cor.11:27. Hence, the answer to part (2) of the question is yes.

(3) No, the cup on the communion table is not the blood, nor does it represent the blood of Christ, and to so affirm is to claim what Jesus did not, and say what the sacred account does not. It is the fruit of the vine in the cup that represents the blood of Christ. Jesus said of the fruit of the vine in Mt. 26:28 "this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

(Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804 or e-mail to rfwade@mchsi.com)

ENTERTAINMENT RELIGION

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medium or manner does not have a relevance. That is utter nonsense. Why not have a real carnival? A decorated knife thrower who juggles chain saws could do his thing while someone shouts out a few Bible verses. Sadly, we know this would draw a crowd because it is not too far different from what is actually being done in some places. We are on the road to cheapening and corrupting the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul reminds us in (1Cor. 1:21) "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe". We don't need to find creative or innovative ways to present the Gospel. We need to harmonize our methods with the profound spiritual truths that we are trying to convey. We must not trivialize the Word of God. Let us not be quick to embrace the trends of the high tech super-churches. Clever approaches are not needed, we simply need to get back to preaching the truth and planting the seed. If we're faithful in that, the soil that God has prepared will bear fruit. May each of us be encouraged to proclaim the Truth as it is written, and let us never give in to the feel-good-entertainment philosophy found in man's religion. - 8432 Cox Rd., West Chester, OH 45069

FRIENDLY FIRE?

BY GLEN OSBURN

It was disheartening news. Pat Tillman, age 27, was killed April 22 (2004) while leading his team of Army Rangers up a remote southeastern Afghanistan hill to knock out enemy fire. Who is Pat Tillman? Pat Tillman was a professional football player for the National Football League's Arizona Cardinals. He became a patriotic icon to many by giving up his \$3.6 million contract as a starting safety for the Cardinals to become an Army Ranger, following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The month after Pat Tillman's death, *The Arizona Republic* reported some even more demoralizing news. The newspaper read, "Pat Tillman. . . likely was killed by friendly fire, an Army investigation has concluded" (*The Arizona Republic*, May 29, 2004).

What is "friendly fire?" Throughout history in the heat and confusion of battle soldiers have inadvertently attacked their own troops, thinking they were engaging the enemy. These misguided attacks are called "friendly fire." History has shown that wherever there is conflict, there is friendly fire.

In U. S. history, one of the noted examples of "friendly fire" is Stonewall Jackson, who was killed during the civil war (May 10, 1863). It is speculated that his death changed the outcome of the war. The death of this military leader makes obvious that "friendly fire" can take down the experienced leader as well as the young soldier. Anyone can become a victim of "friendly fire." In Vietnam it was estimated that close to 6,000 were killed or wounded by friendly fire.

The Bible's history records that God, through Gideon, used "friendly fire" to bring about a great victory for Israel. The Midianites and a number of allies, which together "were as numerous as locusts" (Judges 7:12), encamped against Israel. When Gideon and the three hundred with him broke their pitchers (under which were torches) and cried out, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon," and ". . . blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp" (Judges 7:22 NKJV). The Midianites, in their fear and confusion, attacked and destroyed themselves. They lost their own battle through "friendly fire."

Regrettably, the same phenomenon is also found in spiritual warfare. Sometimes Christians become confused and believe they are battling an enemy when in reality we are fighting those who are on the same side. Paul gave the church in Galatia a warning about spiritual friendly fire; "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" (Galatians 5:15 NKJV).

We, inadvertently, may pick up and swing our spiritual sword at anyone who would challenge us. Over time we may even develop the perspective that anyone who disagrees with us is our enemy, or a "spy" (Gal. 2:4) for the enemy. We develop this conviction because we sincerely believe we are on the Lord's side and know the truth; therefore, anyone who is not on "our" side must be

an enemy of God and not know the truth. Since we are "on" the Lord's side, they must be "off." How arrogant! How similar to the Jews of Jesus' day! (It leads to an attitude where we cannot be corrected unless we already suspect we may be wrong.) We must make sure the fight we're fighting is for the Lord, and not ourselves.

The Bible undeniably tells us to "examine everything carefully" (1 Thessalonians 5:21), but when doing this we must work at objectivity, not just react defensively. As an example of objectivity we often think of the Bereans who "were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17: 10-12 NKJV). In order to help us maintain our intellectual integrity, God demands that we "love" the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10), not just automatically defend our positions. To "love the truth" means we want the truth even if it costs us the embarrassment of being found wrong. To automatically react defensively to every question or disagreement is fleshly, unintelligent, immature and a symptom of pride.

Paul asked the Galatian church: "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16 NKJV). Paul anticipated their defensiveness and tried to say something that would stimulate their objectivity. Paul knew that their defensive way of thinking would lead them to feel that he was their enemy. Was Paul really the enemy? No! He was a brother in Christ trying to keep them from error; but their lack of humility and objectivity could lead them to view Paul as an enemy. Paul endured a lot of "friendly fire" from his own brethren. Some were afraid of Paul because of his previous reputation (Acts 9:26), but not all of Paul's problems were because of paranoia. Some attacked Paul because they were jealous or envious (Philippians 1: 15-17). Paul warns, "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:26). These motives are still around and can still bring about "friendly fire" attacks today as well.

In the heat of spiritual warfare, in order to keep ourselves from engaging in "friendly fire," we need to recognize some "rules of engagement."

First, we must have our facts straight. Let's not base our assault on gossip, hearsay, rumor, questioned motives, etc. It is a sin (the principle of Matthew 18:15) not to check out reports some give on "who believes what," especially if we are going to cite them for attack.

An Old Testament example of what could happen if we don't "check things out" is found in Joshua 22: 10-34. Joshua had just dismissed the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to go possess their land on the east side of the Jordan River (22:6). Just after they had crossed the Jordan, they built a large replica of the altar of sacrifice "that was before His tabernacle" (22:28-29). "When the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them" (22: 12 NKJV). Thankfully, before they went to war, they sent a

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JUDGE NOT?

By REGGIE KINSER

The passage Mathew 7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

The Denominational View

The denominational view of this passage tends to condemn all forms of judging. Verse one is often quoted by those who seek to avoid any kind of correction. The meaning of the passage is then twisted in order to make it teach that judging another person is wrong and therefore condemned by the Lord. Some will even go so far as to say that anyone who attempts to correct another person is a hypocrite because, after all, no one is perfect.

In recent years a similar view of this passage has become very popular even among some within the church of Christ. This writer has personally heard prominent teachers within our own ranks advocate false doctrine on this subject.

"How did Jesus know that *all correctors* would have a plank in their eye?", asked one teacher of his audience. "Judging is almost always depicted in a negative way in the scripture," said another. The truth of the matter is each of these statements is false and gives credence to the denominational misconception of this passage.

Jesus never said "all correctors would have a plank in their eye." Those who propagate this error sometimes point to Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Their reasoning says that since all have sinned, all have a plank in their eye; therefore no one has the right to judge. In reality this teaching contradicts what Jesus actually taught.

In verse 5 Jesus said, "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." The words of Jesus prove that it is possible to have a clear/good eye when endeavoring to assist a brother who has sin in his life. Although all of us have sinned, no Christian need live with sin in his life, especially large protruding sins like those represented by the plank. He who cares for his brother enough to correct him must first make correction in his own life lest he be guilty of *hypocritical* judgment. The suggestion that all correctors have a plank in their eye is foreign to the scripture. Consider the following:

1) If all correctors have a plank in their eye Paul

would never have commanded the Corinthian Christians to "judge" those who were within and "put away" the sinful brother (1Cor.5:12-13)?

2) If all correctors have a plank in their eye, Paul could not have corrected Peter without being a hypocrite. See Galatians 2:11-14 where Paul tells the account of how he withstood Peter to his face.

3) If all correctors have a plank in their eye Peter would have been wrong to correct Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8. There is no indication in scripture that Peter was wrong in his approach. In fact, Simon's response seems to indicate Peter's handling of the situation was right on target.

4) If all correctors have a plank in their eye, no one can correct anyone without being a hypocrite.

The conclusion is obvious - Jesus never taught that all correctors have a plank in their eye. What he did teach is the necessity of godly living. "First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Judging is not always depicted in a negative light in the scriptures

There are many places in God's word where Christians are required to judge the actions of others. Let us notice a few.

1) John 7:24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

2) 1 Cor. 5:12 "For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not Judge those who are inside?"

3) In 2 Cor.6:17 Christians are instructed to "separate" themselves from those who engage in evil. This command obviously requires judgments to be made, otherwise how could anyone conclude that another person is evil?

4) In Romans 16:17 we are commanded to "mark those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them." Obviously, there would be no way to carry out this command without the ability to make sound and righteous judgments.

The above scriptures and others prove that making *righteous judgments* is the responsibility of every Christian. In fact, the Christian who fails to make sound judgments does not fulfill his responsibility to himself, his brethren or the Lord. The truth is, corrective judging is often depicted as a positive and constructive force in the lives of God's true people.

What is "the plank"?

Some have described the plank, or beam, as a telephone pole. What person with a splinter in his eye would seek an optometrist with a telephone pole in his eye to remove it?

Although this imagery makes the illustration vivid, it falls short of explaining the meaning behind it. The question is: What does the plank represent? Contrary to the denominational view, "the plank" is

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DEGENERATE WOMANHOOD

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opening passage in Jer. 7:17,18 where the Lord asks, "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger." Here we see the participation of the whole family, men, women, and even children in idolatrous worship. In Jeremiah 9:17-20 the prophet calls upon the women to wail and lament the ruin and calamity that has swept through Judah. It seems apparent that he calls on the women to lament because they were the leaders in the idolatry that was rampant in the streets of Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, in Jer. 44:15 we learn that all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to the queen of heaven came to Jeremiah, with their wives, and they plainly and bluntly tell Jeremiah that they are going to keep on burning incense. Not only that, but the women seem to be the ones doing the talking, because in Jer. 44:19 these women answer Jeremiah's charges that they have been the leaders in idolatry by sarcastically asking, "Do you think we have poured out our offerings to the queen of heaven without the knowledge and consent of our men?" This is when Jeremiah finally responds by saying, "You and your wives have spoken with your mouths that you will surely perform your vows to the queen of heaven. Go ahead and perform your vows!" In effect, Jeremiah says, "I am finished arguing with you - and the Lord is done with you too!"

Again I want to reiterate that perhaps the most striking element in all this is the fact that the women not only participated in the rebellion, but actually seem to have been the leaders. What a picture we have here of degenerated womanhood! I still believe that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." I still agree with the adage that "women form the backbone of the church." When the communists took over Russia Lenin did his best to eradicate religion from the life of the Russian people. He smugly declared, "When the last grandmother in Russia is gone, then religion will be gone too!" Thank God there are still grandmothers in Russia, and no matter how hard the secular state tries to indoctrinate children, as long as there are mothers and grandmothers who will rock the cradle and whisper the truth into the ears of the children religion can never be eradicated.

But, what happens in a society where womanhood is degenerated? What happens when women become just as profane and vile and rebellious as men? I believe there is a reason that Paul specifically said that "women" are to adorn themselves in modest apparel in 1 Timothy 2:9. He did not specify men, but women. Please do not misunderstand - the Bible certainly teaches that men are to be modest and chaste in dealing with women. Having said that, why does Paul specify "women" in the passage about modest apparel? I believe it is because women

control and set the moral climate in any society and any situation. To put it another way, when women, in any society, are just as vulgar, coarse, and immodest as men, that society is doomed. Dear reader, that is precisely what happened to Judah - and it is precisely what is happening in our society today. And even more alarming, it is happening in many places in the church!

Isaiah had prophesied in earlier days to these same people, and his words are some of the sternest and severest in the entire Bible. "Moreover Jehovah said, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will lay bare their nakedness. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents; the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers; the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the rings and the nose jewels; the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels; the hand mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness: and instead of a girdle, a rope; and instead of well set hair, baldness; and instead of a robe, a girding of sackcloth: branding instead of beauty." (Isaiah 3:16-24)

If a man should preach like that today, what would happen? Those scorching words were called forth by degenerate women, even among God's people who were brazenly participating in, and in some instances, taking the lead in a wholesale digression from the true religion. Woe be the church where women step out of their God given roles and begin to seduce their men to lower the standards and battlements of the church, morally or doctrinally. The epistles of Paul are filled with references to women who were a blessing to Paul and his ministry, and to the Lord's church. These women, in their role and sphere, were no doubt a source of strength and comfort to Paul and other men who publicly led and cared for the church. Thank God for the women all around the world in churches today who motivate and encourage the men who are the public leaders of the churches. They are the backbone that keeps the body standing upright! Thank God for them, and may the Lord give us more strong, resolute Christian women in our churches.

Someone has said that when all the women in the world decide that there will be no more war, wars will cease. That statement recognizes the power and influence of women over men and over the coming generations. May the Lord deliver us from degenerate womanhood! Let us pray for women, especially in the church, who will exercise their immense power for the good of their men, their children, and the church of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

- Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015, Misterjld@msn.com.

FRIENDLY FIRE?

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delegation comprised of the chief of each of the ten tribes west of the Jordan and "Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest" (22: 13-14) to the tribes east of the Jordan to check things out.

At this meeting the western tribes accused the eastern tribes of building an altar "for themselves" (Joshua 22: 19) instead of honoring the one the Lord had designated for all Israel. Then the eastern tribes explained, that they had built it out of "... fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD.'" So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the LORD.' Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before Him... that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, "You have no part in the LORD"' (22:24-27 NKJV). In other words it was designed to remind those on both sides of the river that they were brethren serving the same God (22:28). This was pleasing to "... the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt (22:23 NKJV). The effort given to "check things out" averted a civil war between the children of God. The same thing holds true today. It is foolish to jump to conclusions and not check things out before we attack. "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (Proverbs 18:13 NKJV).

Second, we must remain objective. Remember when listening to others, "The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him" (Proverbs 18:17 NASB). Let's not allow others to emotionally whip us up into some form of "mob mentality" before we check things out. Proverbs 17:4 says, "An evildoer listens to wicked lips; a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue" (Proverbs 17:4 NASB). (Note that in 1 Corinthians 1: 11, Paul identifies who the accusers were. It would go a long way to keeping down gossip if we warned the talebearer that we were going to check out their accusation and name the one who told us, like Paul!)

Third, we must be able to recognize the enemy. At times we may attack allies because we don't recognize them. We may not be familiar with them, so we attack before we know who we are attacking. These may be genuine brethren from a different country and culture. Just because they do not use the same translation we use, use the same songbook we use, wear the same fashions we wear, and know the same people we know, does not mean that they do not know the Lord. A person can, through faith, obey the gospel and worship God in spirit

and truth and not know us personally. This applies to people within our own country as well.

Fourth, we must not engage in childish "sibling rivalry" in the church, this leads to civil war. Listen, the quickest way to lose the next generation is to criticize and belittle everyone in the church. When the children of these critics grow up they will likely have little respect for anyone in the church. They will not want to try anything in the service of the Lord, knowing they will be made fun of and scrutinized by those brethren who have constantly made fun of other brethren. This is "friendly fire." The very ones you would think would be the most encouraging to us can create our greatest apprehension. Isn't it a shame when we fear "friendly fire" more than we fear enemy fire? Are we afraid of some of our own brethren more than we are the enemy? Brethren, we have young Christians and sinners falling all around us while we take "pot-shots" at each other. Such things ought not to be. Does the Devil have us doing his work for him? Remember, a "house divided against itself will not stand" (Matthew 12:25; also Mark 3:25, Luke 11:17).

Rather than being a participant in "friendly fire" or being victimized by it, let's choose the high road, the road that faithful Christians walk. The Scriptures clearly teach that we should treat one another with honor and respect (Romans 12: 10). The Scriptures also teach us to love one another, bear with one another, forgive one another, regard one another as more important than ourselves, admonish one another, serve one another, bear one another's burden, submit to one another, encourage one another, etc.. Even when a brother is wrong, we are not given the option of suspending the attitudes that these many (over fifty) passages demand. We cannot use a brother's error to justify hatred and malice, etc., and continue to remain obedient to Christ.

In our effort to avoid friendly fire, we cannot, must not "stop the war"; however, we must develop the ability to discriminate between friend and foe. We absolutely must continue to "fight the good fight" (1 Timothy 6: 12), but we must be more careful as to whom we put into our "crosshairs." We must make sure we are fighting an enemy, not just "demonizing" an ally of Jesus to other brethren because he disagrees with our opinions.

We should want to be able to say, as Paul did, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7), without the regret of having committed acts of "friendly fire." Remember Jesus taught; "... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25 :40 NKJV). In the Day of Judgment we do not want to be found guilty of "friendly fire," for we would be found guilty of fighting "against God" (Acts 5:39). We will give an answer to the chief commander for those whom we have engaged in battle, and how we fought. We need to pray that our battles are with true enemies of God and not cases of "friendly fire." The warning remains.
- Glen Osburn 881 County St. 2980 Blanchard, OK 73010
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PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following article from pen of Brother J.D. Phillips appeared in the June 1932 number of the Old Paths Advocate. Even though it has been over seventy years since it was written, it is as current as today's headlines. Some of the many departures from the "ancient landmarks" are traceable to the influence Colleges have had on brethren and ultimately the church. The College of the Bible in Lexington, KY traveled a road that has been copied by some of the so called "Christian Colleges" of today. Through the education of young men who later fill pulpits all over the world the false doctrine originating in the college is thus disseminated to thousands upon thousands of people. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

DANGER OF INNOVATIONS

By J.D. PHILLIPS

For several years, a number of us have been warning the brethren against innovations, pointing out to them the fact that they lead away from God. Look at Israel. Look at Catholicism. Look at Protestantism. Look at our brethren who call themselves "Progressives." The sad condition into which many of our brethren have drifted reveals only too plainly the apostate condition into which the practicing of innovations will finally lead their devotees. History is now repeating itself in the so-called "loyal churches of Christ."

The College of the Bible, Lexington, KY, was at one time noted for its sound teaching; but is now noted for its destructive criticism. Bro. R.H. Boll read a letter written by one of its professors, and remarked: "Professor _____ is full of destructive criticism. He couldn't keep it out of a short letter like that." The College of the Bible well illustrates the fact that innovations lead away from God. When its greatest Professor, J. W. McGarvey, died they brought his body into the church he had left because of innovations, and played the organ over his dead body. They had him down so that he could not speak for himself!

On March 12, 1917, my friend, Ben F. Battenfield, who was then a student of the College of the Bible, sent a letter to several conservative brethren, asking them "to do all you can to take" the College of the Bible "out of the hands of destructive critics." The following statements, taken from his letter, show that the College of the Bible was bordering on to infidelity. And it has been getting worse ever since.

Professor Snoddy said, "I am a hard evolutionist." "The first chapter of Genesis is poetry." "We can't believe the story of Adam's search for a helpmate." "To explain how God answers prayer, I must explain what I mean by the term 'God'."

Professor Bower has called Jehovah "the tribal God of the Jews." He said, "The urim and thummin, and Gideon's fleece were means of augury." "Civilization has been traced back as far as 10,000 years B.C." "The Pithecanthropus Erectus is the missing link between man

and the lower animals."

Bro. Battenfield then shows the effect of this teaching by several statements from students.

John T. Pugh says, "I hear scarcely any but destructive critical teaching except in Dean Calhoun's classes."

J.G. Hurst says, "I came to the College of the Bible because of its reputation for sound teaching, but I have found more destructive criticism and Christian Science than anything else."

K.B. Bowen says, "If I had to believe that the Bible is inspired from cover to cover, as Mark Collins said, I wouldn't preach anymore."

Dr. J.R. Barbee says, "I believe that President Wilson is inspired just as the apostles were."

W.R. Hudspeth says, "I think we should have a new New Testament. I know any number of men I would as soon trust to write it as Paul."

Speaking of a union revival meeting in which the Church for which he preached was to engage, J.L. Finnell said: "The man who is to hold the meeting is not a member of the Christian Church, and no doctrinal points will be touched. People are tired of 'our plea'."

The foregoing is bad, but no worse than can reasonably be expected from those who have become "wise above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6) and "progressed" beyond it. Those who disregard 2 John 9 will, sooner or later, disregard anything else in the Bible that does not suit their fanciful imagination. Such statements as the ones given above do not come from those who refuse to go beyond "that which is written."

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not representative of **all** sin. It is representative of great or ongoing sin. The plank-in-the-eye illustration depicts a person who looks at the lesser sins of others while ignoring the greater sins of self. A person who refuses to look inward and first correct his own life is unfit to correct others. This is why Jesus rebuked the man with the plank, calling him a hypocrite. His judgment was hypocritical. He judged others without judging himself. He condemned others for small things while he tolerated much greater sins in his own life. This man was guilty of **hypocritical judgment**, which is precisely what Jesus condemns.

By giving us this illustration, Jesus shows us that when we are guilty of **great error** we have no room to correct those who are guilty of lesser sins. We must first learn how to correct our own lives before we can help others. This harmonizes perfectly with Paul's words to the Galatian Christians in Galatians 6:1. "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."

Love doesn't always feel good

Another erroneous view that often accompanies this denominational error is that "a person can tell when correction is being administered in love by the way it feels." This view not only contradicts the Scripture, it

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Announcements

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR'S LIST OF NAMES NEXT ISSUE

We have a few names of young men and women who have asked that their names be publicly listed as being opposed to carnal warfare. We will plan to run the list in the December issue which will be next month. If you want your name listed, please see that we have the names and addresses by the 10th of November as we publish a month in advance. - DLK

JANUARY OPA Will BE A SPECIAL ISSUE

Brother Johnny Elmore plans to put together a special issue on the theme "**Improving Our Worship.**" This is planned for January, 2005. Several writers will deal with various topics around that theme. Be sure your subscription to OPA is current because you won't want to miss this. Now would be a great time to subscribe for a friend.

DON'T FORGET OUR SUBSCRIPTION SPECIAL DEAL

For some time we have offered a special deal allowing subscribers to subscribe for a friend at half price. If you already take the paper but would like to have a good friend or brother (who is not taking the OPA) receive it also, this is your chance to do it for him at a great savings. Simply send us your renewal fee of \$10 and for only \$5 extra your friend can have a year's subscription also. Why not sit down right now and write the check? In addition, anyone who will send us ten new subscriptions will get theirs free for one year. The paper now goes all over the world and we would like to keep building the subscription list. Many write from foreign places telling us how much they benefit from getting the paper. If you wish to help us send the paper to foreign brethren who cannot afford to pay for their subscription, please feel free to do so. None of us who work for the paper have ever taken a penny for our labor. Everything you send will go for the purpose you wish it to go. Just tell us what you desire. Please, let us hear from you this week.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

We are required by law to publish each year a statement of ownership of *Old Paths Advocate*. The paper is owned by Don L. King, who also serves as Publisher. It is a private endeavor, not a work of the church, hence not intended to be supported or subsidized by church treasuries, but by the paid subscriptions of our readers.

CHURCH IN THE BOSTON, MA AREA

There is now a congregation meeting in Groveland, Massachusetts in the home of Brother David Johns. Groveland is approximately forty miles north of Boston. Services are conducted each Sunday at 10:30 am. If you have family or friends in that area or if you are traveling in the area please contact David Johns, 366 Center St., Groveland, MA 01834, phone 978-

373-5342, e-mail twanya.johns@worldnet.att.net or W.A. Page 13 Park St. Apt. C, Mansfield, MA 02048 phone 512-619-5874, e-mail egapaw@msn.com. Should you be interested in moving to the area to seek employment information can be obtained by contacting either David or Bill.

OKLAHOMA NEW YEAR'S MEETING

The Oklahoma New Year's meeting begins with the evening service on Monday, December 27 and concludes at the midnight hour of Friday, December 31st. Services are at 10:00 am and 7:30 pm, and are located again at the Christian Heritage Academy, 2800 S. Sunnyside Road in Del City, Oklahoma. The Norman congregation is conducting the meeting this year, and the theme is "Do Not Be Afraid, For I Am With You" (Jeremiah 1:8). For more information call James Kuchera (405) 793-0770 or Doug Edwards (405) 364-0611.

DIRECTORY UPDATE

Alabama - Pansey. John Bowen's phone # should be 334-677-2146.

Florida - Jacksonville. We are informed by the brethren that the mailing address for the church meeting in Jacksonville, FL has changed. Please make this notation in your directories. The new address is: P.O. Box 61642, Jacksonville, FL 32236-1642.

Kentucky - Chestnut Ridge. Delete Paul Deatherage. Add Amos Owens, Jr., PO Box 9, Mt. Vernon, KY 40456, phone 606-256-4719.

Missouri - Kansas City. As of October 3, 2004 the 38th & Agnes congregation is no longer meeting. They have merged with the church that meets at 7300 Prospect.

Virginia - Roanoke. Is no longer meeting. I'm told Bro. & Sis. Brown had to go into a nursing home. However, there is a new congregation meeting in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Contact information for the Virginia Beach congregation is Charles Mosley, 757-410-3187.

Lord willing I will be publishing a new directory late spring next year for 2005-2006. Near the end of 2004 I plan to update my file with all the corrections and changes I have received to date and send a letter to every congregation for any additional corrections. The letter will also include and order blank for advance orders. With brethren moving, area and zip code changes, 911 address changes, plus my errors there are hundreds of changes each time I publish. Hopefully, by listing up to three names per congregation at least one contact will always be correct in the two years covered by each edition of the directory. I appreciate everyone's help in keeping the directory as up to date as possible. Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747. papagreg@aol.com.

Bonds of Matrimony

Smith-Orten

In the evening of September eighteenth, two thousand and four, Brother Cullen Smith and Sister Julie Orten exchanged wedding vows, in a beautiful outdoor wedding ceremony at Farmerville, LA. Cullen, one of our outstanding young preachers, is the son of Jimmy and Cindy Smith of Harrison, AR and Julie is the daughter of Jamie and Judy Orten of Farmerville. Currently Cullen is working with the church in Wichita Falls, TX where the couple will reside. Both Cullen and Julie are Christians and bring to this union years of godly training by their parents. We wish for them the utmost happiness and satisfaction that life in this world can offer. A large crowd of family and well-wishers gathered to witness the ceremony. The writer, who has known both Cullen and Julie since they were small children was honored to officiate. - Ronny F. Wade

Our Departed

BASS. BROTHER JOSEPH (JOE) ALVIA

BASS - was born August 1, 1920 and departed this life September 16, 2004. The memorial service was held in Breman, GA at the Hightower Funeral Chapel Sunday afternoon September 19th, where a standing room only crowd of



family, friends and brethren in Christ assembled to pay their respects to the memory of this good man. The floral offering was absolutely beautiful, and the singing by the Prince family singers was both impressive and inspirational. Joe obeyed the gospel while a teen-ager and had been a leader in the church at Temple, GA since 1950. He was a man possessed of unique talents and unusual intelligence. He was able to converse with most anyone about a variety of topics. He had been a very dear friend and brother to me for a number of years. On various occasions he would attend meetings where I happened to be and stay for several days. During this time we would travel about and see the historical sights in the area while enjoying each others company. For a number of years he was plant superintendent for the Southwire Company in Carrollton, GA where he made many friends. He is survived by his wife Velda of sixty years, four sons and a daughter, one brother and three sisters, and fifteen grandchildren. Joe was a friend to preachers and many who enjoyed his and Velda's hospitality will miss him when they go back to Temple. It was this writers privilege to conduct the memorial service. - Ronny F. Wade

SCHOEN - Lester Otto Schoen of San Antonio, Texas, was born on May 25, 1928, and passed from this life on July 16, 2004. He was 76 years and 52 days old. Early in life Lester obeyed his Lord in baptism. Brother Schoen was a leader and faithful member of the Glendora Avenue Church of Christ. Anyone who knew Lester was not left to wonder about his love for the Lord and service to the congregation of the Lord's church. He was there when the congregation consisted of no more than a mere handful to the flourishing congregation it is now. Lester loved the young people and always had an encouraging word for them. He owned Lester's Roofing and Sheet metal Company for 16 years. Lester married his wife, Ruth, on May 22, 1954. They had just recently celebrated their Golden Anniversary, which is an example of faithfulness and devotion for us all. Lester is survived by his wife; one son; one daughter; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild; three sisters; and numerous nieces, nephews and other loving family members. Lester will be missed by all, especially those of the Lord's church, and no one will be able to "fill the shoes" he walked in for so many years. The funeral service was conducted by Brother Murl R. Helwig and Brother E. M. (Buddy) Perkins.

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also clouds the thinking of the sinful brother, causing him to believe that counsel that doesn't "feel good" isn't being done in love. Such teaching sabotages the efforts of those spiritually minded brethren who genuinely seek to restore the souls of the erring.

The fact that love doesn't always feel good is clearly seen in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. In 2Cor. 2:7 we read, "so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be *swallowed up with too much sorrow.*"

Also consider the words of the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 12:11. "Now *no chastening seems to be joyful* for the present, *but painful*; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Truly, no chastening feels good even when it is done in love! Furthermore, if the person being corrected is taught to expect positive feelings and the feelings fall short, the results could be disastrous. Make no mistake about it brethren such teaching is potentially very damaging to the souls of God's children.

Remember, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Proverbs 27:6).

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Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804 rfwade@mchsi.com October 4 - Since last reporting to the paper we have enjoyed meetings at Cassville and Lebanon, MO, Garretts Creek, WV, and Hartwell, AR. At Cassville we were privileged to work with Roger Owens who is a tireless servant of the Lord. At Garrets Creek Wyn Baker labors in word and doctrine. Wyn is dedicated to the truth and is a beacon in that part of the country. Our meeting at Hartwell was attended by large crowds at every service. Recently a small congregation that broke the bread in or near the middle before passing it to the congregation has disbanded and eight or so adults have started meeting with these brethren. This along with the arrival of Daniel Smith, who is now working with them, has given the church a great shot in the arm. Daniel is well liked by everyone there and we anticipate good things to come from his work. The Lord willing our meeting schedule for the remainder of the year is as follows: Lexington, KY Oct. 6-10, Cable Ridge, MO Oct. 31 - Nov. 7, Council Hill, OK Nov. 12-14, Longwood, FL Dec. 12-19, and Dothan, AL, Dec. 26-31 for the annual Alabama New Years meeting. We look forward to being with the brethren in all these places and pray God's blessings upon our efforts.

Douglas T. Hawkins, 3711 Castlewood Ct., Somerset, KY 42503, (606) 678-4347, Oct. 6, 2004 - I recently closed a meeting in Mt. Home, AR. Through the years, I have held as many meetings in Mt. Home as I have anywhere in the brotherhood. Needless to say, I have great fondness for them. It was good to see Bro. Jimmy Smith and Bro. Daniel Smith. Both had prior commitments and so we only got to have them for one night, but was glad to see them all the same. The month of October will be a busy time and then I near the end of my schedule for this year. My only meeting in November will be with the congregation in Fayetteville, OH (Nov. 7 - 14). As always, may God bless us in his service.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Oct. 8 - The meeting at Blue Springs, KY, Sept. 21 - 28, was well attended with visitors from the community and from other congregations in the area. The building was full both Lord's days. Those people know how to have a gospel meeting. Some members work on the evening shift and were not able to attend every service, but when they could come they were there. This is the home congregation of Bro. Zade McClure and Doug Hawkins. Reggie Kinser who was in a meeting at Bandy at the same time was able to attend one service. The Lord willing, we will be in a meeting at Lexington, OK, October 17 - 24. We expect to see brethren and old friends from the surrounding congregations. May the Lord bless all our righteous efforts.

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953 - The California 2004 Labor Day Meeting hosted by the Brundage Ln. congregation in Bakersfield and the sister congregations; Planz Rd; Tehacipi; and Porterville was well attended. The hard work put out by these brethren was a tremendous thing to behold. Their hospitality was outstanding and the conduct of both young and old was a credit to the California churches. Thirteen speakers were used for the night services. In addition, we were especially blessed at the Saturday A.M. service when eight young men all of whom are preachers desiring to serve the Kingdom full time inspired us with timely messages under the theme "Here Am I, Send Me." My prayer is that the brotherhood will use and encourage these men. My thanks to Brundage Ln. congregation for letting me coordinate the meeting. It was a joy to work with them. Wednesday, September 15 I had the privilege of speaking at the Fossil Creek congregation in Ft. Worth. The next Sunday I spoke at the congregation of my childhood in San Angelo, TX. From there we traveled to Knoxville, GA for a meeting there September 15 - 20. We had outside visitors as well as visitors from other congregations. We stayed with Wayne and Lisa Wildes and enjoyed their hospitality shown us and others just a whole lot. We enjoyed being with them as always. The Elders and Deacons there seem to be doing many good works. We leave in the morning for a meeting in Harrodsburg, IN. From there we will return to California for the last meeting of this trip at Escalon. We are looking forward to these meetings with joy and also returning home to continue our work with the Olivehurst church. God bless all.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, e-mail: old_Paths@Juno .com; October 7- We recently closed a meeting at Neosho, MO. This was the first time I had ever been there, though I had been in several congregations nearby for meetings recent years. Crowds were very good with some outside attendance due to the hard work brethren had done in advertising the meeting. God bless them for that. Other congregations were also helpful in their attendance as well as a number of preachers who came from near and far. I feel sure I will have forgotten some but among those who came were Jack Cutter, Clovis Cook, Ronny Wade, Roy Lee Criswell, Stan Elmore, Nelson Nichols and others. We made our home with Irwin and Sandra Johnson whom we have known for a number of years and were treated great. It was a pleasure to visit among the brethren for meals during the week and we also appreciated the many brethren who drove for many miles to be at the meeting several times. Lord willing, we are to begin at La Grange, GA this coming Saturday night and we look forward to seeing friends there whom we have known for a lifetime. Preachers, don't forget to send us your field reports and articles. Too, please take a moment and mention the paper to brethren when you are in meetings. If we all work together, the good accomplished will be wonderful.

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THE BACK PAGE...

JOHNSON'S LEGACY

By CARL M. JOHNSON

In September of 1996 Philip Scott and I drove from London Kentucky, to a large cemetery in Lexington where several key figures from the American Restoration Movement are buried. Henry Clay who was a close friend of Alexander Campbell is buried there along with J.W. McGarvey, Raccoon John Smith, Robert Milligan, L.L. Pinkerton, John T. Johnson, and others.

Of all of these historical figures, Johnson's name was the least familiar to me at the time. I had even heard of Pinkerton who introduced the first instrument of music into the Restoration church (a melodeon) and was labeled by some of his contemporaries as "the first liberal disciple." I knew very little of Johnson however, and as Philip and I drove away from the cemetery I remember wondering if he could possibly be a distant relative of mine.

Born in Scott County, Kentucky, in 1788, Johnson was educated at Transylvania University, married at the age of 23 to Sophia Lewis, and amassed a fortune from his business ventures as a farmer, lawyer, and legislator. He lost the fortune, however, as a result of becoming a surety for many of his neighbors. When his neighbors failed to pay their bills Johnson paid them, a total of \$50,000.

Undaunted, Johnson cheerfully resumed his business career and soon became prosperous again. In 1820 he was elected to Congress, and re-elected in 1822. At the height of a successful business career and at a time when he was rising rapidly in political affairs he retired to private life, much to the regret of his friends.

Johnson was reared as a Baptist, but he did not become a member of the Baptist church until he was 33 years old because of the demands of his business and political life. Later he began studying the writings of Alexander Campbell, comparing them carefully to the Bible, and converted to pure New Testament Christianity at the age of 44. He says, "My eyes were opened. I was convinced."

He became obsessed with telling others about the Gospel he discovered. He labored incessantly as an evangelist baptizing 700 people in the year 1838 alone. He became known as "The Evangelist of Kentucky," but subsequently he broadened his travels to nearly every state in the Union. He was tireless, relentless even, in his preaching travels. It was as though he was trying to make up for getting a late start. Many of his contemporaries observe that he traveled more miles, preached more sermons, and baptized more people than any other individual during his twenty-five year career. In December of 1856, Johnson became ill with pneumonia during a meeting he was conducting in Lexington Missouri, and died at the age of 69, leaving the brotherhood shocked and grief-stricken.

Johnson stood five-feet and ten-inches tall and was very slender in build. During his preaching years, his black hair began to turn white and thin out significantly. He always wore clean, well-fitting clothes. He was the consummate gentleman. He was polite, courteous toward all people, always cheerful, but never frivolous. His sermons were simple, but well arranged and sensible. He never considered himself to be a great orator and thus he eschewed the theatrical affectations of many of the revivalists of his day and presented his sermons in conversational tones. His intention was to focus the audience upon Christ and keep himself out of the spotlight, but audiences could not help being moved by his earnestness. Near the end of his career a member approached him after one of his sermons and said, "Bro. Johnson, you have made me feel it is a great honor to be a Christian." This response was the universal effect of his preaching.

There were two groups in America at the time that had jettisoned the creeds of men and returned completely to a "thus saith the Lord"—a group in Kentucky led by Barton W. Stone and one in West Virginia led by Alexander Campbell. While these groups started without any knowledge of each other, they soon began to overlap in territory and began to realize they believed the same thing and practiced the same thing even though they had never interacted with each other.

Johnson worked tirelessly in a successful effort to bring these two groups together and to unite them upon the Bible alone. He was so impressed with the Bible teachings on unity that he made it paramount in all of his preaching. He became convinced that the one who does most to unite the followers of Jesus does most to convert the world (Jn. 17:21).

Twice in the past two years, many of our brethren from all over the country gathered—last year in Tulsa and this year in Oklahoma City—to discuss polarizing-type issues in hopes of promoting unity within our brotherhood. Jesus' impassioned plea for oneness in John 17 should cause brethren to see the importance of unity as a necessary foundation for evangelizing unbelievers. John T. Johnson understood the importance of that plea and the emphasis he attached to it during his life's work is the primary legacy he leaves us today.

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXVIII

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NO. 12

CALVINISM

By GLEN OSBURN

Introduction:

Text: As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. *See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (Colossians 2:6-8).*

But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving *and being deceived* (2 Timothy 3:13).

These passages warn us of the very real possibility of our being deceived, either through the efforts of others, or by deceiving ourselves through a desire to believe something that may not be taught in Scriptures (2 Timothy 4:34). Knowing this, God has made provision for us to escape from others who would deceive us, or to correct ourselves if we are unaware of our error. As followers of Christ we are told simply to "test" beliefs, that is, "examine everything carefully" and then to "hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21 NAS). Like the Bereans, we are obligated to examine religious ideas with the Scriptures "to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11; see also 2 Timothy 3:16). Based upon this obligation, we would like to examine the principle tenets of Calvinism.

When someone believes: 1. That one is saved by *faith alone* or *faith only*, 2. That *faith is a gift* of God acquired through a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, 3. That *man has no spiritual ability* to sincerely choose to believe in or obey God without a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, 4. That those who acquire faith have been *previously chosen* by God to obtain this ability ("predestination"), 5. That once a child of God *it is impossible* to sin in such a way as to lose salvation ("once saved, always saved"), they have embraced some of the tenets of Calvinism.

Remember, we are concerned for the souls of all people, but oppose false doctrine.

History: John Calvin Born: Nayon, France, July 10, 1509 - Died May, 27, 1564 (near age 55).

He lived the same time as Martin Luther (although 25 years younger) and influenced Luther's Long and Short Catechism. He published "Institutes of the Christian Religion" at age 26, which went through five editions growing from six to eighty chapters. He helped organize the "Reformed Church" with Ulrich Zwingli & John Knox.

Calvinism has profoundly affected the Protestant movement. If, in your investigation, you probe into the history and influence of Calvinism, you will discover that its doctrines have been incorporated into the majority of the great creeds of the Protestant churches (The Five Points of Calvinism, David N. Steele & Curtis C. Thomas, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1963, p. 61).

Calvinism has formed the doctrinal basis of the Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church, the Episcopal Church of America, and in the main the Baptist and Congregationalist Churches, which include the United Church of Christ. Most aspects of Calvinistic ideology are found in the Nazarene Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and almost all so called "Evangelical" churches. (See McClintock & Strong, Vol. 2, p. 47.)

The five points of Calvinism are not original with John Calvin: The Reformation was essentially a revival of Augustinianism and through it evangelical Christianity again came into its own (The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, Loraine Boettner, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1932, p. 367).

An easy way to remember the basic theological system championed by John Calvin is an acronym "T-U-L-I-P" (The Five Points of Calvinism, Edwin H. Palmer, Baker Book House, 1972, p. 6); T - Total Depravity, U - Unconditional Election, L - Limited Atonement, I - Irresistible Grace, P - Perseverance of the Saints. These five points were recognized as representative of Calvinism by the Synod of Dort (Church of Holland) in 1619.

The classification of Calvin's tenets into these five points were the result of a protest made to the Churches of Holland by followers of one James

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Editorial

THIS IS ENCOURAGING

By DON L. KING

Our nation has just completed a national election. Many were elected while others were defeated, as is always the case. Christians generally do not involve themselves in political matters for we believe God rules the world putting over the kingdoms of men whomsoever He wills. The Scriptures plainly say so. Still, it was an encouraging thing to see some statistics which were released after the election.

President George W. Bush was re-elected by about 5 million votes. It was reported that 80% of those who voted for him did so because of moral values. Morality was considered more important by American voters than the war in Iraq or even the American economy. Regardless of what your own personal preferences were it is refreshing, and we might add surprising, to realize the American public is now very concerned about moral matters. Brethren everywhere have been praying that some return to morality might be seen in this Country. With the news focus on same sex marriage, gay rights, partial birth abortion, etc., it is incredible that the people plainly have had their say at the polls and they have spoken out for morality. God be thanked that there is still hope for what is right and moral.

America Is Still Interested

These facts bring to mind a Gallup Poll that was taken several years ago. According to it, 50% of Americans who are members of no church see themselves becoming active in some church in the near future. It was found that four out of five people who do not claim to be Christians want their children taught about spiritual matters. Two thirds of these non Christians say they regularly pray, believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and believe in life after death.

Are these people lost? We believe they are with all of our hearts. However, it is very encouraging to realize that we are living in the midst of a great field that is, apparently, still fertile for the planting of the gospel of Christ. Yes, of course, we still love foreign work and have seen wonderful results and progress in the many places the Lord has allowed us to go. But it isn't only foreign fields is it? No, indeed, for it is obvious that this land we all love is ready for the gospel to be preached to them right now. We really need to redouble our efforts to preach right here at home. Jesus said, "Say not ye, there are four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already unto harvest." (John 4:35)

We Must Do More

Many of us have nearly given up at home, but we must not allow that to happen. It will be necessary;

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: If the Bible class arrangement and the use of individual cups are unauthorized and thus sinful, how can you justify the use of a kitchen?

Answer: The Scriptures are silent about a bible class arrangement, or individual cups being used by any New Testament church. In every account where the Lord's supper is considered one loaf of bread and one cup containing the fruit of the vine were used (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-30). When the church assembled for the purpose of teaching the bible, it did so in an undivided assembly with men speaking one by one and women remaining silent (1 Corinthians 14:23-35; Acts 14:27; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:18). Hence to do otherwise is to violate the pattern set forth in the scriptures. We have no instructions in the Bible as to how to construct a church building. The Scriptures teach that we are to "assemble together" Hebrews 10:25, hence a place for that assembly is implied and authorized. The purpose of the building is to house the assembly. The church gathers for worship and those things related to its mission in the world. That mission, revealed in the scriptures, is evangelizing or preaching the gospel to the lost (Mark 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Romans 1:16), edification or developing spiritual strength (Eph.4:11-16; Heb.5:12; 2 Thess.1:2), and benevolence. In benevolence the church is to relieve the needs of the saints for whom it is responsible (Acts 2:44-45; 1 Timothy 5:16; Acts 6:16). The church does not exist for the purpose of providing entertainment for its members, secular education, or social reform. Since the church is not in the business of providing recreation or socialization for its members, the church has no business building and maintaining church kitchens, any more than it should build and maintain church gymnasiums. In fact one is just as scriptural as the other. If the church can build a kitchen it can build a gym. Does this mean that it is wrong to eat in the church house or on the church grounds? The passage most often cited to prove that it is wrong to eat in the church house is 1 Cor.11:22 "What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." To use this verse to prove that it is wrong to eat in the house where the church meets is to take it entirely out of its context. The meaning is clearly that the public assembly of the church was not designed as an occasion to satisfy one's hunger. They were there to worship God. Since the congregational gathering

was not designed to be a place for eating common meals, Paul admonishes them to "eat at home." There is a vast difference in using the Lord's money to build and maintain something that has nothing to do with the work God gave the church, and eating in a place where the church assembles for worship. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell Springfield, MO 65804 or rf Wade@mchsi.com.)

CALVINISM

continued from page one

Arminius (a Dutch seminary professor). In 1610, just one year after the death of James Arminius, five articles of faith based on his interpretation of the Bible were drawn up by his followers. The Arminians, as his followers came to be called, presented these five doctrines to the State of Holland in the form of a "Remonstrance" (a protest). They insisted that the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism (the official expression of the doctrinal position of the Churches of Holland) be changed to conform to the doctrinal views contained in the Remonstrance. The Arminians objected to the doctrines relating to human inability, predestination, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. In 1618 the Church of Holland called for a national Synod to meet in Dort for the purpose of examining the views of Arminius. After rejecting the tenets of Arminius they proceeded to publish a point for point response to his views contained in five chapters, the headings of which have been designated as "the five points of Calvinism." (Steele & Thomas, p. 19). (See also Christian's Expositor, Calvinism, Vol X, Num. 2, 1996, p. 137; Palmer, p. 6; Steele & Thomas, p. 13-19.)

Our desire is to: 1. Define each of these concepts or tenets. 2. Consider some of the spiritual ramifications of each tenet and applicable Bible passages.

It is not our aim to exhaustively consider all the pros and cons of each tenet but to show a system of thought and its implications.

Body: T - Total depravity: Defined: Westminster Confession of Faith (creed of the Presbyterian Church U.S.) states in regard to the sin of Adam and Eve: Chapter VI...II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body. III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. (Palmer, p. 126)

Philadelphia Confession of Faith, also known as the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith: Ch. 6...2.

Our first parents by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby death came upon all; all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled, in all the faculties, and parts of soul, and body. 3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room, and stead of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, (the servants of sin, the subjects of death and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus sets them free... 4. From this original corruption whereby all are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions [Philadelphia Confession of Faith with Catechism, Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., p. 24 (also known as the London Baptist Confession of Faith)].

And: Adam's act...was counted as the act of each of his descendants...as if they had individually and personally committed that sin. Because of Adam's sin we each stand before God from the moment of our existence as depraved and guilty sinners, for we each sinned "in him" [Christian's Expositor, p. 139: (Steele & Thompson, p. 42)].

The doctrine of "Total Depravity" is also known as "Hereditary Depravity" and "Imputed Adamic Sin," and is sometimes labeled "Original Sin".

Total Depravity is also called "Total Inability" (Steele & Thomas, p. 24; Palmer, p. 14): When Calvinists speak of man as being totally depraved, they mean that man's nature is corrupt, perverse, and sinful throughout...As a result of this inborn corruption, the natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good; thus Calvinists speak of man's "total inability"...the unsaved sinner is incapable of good. The natural man is enslaved to sin; he is a child of Satan, rebellious toward God, blind to truth, corrupt, and unable to save himself or to prepare himself for salvation...(Adam's descendants have lost)...the ability to make right choices in the spiritual realm...they do not have the ABILITY to choose spiritual good over evil (Steele & Thomas, p. 25).

Palmer shows that Calvinism maintains "1. Man cannot *do* the good...2. Man cannot *understand* the good...3. Man cannot *desire* the good" (Palmer, pp. 14-16). On the point of man not being able to understand the good, he illustrates saying that man "is as blind as Cyclops with his one eye burned out...In other words, without the Holy Spirit one is not able to understand the things of God" (Palmer, p. 15-16).

Scriptural Considerations: The Calvinist

implies that since man is unable to *understand*, *desire*, or *do* the will of God, then it is impossible for a totally corrupt man to choose to put faith in God, an act of positive obedience (John 6:28-30; 8:24). They reason that since man is unable to choose faith, faith itself must of necessity be a direct gift of God. Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God...Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift to the sinner (Steele & Thomas, p. 16).

The Bible, however, points out that God designed the testimony of the written Word of God to produce faith in our hearts (Romans 10:17: John 20:30-31; Ephesians 1:13; Acts 15:7). These passages affirm that faith is our response to credible evidence recorded in the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3: 16).

The Bible expressly teaches that man has the ability to respond in faith to the Word of God. In the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Mark 4:3-9, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15) we are taught that within the hearts of men there are differences in understanding, commitment, and priorities that cause various responses to the Word of God. Please do not overlook that one of the hearts, illustrated by these differing soils, was called "good and honest" (Luke 8:15) *before* the seed was sown. It was this nature of the heart which allowed the Word of God to be received. With Calvinism a naturally receptive "good and honest" heart is not possible.

Jesus himself made man personally responsible for his faith: "unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Calvinism teaches that one must receive the Holy Spirit before one can have faith. Scriptures teach that it is "after" we believe that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13).

Calvinists make a comparison of a dead body to a dead spirit and speculate, "If a dead body cannot respond to something offered to it, how can a dead spirit respond to the gospel, unless God gives it life to respond?" First of all being "spiritually dead" does not mean that our "spirit" is dead. When we sin we are then separated from the source of eternal spiritual life, God (Isaiah 59:2). This separation is spiritual death. Jesus uses this imagery speaking of those who would hear His word and believe when He says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when *the dead shall hear* the voice of the Son of God; and *those who hear shall live*" (John 5:25). Jesus here says the spiritually dead can "hear," and those who would believe would live.

How does mankind supposedly acquire this "corrupt nature?" Calvinism says that Adam and Eve's corrupt sinful nature was "conveyed, to all

their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation" (Philadelphia... p. 24). If the guilt of sin and its corrupt nature comes through the flesh, then there is a problem with the fleshly nature of Christ. Mary is the fleshly mother of Christ. The fleshly nature of Christ fulfilled many prophecies and the will of God (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; Matthew 22:41-46; Hebrews 2:14-17; 2 John 7; etc.). Did Christ somehow become infected with "Adamic" sin from Mary, His fleshly mother? Questions like this contributed to the formation of the Catholic doctrine called the "immaculate conception of Mary" (McClintock & Strong, pp. 506-510). This supposedly would enable Mary to give birth to a sinless yet still fleshly Jesus. Some who disagreed with this doctrine maintained that Christ's spirit was given by God to the conceived Jesus, and in this way Christ's spirit itself sanctified His body so that He was born without sin. They contend that all other men receive their spirits from their fleshly parents, not directly from God, and this is how spiritual corruption is passed on.

The Bible teaches that although we receive physical attributes from our parents, our life force (Acts 17:28) and eternal spirit come from God. "Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" (Hebrews 12:9). Zechariah declares that it is "the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12: 1). *To Be Continued...*

THIS IS ENCOURAGING

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however, that we do more than we have been doing if we are to see a harvest in America. While gospel meetings are still productive of much good and several are baptized in such efforts, nothing is going to take the place of us ALL working every day to reach those who are lost. It is not the usual thing anymore that the world will attend, at least in great numbers, our gospel meetings we hold in church houses. Yes, of course, some will come if we invite them personally but we need to realize the vast numbers of people who are out there and will never attend such meetings. There has to be a way to reach those numbers. We just have to find it. Someone figured out that if it were possible to fill the largest stadium in the country to capacity twice a day and preach to them seven days a week it would take two thousand years to preach to every soul on earth if the population stopped growing right now. What does this tell us? It certainly suggests that unless we utilize the mass media we are never going to be able to fulfill the great commission given by King Jesus in Matthew 28: 19,20 and Mark 16: 15,16. Brethren, we have an immense responsibility before us. We must begin using the media for the benefit of

the gospel. Radio and television programs, though seemingly expensive, are really very cost effective. Huge audiences can be reached for literally pennies per person. Some years ago, we were on a TV station in California where it was estimated our audience was about 250 thousand per week. The cost was about \$350 per broadcast. Of course, it would be much more today but the point is obvious. How long will it take to reach 250 thousand with our gospel meetings? It isn't going to happen is it? Does this indicate our meetings have become outdated? Not at all, the church will always need preaching and hence these should not be stopped.

The printed page is also a great way to reach the masses. The *Old Paths Advocate* is read all over the world today and is often photocopied and passed on to many more in foreign lands. Religious journals are a tremendous asset to the Cause and every family in the church should subscribe to them and help them get into as many homes as humanly possible. Brethren sometimes complain that negative things are often published. However, we need to keep in mind that negative things were often preached by the Lord and the apostles and negative things are often preached in our pulpits everywhere. We need this, brethren. We must not give in to an anti negative message. The greatest negative speaking ever done was done by Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master. Positive preaching, of course, must also be done but let us never forget that every positive has a negative.

Tracts, leaflets, newspaper articles, even the phone book yellow pages can be an asset to getting the message out. Let us not forget the benefits of personal evangelism either. This is something we can all do. This land can be still be productive for Christ but we must get the seed of the gospel into the hearts of good and honest men and women. Paul said, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9) - Think on these things. **DLK**

Announcements

2004 PREACHER'S STUDY

Northwest Twenty First (21st) Street Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma will host the 2004 Preacher's Study. Dates of the study are December 20 - 23. The theme for this year's study will be "New Testament Survey - Part 4". All interested persons are invited to attend. For additional information contact Cliff Arney (405) 685-5437 or Duane Cutter (405) 745-2581.

2004 ALABAMA NEW YEARS MEETING

The Hartford Highway Church of Christ would like to invite all to attend the Alabama New Years Meeting this December 26 - 31 in Dothan, AL. This meeting will be under the direction of Bro. Ronny

Wade with visiting evangelists being asked to preach. Services on Sunday (26th) through Tuesday (28th) will be held in the church building on Hartford Highway in Dothan. Beginning on Wednesday morning (29th) and going thru Friday (31st) services will be at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily and will be conducted at the Cultural Arts Center on South St. Andrews St., nine blocks south of downtown Dothan. The final gathering will be at 11:00 on New Years Eve when we will sing the old songs of the church from memory to usher in a new year. The meeting has grown from year to year and the preaching and singing is always outstanding. We hope you will make plans to be with us this year. The host hotel is Comfort Inn and their number is (334) 793-9090. Be sure to ask for our special rates by identifying yourself with the "Alabama New Years Meeting/Church of Christ." There will also be a new Hampton Inn and Sleep Inn open by the time of the meeting. You can find information for these hotels online. For more information, contact Kevin Presley at (334) 678-8999. Also, you may contact Charles Marsh at (334) 692-5756. We hope to see you there!

FREE BOOKLET ENTITLED: CAN A CHRISTIAN KILL FOR HIS GOVERNMENT?

This 40 page booklet was authorized by the late Bennie Lee Fudge in March 1943 and reprinted for free distribution with permission from his widow, sister Sybil Dewhirst. The Longwood Church of Christ graciously paid for the printing of 5,000 copies and brother Glen Bevis of Birmingham did an excellent job of reproducing and printing of the booklet. I think it to be the most complete and best treatise that I've read on a subject that is and has troubled our brotherhood. I only charge for the postage; The cost of mailing one copy is .91¢, yet I can mail 25 for less than three dollars. Send all orders to: Jimmie C. Smith, 5100 Rail Rd. Harrison, AR 72601, 870-741-5788.

NOTICE: TIME CHANGE

Cedar Creek Church of Christ at Jerusalem, Arkansas. Sunday evening services will change from 6 p.m. to 4 p.m. starting October 31, 2004.

MY POSITION ON CARNAL WARFARE

I cannot participate in military service in any form, directly or indirectly, in combatant or noncombatant service, because:

1. My duty and obligation to my God is superior to all other obligations (Acts 5:29; Matt. 22:37).
2. My God in the Bible forbids that I engage in carnal warfare in the following references: "Put up thy sword," "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52) - Jesus. "My Kingdom is not of this world" (Jno. 18:36). "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor.

10:3, 4). "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44); "Turn the other cheek" (Matt. 5:39). "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17).

3. To enter any military branch or service, combatant or noncombatant, I would be compelled to "swear" (take an oath), but the Bible forbids that I do so ("Swear not at all" - Jesus. Matt. 5:34).

4. To enter any military service in any way, I would be compelled to be yoked with unbelievers, which is forbidden - "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

5. To be in any branch of military service in any way, I would be a part of the organization and would therefore have fellowship in the service, but such is prohibited; thus. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

6. To serve in any way in the military service, I would be deprived of obeying the command to assemble on Lord's day to worship God in the Bible way, at least part of the time, hence would disobey God. (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

Therefore, I cannot Conscientiously engage in carnal war in any form or branch, and for the above reasons, I authorize my name to be listed in support of the above principles.

1. Zach DeGough, 3506 Inland Ct., Ceres, Ca 95307
2. Seth Nelson, 1913 Tully Rd., Hughson, CA 93526
3. Jace DeGough, 1701 Nutshell Ct., Hughson, CA 95326
4. Nick Perryman, 2429 Condit Ct., Ceres, CA 95307
5. Giuliano A Mazzina, 3501 Crowell Rd., #4, Turlock, CA 95382
6. Jacob Rhoads, 2151 North Ave. B., Springfield, MO 65803
7. Cooper McClung, 207 Blanton St., Chico, TX 76431
8. Benjamin Burns, 6891 Goshen Rd., Goshen, OH 45122
9. Seth Burns, 6891 Goshen Rd., Goshen, OH 45122
10. Rachel Burns, 6891 Goshen Rd., Goshen, OH 45122
11. Zack Weeks, 515 N. Lily Ann Terrace, Mustang, OK 73064
12. Aaron Newman, 11709 Quiggle Rd., Herald, CA 95638
13. Ryan Newman, 11709 Quiggle Rd., Herald, CA 95638
14. Lana Kristine Wilson, 3088 Country Spring Rd., Lorena, TX 76655
15. Cassie Renae Wilson, 3088 Country Spring Rd., Lorena, TX 76655
16. Matthew Ryan Denton, 2635 Missouri St., Lawrence, KS 66046
17. Christopher Malachi Denton, 2635 Missouri St., Lawrence, KS 66046
18. Stephanie Anne Blackwelder
19. Jared Stephen Blackwelder

20. Justine Erin Blackwelder
21. Jason Eaton Blackwelder
22. Esther Leah Blackwelder
23. Emma Leigh Blackwelder
24. James Alexander Blackwelder
25. Brady Short, 1710 Wanda Way, Arlington, TX 76001
26. Brent Morris, 1905 Palo Duro, Friendswood, TX 77546
27. Joshua L. Pemberton, 2097 Hwy. 17, Iberia, MO 65486
28. Tera G. Humphrey, 26 Sudhammer Rd., Dixon, MO 65459
29. Letesha M. Gumphrey, 25 Sudhammer Rd., Dixon, MO 65459

A NEW CONGREGATION

There is a new congregation now meeting in Irving, Texas. They are known as the Las Colinas congregation. They meet each Sunday at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and are located at 5901 N. MacArthur Blvd. in the Summerfield Suites. They are only 10 minutes away from the DFW airport and invite all to worship with them. For more information contact Wesley Cockrum 972-255-5238, Don Coon 972-438-7003, Jim Reiser 972-790-528 or John Esquivel, Jr. 972-393-0353.

MEET BROTHER SEAN MCCALLISTER

Brother Sean McCallister was baptized into Christ in October of 1990. Since that time, he has studied and prepared himself with a view to become a gospel preacher. He has held several meetings and has preached at numerous churches throughout the United States. For two years he worked with the church at Jay, Florida. Currently he is living in St. Albans, WV and working with the congregation there as well as the church at Beckley, WV. He comes highly recommended by them. He continues to study and seeks a wider field of usefulness. Any questions may be directed to East End Church of Christ, P.O. Box 876 c/o Carl R. Diamond, St. Albans, WV 25177, (304) 727-6917.



Our Departed

BROWN - Juanita Brown of Graham, OK was born May 15, 1915 and departed this life on September 20, 2004 at Healdton, OK at the age of eighty-five. She was married to Jesse Brown July 9, 1932, and he preceded her in death in 1990. She is survived by 3 sons, a brother and sister, 7 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Our sister worshipped here at Ardmore for the last two years or so, and was very encouraging to all. She was a devoted mother, and

a very dedicated Christian. She came to worship at times when it must have been very difficult because of health problems. I was honored to speak at services on September 24, 2004 from the Lincoln Street place of assembly in Healdton, OK and burial was at Graham. We pray that God will bless her family. - Johnny Elmore

GORHAM - Doris Arlene Gorham was born August 29, 1922 in Alva, Oklahoma to Winfred C. and Varna Evelyn (Morgan) Hamilton. She entered into rest at 10:25 a.m., Tuesday, October 12, 2004 at Medicalodge of Neosho, following a three year illness. Her age was 82 years, 1 month and 14 days. She was a member of the Church of Christ, Burkhardt Congregation. She and Otis C. Gorham were married, June 6, 1940 in Neosho, Missouri. He preceded her in death, March 6, 1997. Survivors include 5 children, 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren. Her son Don is a leader at the Burkhardt congregation.

CANNON - Jimmy Lee (Jim) Cannon was born April 26, 1928 in Hewitt, OK and died September 7, 2004 in Healdton, OK at the age of 76. He and Betty Tate were married June 2, 1950, and she preceded him in death June 29, 1988. Jim is survived by two sons, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Jim served as an elder in the Healdton congregation for over thirty years. He was a diligent servant of the church who really preferred the background to the spotlight. He was very well read in the scriptures and a steady influence upon others. He suffered a great deal in his last months requiring kidney dialysis four times a week. He remained independent, however, until the very end. He lived at home, drove himself to Ardmore for his treatments, and ultimately died at home - just as he wished. I knew Jim for nearly forty years and I had great respect for him. I shall miss him very much. A standing room-only crowd gathered in the Healdton church building to pay their respects. Johnny Elmore led the beautiful congregational singing and I attempted to speak a few words of consolation. - Carl M. Johnson

HISLE - Walker J. Hisle was born December 16, 1910, in Franks, OK (south of Ada), and died October 17, 2004, at the age of 93. His is survived by his wife Inez, two sons Joe and Bill and their families. He was preceded in death by one brother, Roland Hisle Jr. and one sister, Jewel Ray. Walker grew up in America experiencing the Great Depression and both World Wars. The people from that period are sometimes called "our greatest generation," because the hard times served to strengthen the emotional fiber of the people. Walker was a very strong man physically and psychologically. He carved out a very successful

livelihood for himself and his family, and when he was converted to Christ he brought that same strength of character into the church. He was a strong leader in our congregation for many years, serving as treasurer for thirty of those years in a conscientious and punctual way. Walker had a keen understanding of human nature and he would sometimes preface his advice to me with the words, "Carl, I'm going to talk to you just like I do Joe and Bill." I shall miss those words, the time we fished together, his reliable presence in the public assembly, and his eloquent prayers. I was in a meeting in Jamesville, Missouri, when Walker died, but Joe called and said the family wanted me to come home and officiate the service. I was honored by his call. A large crowd gathered for the funeral service, including eight gospel preachers. My prayers are now for Inez, Joe, Bill and the family. May God's richest blessings be upon them all. - Carl M. Johnson

LIVINGSTON - Hubert Livingston of the Dothan, AL congregation passed from this life on July 1, 2004 after a long battle with cancer and Alzheimer's disease. Bro. Livingston obeyed the gospel in the 1940's under the influence of Dewitt Palmer. He was a devoted Christian, husband, and father during his adult life. He married Christine in 1942 and they lived in the Dothan, AL area all of their life together. Hubert was a teacher and leader in the old Pansey congregation for over 50 years. He had always hoped and prayed that a congregation would be established nearer their home in Dothan. When the church was established here in 1998 they began assembling with us and did so faithfully until they both were incapacitated by illness. He was the father of two girls. The church in Dothan misses Hubert very much. He was an example of steadfastness and fidelity. It was the writer's privilege to conduct the service. Please pray for the family, especially Christine, as she is confined to a nursing home in failing health. - Kevin W. Presley

EASTER - Elva Opal (Byrd) Easter, was born in Graham, Oklahoma on July 10, 1925 and passed away September 28, 2004 at the age of seventy-nine years, two months and eighteen days. Opal was married to E.B. "Luke" Easter on June 24, 1949 in Wichita Falls, TX. She is survived by "Luke", her husband, one son, Jimmy Easter and wife Cindy, two daughters, Dianne Pruitt and husband Don, Suzanne Hardin and husband Edward, and Barbara DeGough. Three sisters, and seven grandchildren. Her father and mother, and two brothers preceded her in death. Opal was well known in the body of Christ, for at an early age she obeyed the gospel under the preaching of J. Ervin Waters in a meeting in Heldton, OK and

continued faithful to her Lord for some sixty-five years. At her request two preachers in the family, myself, a brother-in-law, and Don Pruitt, her son-in-law helped celebrate her home going with words which we trust, comforted the bereaved, gave encouragement to her brothers and sisters in the faith, and warned those left behind that they too must soon be ready as she was, when the time comes for them to leave this world by means of death. Bro. John Pruitt led congregational singing, and we all sang songs of Heaven and Home. Her husband, Luke, is to be commended, since Opal for a long time had been in poor health, and Luke despite the fact that his own health was declining, kept her in her home and did whatever he could to make her life on earth as pleasant and comfortable as he could. This was a monumental task. - C.A. Smith

CAFFEY - Eleanor Caffey, daughter of Charles and Mabel Burk, was born June 21, 1922 in Webster County, MO and departed this life Oct. 3, 2004 at Marshfield, MO. Eleanor was united in marriage to Earl K. Caffey on February 21, 1948. She and Earl were a part of the first church to begin meeting in the Kansas City area in the late 1940's and were long time members of the 85 and Euclid congregation. Since the early 80's, they had attended church at Niangua, MO until Earl's death in 2000 and Eleanor's confinement to a nursing home in 2002. Eleanor is survived by her step-son, Kenny Caffey of Kansas City, one brother, and a number of nieces, nephews and other relatives. Eleanor and Earl always looked forward to going to church, to big meetings and just getting together. Many young men who went to Kansas City to do their CO work ate many meals and spent much time at the Caffey's (a home away from home). Don Thomason and the writer offered words of comfort. Don's thoughts were special memories of Earl and Eleanor and of the early work in Kansas City. - Ron Alexander

SCOTT - Donald Scott, son of George Warren and Mary Scott, was born August 16, 1909 in Neosho, MO and departed this life October 9, 2004 at the age of 95 years. Don was preceded in death by his wife, Mabel on October 16, 1988. Don is survived by two sons, one daughter, and a number of other relatives and friends. Don was baptized in 1954 and attended the Burkhart congregation the rest of his life. He had attended the mid week service before his death on Saturday morning. I can never remember him not being at church when I was at Burkhart. It's always a special loss when the last of a generation passes from this life. Don leaves an empty seat at church and will be missed by all that knew him. The writer offered words of comfort. - Ron Alexander

MORRIS - Beryl Morris was born Oct. 16, 1927, she passed away Wednesday, June 2, 2004 at the age of seventy-six. She was a long time member of the Church of Christ that meets at Indiana, PA. She was a loving mother and grandmother. Her two daughters, Mary Lou and Louise deserve to be greatly commended for their untiring loving care and devotion they gave their mother during her long illness. Beryl always attended church services regularly and enjoyed the Christian fellowship. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ronald Morris in 1997, prior to his death they enjoyed traveling throughout many states to the gospel meetings which they enjoyed very much. She is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. She was laid to rest Sunday, June 6, 2004 at the Greenwood Cemetery at Indiana, PA. The large group of family, relatives, church members and friends that attended the service attested to the fact that she was well known and loved by all who knew her. She will be sadly missed. Eugene Lockard spoke words of comfort and hope to all who attended the service.

HOOPER - Alice Mae Hooper was born May 4, 1915 in Oklahoma, and passed away September 2, 2004 in Livermore, CA where she lived the last few years of her life. Mae was a long time member of the congregation in Arvin California after moving there from Arkansas with her husband Herman and daughter Alice Moyer. Mae leaves in passing, her daughter Alice, son-in-law Rodney Moyer, two granddaughters, five great-grandchildren, and one sister. Mae leaves brethren and friends that love her because of her kindness and loving ways. She was a godly woman in every way, setting a wonderful example for the generation following. This writer spent many an hour and enjoyed the company of them in their home when I was young, and in the years that have passed. This godly woman's works will follow her and not be forgotten by our Lord. She will be missed, but we will meet again where God's children are at home. Mae was 89 years old at her passing. May the memory of her never pass from our hearts. - Richard DeGough

Field Reports

Douglas T. Hawkins 409 Worthington Pl Richmond, KY 40475, (606)271-0529, Nov. 4, 2004 - I recently closed a meeting With the congregations at Bunner Ridge, WV; Brumley, MO and Fossil Creek, TX in FT. Worth. I enjoyed my stay in each place and hope that good was done. Each place afforded its own events of interest and space will not permit me to detail

each one of them. A special thanks goes to Joe and Alice Bunner; Dwight and Tina Humphrey; and Randy and Rhonda Cantrell for being so hospitable to me during my stay in each of these places. Overall, we have so many good people in the Kingdom of God and I'm thankful for my brothers and sisters in Christ. I'm looking forward to rest at home during the winter months and to the New Year's meeting in Dothan, AL. I'll be planning my schedule for next year real soon. As always, may God bless the faithful.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, November 8 - Sally and I were at Fremont in a meeting August 8-15, along with grandson, Clay Harrison. It was a real treat to be with our friends and loved ones there, and we hope some good was done. We enjoyed having Kevin Fox with us in a short meeting August 20-22. Kevin was well organized and spoke with enthusiasm. Lately we have heard Wayne McKamie at Wichita Falls, TX, Joe Hisle at Ratliff City, OK, and Wayne Fussell at Healdton, OK. Cullen Smith was with us in a meeting October 22-24. We enjoyed having him here and getting better acquainted with his new bride. The meeting climaxed with our Fourth Sunday singing for the last time here this year. I felt honored to be asked to speak on "The Trinity" at the Bible study with Queensborough Church of Christ in Shreveport, LA October 29. Bobby Cunningham has a tremendous work going there. We expect to be with the gentle people at Napoleon, AL November 10-14. I am thankful each day that I am blessed with work and the health to keep on keeping on.

Irvin Barnes, 3218 East Farm Road 88, Springfield, MO 65803, - Kenneth and Cathy Garfitt were recently restored to the faith. We welcome them with rejoicing. However, we are sad to report that Sister Garfitt has been diagnosed with a brain tumor. She began radiation treatments yesterday. We solicit the prayers of the faithful for her recovery. The church here is involved in the work in South America. We support Bro. Villicias at Ambato, Ecuador and Bro. Valverde and Bro. Motta in Lima, Peru. At the present, we do not contribute to his support, but we endorse Bro. Jonathan Bunner at Portoviejo, Ecuador completely. He and his wife have been vital to the work in that region. We are looking forward to having Bro. William St. John work with us here at the north side Springfield, in a meeting Nov. 6-14. In the past months we have had several preachers stop our way, including Floyd Harris, Jr., Greg Gay, Barney Owens, John Strain, Aaron Risener and Phillip Patton. I was able to attend the study at Aurora, once and also to preach once. I believe the meeting was well planned. I commend the hard work that Roger Owens, Billy Dickinson, and Reggie Kinser did in organizing the effort. It was good to see Bro. Roy Criswell, John Anderson and other preachers who were in attendance the nights we were there. Best regards to the faithful everywhere.

Frank Brancato, 3012 Cattleman St., Bakersfield, CA 93312, (661) 588-7338, October 13, 2004 - The work here locally continues to move forward at a fairly good pace. Bible studies continue daily with new members as well as nonmembers. Since our last report, two more have been baptized into Christ, which makes a total of 17 people that have either been baptized or restored over the past 15 months. Another young couple has begun attending services recently, and has agreed to study with me on a regular basis. They have already expressed an interest in baptism, and I look forward to studying with them. The congregation is working well together which is essential in any work, and the members here realize that they must do their part if the work is to be successful. We have also been working with several young men here locally on preparing lessons, and have designated various Saturday evenings for them to give their talks. This is designed to give them an opportunity to gain experience until they are ready to be a part of a regular teaching schedule. I certainly appreciate these young men who aspire to teach God's word, and to make the Lord's church a priority in their lives. Please continue to pray for us in the work.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Nov. 3 - We were privileged to be with the congregation at Lexington, OK for a meeting, Oct. 17-24. This was one of the many meetings we have held at Lexington through the years, starting in the 1950's. Their first church building was a small converted house. Later they built a place of worship, in which the congregation met for several years. Now they have a very nice building in which to worship, and it was a joy to be with them once more. We appreciated the cooperation of people of other congregations, as well as visitors of some nonmembers. We enjoyed our stay in the hospitable home of Mark and Faye McAlister, good friends for many years. That will be our last meeting for this year. Soon we will be looking toward the work of the Lord in the new year. ". . . Meddle not with them that are given to change" (Prov. 24:21) May the Lord help us all to keep our eye on the goal, and press toward that mark (Phil. 3:14).

Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell St., Springfield, MO 65804, rfwade@mchsi.com, November 10 - The meeting at Lexington, KY was very enjoyable. We had good crowds every service with brethren from other congregations cooperation and helping us out. Brother Michael Conley is doing a good work, under trying circumstances. His wife Mary has been gravely ill, but seems to be improving for which we all give thanks to God. Next we were at Cable Ridge here in Missouri. These brethren continue to faithfully serve the Lord and are a beacon light in their area. We look forward to

meetings at Council Hill, OK Nov. 12-14, Longwood, FL Dec. 12-19 and the Alabama New Year meeting in Dothan, AL Dec. 26-31. May God help us all to press the battle in Jesus name.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, November 8, - We recently closed a good meeting at La Grange, GA. We appreciated congregations from near and far helping in the attendance as well as several preachers. It was good to have Rick and Jane Martin with us for at least two services and we also appreciated the ride to the Atlanta airport after the last service. It gave us a chance to visit again which we always enjoy. The hospitality of Alton and Florence Bailey's home was, as always, welcome and appreciated. Alton was ill some of the week but we still enjoyed a good visit and long talks. The meeting closed with one baptism, one restored and eleven confessions of wrongs. We have held a number of meetings there through the years, but this was by far the most results we have had. God be thanked. We have also just returned from a trip to Hawaii. We went there to help in purchasing a car for Bro. Danao to replace the one destroyed in a serious accident last May. Bro. Danao has recovered reasonably well (not completely) but his good wife is still suffering with pain and has great difficulty walking more than a few steps at a time without a walker or cane. She needs our prayers and a card from you would likely brighten her days. They can be reached at 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96797. Bro. and Sis. Danao have sacrificed much for the Cause of Christ. It was my pleasure to preach both services at the congregation to a full house. To those of you who donated toward the car purchase, thanks so very much. We were able to buy a 2003 Ford Taurus with less than 25,000 miles from the Hertz company for just over \$12,000 including a 70,000 mile warranty. In Hawaii, that was reasonable. We are to be at the North Area congregation in Sacramento next Sunday for two services, Lord willing. Then, we plan to be at home until we leave for the Philippines for the annual trip there in January. Our thanks to brethren where we held meetings this year for all you did for us and the meetings. Continue to pray for us, please.

Reggie Kinser, 501 Peabody Road, Columbia, MO 65202, (573) 874-3535, September 30, 2004 - The congregation at Columbia recently enjoyed the wonderful privilege of hosting the Missouri Labor Day Meeting. This was the second time our congregation had engaged in such an undertaking, the first was in 2002. Like the previous meeting, the preaching at this meeting was excellent. We had good solid preachers from Missouri and the surrounding states, and these men did not let us down. This year's meeting was aimed more toward reaching out to the community

and calling people back to the "ancient order." We had good attendance from the community, and great support from the surrounding congregations. We continue to follow up on leads that were generated from the meeting. More recently, as a result of our local TV program coupled with our home studies, another has obeyed the gospel. Glen and Sherry Mier have been attending services for the past couple of months. Glen was baptized this week, and we anticipate that Sherry will also obey the gospel very soon. Also this month, it was my great privilege to conduct a gospel meeting in Bandy, KY. It was my first time to preach in Kentucky, and I must say that it was one of the most enjoyable meetings I have ever participated in. It was great to visit with preaching brethren: Doug Hawkins and Michael Conley, while in the area. We were greatly encouraged to see Michael's wife, Mary, and their new baby at the meeting. The Bandy congregation was splendid in its warmth and hospitality. A friendlier and more loving group of people I have never met. Crowds were good and attendance from surrounding congregations was consistent throughout the meeting. But the thing that impressed me most about the brethren at Bandy was their genuine desire to hear the truth. The brethren, (esp. Philip Scott and Bob Baron) are doing a tremendous job in their work with the church. From the beginning of the meeting, these men encouraged me to *speak the truth plainly* . . . which is always my intention. Words cannot express my appreciation for these men, and their families. We went to Bandy with the hope of building up the brethren - it is our prayer that they were as encouraged by us as we were by them. May the Lord bless all who are His.

Kevin W. Presley, 106 Whiffletree Way, Dothan, AL 36303, (334) 678-8999 September 11, 2004 - I have enjoyed meetings here at home and throughout the south so far this summer. In June, I spent a weekend with the little church in Gadsden, AL, enjoying the hospitality of Pat and Linda Adkinson. The meeting was well attended and I hope good was done. In July, it was my pleasure to conduct the summer meeting for the Marietta, GA congregation. This is the home of Ricky Martin whom I have tremendous regard for as a brother and a faithful, capable preacher of the gospel. The Martin family made their home ours for the week which made our stay enjoyable. . . Matt took the week off of work to spend time with our family and that made the week that much more enjoyable. One of the highlights of the summer was the meeting at New Salem, MS. We had a wonderful meeting with great crowds and participation. One man obeyed the gospel and another confessed faults. Sickness did cast a shadow on the meeting, however. Garland Smith spent the week in the hospital and passed away shortly after the meeting

ended. It is my understanding, this was the first summer meeting at New Salem that Garland had ever missed. It certainly did not seem the same without him sitting in the corner pew beside the pulpit. Spending the week with Lynwood was a joy. I always covet the opportunity to be with him. He has been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration to me during my short span of time as a preacher. "Aunt" Ivy was able to attend several nights of the meeting as well, which made me very glad. She is a special lady to me. For these and others I could mention, the summer meeting has been a part of their entire lives, some spanning 90+ years. Their steadfastness to the truth and to the Lord's service should be a lesson to all of us. My last meeting was in Houston, MO where I enjoyed seeing many friends and making new ones. Ervin and Mary Baker were so hospitable. My thanks to Don Pruitt and Ronny Wade for their presence at the meeting. Finally, our 2004 Alabama New Year's meeting is planned for Dec. 26-31. See the announcement elsewhere in this journal. Keep us in your prayers.

Allen Bailey, 112 Tuscany, Irving, TX 75062, 972-281-8181, allenbailey@thechurch.com - It is with sadness I report that after 16 years of working at Irving, Texas, I was fired after my public and private opposition to false doctrines, practices and beliefs. I had to stand against innovations in worship and doctrine such as women speaking in the church, public teaching that has significant Calvinistic influences, and false teaching in reference to the communion. To the best of my ability I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God during these troubled times. Many of you have received a letter from the elders of the Irving congregation and signed by a number of the brethren. This letter contains incomplete and misleading information and fails to accurately portray the events as they actually transpired. These occurrences and situations are further being presented as having been resolved. These things have not been resolved since confessions as required by the word of God have not been made. The letter denying preaching or promoting Calvinism is also misleading. There is overwhelming evidence in the form of tapes, transcripts and eye witnesses that Tony has promoted false doctrine heavily influenced by Calvinism and Baptist doctrine. This can be easily verified by a number of faithful gospel preachers. May God's love, mercy and grace be upon everyone involved in this conflict. We pray for a scriptural solution to these problems. At the present time I am worshipping at the new congregation in Irving known as the Church of Christ in Las Colinas. It is our hope to find support to continue working with these brethren to get established and to grow for a period of time. Please pray for our efforts and God bless all of you.

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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THE BACK PAGE...

A REFERENDUM ON JESUS CHRIST

By CARL M. JOHNSON

As I sit at my computer this morning it is November 2, 2004, and it is Election Day throughout America. Among other things American voters ostensibly will decide who will be President for the next four years. **Washington Post** columnist Charles Krauthammer sees this election strictly as a referendum on President George W. Bush. Krauthammer's use of "referendum" refers to the process of placing an initiative or an issue before the voting public to be decided upon, and he believes America's voters will make their decision based strictly upon their evaluation of President Bush. If voters are satisfied with the President's performance over the last four years they will vote to give him four more years. If voters are dissatisfied with his performance they will vote for the alternative, regardless of whom the alternative may be. Therefore, the election becomes a referendum on President Bush because the outcome hinges entirely upon his popularity.

While it is my belief that God has a hand in putting rulers in place here on earth, Krauthammer's observation is interesting and it reminds me of another referendum of much greater consequence. Pontius Pilate the Roman Prefect of Judea made Jesus Christ the object of a referendum by calling for a popular vote of the people to decide whether Jesus should live or die (Jn. 18:39-Jn. 19:16).

Jesus is arrested, tried by the Jewish Sanhedrin, and is condemned of blasphemy, a capital crime punishable by stoning under the Law of Moses. Under Roman rule, however, the Jews are prohibited from exercising the death penalty. Executions in Judea can be carried out only when Roman officials declare a capital offense has been committed according to Roman law. The Jews are determined to have Jesus executed, however, so they bring Him to Pilate and charge Him with treason saying Jesus calls Himself a King and is therefore a rival to Caesar (Lk. 23:2).

As a Roman Procurator, Pilate has no personal interest in Jewish religious affairs. He is in Judea solely for the purpose of keeping peace, collecting taxes, and avoiding interference in Jewish religious matters. Pilate does not believe the charges lodged against Jesus, but he takes Jesus aside and asks incredulously, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answers affirmatively but adds, "My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 18:33-36).

Pilate is convinced Jesus has done nothing worthy of death and that He is not the type of man normally condemned by Roman courts. But he can also see he is in a very difficult situation politically. He knows the Jews, because of envy, are bent on having Jesus put to death, and that if he refuses to accommodate them he is going to make some powerful and unscrupulous enemies. He knows they will make life miserable for him. They will leave no stone unturned to accomplish his downfall.

Pilate remembers it is customary for the governor to release a prisoner during the Passover feast. This procedure can be termed a referendum because the people themselves are given the privilege of choosing who will be released. On this occasion, however, Pilate does limit their choice. He gives them a choice between two men—Jesus or a man named Barabbas, who is a robber, murderer, and insurrectionist. Pilate figures the crowd will surely choose Jesus to be released over a notorious criminal, but is shocked when the crowd cries, "Release unto us Barabbas!"

Despite the demands of the crowd Pilate still seeks a politically expedient way to release Jesus. As he is contemplating his options the Jews cry out, "If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend" (Jn. 19:12). These words supply the knockout punch. Until now there is hope Pilate will do the right thing. In spite of his previous efforts to extricate himself from any connection to Jesus' case, Pilate has fought to spare Jesus' life. But upon hearing these words, he capitulates. In a final attempt to place responsibility for Jesus' death onto other shoulders, Pilate decides to make Jesus' fate a referendum. He refers the question to the crowd, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified" (Mt. 27:22). Pilate washes his hands, sears his conscience, delivers Jesus to the hate driven crowd, and thus consigns himself to an immortality of shame.

You may be disappointed in how the referendum on President Bush turns out later today, but of much greater consequence is how you respond to the referendum posed by Pilate. Every responsible person born into the world faces this referendum. Each of us has Christ on our hands and we cannot avoid Him. Neutrality was impossible for Pilate and it is equally impossible for you and me. Jesus says, "He that is not with me is against me." You may decide to reject Him. However, one thing is certain—you must do something. Therefore the referendum Pilate placed before the crowd becomes your question and my question. Ask it for yourself. "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"