

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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NO. 12

INDIVIDUAL-CUP-COMMUNION: WHERE’S THE JUSTICE

BY ANDREW RICHARDSON

It amazes me how deep and complex the debate concerning the correct quantity of communion cups becomes sometimes. It is not, as it is laid out in scripture, a complicated concept; it’s not taught as complex doctrine. Repeatedly we read of Jesus taking “a cup” and giving it to the disciples gathered with Him (Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23). We also read where He commands them, “Drink of it, all of you” (Matt. 26:27 ES V), and where they “all drank of it” (Mark 14:23); therefore it is not within our liberty to use individual cups of fruit of the vine in this memorial. Arguments like, “well, you can drink of a cup without putting your lips on it, can’t you?” and “they drank of Jacob’s well without all drinking from the same container, didn’t they?” really beg the question -are you serious? A cup is not a water-well for crying out loud! A well is a supply source; a cup is a drinking vessel-it’s not exactly quantum physics! We need to forget about what “can” be done and concentrate on what should be done -what Jesus intended to be done. In regard to the Lord’s supper, the language always presents the cup in the singular form. Always! In every instance! This is particularly interesting considering the inspired gospel writers use the plural form, cups, in instances where there is more than one (Mark 7:4, 8), but, as stated earlier, never in reference to communion. There’s a reason for that! The kind of arguments mentioned before are always revealing to me, making it obvious what the preacher is doing-simply trying to justify his position.

Jesus told the woman at the well that the Father “seeketh” those who will worship Him in “spirit and truth” (John 4:23); moreover they “must” worship Him this way (v. 24). “Truth,” according to Christ, is the word of God (John 17:17). God seeks those who will worship Him in sincerity from the spirit and in harmony with His revealed word. This is a “must”!

God is not searching for those who worship Him in ways He has not authorized and approved. If our observance of the Lord’s supper is not as it is found in the Holy Scriptures, the pattern Christ gave, then it is not according to truth and therefore not acceptable worship. The communion passages, very simply, tell us Jesus took a cup, blessed it, gave it to the apostles, and commanded them to drink of it. He also told them to do this in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25). This command binds this divine ordinance on the church (something Christians must do), but performing a different ordinance, i.e., one using multiple cups, is not keeping that command. Paul, in inspiration, told the Corinthians: “Keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:2). He delivered to them the ordinance of the Lord’s supper (v. 23) and speaks of “the cup,” and quotes Christ saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood” (v. 25). This ordinance, as Paul delivers, very clearly involves the use of one cup of fruit of the vine. Basic English! Paul emphasized the same concept of staying true to taught traditions (or ordinances) from the apostles elsewhere:

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thess. 2:15).

OBEDIENCE FROM LOVE

There is another reason we should put so much significance in adhering to God’s pattern of worship because we love Him! God is love (1 John 4:16), and He showed us great love by sending His Son on our behalf (John 3:16), and it is for this reason that we love Him (1 John 4:19). Our love should, and will, drive us to worship God in the manner He has prescribed (John 14:15, 23-24; 15:10). Not only do we love Him, but we also believe Him and trust His “methods” to be above and beyond our own presumptuous ideas of what aspects of worship are “insignificant,” and we realize that human standards cannot be trusted (Prov. 14:12; 28:26).

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Editorial

DID CHRIST PREACH THE GOSPEL OR THE LAW?

By DON L. KING

It has always seemed pretty obvious to this writer that Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ. No one denies, I'm sure, that He also answered questions and dealt with matters regarding the law. The 8th chapter of John furnishes one of many such instances when the woman who was caught in adultery was brought before Him. The Scribes and Pharisees quoted the law to Him. The law, they said, required that she be stoned to death. However, they wanted to know what He said. Jesus simply quoted the law to them as found in Deuteronomy 17:7, and told them who were without sin to cast the first stone. The individuals, who were before Him, feeling guilty simply left. With no accusers the case was to be thrown out and it was. His final statement to her was, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8: 1-11)

However, when Jesus gathered the multitudes together was He usually teaching the law of Moses or the gospel of the kingdom? This is an important question because a misunderstanding or wrong application of the teachings of Christ can result in a false doctrine being taught.

In Mark 1:14,15, Mark says, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel."

This was near the end of John's life (John the Baptist) and obviously before the church was established. Yet, the Lord was preaching the gospel. Not only was He preaching it but He was also commanding the people to change their ways (repent) and believe it. This was preparatory to His building the church. If He was going to build His church He had to establish His doctrine first. Teaching must always come before one believes. The teaching of Christ was done with authority too. Matthew 7:29 says, "For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Even though He had not yet built the church, He preached the gospel with authority from Heaven.

On the mount of transfiguration when Peter made his foolish statement about building three tabernacles, one for Christ, one for Moses, and one for Elias (Elijah),

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Is a congregation without qualified elders righteous before God?

Answer: A congregation without elders may be scripturally unorganized when there is no one in the congregation who meets the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Scriptural church government should be the goal of every congregation. Churches that go year after year with no attempt to qualify men to serve in the eldership are unscriptural. Those who say “we are getting along fine without elders,” overlook the fact that the scriptures teach elders in every church. Titus 1:5 “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.” Acts 14:23 “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” The question that needs to be answered is “what are we doing to qualify men to become elders?” What plans are being implemented so that in the future we will have men who do qualify? Some seem to be happy with the fact that no one qualifies. So nothing is done and year after year things remain the same.

Some at the other end of the spectrum jump the gun and appoint men who are not qualified. This doesn't help the situation at all. In fact it only makes things worse. There are a lot of good men in the church, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are elder material. In the view of this writer each church should identify those in the congregation who could qualify, and begin working with them so that at some point in the future they will qualify and be appointed to the office. Church organization is a scriptural subject just like worship is a scriptural subject. To have one and not the other when we could have both is wrong. We should be just as concerned about our organization being scriptural as we are our worship.

Question: Do the elders of a congregation have the right to discipline a member of another congregation?

Answer: The elders of any one congregation only have jurisdiction over the “flock which is among

you.” To withdraw fellowship from someone who is a member of another congregation does not fall within their purview. If there is someone who needs to be disciplined by the church and the elders of a particular congregation are aware of certain facts that might not be known by the elders where the person attends, I believe, as individuals, they can inform those elders, however it is then their responsibility to investigate and take action if it is justified.

Question: Can an elder scripturally serve a congregation, when he is away from the church where he serves, preaching at other churches?

Answer: In the view of this writer, he cannot. His work as an elder is limited to the “flock which is among you.” Preaching is a wonderful work, but the elder is to work among those he serves. He can't do that when he is away preaching somewhere else. Some say “we have other elders” to take care of the flock while I am away. That may be, but it is the duty of each elder to guard, feed, and care for the flock over which he has been appointed as a shepherd. If a person wants to be a preacher, that is wonderful. He should be encouraged in that endeavor. However if he wants to be an elder he needs to remain with the flock that he oversees. If one elder can be gone preaching why not all the elders? This is not to say that an elder can never be away on Sunday or be gone on a vacation. It is, however, to be noted that there is a vast difference between the work of a preacher (evangelist) and the work of an elder. One cannot successfully do the work of both. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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THINGS THAT HINDER

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

In the days of Christ the lawyers were men who claimed to interpret divine law so as to help the Jews to understand the will of God. They were a bunch of hypocritical religious bigots who deceived the people and hindered them from accepting the truth. Jesus strongly rebuked them for their inconsistencies and showed to them their true condition. He accused them of hindering the people from understanding God's word and from entering into the kingdom. Listen to Jesus, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke 11:52).

Today there are members of the church who are guilty of hindering people from obeying the gospel and are hindering the progress of the cause of Christ without even realizing the mistake they are making. They may not be guilty of "taking away the key of knowledge", But by their conduct, or attitude they may be guilty of hindering others from becoming Christians, or some from becoming strong and faithful members of the church. I am sure that no one wants to be guilty of this.

In this article we will point out some things which should help us to take inventory of our own lives to see wherein we might be guilty. The apostle Paul says "Examine your own selves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5).

Members of the church who live worldly lives are a hindrance to the cause of Christ. People in the world are quick to take notice of the hypocrisy of those who claim to be Christians who do not live right. The apostle James says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). Again, the scriptures teach, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth" (Col. 3:1,2). The apostle John says, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:16,17). A person may excuse himself by saying he is not guilty of bad things that are condemned in the scriptures, but by inspiration Paul even includes "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim 3:4). Things that are not wrong

in themselves can become sin to us by keeping us from being the strong Christians the Lord wants us to be. Our Lord teaches us to "seek first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33), and we are told, "Be strong in the Lord and the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10).

Christians who show no real interest in the church are a hindrance. We are told in Heb. 11:6 that God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him". Lukewarm Christians are sickening to the Lord. Jesus said in His letter to the church at Laodicea. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth"(Rev. 3:15,16). We are told in I Cor. 15:57,58, "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Members of the church who refuse to cooperate in the Lord's work impede our progress and discourage others who want to do what is right. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Ephesus and said, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). In the Old Testament we are informed that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Sam. 15:23). Those Christians who have no time to contribute to the success of any program of work that is decided on by the brethren hinder and discourage others who want to cooperate and to do what they can for the Lord. Such individuals will give account in the day of Judgment.

People who allow trivial things to keep them from attending worship services of the church are a detriment to those who are interested and want to do right. A strong church cannot be built on weak Christians. There are three classes of church members: (1) Those who will, (2) Those who won't, (3) Those who might.

The first class can be depended on. They are the backbone of the church. They are the ones who will be present every time the church meets (if at all possible). They do not rely on excuses to justify poor church attendance or lacks of personal service these people are "ready to every good work". If there is anything they can do to help the church, they are ready. You can depend on it. They are a good example to all, including their children. They are a source of encouragement to all others.

The second class, those who won't, can also be depended on. They are the ones who will not do more

than they have to do and still be recognized as a part of the congregation. They refuse to attend more than one service a week. They will not sacrifice any of their fun and game time to help do anything for the church. They are selfish and think only of themselves and their own interests. They do only the bare stint of duty, but expect the Lord in the day of Judgment to say to them, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

The third class is made up of people who might or they might not be at the services. They might or might not show up to help on a day when others gather to help get the building and property ready for a meeting. They might or they might not attend when the congregation conducts a gospel meeting to help strengthen the church and save sinners. If they don't "have other fish to fry" they might show up for a service or two to see what is going on, but not get too involved. These are people who could change classes by making up their mind that they want to be more useful to the church and start taking advantage of opportunities to be made spiritually stronger; who could decide that they want their life to count for something before they die. They could decide that they are going to use their abilities and talents for the Lord so that their lives will have meaning. Or on the other hand the third class can change and become a part of the second class. They can decide that they want to join those who won't. Of course, this would be a bad decision, but sometimes people retrogress instead of doing better. No one is responsible for this but the individual himself. He may try to blame others, but in the day of Judgment he will be judged as an individual as like of us will.

Finally, members of the church who refuse to put into practice the truths they learn from the Bible are a detriment to the cause of Christ because by their influence they discourage others who want to do their best. The apostle James says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). This same apostle says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). Again, this same writer says, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"(James 1:25).

We know that no one wants to be guilty of hindering anyone from becoming a Christian, and no one wants to discourage anyone from doing his best to serve the Lord and go to heaven. But what are we going to do to improve our influence? It would be a terrible thing to hear our Lord renounce us in the Day of Judgment and say; "Depart from me into everlasting fire prepared for

the Devil and his angels!"

Let us do the best we can to serve the Lord and encourage others to do the same. It will all be worth it in the Day of Judgment and for all eternity.

HERE AND THERE

By RICK MARTIN

Some people refer to Thomas, as "doubting" Thomas. This comes from the fact that he demanded more proof about the resurrection of Jesus than just the word of the apostles. Thomas wanted to see Jesus with his own eyes and he wanted to touch the nail prints in the hands and feet and thrust his hand into his pierced side. Some people even say that Thomas always looked on the bad side of things and expected the worst.

For all that we do not know of Thomas, one verse John 11:16 ... speak volumes about his character: He said, "Let's also go, that we may die with him." The disciples were extremely concerned about Jesus making another trip to Judea. It is ironic that here they, or at least Thomas, were willing to go with Jesus and face death. Later on, in the same Gospel, everyone flees, and after His death everyone is hiding behind locked doors 'for fear of the Jews.'

Still, we can say this much: Whatever his understanding and motives, Thomas was at least willing to go with Jesus and face whatever Jesus faced. There is something to be said about such loyalty. Are you willing to face what Jesus faced? Would you be as loyal as Thomas?

I have heard good news about the foreign work lately. This year, Mike Criswell, Clint DeFrance, Keith Thomson, and Matt Trent have been to Tanzania. Richard Bunner has visited Malawi and also Russia, with Philip Prince. Good reports have come back of people obeying the Gospel and growing spiritually. Thank you brothers, and may the Kingdom grow all over the world. Lord willing, Don King will soon be making his 34th trip to the Philippines. He will be accompanied by Frank Brancato. We pray that Don and Frank will be safe and the work will be successful.

It will soon be time for the New Year's meetings. The Oklahoma meeting is being sponsored by the Edmond congregation and the Alabama meeting will be sponsored by the Dothan congregation. Ronny Wade will be in charge of the Alabama meeting. If you have never attended one of the meetings, I urge you to do so. This is a great way for Christians to have fellowship with other Christians throughout the country. Parents, your children need to be a part of meetings like this.

It is one of the highlights of the year for me and my family to sing in the New Year with fellow Christians. Make your plans to attend one of these meetings.

A preacher is expected to be prepared to preach a funeral at any time; but how many people object when he tries to prepare them for their funeral?

I love to hear of people going to Gospel Meetings and I encourage people to do so. But, I have to say I become a little vexed when people go off to meetings on Sunday morning or Wednesday night at the expense of their home congregations. Some people think; "We've got to go to church anyway, might as well go to a meeting on Sunday." It doesn't seem like to me such people are making much of a sacrifice.

That's all for now; pray for the brotherhood.
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"THAT'S JUST RELATIVE"

BY AARON BATTEY

It is hard to walk the earth and pass away before hearing someone say at least once, "That's just relative." Some people believe that everything is relative to any given person or situation. Consider the enraging idea that there is only one church going to heaven. Is this a true statement? The modern and popular "Christian" would say that this is a relative statement, or "What's right for you is not what's right for me." The Bible says differently.

The proper term to describe the philosophy above is "postmodernism" or "relativism". The Bible does indeed address this subject. Judges 21:25 says, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." The period of the judges was a 450 year span of anarchic chaos and immorality. Why were times so bad then? Because what was right for one person was not right for the other person, or as Judges says, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." This type of thinking evolved long before Judges though. The first relativist was Adam's son Cain in Genesis 4. He decided it didn't matter what kind of sacrifice he gave to God. Carrots were okay in the eyes of Cain, but God did not approve. You can then read to find out that Cain's lineage produced only evil (Genesis 4:16-24).

Relativism is wrong. It is not only wrong, but the doctrine is dangerous. Relativism is so dangerous that it can unwittingly lead to losing one's soul as Cain lost his. This short article is just a short piece to introduce you

to this evil philosophy which creeps around inside and outside the Lord's church. Next time we will discover in more depth why this doctrine is a contradiction by using simple logic and more enlightening scriptures. You can know the truth, and "The truth shall make you free," (John 8:32).

As a disclaimer, this article uses the phrase "Christian" quite loosely, as this is how the world uses the term. However, a Christian is one who has been baptized into Christ and follows Him faithfully (Acts 11:26). One would not come to this definition by viewing the lives of the popular parenthetical "Christian" today. But as such acclaimed Christians would say, "That's just relative," or is it? Jesus said, "Sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth," (John 17:17). According to Jesus there actually is absolute truth, and so the discussion continues.

Relativism makes for a good laugh because of its blasting contradiction. That is... everything is relative except the "fact" that everything is relative. This last statement may bend the brain, but ponder the meaning before reading further. Bombastic means inflated sound with little meaning. Relativism is bombastic because of this glaring contradiction. If anyone ever tells you everything is relative when it comes to truth or the Bible, ask that person point blank, "Is that statement you just made relative or is it the absolute truth?" Then watch them respond with the treacherous and self-defeating lyrics of the song, "Don't judge me." Yes, they quote the very Bible they just called relative. Paul writes about such people as if he lived in the 21st century. In Romans 10:3 he says, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God."

Relativism is not only good for a laugh, but slap the theory in the face and suddenly everything is no longer relative. In other words, the relativist says there is no standard right or wrong. Everything is supposedly relative from person to person. Now slap that person across the face (obviously not in reality) and suddenly you are absolutely and positively wrong on every single moral standard man every created. This point is very well illustrated by the words of former president Ronald Reagan who said, "I have noticed that all those in favor of abortion have already been born." This means, stuff every relativistic minded, prochoice advocate back in the womb, dissolve their fetal existence with a pill, and then listen to them cry out a charge of murder. All these examples expose the roots of relativism, and that is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy like that unto the kind Jesus exposed of the Pharisees in John 8:3-9 when they

brought an adulteress to him for stoning. The problem was they were all guilty of adultery as well.

Don't be afraid of those who use the term "relative" or similar jargon to downplay Bible truths in a way that seemingly justifies their favorite sin. Remember Psalm 118:6, "The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

HOW THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS DIFFERENT

If the church of Christ is just a denomination among other denominations we have no right to exist, in fact, if that is true the sooner we pass out of existence the better. If it is different from the many churches in the land, what distinguishes it? How is it different?

First, every thing about the church of Christ is simple. It is not the purpose nor is it the practice of the church to appeal to vanity or pride by making a display of unnecessary things. Churches of Christ purpose to do all the Lord has stipulated and leave out the things He has said nothing about. "They sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." (Acts 11:22-23).

It is not the purpose of the church to entertain. The teaching is for edification. Preachers do not consider themselves "stand-up comics." The music is the expression of each person singing praises to God. Chorale groups, quartets and choruses are not heard. Prayers are spoken by men of faith and hope uttering words of thanksgiving, trust and determination. No prewritten or form prayers are uttered. The Lord's Supper recalls the sacrifice of Christ by eating it in the simplest manner. There is no fanfare; chanting, reading or singing while Christians participate. Giving is done by the rich and poor alike according to the ability of each one on the first day of each week. There are no pleas to contribute for special works or people. Churches of Christ never sponsor bingo games, fish fries, or rummage sales. Play room and gymnasiums will not be seen attached to the meeting-houses of faithful congregations.

Second, churches of Christ speak out against sectarianism and refuse to be a part of it.

Sectarianism originally referred to those who are apostates from the established church or members of a religious sect. It therefore is people who are blindly and narrow-mindedly devoted to a sect. The religion (church) of Christ was early on called a sect, by the Jews who were faithful to their ancestral religion. When imprisoned Paul called the chief Jews of Rome together, at which time they said to him, "we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

(Acts 28:22). Appealing to Governor Felix in regard to Paul the Jews selected a certain orator who accused Paul by saying, "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." (Acts 24:5). The Jews were incorrect by making the charge against the church, as it was not a sect or a part broken off from the Jews religion. Likewise, people are incorrectly judging the church by classing it with the sectarians (or denominations) today. The church is not a part of something, or broken off from any religious body or church.

The word translated "sect" is frequently translated "heresy." While there were numerous "sects" among the Jews, anytime a person or a group broke off from the church the term was used of something evil or bad. Paul speaks of it as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), and of those causing division in the body, a condition that he declared made their coming together "not for the better but for the worse" (I Cor. 11:17-19).

The leaders and members of denominational churches accept, tolerate, and even thank God for the many churches (sects or divisions), in the world. They rejoice because this enables "everyone can have a choice of a church they wish to join, work among and praise God through." Churches of Christ are different because we still believe as those in Apostolic Days, who were taught that religious division is wrong, therefore, sinful. In addition, those who advocate the practice are heretics and are engaged in a work of the flesh. This being true we cannot remain silent, rather we are compelled to speak out against this popular practice.

Third, churches of Christ will not accept in worship anything that was not practiced by the church in Apostolic Days. There is no appeal made to rituals or emotionalism when Christians assemble to worship God. God has not left each person or each congregation to decide what is to be done toward Him in worship, praise or glory. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (Jn. 4:24). Several things in this passage are quite striking to the eye. 1st the worshipper of God MUST worship Him in spirit and in truth. That is a settled fact. When worship is not in spirit or lacking in truth it is unacceptable. 2nd acceptable worship can only be direct to GOD. When another being or thing is worshipped whether real or imagined, worship is invalid. Angels, persons, animals, or totems, heavenly bodies or earthly selections are to be rejected. 3rd, Worship is to be IN SPIRIT i.e. from the inner being. Without the spirit the body is dead (Js. 2:17). Such makes worship SPIRITUAL. Performing certain outward acts without putting the heart in it is worthless. 4th IN TRUTH means that the acts which God has prescribed are to be done. One may claim sincerity in his worship while either failing through ignorance to do God's will or openly rebelling against God is lethal. Churches of Christ contend that each person must guard his spirit while joining with others in the actions demanded by God. To name the things that are necessary.

(a) The Church is to assemble on the Lord's Day (the 1st day of every week) to worship. A time is set each Lord's Day when each member of the congregation is to present his or herself before the Lord in worship. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7). As surely as the first day arrives, Christians have the dutiful privilege to gather to worship. Forsaking is forbidden (Heb. 10:25). This difference is seen as members of various churches and religious organizations, assemble if they wish, if it is convenient, or if they have nothing else to do or another obligation is not pending. Churches of Christ reject the notions that advocate all of life is worship, or, that we may worship alone sitting on a rock or under a tree somewhere. The church must come together (I Cor. 11:17-34).

(b) As you notice in the above passage Christians assemble "to break bread" or to eat the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 10:16-17). Most churches partake of the Lord's Supper annually, biannually, quarterly or monthly. This makes the Church of Christ different. Also, the manner in which Christians commune is a distinguishing mark. Just as Jesus ask of His disciples, Christians all break from a single loaf and drink from the same communion cup. Some seeing this done for the first time are taken aback but, on a close examination of the accounts in scripture realize that is the correct way to commune.

(c) One man speaking at a time edifies the assembly, since the assembly is never divided into various classifications (I Cor. 14:23-34). The instruction of children is left to parents in a home setting. The Sunday School or classification of people into Bible classes for teaching is unknown to the New Testament. We have asked our religious neighbors for the passages that tell us to divide the assembly, but, as of yet have not been supplied. Likewise, some churches of Christ have adopted the denominational practice without Bible authority.

(d) Churches of Christ take up a collection only on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:12). Each one gives (or lays by) as prospered by the Lord. Graciously we have received and graciously we give to the Cause of the Lord without begrudging or compulsion. There are no demands or pledges made (II Cor 8:1-7). All is a freewill donation (II Cor. 9:7). We take God at His word, sowing bountifully (II Cor. 9:6).

(e) Early Christians rely heavily on prayer, in private and when we assemble as the church. When a brother leads us in prayer we listen giving heed to every word so that we can say Amen (I Cor. 14:15-16). In this way, his prayer becomes our own. In the houses where a Church of Christ meets there is no special altar to pray, no counting of beads etc. And, may I add, the prayers are addressed to the heavenly Father and prayed in the name of Christ (Eph. 3:14-15). There is no dependence on Mary (the Lord's mother), angels of God, nor any so-called saint, living or dead.

(f) Singing praises to God is done by each individual without the accompaniment of any kind of mechanical instrument of

music. Singing is usually the first act of worship in most congregations; therefore, it is the most surprising thing to visitors as they observe singing without an instrument. We are content resting our practice on the pattern of the church in New Testament times (I Cor. 14:15, Eph. 5:19).

Fourth, the church of Christ is different by presenting the plan of salvation scripturally (and logically), in the order given in the New Testament. Consulting every case of conversion recorded in the book of Acts, every one converted to Christ first heard the word of God. When those who wished to please God heard what was required of them, it produced faith in their heart. The Apostle reminded his readers at Rome, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17). For the benefit of those who hold to the idea that the Lord in some miraculous manner creates faith in the heart, the question of inspiration is, "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14). The scriptural order is hear, believe. Logically, for our readers who think God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit moves on one to produce faith, we must in all fairness ask, "why send missionaries to heathen lands?" Of all places, the Godhead should give to those people the aid they need to become followers of Christ.

When hearing of the goodness of God extended to sinners through Jesus Christ upon considering the evidence, faith is produced causing one to repent or change the mind resulting in a reformation of life. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). Some teach that repentance must precede belief, sometimes citing a passage that so teaches. But, these have to do with the Jews who believed in God and were to repent of their wickedness before Him and believe Jesus to be the long looked for Messiah. Why would a man who never heard of Christ repent in obedience to Him?

Once the mind is changed and one wishes to have his sins forgiven by virtue of the blood of Christ he openly and willing acknowledges his faith in the Lord. This confession expressed with words are the feelings of his heart. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10). There is no record of a person praying "a sinner's prayer" for salvation. We do have recorded a confession unto (leading one toward), salvation. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37). To ask a person to confess more than that is to act upon one's own authority. To ask less is to reject the authority of the word of inspiration. Simple as that confession is, it embraces the whole of one's life from that moment forward.

Baptism in water is the final action one obeys that actually transports from sin into the salvation offered in Christ. When one is baptized in water, the scriptures testify to these results (among other things). (1) Salvation (Mk. 16:16, 1 Pet. 3:21), (2) remission of sin (Acts 2:38), (3) washing away of sin (Acts 22:16), (4) the beginning of a new life begins (Rom. 6:3-4), (5) placing one into the one body (I Cor. 12:13), (6) allowing Christ to be put on (Gal. 3:27). Baptism in the scheme of redemption cannot be overlooked or stressed too

much. At the point of baptism these blessings are obtained, not before water baptism-not after water baptism.

THE ORDER OF THE STEPS IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Some think as long as these things are done the order is insignificant. For instance, if one is baptized as a baby, then later learns to believe, confesses Christ at various times and does daily penitence, then all is well. Others think if one repents and believes the Gospel he is saved and then begins to confess Christ and is baptized later on, he is fine. In either case all things have been done. The order means nothing. Nothing could be further from the truth. Consider the letters O D G, we can arrange them as follows. G O D and we have the Supreme Being, the object of our affection and worship. On the other hand, if the order is D O G. The same letters are there but the arrangement makes a great deal of difference. Think on it. Barney Owens

*This article is taken from a personal book of sermons by Brother Foster Prince who preached the Gospel for many years and served as an Elder in LaGrange. GA.



INDIVIDUAL CUPcontinued from page one

JUSTIFICATION, WHERE ARE YOU?

However, there are many that seek to justify the human tradition of multi-cup communion. How do they attempt to do this? By clouding the truth. A lawyer, when talking to Jesus about how to attain eternal life, quoted the Mosaic command to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus responded by telling him he would live if he did this, and then we read:

“But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29)

How did this lawyer go about trying to justify himself? By clouding the truth. When all else fails in trying to justify ourselves, we can simply ask needless questions (to which we really know the answers) in an attempt to make it appear as if the truth on which an issue hinges cannot be determined. His inheriting of eternal life hinged on loving his neighbor, so he attempted to muddy the water—well, who exactly is my neighbor anyway? Now if we want to get out of keeping the divine pattern of communion, as exemplified by Christ, and we want to feel justified in not obeying the command, “drink of it, all of you,” then we merely have to make it seem as though the truth of what He did and commanded is undeterminable. We might ask this question: did they have to put their lips on the cup to drink “of it”? Or perhaps this question (which I have been asked): if Jesus had taken two cups, can it not still be said that He took a cup? Those who ask such questions are trying to present it as if Jesus’ action is vague.

DIVERSION

Another tactic is to distract from the real point. The metonymy-argument falls into this category. If you don’t know what a metonymy is, that’s ok, it’s not important-you can go the rest of your life without knowing what a metonymy is, and more importantly, you can understand the communion passages without knowing what it is. However, if you do want to know, it is figurative language where one thing is named while another thing is understood: if I say the kettle is boiling, you understand that by naming the container (kettle), I am referring to the contents - the contents are boiling. It is argued that the word “cup” is used to refer to the fruit of the vine and not the actual container. My response: so, what? We must still follow Jesus’ example in using one cup. We must still keep the ordinance as it has been delivered! Whether the “cup” is named to stand for its contents or not, it doesn’t change anything, because it’s still a fact that the cup is there. If I drink milk out of a cup and say, “I drank the cup,” what effect has that had on the physical cup? The cup is still there, of course. A metonymy is not a magical spell that causes the cup to vanish from reality. The fruit of the vine was not contained in the fruit of the vine. Such is absurdity and is exactly what kind of a nonsensical discussion this argument leads to. It’s just another maneuver attempting to justify a man-made tradition that violates scripture. What Jesus took in His hand was a cup, and that cup contained fruit of the vine - period.

AS MANY CUPS AS CONGREGATIONS

Another argument often put forth is the idea that since there are multiple congregations that observe the Lord’s supper, there must be more than one cup of fruit of the vine anyway. Kevin Pendergrass, a multi-cup advocate, used this argument in the Pendergrass - Elmore debate which took place on June 5th, 2009:

“To argue that each congregation is to have its own ‘cup of the Lord’ is to argue for more than one cup of the Lord - as many cups as congregations. To contend for only one container and then justify as many containers as there are congregations is to abandon the argument for having only one container to begin with” (1st Speech, 19:47).

This reasoning astonishes me. Do we not understand that we are speaking of multiple observances of this ordinance? Each assembly’s observance is independent from another, and that being the case (as with any ordinance or observance), each individual one must follow the form established by the example and commands of Jesus. Mr. Pendergrass’ logic is strangely based on the idea that all observances throughout the entire world on the first day of the week merge as one single communion. At least this is the premise on

which his argument needs to be based if it's even going to be considered.

In the Old Testament, God commanded there to be one lamb for each household in the keeping of the Passover (Ex. 12:3). Nationwide, there would be many families with a lamb; therefore, necessarily, there would also be many lambs, but (as in Mr. Pendergrass' argument) this is meaningless, because each family's observance is independent of another, and each individual one must follow the requirement one lamb per house.

Man's desire to accommodate the overly-large congregations and to appeal to the mass's faithless fear of germs they think they will catch from the common cup rejects the commands of Jesus Christ to Whom this ordinance belongs in the first place. Nevertheless, it is indeed the Lord's; let's observe it in the way He intended. We should not take it upon ourselves to perform it in a different manner than Jesus Himself. Lord, let us men understand your will!



DID CHRIST PREACH THE . . . continued from page two

God answered him from a bright cloud and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." God was letting them all know that the time for the teaching of Moses and other Old Testament characters was past. It was time to hear the Son now, and again and again we find Him preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

In Matthew 9:35 the Book reads: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom..." It is small wonder that Jesus became unpopular with the Jews. After all, He was teaching a doctrine that was different and sometimes even contradictory to the law of Moses and this in their own synagogues!

We have heard of folks who claim the New Testament really begins with the Book of Acts. Of course, we know why. There are things taught by the Lord in the Book of Matthew which they are unwilling to accept. They insist that those things, especially Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 belong to the law and not the gospel. However, Matthew 9:35 says He was teaching the gospel of the kingdom in their own synagogues! Did He deal with the law at all? Of course, but that was not the purpose of His teaching. It is unthinkable that one should teach a doctrine so very different from the law of Moses and not have to answer questions about it. However, what Jesus preached was not the law but the gospel! In John 6:63 Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; (makes

us alive, DLK) the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Jesus said His words would make us alive. That's good enough for me. In the 6th chapter of John, Jesus had been teaching some difficult things for his disciples to accept. This, in itself, shows that he was not in the habit of teaching the law of Moses. If he had, it would not have been so difficult for them to accept. The reluctance they manifested in verse 66 proves they were hearing some things they were not accustomed to. John 6:66 says, "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." The next verse (67) says, "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" Listen to Peter. He said, "...Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68) Does the law of Moses provide eternal life? Of course not. If it had, the Lord would never have had to come to the world and suffer, bleed and die. Paul said, "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." (Hebrews 8:6, 7)

The very fact that a second covenant (New Testament) exists is proof that the first one was not satisfactory. There would have been no reason at all for the Lord to have preached the old law! It had been taught for about 1400 years already. He was obviously interested in presenting His gospel. That was new and fresh. It was often difficult for the Jews to accept because they had the old covenant in their minds. When Jesus contrasted the old law with the new He was not explaining the old. He often contradicted the old law. He was presenting the New Testament. God forbid that men reject anything taught by the Son of God Himself! As the apostle opened the book of Hebrews he wrote: "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." (Hebrews 1: 1,2) One will look in vain to find more majestic language given by Inspiration than the words used here. May we be content to "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

DEAR READERS

Brother Eric Stone and his family have now been in Hawaii over three years. The family consists of Eric and Tara, and three children. They have done a good work for the church and really need medical insurance for the family. (he has insurance through a part-time job but the family has none). They can have insurance

for all of them at a cost of \$859.95 per month. With today's rising medical costs, this is a bargain and anyone with children needs insurance! Is there a congregation among us who is willing to pay for this? Please consider this at your earliest opportunity and contact the Stone's at: 94-371 Ikepono Street, Waipahu, HI. -DLK

Our Departed

BYRD, Mary Marie (Dowling) Byrd was born Feb. 4, 1930 to Frank Artie and Vera Alma (Sims) Dowling. She died Sept. 24, 2014 at 84 years of age. She was married to Marion D. Byrd Feb. 12, 1948. To this union six children were born. She was preceded in death by her parents and husband. She left to mourn her passing, two sons Tim (wife Chloe) and Ewell (wife Paulette); four daughters, Regina Humphrey (husband Tommy), Gail Robjson (husband Charles), Avis Dilday (husband Chuck), and Denise St. John (husband William) There are seventeen grandchildren, twenty-six great grandchildren, and eight great, great, grandchildren. Two brothers, Lee and Ray Dowling and one sister, Cheryl Rollins, along with a number of nephews and nieces. She was confined to her home the past few years being in constant pain, yet always had a smile for visitors. Sister Bryd was a faithful member of the church, a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. All six of her children and their companions are faithful members of the church. All of her grand children have obeyed the gospel. She was an example of one whose behavior becometh holiness (Tit. 2:3,4), being modest in her demeanor, reflecting Christ to all. She was modest in her speech, I never heard her say anything disrespectful about anyone, modest in her appearance as there was no concern about visiting her home or meeting her on the street improperly attired in shorts and pants. The church at Paris Texas will greatly miss her and all of us who knew her mourn her passing, yet, we rejoice knowing she will love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Sorry this didn't make the past issue. Our apologies. - DLK*

MOORE- Oct 31, 2014 Leland Moore passed away. Brother Moore was a true and faithful soldier for the Lord. He labored hard to grow the church everywhere he lived. He was preceded in death by his daughter and wife. I learned of his passing only by happenstance. When I called to get the facts I was told yes it is true. Lee died from heart failure. I had spent many hours in his home and traveling to visit folks in Casper Wyoming. The congregation in Casper has no future without Lee. Lee and I were in the process of working with a group of folks in Riverton and he was so excited. Lee was 80 years old and full of life and so excited to sing and work for the Lord. Lee has crossed the Jordan but not alone. I will miss him so very much. Lee and I had grown to love the Lord and each other as Paul and Timothy did. I look with hope to the day that I can be with him and so many others that have turned their path now to the shores of heaven. Leland wouldn't want the work in Wyoming to end, but wanted to see so much a new congregation to come forth. I am a better person because of Lee's influence in my life. A graveside service was held on his behalf. Roger L. Owens

WILSON, Pearl B. Wilson of Springfield, MO passed away October 21, 2014 at the age of ninety-seven. Born and reared in Laclede County Missouri, as a young high school graduate, she taught seven years in the rural schools of that county touching the lives of many who are yet alive and remember her with great fondness. Pearl was widowed at the young age of thirty-five when her husband suddenly died of cancer. Left with two young boys she worked toward a degree in education at Southwest Missouri State College where she later graduated. She accepted a position with the Springfield Public Schools where she taught for the next twenty-seven years. Pearl moved to Springfield around 1957 and attended church services at the old Benton Avenue congregation. She remained faithful to the Lord for the remainder of her life. As a result of her connections with school, home and church she touched the lives of an unlimited number of people. She was a tireless worker and had an influence for good wherever she went. Even at her advanced age she continued to work around the house and in her flower garden right up to the end. Pearl was an older sister of Helen King and Bonnie Ervin both of whom survive her. In addition she is survived by her son Jack and several grand and great grandchildren. The memorial service was conducted from the Gorman-Scharpf Funeral Chapel here in Springfield. This writer along with one of her grandsons conducted the service. Mark Triplett led the congregational singing. We, here at Mission Hills are sorry to see Pearl leave, we will miss her, but we look forward to that day when all of God's children will be gathered home on fairer fields and brighter climes where we can sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb by and by.- Ronny F. Wade

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, November 13-2014, e-mail old_paths@juno.com It is difficult to believe we are nearing the end of another year, one we can never have again. Hopefully, we have all worked hard and the Lord is pleased with our efforts. The meeting at Columbia, MO closed with no visible results but we did enjoy good crowds with some outside attendance, if I recall correctly. Shahe Gergian works with Columbia and has worked hard. His labors have produced gain for the church and we enjoyed being with him and his sweet wife. It was my privilege to stay with Bill and Karen Smith who took wonderful care of me and we had a great visit. The brethren were all hospitable and we really enjoyed being with them. Our thanks for the opportunity. We are getting ready for the trip to the Philippines and we need your prayers for the work and us while we are there. Allow me to remind our preachers and editors that the paper needs your writings and reports on a regular basis. In Acts 15 we read where apostles came to Jerusalem after a trip and reported to the church "...all things that God had done with them." (Verse 4) Thus we have Bible precedent for following their example. Brethren do enjoy and profit from hearing where you have been, the results, etc. and it is encouraging to them. Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

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THE BACK PAGE...

THE PSALMS

By CARL M. JOHNSON

An exchange I had with the late Lynwood Smith in the 1970's during the annual Fourth-of-July Meeting at Sulphur, Oklahoma made a lasting impression on me. When the time came for me to preach, I assumed the pulpit and announced my text would be taken from "Psalms, chapter 51, verses 12 and 13." After services were over that evening, Lynwood pulled me aside, took my Bible from my hand, flipped through it to the Psalms and said, "Carl, there are NO chapters in the Psalms!" He then pointed his finger at my text for the evening and added, "See, it is Psalm 51, not chapter 51!"

Of course, he was absolutely correct, and I do not think I have ever made the mistake of referring to a psalm as a chapter since that night. As a young preacher my knowledge of the Psalms was sort of like a patchwork quilt. I knew some of the Psalms here and there, but I had never done a systematic study of them in order to get the overall understanding of the entire collection. I have corrected that oversight since then. In fact, our home congregation is nearing the end of a weekly, systematic study of Psalms at our Wednesday night services. Rediscovering the wonderful significance of this book has been a great blessing to me.

Psalms is the longest book in the Bible and the OT book most frequently quoted in the NT. The tremendous breadth of its subject matter includes jubilation, war, peace, worship, judgment, messianic prophecy, praise, lament, and prayer. Psalms teaches us the importance of praise. We praise God for His attributes and actions. Consequently, we must come to know God as He is revealed in His Word. Psalms teaches us the importance of prayer—that there is no experience in life too high or too low to exclude God. Psalms teaches us the importance of corporate worship. It is not enough to praise God all alone. We also need to worship Him corporately and sing His praises together. The Psalmist makes it clear that there is something about the corporate aspect of worship that is satisfying to God and to us.

Psalms also provides great consolation. My father died in 1986. He suffered ill-health and much physical pain during his last years. He often said that when he could not sleep at night he received his greatest comfort reading from the Psalms. There is probably no other book in the Bible where you can find more help to deal with the crises of life.

I have been a collector of certain kinds of old and rare books for many years, including old songbooks and hymnals. I have at least one copy of all the songbooks Lynwood Smith published throughout his career. I also have two leather-bound hymnals published by Alexander Campbell in 1860, and a leather-bound hymnal by Issac Watts published in 1787.

Watts was born July 27, 1674, in Southampton, England, and is called the "Father of English Hymnody." He wrote upwards of 600 songs including such classic hymns as "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Am I a Soldier of the Cross," and "Joy to the World." His hymnal also includes his most hailed accomplishment—the monumental rewriting of the Psalms of David in rhyming-meter English verse.

I treasure these books, along with a number of others I have been fortunate enough to pick up through the years, including Bibles and fragments of Bibles dating as far back as the 1500's.

However, suppose I made it known worldwide that I know the location of the actual songbook Jesus used when He worshiped in the temple. Do you suppose the news would peak the curiosity of collectors and book lovers from all over the world? Do you suppose there would be a mad rush to see such a rare find?

The truth is, I do know where that particular book is. It is in the middle of all our Bibles. Jesus sang these same psalms we possess today when He worshiped in the temple. Personally, there is just something arresting in knowing that every time I pick up the Bible, I am also picking up within it the songbook Jesus used in corporate worship during His lifetime.

We still sing the Psalms today. While the OT carefully dictates what musical instruments the Jews were to use while singing these Psalms in the temple, we are commanded in the NT age simply to sing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Because there is no authority for instruments in the NT, we sing them a cappella.

Song 126 in Kevin Presley's latest songbook "Ceaseless Praise," is Psalm 23. The next time you sing this beautiful arrangement, consider that Jesus undoubtedly sang this same psalm many times Himself, and contemplate how wonderfully blest we are that God has provided it and all the other psalms for us today. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com