

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 is 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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CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO SEND SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR OPA

As of this month we have a new person taking care of the subscriptions for Old Paths Advocate. Please send renewals and subscriptions to: Matt Martin, 1000 Stonecroft Ln, Woodstock, GA 30188. Matt has graciously agreed to take this work over after Steve and Stacie Gallman had to let it go after a number of years. We appreciate the Gallman’s and thank them for their many years of faithful service. We anticipate that Matt Martin will also do a great job. You can help him by sending your renewals promptly when you see your subscription about to expire. Thank you all. -DLK

“SIN” - “MAN’S GREATEST PROBLEM”

BY FRANK BRANCATO

Does the news on television show a world that is filled with happiness and peace? Are the daily newspapers filled only with “feel good” stories about nice people loving and helping each other? We live in a very real world that has a very real need for prisons, judges, policemen, and soldiers. Our automobiles are equipped with locks and alarms. Our homes have locks on doors and windows; some even have bars. The present condition of society says sin is real. I am told that a serious crime is committed every 6.5 seconds. The nation’s crime clock, as computed by the FBI, also reveals that a burglary is committed every 16 seconds, a robbery is committed every two minutes, a rape is committed every 14 minutes, an aggravated assault every two minutes, and a murder every 36 minutes. All of this points to an unmistakable fact that we live in a world that has been polluted with SIN. Sin and its evil effects have corrupted man since the beginning of time. Sin caused man to fall from the blissful paradise of the garden to a state

where innocence was lost and condemnation was pronounced. With sin there has always been a price and a consequence. And Jesus walked the lonely road to Calvary to pay the greatest price of all: the greatest example of the innocent dying for the guilty. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3: 16)

The Origin of Sin

Where did sin originate? When did it begin? Did sin begin when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit? Did it begin when the serpent deceived Eve? The beginning of sin took place long before man fell in the garden. We must remember that before Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, there was already a sinful creature there: a creature once in heaven, but was cast out due to sin. “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12: 9). The Bible, which further speaks of this event in II Peter 2: 4, says, “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment...” But, who is this creature that has been an active enemy of God and man through the ages? His name, the Devil (Diabolos), means accuser, slanderer, and one who maligns. Another name that describes this creature is Satan (Satanas), which identifies him as an adversary, one who stands as an opponent or an antagonist, an enemy. “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him” (Zechariah 3:1). (NKJV) The Bible describes him as a “roaring lion that walks

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Editorial

LOOKING FORWARD

By: DON L. KING

This past November America elected a new President and numerous other politicians to office. We are told the economy is beginning to improve, home prices are on the rise in some areas, the job situation is some better and things are looking up according to some. As always some are thrilled with things while others are discouraged. More than likely it has always been this way. Solomon wrote, “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever.” (Ecclesiastes 1:4) Undoubtedly every generation has its concerns with many of the same problems facing us today. As long as I can recall the older generation worried about the younger one with good reason, no doubt. As the world sinks farther into ungodliness and the sins once rarely seen become more and more common, we are made to recall the words of the apostle Paul as he spoke of the future, “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Timothy 3:13)

Yes, brethren have some cause for concern. However, there is a ray of hope for God’s people and all is not dark and gloomy. God is still on His throne, Christ is still our Savior and He is still King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (1 Timothy 6:15) Thank God we have more to look forward to than what we can see here and now. In Romans 14:7, 8 Paul wrote: “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” Once these two verses are seen in perspective, it is much easier to see how Paul could face his coming death without fear. He knew he would be even better off after death because of Christ. We do not mean to imply that life is unimportant, of course it is. It is during this life that we live the Christian life. Of course we want to enjoy life, and we should enjoy even the day to day things. The problem with living in this world is that there is always the dread of growing old and finally death. But, look forward, there are better things coming for you if you belong to Christ. This knowledge helps us to enjoy life even more. Death, to a child of God is not the end but the beginning. Paul said, “I press toward the mark

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Would you please explain I Corinthians 3:12-15?

Answer: The verses in question read “Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the day shall declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” The apostle Paul had laid the foundation of Christ in Corinth by preaching the gospel. He along with others continued to build on this foundation through their work in proclaiming the truth. Some of those converted were likened to gold, silver and precious stones. Others were characterized as wood, hay, or stubble. The indication being that two classes were represented (1) those who turned out to be valuable and permanent, and (2) those who were cheap and destructible, i.e. unfaithful. J. W. McGarvey commented “The church should be built of true Christians, the proper material; and not of worldly-minded hypocrites, or of those who estimate the oracles of God as on a par with the philosophies of men. The day of judgment will reveal the true character of all who are in the church.” I believe McGarvey is correct when he identifies the “day” as the day of judgment. On that day Jesus will be revealed from heaven “in flaming fire” taking vengeance on those who “know not God and obey not the gospel.” Only that day will make known who is and who is not a part of the true church. The Lord warns in Matt. 7:15-23; 25:34-46 that many will be surprised on that day. Some who thought they were saved will discover that they were not. This should be a warning to all of us. Salvation is something that deserves our utmost attention. It cannot be taken lightly. To think or suppose that one is right with

God is foolish. We must make sure that we are living in harmony with His requirements. Verse 14-15 teaches that those led to Christ by another may leave the church and become unfaithful. This, however, will not affect the salvation of the person who assisted in their conversion. Those who remain faithful, through their faithfulness provide a reward for the labors of the faithful Christian who assisted in their conversion. Coffman thinks that the phrase “so as by fire” is a figurative expression and has nothing to do with actual fire, but “has the meaning of something resembling an escape from fire as in “snatching them out of the fire as in Jude 23.” Those who claim that the phrase “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved,” to mean that a Christian who sins will not be lost because he is eternally secure, miss the point altogether and woefully misapply the passage. As we have pointed out, it is the person who assisted in the salvation of another that will not be lost even though the person who was converted turns back into sin. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

TWO SORROWFUL MEN

By SHAHE GERGIAN

One decision can dramatically impact a person’s life. One decision has the power to improve a life or destroy it. One decision can be all that separates someone from being remembered with honor or with shame. Just one decision delineates the near indistinguishable lives of the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Judas Iscariot.

Peter and Judas both traveled with Jesus. They witnessed His baptism, and they heard the voice from Heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17b NKJV). They heard some of His most famous and well-known sermons. They witnessed the powerful miracles He performed. They were with Jesus when He calmed the raging tempest, when He fed five-thousand men (and an unreported number of

women and children) with five barley loaves and two fishes, and when He raised Lazarus from the dead. They were numbered among His closest disciples, and were even named apostles.

Jesus predicted that both Peter and Judas would turn away from Him. To Peter, Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times” (Mark 14:30). Peter strongly objected to the Lord’s prophecy. He claimed that he was willing to die before he would deny Jesus. To Judas, Jesus said, “He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me” (Matthew 26:23). Jesus then identified this betrayer as Judas.

Peter and Judas both turned their backs on Jesus in His time of crisis. After Jesus had been arrested, Peter followed the mob to the confrontation with the high priest. When Peter was identified as a follower of Christ, he denied even knowing Jesus three times. As the Lord predicted, the rooster crowed. Judas was responsible for handing Jesus over to the chief priests and the Pharisees. He sold his friend for thirty pieces of silver. He delivered Jesus to them by leading a group of soldiers and an angry mob to the Garden of Gethsemane where he knew Jesus would be.

Peter and Judas were both sorry for their betrayal, but they handled that sorrow differently. After the rooster crowed, Peter wept bitterly. This was a wake-up call for Peter. After Jesus had been crucified and resurrected, Peter renewed his efforts to serve the Lord, and became one of the chief advocates for Christianity. Judas also wept after his betrayal. He tried to right his wrong by returning the silver, but Judas found no place for true repentance. Instead of turning his life around and seeking after God, he killed himself.

One decision separated Peter from Judas. They received the same training, witnessed the same wonders, and stood as two of the apostles of Jesus Christ. But when it came time to handle the sin of betrayal, only Peter was able to overcome his wrong, put it behind him, and devote the rest of his life to the Lord.

STANDING IN YOUR PLACE

By RICK MARTIN

Judges 7:21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. This verse is referring to Gideon and his army. We notice from the reading that every man stood in his own place. Today we also need people to stand in their place and in this article I want to mention 3 groups that need to stand in their place.

First, we need parents to stand in their place. One of the greatest concerns of every Christian and every Christian parent should be how to instill in the hearts of our children a meaningful faith. We need to be concerned about how to bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so they will be prepared for whatever life may deal out to them. The Bible teaches parental responsibility in Ephesians 6:4. This is not an easy thing considering the nature of the world in which we are living today.

The way we can instill the truth into the hearts of our children is by constant teaching and faithfulness in our own lives. In Deut. 4:2 God says Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. He continues in verse 9, only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ Sons.

We need parents today to stand in their place and give the spiritual direction that is necessary. Spiritually mature parents will seek to help their children to serve the Lord. This can be done by being a Christian example and by presenting positive instruction as well as warning against the destructive paths of evil.

Second, we need young people to stand in their

place. God often chooses the young to lead his people and the Bible is filled with accounts that show God's trust in young people. A few examples are; David, Daniel, Joseph, Josiah, Timothy and Mary the mother of our Lord.

Young people need to know and realize that they can be a powerful influence for good. Think of the young people that I just mentioned and the powerful influence that they had. Peer pressure can work both ways for good as well as for evil.

There is great potential in young people. That potential is like dynamite. Dynamite when used the right way can do great things. It can pave the way for new buildings, schools, highways, lakes and many other projects which can benefit mankind. In the wrong hands it can be used to take lives. This is why the young should be urged to surround themselves with good people.

There can be strength in young people. They are idealistic. There are worlds to be conquered, battles to win, and deeds to be done. They have not become jaded by life's heartbreaks and defeats and because of this they can often achieve great things. We must not destroy the idealism and zeal of the young. The church needs the fire and zeal of young people.

Young people need to respect those who are older, because they have been through life and in most cases really do know more than most young people. Young people should seek the advice of the older and carefully weigh their warnings. If older people are seeking to do the Lord's will they are due honor.

The young Christian should be an example to the rest of the body. 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Nothing can cause people to lose respect for you quicker than not to live your life as a child of God.

The young Christian should stand on the Word of God. Be like Josiah and go neither to the right or

left. Do not be carried away with something just because it is different. I Timothy 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Third and last, we need preachers and teachers to stand in their place. Congregations need to be deeply concerned about the quality of teaching that is taking place. When it came to making disciples, Jesus never tried to sell himself to the world by portraying discipleship as an exciting experience or something that would enhance people's materialistic existence. His idea of discipleship was a life of self-denial, potential hardship and possibly even persecution. He did not hide the fact that one has to pay a high price to be a disciple. Many religious bodies today would consider such preaching to be ineffective, but it is the kind of preaching that God demands of all who would be faithful to him.

We often see preaching that involves a deliberate perversion of the scriptures. We have all seen some nationally known TV evangelist leave out part of a verse of the scriptures. Deliberate perversion of the scriptures could be one reason why so many have little if any respect for the Word of God. Nobody has the right to use the scriptures in such a way. Twisting the scriptures will bring destruction on those who do it. 2 Peter 3:16

Strong preaching emphasizes a 'thus saith the Lord.' If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God, must be the cornerstone of all preaching and teaching. When someone preaches on a subject, they must use the Bible as their authority for being for or against a particular thing.

Every man who preaches or teaches the Word must be devoted to doing what God requires of him. Unsound, doctrinally challenged, ineffective preaching cannot be tolerated and every preacher and teacher must stand in his place.

Conclusion: A revival was conducted in 1858 in

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The evangelist was a dynamic young man of twenty-nine years. He had held the audiences spell-bound and many responded. A few days after the close of the meeting, he was out at his farm watching a new corn-shelling machine in operation. He got too close; his sleeve was caught, and before the machine could be shut down his arm was pulled out at the shoulder. In those days little could be done except to ease the pain. Friends and fellow ministers came from far and near to console the family. Just before the young preacher died, his father leaned over the bed to hear his son utter his final words: "Tell them to stand up for Jesus!" Among those present was George Duffield. He was so impressed by the words of the dying young preacher that he went home and penned the poem

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the Cross,
Lift high his royal banner, It must not suffer loss.
From vict'ry unto vict'ry, His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished And Christ is Lord indeed.

BREAKERS AHEAD

By RICHARD DEGOUGH

There is concern today about changes in the Lord's Church. Talking with brethren and preachers it is evident that their concerns are justified. When you begin to inquire about the so called "rumors" and find they are really true facts you take it seriously and wonder why these changes are made in the Church. I have been ask by good brethren why do we have these changes, because in years gone by we never had to be concerned with matters like these. Brethren forget that our brethren have had to restore, or try to restore the various departures that come to us and contend once more for the Old Paths. I will give you an example of brethren on the continent of Australia that had concerns in the eighteen hundreds about "liberalism" in the Church.

F.G. Dunn, editor of the Australian Christian Standard, along with F. Illingworth, co-editor along

with others, wrote against various departures from the ancient faith. Dunn, like so many in our present time was looked upon as a "slightly eccentric prophet of doom".

Illingworth had a favorite expression to warn against departure it was: "Breakers Ahead" When he told of a Baptist speaking at a meeting of the Church of Christ, again he said, "Breakers Ahead" When he was criticized for the phrase, he wrote;

The remark reminded us of a Russian soldier who cried out to his officer in an action against the Tartars, "I have caught a Tartar." "Bring him along," said the officer, "But he won't come said the soldier. "Then come along and leave him," replied the officer, "But he won't let me go," cried the soldier. One of our churches invited Baptist ministers onto our platform in a spirit of conciliation, perhaps in winning them over to the New Testament ground and catching a Baptist minister, but we "caught a Tartar," and so lost brother Porter, one of our best speakers. There were "Breakers ahead," and we fear the next Tartar we catch will carry away not the preacher only, but the church as well. Hence we cry again, louder still, "Breakers ahead." (Australian Christian Witness, April 1883)

Under the heading, "Word of Warning in the "Bible Advocate," August 1891, Dunn wrote:

It seems to us that at the present time we are passing through a phase of existence which will, unless it receives a salutary check, take us from, rather than to, the Church of the New Testament. There seems to be in some things a disposition to be impatient under the curb of apostolic teaching, and a desire to exercise liberty in those things wherein we are bound by Divine LawIt would seem as though every reformatory movement, after a certain lapse of time required reforming again

Those men wrote long ago, with sincere concern about changes that were being advocated in the "faith once delivered." (Jude 3) Digression will always raise its head to speak, labor, and war to break the barrier of truth if at all possible. Personified digression has its own will unless checked by conscientious brethren, stepping forward to "stop it in its tracks." I have learned this; battles for truth never stay won. We must fight

the good fight of faith continually with courage, zeal, and of course with truth. The time has come when some Christians are tired of God's wisdom and ways revealed in the Bible. Israel of the Old Testament era was tired of God and often exhibited this fact by their hard heartedness leading them to disobedience and ultimately the wrath of God. They went into idolatry as well as practicing the vices of the nations around them. God was no longer the source of provider in their eyes. Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord when he wrote; "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jer. 2:13) Again: "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number." (Jer. 2:32)

There must be a time when we examine ourselves and ask, am I in the number Paul and Titus wrote of, "for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine..." or are we; speaking the things which become sound doctrine? (II Tim. 4:3, Tit. 2:1) Again Paul exhorted Timothy: "Hold fast the "form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (II Tim. 1:13) I hear of some who have taken the name Church of Christ from their sign. Why? Paul thought of it as the churches of Christ that salute you, (Rom. 16:16) It is the Church of the first-born, and the Church of God (God the Son) (Heb. 12:23, Acts. 20:28) It must be the Church of Christ because He built it and died for it, purchasing it with His blood. (Acts 20:28) Brethren, are we involving ourselves with denominational "titles" and ways, forsaking what we know is right? We can speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent. Do I hear someone object to the phrase Thomas Campbell said long ago? Maybe this will clear it up. Peter wrote: "If any man speak, let him speak as the "oracles of God": if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things might be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (I Pet. 4:11)

The Church of the Lord has been criticized by denominational people, the worldly, unbelievers, agnostic's, atheist, yes, & even wayward brethren, who are tired of true and tried ways of God. Schools of "higher learning" have had their effect on young

men and women in the Church, teaching them new things and ways that are more in step religiously for the modern world. Brethren, keep "preaching the word" for we must endure sound doctrine or be lost. Remember; "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for DOCTRINE FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

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about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5: 8). Satan is further described as the deceiver of the whole inhabited earth, for it was by the deception that the world of mankind was plunged into sin.

What Is Sin?

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words defines the word "sin" as a "missing of the mark." It is further defined as a governing principle or power. For example, in Romans 6:6, Paul said, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin." Sin, in the "body of sin," is spoken of as an organized power, acting through the members of the body, though the seat of "sin" is in the will (the body is the organic instrument); "sin" is "lawlessness," a "transgression of the law." 1 John 3: 4 says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." The synonymous terms are: disobedience, error, fault, iniquity, transgression, and ungodliness (Vine). Sin is a universal ailment that affects everyone. "For there is no man which sinneth not" (II Chronicles 6: 36). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1: 8-10). Sin is real and it affects all of mankind. Every broken marriage, every disrupted home, every shattered friendship, every pain and every tear, is the result of sin. It truly is our greatest problem!

Improper Attitudes toward Sin

Sadly, many try to minimize sin, denying its ugliness and its consequences. We minimize

sin whenever we do not call it what it is. We are told by many that the word “sin” sounds too harsh and offensive. Some believe that there is no such thing as sin. One writer described how we have rationalized sin by the following perceptions: Abortion is no longer murder; it is simply a woman exercising her right of privacy with her own body. Pornography is an expression of free speech, and fornication is just an expression of love. Sin today is called everything under the sun except what it is - SIN! We minimize sin when we try to rationalize it or make it inconsequential. In 1 Kings Chapter 16 where we are told that King Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him: thinking it, too, was a light thing to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, marrying Jezebel, and worshiping Baal. Ahab certainly looked at sin differently than God did. Ahab thought those sins were insignificant and inconsequential. But were they? We are told in 1 Kings 16: 33 that, “Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.” Let this be an example to us today that we must not minimize sin with our attempts to rationalize and dismiss it. Let’s call it what it is and not be concerned about changing its label. Because as one man said one time regarding sin, “The milder we make the label, the more deadly we make the poison.”

The Consequence of Sin

“In an article written by Edward Chinn entitled, “Where Do Sins Go”, the author compared the consequences of sin to the atomic bomb that was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. He said that the light from that explosion was brighter than 25,000 suns. John Hershey wrote a book about that day. The book, “Hiroshima”, described the permanent shadows which were caused by the blast of that bomb. The heat from the burst of energy indelibly etched the shadows of objects and human beings upon the buildings and the roads of that place. When troops later entered that devastated city, they saw the shadow of a person who had been sitting on the steps of a bank, the shadow of a soldier unbuttoning his shirt, and the shadow of a painter caught in the act of dipping his brush.

The point is there are other shadows, too, which have an enduring and ongoing quality. The shadows of personal influence seem to remain permanently etched on human lives long after the persons themselves have passed on. Mark Antony, while delivering Caesar’s eulogy, spoke eloquently of those lingering shadows of consequences: “The evil

that men do lives on after them” (Julius Caesar, III, ii 80)

The question is, where do sins go? Someone once said, “Sins go up as an iron curtain between our hearts and God.” Isaiah, the prophet of old, said, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59: 2). Sins also go out into the world as evil consequences. For example, consider the life of David, a man who comes to the scene of Bible history as a shepherd boy that would be the anointed of God and take the place of King Saul on the throne. He was a young man of great courage who fearlessly slew the Philistine giant because God was with him. David went on to become a great warrior and king, and truly a man after God’s own heart. However, even David made sinful choices that would have tremendous consequences. He chose to have sinful relations with another man’s wife, and then tried cover it up. But did God forget his sin? Did the consequences of his actions simply disappear? Even after David finally confessed his sin, there were still consequences that he had to endure. Nathan said in II Samuel 12: 13, “...the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” Now this brings up an important fact about forgiveness. It is true that God will forgive a Christian of ANY sin he or she will repent of and confess. When we ask God to forgive us, He does so as if the sin never happened and restores us to duty. The problem is, the consequences of that sin may continue on. David’s sin flowed into Bathsheba’s life and into the life of her child. As a consequence of David’s sin, his son, from that sinful union, died. We can be fairly certain that a day didn’t go by when David didn’t regret the sinful choices that he had made.

Conclusion

Someone may ask, “Why is it important to mention something as unpleasant as sin?” The answer: because it is the only thing that will keep us out of heaven. It will keep the alien sinner who has never contacted the blood of Jesus at baptism out of heaven as well as the Christian who allows sin to re-enter his life. All of mankind have sinned and come short of God’s glory. “Our” sins put the Lord Jesus Christ on the cruel cross of Calvary where he died that we might live. He died for our sins when we were nothing but miserable offenders and completely unworthy. Therefore, let us not minimize sin by rationalizing sinful behavior. Let us not make insignificant that which sent our Lord to Golgotha, and simply say, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

LOOKING FORWARD continued on page two

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14) Paul knew there were better things in store as he looked forward.

We have an influence in this life over someone, whether we realize it or not. That is just the facts of life. Someone is watching us and wants to be like us because they admire us. However, that is not the real point Paul makes in the verses we mentioned earlier. Paul is speaking of our relations to the Lord. None of us lives to himself, “for whether we live, we live unto the Lord,” etc. We are servants of Christ and that is Paul’s subject. The Christian cannot cut himself off from a connection with the Lord and live his own life as he pleases; because even in death, we belong to the Lord. Christ is the Lord of the dead as well as the living. So, what do we really have to fear? The Bible teaches us that as long as we are the Lord’s; no matter what happens it will be alright anyway!

As we look forward we need to focus on spiritual things. There will come a time when we will all cross over the chilly stream of death unless the Lord comes first. We need to be more concerned with the welfare of the church than the condition of the world politically, don’t you agree? We need to be concerned with why some treat the church in such a pitiful and uncaring manner. Are you concerned when you see division, dissension, and ungodliness where there should be unity, agreement, and Christian living? Are you concerned if there are only a few at a midweek service when the building is full on Sunday? Are we concerned when brethren may leave on vacation while a gospel meeting is in progress at their home congregation? Does it concern us that worldliness is far more common today than a few years ago? Are we properly concerned when young people show little interest in leading singing, learning to teach God’s Word and otherwise being of service in the local church? Thankfully, this isn’t the case everywhere, but we all know it is in some places. What a thrill it was for me recently when I saw our young men gather at a home and study the Lord’s Supper and actually practice serving at the table. More studies such as this are planned. What a thrill! We know the future is bright for the church when we see such an interest manifested.

Let us look forward and take courage. God is still in charge and this old world is like a checker board to Him. He moves the powers that be from one spot to another and most never realize His omnipotent power. Yet, He knows even the hairs of our heads because we belong to Him. We are His children. Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

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Our Departed

Costa – Lenora (Cisco) Costa was born May 12, 1925, in Lehigh, OK, Born Again June 19, 1943, and passed away in the early morning hours, March 6, 2013, in Oakdale, CA, at the age of 87. Lenora was preceded in death by her husband of 65 years, Louis Costa. She is survived by her children Barbara Cole (Howard), Louise Boek (Richard), Bill (Melissa), Myron (Robin), Mary Alice Hodge (Gary), Cynthia Tidmore (Randy), and Ivan (Gina); 20 Grandchildren, 34 Great Grandchildren, and a host of friends and loved ones. Louis and Lenora were dairy farmers until retiring in 1987. After retiring, they spent 6 years traveling around the nation supporting Gospel Meetings and meeting their brothers and sisters in Christ before settling down in Ada, OK in 1993. They loved the Church and loved to hear the Gospel taught. They treasured the years they were able to make new friends and

meet those whom they longed to spend eternity with in Heaven. In 2005 they moved back to Oakdale, CA. This is where they lived and worshipped until their passing. Brother Greg Cardoza and I were honored to conduct Lenora's Memorial Service. Brother Matt Trent led the congregational singing. It was touching to hear some of her favorite songs written by her son Ivan - "Come to the Garden" and "Someday". How wonderful it is to imagine singing praises together around the "Great White Throne". Truly, as Solomon wrote in Eccl. 7:2, it is better for us "to go to the house of mourning... the living will take it to heart." – Gregory A. Branch

Field Reports

Douglas T. Hawkins, 409 Worthington Pl. Richmond, KY 40475 (606) 271-0529 douglast69@bellsouth.net March 11, 2013: At this writing I am in a meeting in Fremont, CA. We had a wonderful start to the meeting yesterday and I am looking forward to making my home among these brethren here this week. I have been anticipating a full year for 2013. I have scheduled a number of meetings and will be looking forward to each of them. Lord willing, I plan to be in Jamesville, MO (Apr. 5-7); Florala, AL (May 5-12); Flemington, PA (May 22-26); Moore, OK (June 21-30); Marietta, GA (July 14-21); Fossil Creek, TX (Labor Day); Jacksonville, FL (Sep. 25-29); Mt Home, AR (Oct. 9-13); Tucson, AZ (Dec. 28-31). We'd love to see you if you are available to be with us at any of these times. Lord bless us in his service.

Bennie Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd, Live Oak, CA 95953 Many of you already know that earlier in the year I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma which is a type of Cancer. The doctor tells me that if one could pick and choose the type of cancer to have this would be the one to choose because of its ease and success in treatment. I am going for my second treatment in chemo-therapy in the morning, March 11. The phenomenal outpouring of cards, letters, e-mails, etc., has been overwhelming. These, added to the many prayers on our behalf has been most encouraging. The first treatment was pretty rough on me and I can only hope and pray the next ones will be easier and more successful. I am getting to where I can talk easier now. But who knows what the second one will have in store for me. We know we are in the hands of the Lord and along with the best of doctor care and your continued prayers we believe the treatments will continue in a successful way. All I

can say is "God bless the brotherhood." So many others need our prayers too.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 93440, March 9, email: old_paths@juno.com The church at home is doing pretty well. We are at peace and looking forward to beginning a gospel meeting tomorrow with Doug Hawkins. The Fremont congregation plans to relocate to the city of Livermore, about 16 miles north of our present location, perhaps within a year. We anticipate greater growth possibilities there. Proper announcements will be made when definite plans are known. We look forward to holding a meeting with the Fossil Creek congregation in the Dallas-Fort Worth area April 17-21. We have been there several times and always enjoy being with those brethren. If you can help with your attendance we'll be happy to see you. The work in the Philippines is doing very well and we hope to have a report of a trip into Mindanao and other areas by the time we go to press. Preachers, may we remind you to send reports and articles for publication regularly? The paper goes into many places and your participation helps to further the Cause of Christ everywhere it goes. Also, we want to remind all subscribers to renew your subscription promptly to avoid missing an issue. Let us pray for the work.

Frank Brancato, 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312, February 1, 2013, email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net On January 22nd Brother Don King and I returned from the Philippines. We are happy to report that the work in the Philippines is going well, and many are being added to the body of Christ. Our preaching itinerary began on January 6th in Makati City in Manila and 10 were baptized that first service. We then traveled to Isabela and held an all day preacher's study in Roxas. Many preachers were present, and some traveled a very far distance to get there. One Brother from Mindoro took a 42 hour boat ride to make the study. For the next several days, we preached at a number of congregations in the Isabela area and 21 more were baptized into Christ. On January 12th we traveled to Ilocos Norte, and stopped to preach at Lapogan along the way. On Sunday January 13th, Brother Don and I split up so that we could visit and preach at 5 congregations. What a blessing it was to see God's increase, as 26 were baptized by days end. The following day we began our trip to Baguio City. While we were there we preached in Baguio, Dagupan, Matulong, and then Tarlac. We then flew to the Island of Palawan and held another all day preachers study. The next day we met at

two places and 14 more were baptized into Christ. The final congregation that we visited in Palawan, was a former digressive church that is now faithful. This congregation was converted and took their stand for the truth during Brother Don's trip last year. It was wonderful to see that this congregation was still faithful and worshipping according to the pattern. During our stay in the Philippines, 83 were baptized into Christ and we give God the praise. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be a part of this great work. Brother Don has been one of the great influences in my life, and I enjoyed working with him again very much. I also enjoyed traveling and working with Brother Libertino, Brother Eduardo Danao, and his son Edson Danao. These men are tireless workers for the cause of Christ and they were a great help to us on our trip. Please pray for this work, and for the faithful everywhere.

Darrell Crawford 208 E. Baldwin Rd Unit 5, Panama City, FL 32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com We trust this finds everyone doing well. The Lord is blessing here, we are starting to see more signs of interest in the Lord's work. For this we are thankful. We are having several digressives as well as outsiders attending services, and attending gospel meetings with us in neighboring towns. We are having at least two studies each week with one family from the community agreeing to a study for a total of three studies. Recently, we had a brother attend who has been out of duty for many years. Hopefully this will lead to him returning to the fold. We also had one confession of fault. We believe we are on the verge of a breakthrough here hoping to enlarge the borders of the Kingdom in our area. We have started the booth at Friday Fest again this year, we have many more materials available to give out. We also have a new (to us) computer with a Bible Quiz on it, graciously provided by the Moore congregation in the Oklahoma City area. This should prove a very big help. Please continue to pray for the efforts here that the Lord will bless us with wisdom in all we do for His Kingdom's sake. Thank you all for your prayers and support for the work here, if you are in the area, please stop by to worship with us Sunday at 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. May we always stick with the Old Paths, and may the Lord bless His church everywhere.

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NOTHING FOR JESUS
By ROGER OWENS

The one man who had it all, gave it all, and that, dear neighbor would be the world's dearest and grandest friend, Jesus. His earthly parents loved him so much providing him complete spiritual and physical sustenance of life. Jesus learned and practiced perfect love as a human. He felt the pains of suffering, the anguish of rejection, the heartbreak of humiliation and the loneliness of lost friendship when he needed it most. His work didn't get in the way of his service to others, for his was a life that served others. Jesus never had to make or plan time for doing the Father's will. His will was the Father's will. He didn't speak of what he would do one day for his heavenly Father, but was up about the Father's work tirelessly day and night. He didn't preach about salvation for the lost, but he took salvation to the lost. Jesus was the man that practiced what he preached in every aspect of his short life. He didn't ask for life's living bread, but provided living bread to those that asked and many that didn't. Jesus didn't live as if something good might happen, but made things happen as he brought hope to the lost, the blind and helpless. Yet the book says of this man, this creature of flesh that he willingly laid aside all his riches that we might gain wealth untold one day. A King of kings was he, but the life of a servant is all that we were ever allowed to see. We complain of having to give up so much to be a Christian, but Christ gave up everything to become the man of sorrows that he might heal our wretched souls. One might think that he gave up too much, and yet when it didn't seem possible that he could give any more, we are drawn to tears bowing at the foot of his cross. It's here at Calvary we find our friend the man who took time to die for even me. The world had nothing and offered nothing to this Jesus. In return he gave all to the world. Please dear friend, the next time you plan to do something for the King, do it quickly, your time is swiftly running out. Is it well with your soul? Do you know the world's greatest friend? Jesus may have come for you many times. He perhaps has called your name oft, so why not follow him home to receive his Father's eternal blessings? Are you like others of history, you have nothing for Jesus? Life is talent one; ability makes five; obedience is worth ten. Slothfulness is a hidden life, a bankrupt soul. Faith will increase as we take action allowing His light to shine for others through our daily service. Do you dare to walk with the Master? Beware of the fresh blood stains that mark the way. Each drop of blood keeps us from losing our way or ever becoming lost again. Grace is Christ magnified in US. (Galatians 2:20



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THE LIGHTER SIDE OF SIN?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Forty years ago psychiatrist Karl Menninger of Topeka, Kansas, wrote a landmark book entitled, *Whatever Became of Sin?* In a work that many saw as out-of-character for a psychiatrist, Menninger warned that our modern culture was being conditioned to make light of and even encourage sin, but not to tolerate the guilt that sin normally produces. After 40 years, his words still have the ring of a voice crying in the wilderness, but his message is needed more urgently today than ever. I was reminded of Menninger's book when I read Joe Kita's article, "The Lighter Side of Sin," in the most recent Reader's Digest (4/13, pp. 150-157).

Kita argues that modern science is proving that even the "blackest cloak of sin" can be a good thing. He uses as his model the "Seven Deadly Sins," and proceeds to find a silver lining in each one. The "Seven Deadly Sins" include wrath, greed, envy, sloth, pride, gluttony, and lust. This particular grouping of sins cannot be found anywhere in the Bible, and the Bible does not assign to it the special classification of "deadly sins." It was Roman Catholic Pope Gregory in A.D. 590 who devised the classification. However, each one of the seven is condemned in Scripture and, as with all sin, can be deadly if it is not forgiven by God (Rom. 6:23).

"Wrath" is outbursts of anger or violent rage erupting in crude, derisive language, often regretted later. Paul condemns this behavior in 2 Corinthians 12:21 and Galatians 5:20. Kita argues, however, that studies show "chronic suppression of anger can cause high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, and sleep disorders. When you let loose on occasion, you vent the emotional steam from life's pressure cooker. If you are married, a little bit of wrath might even save your life. Couples who regularly got problems off their chests lived longer than those who internalized them."

"Greed" is condemned throughout the Bible. Solomon says, "He that is greedy of gain troubles his own house" (Prov. 15:27), and yet Kita contends that "materialistic greed can have positive effects. Research shows that when you're pursuing and acquiring what you desire, you feel great. This has the potential to benefit not only you personally, in the form of happiness and health, but also those around you, including family, friends, and depending on your business, shareholders and society."

"Envy" is always used in a bad sense in the Scriptures. It is jealousy of another's success, depreciation of his worth, and envy of his excellence. It is associated with murder, as envy led to the first murder (Gal. 5:21). According to Kita, however, envy can be a good thing because "studies show that when individuals are experiencing envy, they actually have superior mental focus and recall about the envied person." He offers anecdotal testimony as proof. "It's a tool to motivate myself," says Helen Jane Hearn.

"Sloth" is harshly condemned by Christ. He calls the slothful servant in Matthew 25:26 "wicked." Kita counters, "When you stop to consider that some of our greatest discoveries came while doing nothing (Newton sitting under an apple tree, Archimedes taking a bath), you might realize it's this incessant busyness that's the real deadly sin."

"Pride" goes before destruction, according to Solomon (Prov. 16:18). Peter says God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5). John adds that the love of the Father is not in those filled with the pride of life (1 in. 2:15-16). Kita responds, "Studies show that achievement-oriented pride creates feelings of optimism and worthiness. It is motivational, resulting in greater perseverance and personal development. It fosters leadership and admiration. It even changes physical appearance, prompting more smiles and better posture, which affect social standing."

"Gluttony" is condemned by Solomon in Proverbs 23:21, but Kita finds a silver lining in a 2010 University of Missouri-Kansas City study. It found that overweight male candidates were perceived as more reliable, honest, inspiring, and better able to perform a strenuous job than their thinner adversaries."

"Lust" is used exclusively in the Scriptures to refer to sinful desires. James warns that uncontrolled lust results in sin which leads to death (Jas. 1:14-15). Kita argues simply, "Lust is life-affirming. It's invigorating, fun, and very few of us would be here without it."

In reality, efforts such as Kita's to make light of sin are not really new phenomena. The devil began the campaign of confusing evil with good with Adam and Eve and humanity has had a problem with it ever since. If evil were not made to appear good, there would be no such thing as temptation. It is in their close similarity that the danger lies.

Consequently, God declares, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Is. 5:20).

God threatens travail upon people who intentionally confuse the issues, and I challenge the guilty to find the lighter side of that. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com