

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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KILLED ON THE WAY TO THE BAPTISTERY

By *ANDREW RICHARDSON*

No subject carries greater weight than the salvation of our souls, and such being the case, the issue invokes strong emotion in people, especially when it comes to the salvation of deceased loved ones. Unfortunately, much of the time, many are swayed more by feelings -what they “feel” is more right than scripture, facts, and logic. That is, people are all too often content to believe a particular teaching simply because they like it and not because an honest, thorough study of scripture has led them to believe it is right. Consider the issue of baptism and salvation. On occasion, when some people are presented with scripture that confirms baptism to be a necessity of salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21, etc.), they will respond with some kind of tragic illustration similar to the following:

“There’s a man who gets down on his knees after hearing the gospel and cries out to God with a sincere and genuine heart, saying, “God, I believe in Your Son Jesus Christ! I believe that He died for me, and I’m sorry for my sins. I accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior! The man then stands up and walks toward the nearest baptistery to be baptized, but as he crosses the road, he gets hit by a bus and dies. Will he be in hell just because he wasn’t baptized?”

Illustrations like this are commonly used because of the perceived injustice they convey. To people that tend to allow their “gut feeling” to be the deciding factor in what they choose to believe, an illustration like this is proof enough that God would not be so strict as to condemn a victim of circumstance to hell just because he didn’t get baptized, especially when he intended to do so. The problem with all of them is that they do not deal with what the Bible actually says about baptism and its place in salvation. Instead, we are tempted merely by compassion to accept the premise that baptism cannot be required for salvation because such a requirement would seem too harsh in a “death-bed” situation. The fact is, however, that emotions-our “feelings” do not determine truth. God’s word is truth (John 17:17), and

it teaches that a man is saved by both faith and baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38).

The idea of anyone going to Hell is tragic indeed. The value of human life is significant enough to God that He “gave His only begotten Son” that all men can have the opportunity to pass from death to life (John 3:16; Titus 2:11). It takes a callous heart to feel no sympathy for a lost soul, and there is certainly nothing wrong with emotions and feelings -they are God-given. They are a fundamental trait of being alive and being human, but God did not design them to be a guide to truth. For that He gave us our intellect. To find the truth on any Biblical issue, we must “search the scriptures” (Acts 17:11), basing our belief on scriptural facts and not being directed by emotion alone. In fact, many times truth does not “feel” right (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). According to God’s word, the man in the previously mentioned illustration has died in his sins, because baptism is “for” the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38) when it is done out of “faith in the operation of God” (Col. 2:12).

Think about this: some atheists have ridiculed the idea that anyone would spend eternity in Hell just for not believing in Jesus Christ. They’ll ask, “If a man who is decent and good to other people dies, will he spend eternity in torment just because he didn’t believe in Jesus?” Sound familiar? Sure it does. It’s the same kind of error. It is the refusal to believe something just because it does not fall in line with our human conception of right. However, God will judge the world according to what He has said (John 12:48), not what we think is right.

Anyway, would God not allow the opportunity to be baptized just as He allows those seeking the truth to hear the gospel? Cornelius and his household waited days for Peter to come with “words whereby he would be saved” (Acts 10:6; 11:14), but “suppose” Cornelius had died before Peter got to him. What then? The reality is this didn’t happen. God was in control. What if Paul had been too late in averting the suicide of the jailer (Acts 16:27)? The fact is he wasn’t. God knew the jailer’s heart and allowed him the chance to not only hear the gospel (v. 32), but also to be baptized (v. 33). God is not sleeping on the job. He allows for no excuses, providing

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Editorial

THE NAME OF CHRIST

By DON L. KING

The name of Christ is a very powerful name. In Acts 4: 11, 12 Peter said, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." In this interesting manner Peter concluded his tribute to Christ as he spoke to the people. The people had been amazed at the miracle Christ did when He healed the lame man at the gates of the temple. The rulers had commanded that no preaching be done in the name of Christ, but it had fallen on deaf ears. The apostles paid no attention to their insistent demands because they knew Jesus and loved Him. They wanted the whole world to know the Christ, and they weren't about to allow His name to be hidden and put down. The poet wrote: "Jesus, I love thy charming name, Tis music to my ear, Fain would I sound it out so loud That heaven and earth would know."

The Scriptures show that to all who believe He is precious. The very word "precious" brings to our minds something of immense value, and so it should be since Christ saves from sin. What could be of greater worth than to be saved and made free from sin? Because of Christ, we can look forward to eternal Life in Heaven. We can escape the dread of eternal loss because of Christ! In 1 Peter 2: 6, 7 we read: "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded (Grk "shamed") Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner." In the very next verse (verse 9) Peter said, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

The pioneer preacher, John L. Brandt once wrote: "This salvation is exclusive in the name of Jesus. Substitution is impossible. Efforts have been made to substitute other names and agencies; and in this so-called substitution, we apprehend one of the chief dangers of our present time. These builders of the human temple would set at nought the chief corner stone of our salvation. They would substitute moral principles and examples, science

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Would you please explain what is taught in James 5:16?

Answer: The verse in question reads as follows: “Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another, that you might be healed. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” (NKJV) To confess a sin or trespass is to openly admit to that sin. When confession, preceded by repentance, is made, then the individual to whom we unburdened our heart can pray in our behalf. Any brother may be a help to us in such matters (Gal. 6:1). It doesn’t have to be a preacher or even a church leader. David said “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” Psa. 22:18. John declares “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” I John 1:9. The phrase “that ye may be healed” in my view, most likely refers to our being forgiven as a result of our repentance, confession of sin and the effective prayer of a righteous man. There are some, however, who feel that the reference is to physical healing connected with the sick person mentioned in verse 15. The fact that we are to confess to one another is proof that there is no class of men who are set up in the church to hear confessions. The auricular confession of the Catholic Church has no support in this passage, or any other. Brethren everywhere should be careful in leading people to believe that when they sin, they need to come forward at that time and make a confession for their sins, before the church. Often preachers make emotional appeals for anyone in the audience who has fallen into some weakness or shortcoming to come forward at the invitation and confess that weakness before the church. Such we believe to be a travesty on God’s plan and an abandonment of New Testament teaching. I have seen people come forward and confess that

they “have not been as prayerful as I should be” or “I have had evil thoughts about other people,” or “I feel like I need to live closer to the Lord” etc. etc. This practice should be discouraged, for it is not scriptural. James 5:16 nor any other Bible passage teaches it. All these shortcomings should be confessed to God in private prayer at home. If I sin against a brother I need to go to that brother and confess my sin to him Mt. 5:23-24. If I sin privately, I need to repent and pray to God for forgiveness. If I sin openly and publicly I need to come before the church and make confession for my sin. Guy N. Woods correctly points out that “The verbs of James 5:16 are present imperatives, and thus signify, “keep on confessing your sins one to another, and keep on praying for one for another...” It seems to this writer that many church problems and hurt feelings could be mended if we only regularly practiced going to our brethren and confessing our wrongs and praying for and with each other about such matters. Those who have misunderstood this passage and continue to come before the church to confess private sins, need to be taken aside and taught that public confessions need to be reserved only for sins about which the whole church is aware. Should these sincere people feel the need for prayer they need to follow the teaching of James 5:16 and go to some brother and confess their failing or weakness and have prayer as the scriptures direct. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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WORLDLINESS*By RICK MARTIN*

One of the greatest problems facing the church today is the problem of worldliness. As we will see in this article this problem has always plagued God's people and numerous warnings are given in God's word.

The word "worldliness" is not found in the standard versions of the Bible, but there is no doubt that the trait is often referred to. In defining the word "worldliness" we would say it is the condition of being worldly. The Bible tells us that the "world" we are not to embrace is not just the world we live in, but it is the moral and spiritual chaos that is opposed to and alienated from God. Any person who loves the world and who is influenced by it stands in opposition to God and is alienated from Him. Worldliness is being disposed to things pertaining to this temporary world; not regarding the spiritual or religious realm but being secular. In this article we will notice 3 warnings given against worldliness and the world.

First, we see that we are not to be fashioned by the world. Rom. 12:2 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 Paul is telling his readers, to not fall in step with the people of the world. Christians are constantly being pressured to be like the world. People of the world do not want to live right and they are not too happy about having people around them who live right. They don't want anyone to rebuke them for their evil behavior. People of the world will often use harassment, ridicule, and other techniques in an attempt to make the Christian conform to their standards. Paul says, "Be not conformed". Don't fall in step with the modern world. Christians should not allow worldly people to determine how they talk, dress, and how they spend their leisure time. If one is a Christian, then Christ sets the standards. When a person lets the world dictate his behavior, he is not a follower of Christ.

Second, we see that we are not to be lovers of the world: 1 John 2:15-16 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. John could not be any clearer; a choice must be made between loving the world and loving God. He tells us what the world is made of and what we must avoid; Lust of the flesh is what feels good, Lust of the eyes is what looks good, and Pride of life is what makes me look good. Love for these things excludes love of God and vice versa. All that the world stands for is opposed to God and will perish.

Lastly and third, we are not to be stained by the world. James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. The life of the Christian should not be stained by worldly behavior. People who see nothing wrong with worldly activities such as drinking, dancing, vile language, immodesty, and so on are showing their love for the world. Unfortunately, when people in the church act in such a manner, they lower the standards of the Gospel. They want to behave like the world and maintain respectability in the church. This is impossible. To practice "pure and undefiled religion" one must abstain from all appearance of evil, 1 Thess. 5:22.

In conclusion, Christians are to be the "light of the world, a city that is set on a hill", Matt 5:14. Light is no good unless it penetrates the darkness. If light becomes darkness, how great is the darkness? That is what happens when Christians, become worldly. The power is in contrast, not comparison. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, 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. May all those who wear the name Christ come out of the world and be separate. - Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189. mmartin@bellsouth.net

YOUNG CHRISTIANS AND THE CONTRIBUTION

By ZACH ELLIOTT

As a young person with part time or some sort of temporary income, it can be easy to pass on the weekly contribution. After all, we may not make much money compared to our parents or other members of the congregation. How much help could we really be? In 1 Corinthians 16:2, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Notice what the apostle said here. He did not say, "Let the leaders of the household" or, "Let the ones with the most income lay by in store." Paul simply told the brethren at Corinth that each and every one of them should lay by in store as God has prospered them.

Even as young people, God has given us the time and opportunity to work and the money we make at our jobs. Our money is not our own, it is God's. The Old Testament reminds us of this fact several times. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Deuteronomy 8:18 says, "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day." We need to keep that in mind as young Christians. Without God, we would have nothing. He has given us everything that we have prospered, and Paul said in I Corinthians 16 that we should give back to God for the service of the Church.

Mark 12:41-44 tells us an important story: "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." The widow gave much less than any of the rich, yet Jesus commended her over all of the others because of her generosity in her poverty. We

may not give as much because we do not make as much, but we still need to give generously despite our income.

2 Corinthians 9:6,7, says, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." Remember these passages every Sunday. God has told us to give generously of our means every first day of the week. It does not matter if you haven't chosen a career, you don't make that much money, or if you aren't out of your parent's house yet. God wants you to give. The work of the Church depends on your generosity.

A RELIGIOUS BUFFET

By MARK GRANT

In Leviticus the tenth chapter we read, "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' So Aaron held his peace" (Lev. 10:1-3; NKJV).

Down through the years there has been a great deal of speculation as to what, precisely, was the profane fire that Nadab and Abihu offered to the Lord. But regarding what the exact offense this was, the seriousness of their sin is expressed in these words; they "offered profane fire which the Lord had not commanded them." Nadab and Abihu abused their office as priests in a flagrant act of disrespect in not obeying God's word. As a result they both died, being consumed by fire. This should teach us that the old adage "one way is just as good as another" or "as long as you are sincere then that's all that matters," are very careless and dangerous attitudes to display when it comes to worshiping God.

Even today many show the same attitude of carelessness and disregard for obeying God's word. For example, a large number of people want to treat worshiping God as a religious buffet. A buffet is defined by Bing dictionary as, "self-service

meal: a meal at which people serve themselves from various dishes set out on a serving counter or table.” Here in the south there is a very popular restaurant called Golden Corral. And the reason a large number of people like it is because it has a massive buffet. They have a huge selection of meats, vegetables, and desserts so that each person can pick and choose what he likes and be satisfied and filled to his liking. Unfortunately, some want a religious buffet when it comes to worship and serving God. They prefer to pick and choose what parts of God’s word they like and ignore the rest. So I would like to discuss just a few of the many religious buffets we see in churches today.

The first one I would like for us to consider is; the “make me feel good” religious buffet. Many people go to a buffet restaurant and choose only greasy foods they like, instead of foods that would be healthier for them to eat. People go to worship today only wanting to hear preaching that is going to make them feel good about themselves, regardless of the actual spiritual state they might be in. In first Corinthians fourteen we read, “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you” (1 Cor. 14:24-25; NKJV). One of the greatest challenges confronting believers today is to convict unbelievers of their sinful condition and bring about their repentance. This isn’t going to be accomplished by being “politically correct” or by “we don’t want to offend anybody.” As the apostle Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Rom. 1:16; NKJV).

Another “dish” on the religious buffet is to “keep people happy and entertained.” When we go to a restaurant, sometimes you will hear music playing in the background, and a waiter to keep our glass filled and any other desire satisfied. Too many have bought into the notion that the church must win people by offering an alternative form of worship and entertainment to keep them happy. Like the church of a hundred years ago, we live in a world of rapid changes with major advances in science, technology, world politics, and learning. Like the brethren of that generation, Christians today are open, even eager, for change in the church. It seems that people everywhere are frantically seeking new techniques and new forms of entertainment to attract

people for church growth. Some churches today feature impressive facilities with bowling lanes, movie theaters, health spas, restaurants, ballrooms, roller-skating rinks, and state-of-the-art multi-court gymnasiums, rock bands, musical shows. Whether trying new forms of entertainment to attract people is biblical or not scarcely seems to matter to the average church goer. Nadab and Abihu thought they could try a new method in worshiping God and it cost them their lives. “But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD” (Num 26:61; ESV). Jesus described how all people would be drawn to Him by saying, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me” (John 6:44-45; NKJV). Jesus tells us that there are three methods by which all people would be drawn to Him; by teaching, by hearing, and by learning. Is this how Christians were drawn to Jesus in the early church? The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, “But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:20-21; NKJV). Can we not see how these new forms of entertainment to attract people for church growth undermines sound doctrine? What good, after all, is numerical expansion that is not rooted in commitment to the Lordship of Christ? As one lady complained, “When is the church going to stop trying to entertain the goats and get back to feeding the sheep.”

Another dish on this religious buffet menu is the religion of “conformity.” Most people go to a buffet restaurant that has a casual dress code where everyone can dress alike and feel comfortable and at ease. Most people don’t want to stand out of the crowd and be different from everyone else, that would make people feel uncomfortable. That is why some Christians don’t want to be any different than people out in the world. Brethren, if we dress like the world, and talk like the world, and act like the world, then we are the world. Paul said, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2; NKJV). God does not want his people to be like the world. He wants His people to be different. “But you are

a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy” (1 Pet. 2:9-10; NKJV). Nadab and Abihu thought they could come into the presence of God in a sinful condition and God would accept them anyway. Notice what God tells Moses and Aaron after he pours out His wrath on Nadab and Abihu. ‘This is what the LORD spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified’ (Lev. 10:3; NKJV).

How many of us have come to worship God, living in a sinful condition and think that God is still going to accept us anyway? Because God is a holy God He wants us to live holy lives. “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:15-16; NKJV). When we come together as a congregation, God wants us to enter into worship with reverence and godly fear. “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28-29; NKJV). Let us stop playing the games of a religious buffet and get back to a “thus saith the Lord.” Else when you stand in the presence of God you may find it just a little too hot. -OPA

“LYING”
By CARTER CULBERTSON

Chances are you’ve been lied to in the past day or two, and that’s something you and I have to deal with. I go to school every day and probably 90% of the people I know, lie. It seems some of them are compulsive liars. Just like anything else, it is very tempting to lie and cheat. I often wonder what benefits people get from cheating. Yes, you may get away with it, but your conscience will bother you and it’s hanging over your head all the time. You may think you can get away with it, but as we always say, even if no one finds out, God knows.

As we know, one lie usually turns into a bigger lie, and then a bigger one. It’s a never-ending process. People that I go to school with cheat on tests every day just so they don’t have to study and put forth

a little effort. As I stated, it is very tempting but again, I ask why people do it. They do it because just like every other sin in the world, it’s the easy way out. People don’t want to do anything that’s a little difficult. Doing the right thing, when all your friends are trying to convince you that little white lies are no big deal, is definitely difficult. Furthermore they try to convince you that you can easily get what you want by lying and cheating. They are probably right, but what we as Christians need to ask ourselves is, “What do we want?” I, for one, want a home in Heaven, so when my friends pressure me to lie and cheat, I try to remember this verse in particular: Rev. 21:27, “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”



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ample time and opportunity to do what is required.

Our loving God does not want anyone to “perish” (2 Pet. 3:9), but many will (Math 7:13), so despite even the “feelings” of God, many will die and end up in hell having not done what is right. How much more should we accept that our sympathy cannot keep anyone out of hell if they die without adhering to the requirements of God?

Jesus, in Mark 16:16, teaches that the man who is saved is the man who believes and is baptized. Also, In 1 Peter 3:21, Peter taught that baptism has a part in “saving us” as did Jesus. Such scriptures are truth, and feelings are not going to change them. So we either believe them or not.

Something else should be said here before closing. Sometimes the thief-on-the-cross passage is cited as proof that some who die without baptism will be in heaven (Luke 23:40-43), but such proves nothing, because Jesus did not give the commission to “baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” until after His resurrection which occurred three days after the thief had died with Him on the cross. In other words, new covenant baptism wasn’t required at the time the thief was promised paradise. The covenant of Christ, or the New Testament, did not begin until after both He and the thief died. In Hebrews 9:15-17, we learn that Christ had to die before the new covenant could go into effect. So, at the time of the Lord’s encounter with the thief, the Mosaic Law was still in force. “Whatever a law says, it speaks to those that are under the law” (Rom. 3:19), and the thief was not under the covenant law of Christ that requires baptism for salvation.

Emotions have their purpose (How stale life would be without emotion!); nevertheless, they are not intended to replace our intellect. Feelings should be the product of our beliefs and not the other way around. The right thing to do is to preach the truth and let the chips fall where they may. Let's tell people they need to believe (John 3:16), repent (Acts 17:30), confess (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Perhaps there would be fewer people dying without baptism if there were fewer preachers teaching that baptism is not necessary for salvation!



THE NAME OF CHRIST continued from page two

and philosophy, rationalistic criticism and socialistic theories, sophisticated arguments and pretending philanthropy, but all such influences and systems, no matter how plausible, are limited by the horizon of time and have no effects on the hereafter. They exalt the material above the spiritual and embellish only the outward life and leave the soul untouched and unsaved. They are a delusion and a snare to their followers. Soul salvation is found only in one name. The minister may exalt himself, the priest may hide his savior, the ritual may shut out the truth, and sectarianism dishonor God; but there is salvation in only one name. Christ is the Way, the Life and the Truth; no man cometh unto the Father save by Him. He is the one and only foundation. He is the only hope of Glory. He is the door into the sheep-fold, and if a man climb up any other way he is a thief and a robber..."

No one denies that human plans may improve human life here on earth; but the fact remains that salvation is found only in Christ and His church. After all, He died to build just one. Denominations came hundreds of years after the church was established on Pentecost and were built by men. They were, and still are, governed by human creeds. Having said this, it saddens us that some seek to remove the name of Christ from the church. The denominations have been doing this for a long time. Few indeed use the name of Christ on their buildings. Isn't it interesting that so many have left His name completely out? Many wear a name containing no vestige of the name of Christ. In fact, we are told that some purposely choose a name without His name believing it will further their cause.

Then, the worst of all is when some who once knew the truth turn away from His name as well. Some believe it wise to say nothing about the church that wears His holy name when beginning to study the scriptures with an outsider. Why on earth would anyone who understands the value of the name of Christ and sees His name as

being "precious, feel reluctant to tell a sinner about the church of Christ? It isn't logical, is it? That is a name above all names. That is the only name whereby they may be saved! (Acts 4:12)

If one picks up a book of sermons from a pioneer preacher of the church of Christ, he will find sermons that glorify the precious name of Christ. One sermon after another will show how it is impossible to be saved out of the church built by Jesus Christ. Do you sometimes wonder why so many were baptized into Christ in the long ago? Could it be because those old-timers perhaps better understood the value of Christ and His church, and all that went with it? Now, we are not suggesting that our brethren fail to love Christ, that isn't the point here. However, we need to shout it from the rooftops, so to speak. We don't mind telling anyone that one of the first things we do when beginning a study with one who knows nothing is to tell them about the church of Christ and the Christ who died to build it. If you have marveled at the numbers of souls baptized into Christ in the Philippines, and other lands as well, it may well be that those people are taught from the very beginning about Christ, His church, the worship ordained in the Scriptures and living the Christian life as we honor His holy name. They often worship in a simple building, but there will always be "church of Christ" on a sign outside. There is very little "feel-good" preaching done in foreign lands but much is said about the Christ who died to save the world. We believe this is food for thought. Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

Sulphur Oklahoma's Annual 4th of July meeting will be June 28 through July 4, 2014. Services will be 8:00 PM nightly, and 10:00 AM as the crowds increase. Greg Jordan and Terry Studdard, both from Alabama, will be in charge of the services. For information on lodging or eating places go to www.sulphurokla.com or call 580-622-2779 or 622-5213 & we'll mail you listings. Come worship with us on this 73rd year of the meeting. We are looking forward to great preaching and singing as we have always had in the past.

Our Departed

WATSON- Cranston Creech, was born February 9, 1928 to Estel and Lora Watson, at Liberty, KY. He died February 7, 2014 At the Dearborn County Hospital, Laweranceburg, IN, after a long illness. He worshipped with the church at West Chester, OH

until his health prevented it. He married Dorothy Murphy November 27, 1950. He was a meat cutter retiring as Meat Department Manger from the Jay C Food chain. He is survived by Dorothy and four children, sons, Keith and Jeff, and daughters Beverly Morris and Lisa Dyer, his brother, Ivan, ten grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. His daughter Teresa Fette, his parents, one brother and five sisters, preceded him in death. A large crowd gathered to pay their last respects to Cran and his family. John Brewer and I spoke to them about preparing for the day when every human being will meet God. - Barney Owens

WOODY- Bonnie May Woody, daughter of Sherman and Sylvia Beard Hillhouse, was born May 29, 1929 in Competition, MO. and departed this life on January 18, 2014 in Springfield, MO. at the age of 84 years. Bonnie was united in marriage to Kenneth Woody on January 6, 1951. Both were long time members of the Lord's Church, first at Claxton, then at the Hayes St. Church in Lebanon, MO. after moving to a farm north of Lebanon in 1961. Bonnie was preceded in death by her parents and one son Randy Woody in 1976. She is survived by her husband Kenneth, one daughter, Becky Barker and her husband Lester, three grandchildren, Tammy Bullock and her husband Monte, Angie Sing and her husband Donnie, and Brad Barker and his wife Amber; Six great-grandchildren; Kyle and Colby Sing, and Logan, Caleb, Abby and Madison Bullock. Bonnie was a positive Christian influence on her family and friends and will be missed at home and at church. Services were held at Shadel's Colonial Chapel in Lebanon. A large group braved a cold north wind to attend the burial service at Claxton Cemetery. Ron Alexander

ELMORE- Sally Sue Elmore, wife of Johnny, mother of Joni, Kim and Stanley passed from this life on Saturday February 15, 2014. She had struggled for several months with a number of different maladies but in the end was unable to overcome them. I first met Sally when we were in our teens. She was courting, at that time, a young Johnny Elmore who had baptized she and her sister in a gospel meeting near Lone Grove,

OK sometime before. Later, (1954) they were married and so remained for the next fifty-nine years. She traveled with Johnny extensively as he conducted meetings and singing schools over a great part of this country. She was known and loved by hundreds of people in whose homes she had lodged during her long tenure as a "preacher's wife." She came to know the hardship and perils of such a life very well, often struggling to making ends meet and at the same time care for both her husband and children. Life on the road was not easy but the rewards and benefits were enough to keep her going even when times were difficult and discouraging. Sally was a person of conviction and dedication. You might not have always agreed with her, but one had to admire her devotion to what she believed to be right. The memorial service was conducted at the Chapel at Griffin-Hillcrest in Ardmore, OK. A near capacity crowd of relatives and friends gathered to pay their respect to her memory. Between twelve and fifteen preachers, and their wives, were present showing the respect and esteem in which the Elmore family was held. For the past two to three years Johnny has stayed by her side caring for her both day and night. As a result he was unable to pursue the work of gospel preaching that he loved so well. In addition both he and Sally mourned the passing of their only son, Stanley, just a few short months ago, making his burden even heavier to bear. Our prayers are with Johnny and the rest of the family, as they face the uncertainties of the future. You may communicate with him at 419 K SW Ardmore, OK 73401 The memorial service was conducted by Clint DeFrance and this writer. The beautiful acapella singing was led by Mark Triplett. -Ronny F. Wade

KING- James Harold King was born Aug. 28, 1926 in Phillipsburg, MO and died on Feb. 23 at the age of 86 years. He was preceded in death by his parents, Jim and Jewel, and his sister, Pauline Mizer. He is survived by his wife, Mary, one daughter, Robin Paulson and her husband, Dan; and one son, Jeff. Also surviving is one sister, Mary Northcutt, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Harold for many years was in the grocery business, starting from youth in his father's general store,

and he had a successful career with Sysco Foods, where he made a difference in the lives of his customers. He had a winsome personality and loved people, enabling him to be a great salesman, as well as an effective worker in the church. He was a devout Christian who excelled in the art of encouraging others. Having obeyed the gospel at the age of 18, he was a faithful member of the church for almost 70 years. Oh, how we are going to miss him at the Jamesville congregation! Harold and Mary were married for 64 years, completely devoted to each other, and we admire how Mary cared for her husband during the declining years of his health. A large number of family, brethren, and friends gathered for the memorial service. Dan Paulson read the obituary and paid tribute to his father-in-law in a very touching way. Ronny Wade was asked by the family to share some humorous incidents that occurred in Harold's life, reminding us that he was a unique individual who was a joy to be around. It was this writer's honor to speak words of comfort from the Scriptures and to also pay tribute to our dear brother. His body awaits the resurrection in the Hazelwood Cemetery here in Springfield. We expect to see him again in that great reunion day!- Billy D. Dickinson

Field Reports

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com March 4- Our 38th annual March Weekend Meeting begins this weekend. We have an excellent lineup of young speakers. We are praying for good weather in anticipation of a great meeting. Phyllis and I were saddened by the recent death of Sally Elmore. Johnny and Sally first moved to Ada to work with the church in the fall of 1959. I was 11 years old when they arrived and they made a tremendous impact on my life. They have always been like extended family to me. We attended Sally's funeral in Ardmore and saw so many people we have known for so many years. After observing the giant crowd one brother commented, "it is as though my whole life has passed before my eyes." Our prayers go out to Johnny and all the family.

My brother-in-law Darrell Gould continues his amazing recovery from a year-long battle with life-threatening health issues. He and Rosa have been to every church service (including Wednesday nights) for almost a month now. Lord willing, Phyllis and I shall head to Piedmont, Alabama, this weekend where we shall begin the first meeting on my schedule. Our schedule for the next few months includes: Piedmont, AL (Mar. 9-16); Washington, OK (Apr. 2-6); Mountain Home, AR (Apr. 16-20); Longwood, FL (May 1-4); Burkhardt, MO (June 7-15); McGregor, TX (July 20-27); Please pray for us.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com March 14- It is good to be home for a short time and enjoy the peace and harmony of the home congregation. We enjoyed preaching both services here recently. It was also a pleasure to preach at Turlock a while back, and we enjoyed being with all of the brethren there. We have heard Billy Dickinson preach one sermon at Manteca just last night and, if possible, we want to go back tomorrow evening. We love and appreciate Billy for his work's sake. It was a sad day that we learned of Sally Elmore's passing. We have spent time in Johnny and Sally's home and they spent time in ours as well. I have known them both so long I am not sure I recall when I first met them. Our prayers are with all of the family. Then, just recently, as I was making preparations for doing another issue of the OPA, I received an obituary for Harold King. Harold and I were first cousins so I had known him all of my life. We have stayed with Harold and Mary while in meetings and loved both of them a great deal. Mary took exemplary care of Harold in his last years of failing health, but his unique sense of humor never deserted him. Harold loved the church, as does Mary, and we wish for the family all of the best. It is really sad to say goodbye to those we love but we look forward to a great reunion day. Lord willing, Pat and I plan to go to Hawaii later this month to help the church there. Our building project in Livermore should get started very soon and we are all anxious to see it finished. We always need your prayers.

The following is a report that was sent to me from Zambia which is a good note explaining that the work is strong and prospering even though no American preacher lives in the country of Zambia. It will be my privilege to experience firsthand the work being done in a few weeks when I make the trip back to Zambia for one month. Duane Permenter, email: duane@tncgchurchofchrist.com

Gospel Work Lusaka, Zambia, Central Africa

Time is pretty much passing rapidly. Already one month of the New Year is gone! I'm looking forward to 2014 with great anticipation, zeal and optimism. Before I completely put 2013 behind me, I want to say that all the meetings I attended as well as other duties that go with work for the Lord were a joy, and I trust that much good was accomplished.

Training the Congregations

We have started monthly Bible studies with the congregations in Chongwe area. (These are assemblies of the church where various topics are both presented and discussed by men only, pdp.) I must say that these studies have been encouraging and well attended. The brethren there are such a delight to be with. I have grown to love and appreciate them more than ever before.

The Work of the Church

We went through a series of studies on the work of the church, the development of saints, and the development of leadership. The studies continue even this year. January 11th, we were at Chilyabale congregation. February 1st, we were at Chiyokoma. March 1st we're scheduled to be at Dimuna. In addition to these studies, we plan to start having gospel meetings in this area with the determination to spread the gospel of Christ to the community. There are many more congregations in Zambia we need to visit and study with. My prayer is that the Lord will bless these, and all other efforts, with success.

Northwestern Province

I was recently happy to be with the Church in Solwezi, Northwestern Province for a Lord's Day service. I have not been there since 2010, so it was a treat to go back. The brethren have things well in order. Faithful men are diligently serving in the Lord's work.

Work at My Home Congregation

Presently I am studying with a fine young man who is interested in becoming a Christian. I hope and pray that he will soon obey the gospel. Recently, our hearts were saddened however, by the demise of Bro. Stephen Kabandala's daughter who departed this life to be with the Lord at the young age of 4. I was privileged to speak words of comfort and encouragement to the Kabandala family. They are a devoted family at my home congregation. Brother Gabriel Chulu directed the singing and the graveside service was conducted by Bro. Roy Siansobanda whose remarks reminded us all of the importance of having the Lord by our side when we make the crossing to the other side. The fact that we shall not have the opportunity to see and be with the departed again here in our earthly sojourn, we know if they were prepared and we are prepared as well, we shall meet over yonder in the sweet by and by. Glory be to God and His faithfulness.

Protracted Meetings Planned

This year I am looking forward to the following meetings: March, A gospel meeting with emphasis put on the younger Christians in Lusaka. It is my desire to attend the Spring meeting in April in the country of Zimbabwe. We plan to have our annual in Lusaka near the 4th of July. I'm happy to say that this year's 4th of July meeting will be hosted by my home congregation, John Laing. I'm looking forward to that and pray much good will be done. I look forward to the October meeting which is to be held by Riverside Church in Kitwe this year, in the Copperbelt. The brethren there are determined to make it all work in His name. REMEMBER us as you pray. Thank You! God Bless! - Isaac Sikabenga

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THE BACK PAGE...

THE COLOSSIAN FACTOR

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Paul writes as though he has our modern society in mind as he deals with a doctrinal heresy developing within the church at Colosse. An element there claims to be Christian, accepts Jesus as a great teacher, but denies that He is God. They believe various angelic beings were the creators of the earth, and that Christ is just one of them. Paul argues, however, that Christ has preeminence over all living beings and has shown that preeminence as the Creator of the universe. He argues Christ created "all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible" (1:16). We do not know the size of the universe, but Christ created what we can see and what we cannot see.

If we could travel at the speed of light, 186,282 miles per second, we could circle the earth seven times in one second. In two seconds, we could shoot past the moon. In eight and one-half minutes, we could reach the sun, 93 million miles away. Five hours later, we would reach the end of our solar system, consisting of the sun and the planets that revolve around it.

We would have to travel for almost 100,000 years to cross the Milky Way, our own galaxy. It would take at least 4,500 million years at the speed of light to reach an area in the universe that cannot be seen by telescope from our planet. We do not know what lies beyond that, but whatever it is, Christ created it. He created all things "in heaven and ...in earth, visible and invisible" (1:16; Cf. Heb. 1:1-2).

Paul explains that Christ is not only the agent of creation, but He is also the adhesive of the universe. "By him all things consist" (1:17). The word "consist" means "to hold together." The sun is the center of our solar system, but it is only one of over 100 billion stars in our galaxy. There are at least 100 billion other galaxies in space.

The sun is so large that a million planets the size of our earth would fit inside it. There are some stars in space so large that 500 million suns the size of ours could fit inside them. As the late astronomer Carl Sagan used to say, all these "billions and billions" of planets and stars are swirling around in space continuously. What keeps them from colliding? Who directs traffic in space? Jesus Christ does.

Compare the universe to a busy international airport. Planes are taking off and landing at a dizzying rate. The uninitiated observer expects a collision at any moment, but we know not to hold our breath because the person in the control tower is carefully directing each takeoff and landing. So it is with Christ and the continuously moving celestial bodies of the universe. He created all things and by Him all things are held together. Astronomers refer to the universe as the "cosmos," which means it is "systematically arranged and harmoniously ordered." Christ gives us the "cosmos" instead of chaos (Cf. Heb. 1:3).

The atom is the basic component of all matter. Everything is composed of atoms. Atoms are made up of electrons, protons, and neutrons. Atoms are so small there are 100 million of them in a single drop of water.

Scientists learned to split the atom in order to release atomic energy and they developed the atomic bomb. On August 6, 1945, a USA aircraft dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, killing 100,000 people. Most of the 90,000 buildings in the city were destroyed and temperatures at the center of the blast reached 6,000 degrees.

Splitting the atom allowed all of this to happen, but what holds the atom together in the first place? It is Jesus Christ. Some scientists refer to the cohesive force of the universe as the "Colossian Factor." It comes directly from Colossians 1:17 and means Jesus Christ is involved in the universe in such a way that He keeps it from flying to pieces.

Having shown the relationship of Christ to the universe, Paul adds emphatically that Christ also has preeminence over the church, and that the glory of the universe cannot compare to the glory of this new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul refers to Christ as the "head of the body." The body moves at the head's bidding; the body itself is powerless and dead without the head. So Jesus Christ is the guiding, directing, dominating force of the Church. Every word and action of the church must be governed and directed by Him (Col. 3:17). By His control the universe operates in a systematic, orderly manner, and by His control the church is to operate in a systematic, orderly manner (1 Cor. 14:40).

It is a wonderful privilege for the church to be the instrument through which Christ works today, but it is also a very serious responsibility. Paul concludes, however, that as we obey Christ we acknowledge His preeminence as Savior of the church in addition to that as Creator and Sustainer of the universe. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com