

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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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 ownelves whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownelves” (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” (Co1.3:1,2). 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 1 Cor. 15:57,58, “But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore my 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”

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550
Fax 925-454-8995

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814

EDITORIAL STAFF

Billy Dickinson	Greg Gay
Jerry Dickinson	Carl Johnson
Johnny Elmore	Kevin Presley

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

www.oldpathsadvocate.org
Rick Martin, Website Publisher
Terry Studdard, Website Asst. Publisher
Brandon Steward, Webmaster

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Editorial

NO WORSHIP IN EGYPT

By DON L. KING

In the book of Exodus beginning in chapter three, we read the account of the time when God wished for His people to leave the land of Egypt, where they were kept as slaves, and go into the wilderness to worship Him. Most of us are familiar with the several plagues eventually sent upon Egypt because of Pharaoh's continued refusal to allow Israel to go. As we consider the account, we are reminded of the familiar manner Satan used then, and still uses today, as he does his best to lead people away from what is right. Obviously, he has not changed all of his tactics, probably because they are still productive in our modern age. He repeatedly offered compromises which could never be accepted by Israel because they required disobedience in some manner. Always remember that compromise seldom carries one toward strength. It almost always carries us toward weakness. If it didn't, Satan would not use it. We won't have the space to consider the entire subject here, but let's notice Exodus 8:25: "And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." However, this would never do! Moses said, "...It is not meet (suitable or permitted) so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination (that which the Egyptians held sacred, DLK) of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: 10, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?" (Exodus 8:26)

Moses and Aaron were faced with a decision with which many of us are sometimes faced: Whether or not to compromise and try to make the best of a seemingly bad situation. God had demanded they go into the wilderness. They were supposed to leave the land if they were to obey God. Pharaoh was willing to allow them to worship, but only if they remained in Egypt. Moses made the right decision. He knew that to compromise would be to disobey God's command. Men often want to do this. I suppose they reason it is expedient, but it is never permissible to only partially obey God. Moses knew Israel could not afford to do that, and we can't either. To worship in Egypt would have brought about both the wrath of God and finally the Egyptians themselves.

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QUERIST COLUMN

BY CLINT DEFRANCE

1. How would you explain why everyone needs to be a member of the Church of Christ? (TX)

Response: First, we must be very clear that by the expression “the Church of Christ” we mean the Church that Jesus established and which is described in the New Testament (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16). There are man-made denominations and sects that call themselves “the Church of Christ” and it is not necessary that anyone be a part of these organizations.

I do believe that everyone should be a member of the Church that Jesus established because it is the true Church. It is the only Church that Jesus established (Matthew 16:18). It is the only Church that fulfills the prophecies and expectations of the Old Testament (Isaiah 2:2-4). It is the only Church which Christ loves and for which He died (Ephesians 5:23-25; Acts 20:8). It is the only Church to which the saved are added by Christ (Acts 2:47). It is the “body of Christ” (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1.24), the people of God (1 Peter 2:9), the Kingdom of God on earth (Matthew 16:18-19), and the spiritual temple and priesthood wherein alone acceptable worship can be offered to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5). The Church is Christ’s Bride (Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2), which He is returning to take to heaven.

These statements may be made about no other institution on earth. If one is interested his or her spiritual welfare, in standing the truth, in pleasing God, and enjoying His presence for eternity that person should be a member of the church of Christ.

2. My mother was an abusive woman and facilitated abuse against me for many years when I was a child. I know that the Bible commands me to honor her, but I just don’t know how. (SC)

Response: My heart goes out to the one who made this inquiry. Abuse, especially abuse against a child, is a terrible thing. It is much worse when the perpetrator is one who had been charged by God as a caregiver and protector. However, I can see that this question is asked not out of mere emotion, but from a sincere desire to understand what the Bible means and how to follow it. I shall do my best to give the scriptural answer.

The Bible does teach that children must honor their fathers and mothers (Ephesians 6:2-3). Evidently, this instruction is not limited to the time when children are

young and live at home, because Jesus condemned the people of His day for neglecting to care for their elderly parents out of a greedy desire to keep their property and assets for themselves (Matthew 15:3-7).

However, we should carefully consider what is involved in “honoring” someone. Christian citizens are commanded to “honor the king” (1 Peter 2:17). We understand that this includes obeying the laws of the government and paying taxes (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14). It also means that the Christian is not permitted to bring “railing accusations” against the government leaders (2 Peter 2:10-11; Acts 23:3-5). We do see precedent in Acts 8:1-4 and Matthew 1:13-15 that when a government becomes violently oppressive to Christians, while the Christians do not have the right to retaliate, they do have the right to flee the jurisdiction of that government. “Honoring the king” does not mean that the Christian must remain in a dangerous or abusive situation.

Similarly, while Peter admonishes Christian slaves and servants to, “be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps ... “ (1 Peter 2:18-21). Yet even the Old Law allowed for a slave to flee from a master who was abusive (Exodus 21:26-27; Deuteronomy 23:15-16). In fact, a slaveowner who killed his slave was to be put to death (Exodus 21:20)!

According to the biblical teaching on these relationships that in some ways parallel the relationship between children and their parents, honoring does mean maintaining a relationship with someone who is dangerous and abusive.

What is the proper response to the kind of abuse our questioner received? Separate yourself from the abusive situation. There is nothing wrong with this. However, follow the example of Christ: “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). Committing yourself to God who judges righteously is a great definition of the kind of forgiveness we are to show toward our unrepentant enemies who sin against us. We must give the matter over to God, knowing that He will handle things correctly. This releases us from the dangers of bitterness and wrath. Paul further comments In Ephesians 4:31: “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger,

clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” Holding on to the hurt will only hurt you. God can take this burden. His demands on you are simply to avoid efforts to retaliate, evil speaking, and allowing anger, clamor, malice, and bitterness a place in your heart. God bless you.

ORIGINAL SIN AND SINFUL NATURE DOCTRINE

BY JERRY L. CUTTER

It is generally believed that the father of the “original sin” concept was Augustine, Dr. Herbert Haag, a noted Catholic Bible scholar of Germany, writes: “St Augustine, in the 5th century [A.D. 354-430], coined the term ‘original sin.’” Dr. Haag, in his book *Is Original Sin in Scriptures?* (Issued by Sheed and Ward, a Catholic publishing house) is a Catholic, but differs with their position on “Original Sin.” August Strong in his book *Systematic Theology* (1907), pp. 620-621, writes: “The early Fathers thought of the origin of sin in angels and in Adam as due to free will. Augustine thought of the origin of sin in Adam’s posterity as due to inherited evil will.”

We must understand that one’s sins are not “due to inherited evil will” (II Corinthians 5:10). This doctrine is false. Homer Halley, educated in a Christian Church college, became a popular lecturer and traveled widely across America. I mention him because of what he wrote concerning the “sinful nature” of man in his book entitled, *Halley’s Bible Handbook* (23rd edition). On Romans, chapter 5, he wrote this strange comment: “Paul’s answer is that Men are not to be blamed for being Sinners. They are born that way, brought into Life without being asked if they wanted Existence. Just woke up in this world to find themselves in a Body with a Sinful Nature. But, says Paul, the Founder of our Race, Adam, did not start with a Sinful Nature” (p. 587).

According to Halley, “Men are not to be blamed for being sinners.” “They are born that way...Just woke up in this world to find themselves in a Body with a sinful nature.” The ramifications of this doctrine are far reaching. This doctrine is believed by “the Congregationalist, Baptist, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans” and others. According to this doctrine, one is not just born with a sinful nature, one is born “totally depraved.”

If one is born totally depraved, it is then surmised that “there is of necessity of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man.” This operation creates (it is believed) the faith necessary in Jesus for repentance and salvation to take place. However, the Bible says that “faith come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 1: 16-17; 10:17).

God is “the Father of spirits” (Hebrews 12:9; Ecclesiastes 12:7). It takes more courage than I have to suggest that our Father gave us a “sinful nature,” that is “totally depraved” (Ezekiel 18: 19-20).

Those responsible for the New International Version of the Bible are strong Calvinists. They are strong believers in the original sin doctrine. In the first edition of the NIV we read often the expression “sinful nature.” They unnecessarily used two English words to translate one simple Greek word “flesh” into English. Partial corrections have been made in the second edition. The NIV translators’ original goal was to give the “dynamic equivalence” to a text, and not to give necessarily the nearest corresponding English word from the Greek. For instance, in Romans, several times they translated one simple Greek word “flesh” (sark), into two English words as “sinful nature.” The simple truth is that, literally, “flesh” is the material of the human body and, within itself, it is neither good nor evil. The Catholics’ perception of how one is saved from the original sin is different from that of most Protestant denominations. However, both believe that original sin is “inherited” from Adam through one’s ancestors. A Catholic priest, known as Rev. William J. Cogan, in his “A Catechism for Adults,” explains salvation this way: “What is original sin?” Answer: “The sin committed by Adam, the father of the human race.” Question: “How do you get rid of original sin and get grace?” Answer: “Baptism takes away Original Sin and puts grace in your soul.” Question: “Was any human being preserved from original sin?” Answer: “Yes, the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose soul was created with grace in it. This is called the Immaculate Conception.” And further, concerning babies, Cogan writes: “Babies who die without being baptized cannot go to heaven because they die without grace. Instead, they go to Limbo, a place of natural happiness in the next world ... Adults, who, through their own fault, neglect to be baptized, do not go to Limbo but to hell.” One must remember that sometimes the Catholics’ view on babies and Limbo varies with which priest writes the Catechism, but their belief concerning original sin never varies.

BE YE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

By BENNIE T. CRYER

It is a necessity for Christians to be filled with the Spirit. This is taught effectively by Paul in Eph. 5:18. This is something we obviously obey and not something for which we wait. It is not a mysterious influence sent into our bodies in an inexplicable way, for then it would be impossible to obey it. This is something we can and must do. Paul said: “but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:18-21). And in the parallel verses: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:16-17).

The apostle uses the imperative mood and he does not leave any doubt as to how to carry out the command. He describes how they are to carry out the command by the use of different participles. Let us study them carefully so that we, too, may be “filled with the Spirit.”

1. “Teaching and Admonishing One Another.”

This is mutually edifying one another and is not necessarily confined to the Lord’s Day assemblies. Christians of today have neglected this until in many places saints do little teaching and admonishing out of the regular church assemblies. Yet, this is one of the things we must do in order to be filled with the Spirit.

What does the apostle mean by the words “teach” and “admonish”? W. E. Vine in his “Expository Dictionary of N. T. Words,” p. 31, says: “The difference between “admonish” and “teach” seems to be that, whereas the former has mainly in view the things that are wrong and call for warning, the latter has to do with the impartation of positive truth, cp. Col. 3:16; they were to let the word of Christ dwell richly in them, so that they might be able (1) to ‘teach and admonish one another and (2) to abound in the praises of God.

Admonition differs from remonstrance in that the

former is warning based on instruction; the latter may be little more than expostulation. For example, though Eli remonstrated with his sons, 1 Sam. 2:24, he failed to admonish them, 3:13. Pastors and teachers in the church are thus themselves admonished, i.e., instructed and warned, by the scriptures, 1 Cor. 10:11, so to minister the Word of God to the saints, that, naming the Name of the Lord, they shall depart from unrighteousness, 2 Tim. 2:19.”

In carrying out this we must not only expose sin and error with scriptural warnings, but we must also point out the positive side of Christianity. When we learn to do this our hands will be filled, and the church will grow.

2. “Singing and Making Melody in Your Hearts to the Lord.”

This is to be done in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” “Psalms and hymns” evidently have reference to those songs which praise God, or divinity, and His attributes. The original word that is used for “song” by Paul is a general term and may denote any song. So, he places the adjective “spiritual” before it to show that the songs we sing must be based on the things revealed by the Spirit and in harmony with the Scriptures.

3. “Giving Thanks Always for All Things.”

I want to emphasize “all things.” When we receive the blessings of life from God we should give thanks for them. Too often in the homes of those who profess to be Christians do the members of the family set down to their daily meals and never thank God for their “daily bread.” If we are “filled with the Spirit” we will give thanks for all things, whether it be for the necessities of life or for those things we obtain above life’s essentials. Paul describes those who are not thankful in the first chapter of Romans. Those people were without excuse because of nature’s revelation. God gave them up. Why? “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful” (Rom. 1:21). If one is truly “thankful”, he is thankful. And only those who thank God are filled with the Spirit.

4. “Submitting Yourselves One to Another in the Fear of God.”

Jesus was “heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7). This does not mean that Jesus was afraid of God or that we are afraid of our Father as a child is afraid of the dark. This is a reverential fear. Jesus was afraid he would do something that would wound the affection of God. If we

are filled with the spirit this will be our attitude toward our brethren. We do not want to wound the affection of our brethren and cause a severance of the tie of fellowship. According to Paul we should be afraid that we might do something to our brother or sister that would cause disfellowshipping, and we should continually be on the watch. This part demands longsuffering. How many divisions could be avoided if brethren really had the “fear of God” and would submit themselves one to another. It seems when one of our brethren makes a mistake we want him to make a confession immediately or we will withdraw from him. And if the confession doesn’t suit us, we will not accept him. The Lord was longsuffering with us even before we obeyed the gospel while we were in sin. If the Lord had dealt with us as some of us do with each other, I fear none of us would be living today. He would have taken our life immediately when we sinned. The Lord was and is merciful and longsuffering toward us. Let us be merciful, kind, and longsuffering toward each other. Let us be filled with the Spirit.

THE TWO COVENANTS

BY MELVIN BLALOCK

Many religious errors occur because of a failure to distinguish between the two covenants. There are two main sections to our Bibles, known as the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “Testament” is also correctly translated “Covenant.” The Apostle Paul wrote that God, “.....hath made us able ministers of the new testament.....” 2 Cor. 3:6. The first covenant would eventually be replaced by the new covenant. In the book of Hebrews we read the following: “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second,” Heb. 8:7. He shows in this same text that the first covenant had become obsolete. “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away,” Heb, 8:13. We are not subject to any part of the first covenant. It has been replaced by a new and superior covenant. Again we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises,” Heb 8:6. When Jesus died on the cross it brought an end to the old covenant and a beginning of the new. “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after

men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood, For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you’” Heb. 9:16-20. When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper He said, “For this is My blood of the new covenant with His blood. Let us rejoice that we live and worship under the new covenant.

Note: A good article by our Brother Blalock

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(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” (1 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 lack 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 regress 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 all 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, he 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. — OPA

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However, there was an even worse problem with Pharaoh's bargain. If Israel compromised and tried to worship in Egypt, it would have been like placing God on a common plane with the uncircumcised Egyptians. Even worse, it would have placed the God of heaven on common ground with idols!

What a lesson for us. To hold the feast in the land of Egypt would be to place the people of God on the same level of heathens. God had demanded their complete departure and separation from those who had enslaved them. Undoubtedly, the same is true for us today. God demands a separate people and has always. We cannot and must not allow ourselves to sink to the level of those who seek to worship God in idolatry, denominationalism or innovations which God has not commanded or ordained. We must be separated from all such things now just as Israel was to be separated from Egypt then. Christ wants us to be free of sin. He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

No, there could be no worship in Egypt for Israel. There could be no tabernacle or altar there; for any religion which could allow them to remain in Egypt could never be authorized of God. Let us take careful note: Any religion allowing us to be a part of the world in all its glory does not come from the Lord, and cannot be right. Paul said: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) It is interesting that Paul said he was "crucified with Christ." No, Paul had not literally died as Christ had. However, he had indeed died to sin and he had died to his previous way of life.

When we die physically, we leave everything we have behind, and this life holds nothing more for us at all. That is what Paul means in this passage. He meant that he had forever closed the door to his old way of life. Why does anyone believe they can be different? Why try to bring our old way of life with us when we enter the church? Why does anyone seek to convince themselves and others they are now Christians when they are living the same as before their baptism? How can we convert

the world to Christ when the world can easily see we are the same as they are? Why would they want to be with us? How different are we really? Paul said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and unto the world." (Galatians 6:14) There can be no misunderstanding this. Paul had left his old way of life behind. He said: "...the world is crucified unto me."

Oh, we know Paul still lived among the world. He made tents and continued to conduct the daily affairs of life among the people of the world. He undoubtedly had to hear the profanity of the worldly people around him. He must have seen the sinful ways of those around him in the world. However, It was not the way he lived anymore. He kept himself separate. God hasten the day when members of the church in our own time will realize, and practice, this great truth. Allow me to be plain: let those of Egypt (the world) do the drinking, dancing, swearing, wearing of immodest dress, gambling, (yes, the lottery is also gambling) carousing, and watching filthy movies for entertainment. Let us keep in mind we are crucified to all such things. Let us be about the Lord's business. Our mission is to convert the lost to Christ. We must be different than they are if this is ever to occur. There must be a recognizable difference in them and us. This needs to be evident in our daily living and even in the language we choose when teaching the Word of God. Be careful that we don't allow the use of common street language to mar and lower the beautiful overtures of Christ. His message to the lost is surely worthy of our best efforts to preserve.

Think on these things. DLK

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Matt Martin

1000 Stonecroft Lane
Woodstock, GA 30188
Phone: 770-318-8495
mattsmartin@att.net

Our Departed

WEST - Sister Ruth (Welch) West was the wife of Brother Jim West. She was born March 16, 1929 and departed this life October 30, 2018 in Tucson, AZ. Sister Ruth was a faithful member of the Tucson, Arizona congregation for many years. She worked in the Banking industry, Bookkeeping, and Accounting. She leaves to mourn her husband James E. West Sr.; Edward Garner her son, James West, Douglas West, and Timothy West all step-sons. Ruth was the daughter of the late Henry Calvin Welch and Myrtle Calvin Welch. Ruth was baptized at age 12 and spent the rest of her life in service to the Lord. Ruth and Jim had a beautiful marriage for 23 years and three months together. Brother Jim was holding Ruth's hand when she passed from this life to the eternal life. Brother Randy Seals spoke kind and thoughtful words at the funeral service. She will certainly be missed by her husband, family, and the congregation.

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, email: oldpaths@juno.com, November 13. Winter is coming in California. The nights are chilly but the skies are mostly clear in the daytime. With the terrible wild fires on both ends of the State, we need rain badly but none is forecast for the immediate future. Even in Livermore, far from the fires, the smoke is terrible and elderly people are being advised to remain inside. The church here is at peace for which we are grateful. Pat and I visited Jerry Dickinson's meeting in Turlock last Saturday evening and heard him preach a good sermon. We appreciate Jerry, and all who contribute to the Old Paths Advocate with their writings, for the work he regularly does. He is a fine preacher. We look forward to good things in the coming year, Lord willing. The Devil seemingly has been on the march and we need to meet him head on if we expect to defeat him. Preachers: we are trying to revive the field reports section of the paper. If this is to happen, we need the cooperation of our brethren everywhere. Will you help? Lord bless the faithful.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, cmjthebackpage@gmail.com, Nov. 10. We have completed our meetings schedule for the year and it is good to be home for a few months. Phyllis and I cannot begin to thank adequately all of you who extended hospitality to us during the year. We now are looking forward to the annual Oklahoma New Year Meeting in

Oklahoma City. It has been an inspiring way to close out the old year and usher in the New Year for many years. Brethren M. Lynwood Smith and Tom E. Smith conceived of the idea for the meeting and began it in January 1947. I have a full schedule of meetings for next year and Phyllis and I are looking forward to them. Please pray for us. I have been thrilled with the initial response to my new book, "For Such A Time As This" (And Other Essays From the Back Page). Litho Printers did a beautiful job on the printing. The book is 417 pages in a red leather-like hardback binding with gold embossing. The cost is \$20 plus \$3.17 postage for one book. Add \$1 postage for each additional book. You can send a check to the address above or use PayPal to carlmj@cableone.net.

Ronny Wade, P.O. Box 14352, Springfield, MO 65814, Nov. 12. During the latter part of September we were with the church in London, Ky for a very good meeting. Brother Phillip Scott works here with the church, and is respected for his tireless efforts to strengthen the saved and convert the lost. From London we went to Council Hill, OK for a very enjoyable meeting that resulted in two people returning to the Lord after being away for over ten years. There was great rejoicing and prayers of gratitude over their repentance. Lord willing we will be with the church at Fossil Creek in Ft. Worth, TX. November 14-18. The current year is winding down and soon Lord willing, we begin another year that will bring us all nearer our final destiny. May God bless and keep us in His care in the days that lie ahead.

Cullen Smith, 706 Terral Island Rd., Farmerville, LA. 2018 has been a good year for the Lord's work. Our area congregations have had excellent meetings with great preachers this year. Duane Permenter, and one of our best friends Frank Brancato, at my home congregation of Strong Arkansas. Shahe Gergian was at West Monroe, Brother Clarence White at Betty Street, our highly effective Brother Elias Rodriguez, Greg Branch, and my dear friend Jimmy Cating at the Park congregation, and a fantastic meeting with Brother Kevin Presley at the Fairview congregation. By the grace of God and the power of the gospel many souls have been baptized into Christ here and in Mexico. I appreciate every congregation in our brotherhood. One special mention is the Burkhart Church of Christ in Racine, Missouri that celebrated 150 years. Please continue to pray for the sick among us and our dear Brother Joe Hisle. May God bless the brotherhood.

Kevin Presley, 108 Mulberry Court, Dothan, AL 36303, Nov 14, 2018. The last several months has taken me to several places throughout the country and I am thankful for each opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ. I

have recently been with churches in Cable Ridge, MO; Marietta, GA; Chapel Grove, TN; Fort Worth, TX; Cave City, AR; Hartwell, AR; Fairview, LA; Midland, TX; and Rogers, AR. One was baptized in Midland and the meeting in Rogers closed this past Sunday with some of the largest crowds we have ever had there. Bro. Don Pruitt is a diligent worker in this part of God's vineyard. We had visitors from our television program and a few of them may be good prospects in the work there. I am presently enjoying a good meeting at Pleasant View in Springfield, MO. Bro. Irvin Barnes has made this his home for the past 37 years and it has been good to see him feeling well enough to be at all of the services thus far. My last meeting of the year, the Lord willing, will be Dec 5-9 in Lexington, OK. We are preparing for the annual Alabama New Year's Meeting (Dec. 27-31). Make plans to join us! For more information, visit alabamany.com.

Matt Trent, 314 Woodcrest Dr., Norman, OK 73071, mtrent2016@gmail.com. It has been a long time since I last submitted a report to the OPA. I was recently asked to remedy that, which I am glad to do. In recent times, I have primarily focused on my local work here in Norman. I returned here in 2013 to work with the congregation. It has been a blessing for me and my family to be here and work with the brethren here. In 2015 we worked together to create some goals that we are working on. We call it 2015 and beyond. It has been a joy to see God bless the work as we strive together to reach these goals. I have had a few opportunities in recent months to preach at other places as well. I have been able to preach at Denton County, TX, Grapevine, TX, Oakdale, CA, Clovis, CA, Bakersfield, CA, and Sulphur, OK. I am looking forward to being with the church in Kansas City, KS (Mill Creek) this coming Sunday as we spend time with my wife Rachel's family. We are also looking forward to the annual New Year's meeting in Oklahoma City. Please pray for us as we endeavor to serve Him. May God bless His family everywhere!

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO, 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Nov. 12. As I write this report, the first snowfall of winter is under way in our area. Kevin Presley starts a meeting at Pleasant View tonight and the icy conditions will probably affect the attendance of their first service, but the rest of the week should be fine. Our meeting at Jamesville in September with Randy Tidmore was an uplifting experience, as topics were dealt with in an instructive and passionate way, and both our intellects and emotions were touched by his sermons. Thank you, Randy, for preaching your heart out! I finished up my meeting schedule for 2018 with meetings at Grapevine, TX (Sept.) and

Edmond, OK (Oct.). In both places I found thriving congregations where brethren love gospel preaching, longing to hear only a “thus saith the Lord,” and they are working hard in the area of evangelism. The hospitality has been grand everywhere I’ve been this year and I’m now looking forward to being home for the next few months. Recently, I’ve had some studies with a man visiting our services who expressed interest in knowing more about the scriptural worship of the church. When someone has respect for Bible authority, as this brother does, it’s not difficult to show them the errors of individual communion cups and Bible classes with women teachers. It is my hope that this brother will soon take his stand for the truth. Brethren, a new year is almost here, so let’s take stock and make sure our priorities are where they ought to be. Lord willing, I plan to begin 2019 on a good note by attending the Oklahoma New Year’s Meeting. Please remember us when you pray!

P. Duane Permenter, 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96797, (808) 773-5523, duane@churchofchristhawaii.org, Nov 12. All is going well in Hawaii and we continue to move on in the work. We have had a few new visitors from the community of late and we are grateful. Estrella Baldovi who came here from the Philippines twelve years ago recently brought her husband and three children who are all prospects. Estrella was baptized in the Philippines and came here to better her life so the Lord has been put on the back burner so to speak. This is the difficulty we face in this evangelistic effort with many people we are dealing with. The Lord will give the increase as we continue laboring and praying. We continue having 23 every Sunday in addition to any mainland visitors and community people we have. This last Sunday we had 41 in attendance for which we give God the glory. Please continue to pray for us. God bless the faithful!

Frank Brancato, 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312, November 12, 2018, email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net. Since last reporting, I had the pleasure of holding a meeting at the 85th and Euclid congregation in Kansas City. We had very good crowds and we pray that all were edified and encouraged. As always, Mike and Beth Criswell were very hospitable and they took very good care of me while I was there. I consider them both good friends, and I enjoyed our time together. It was wonderful seeing Brother Paul Nichols again, and I was glad that he was able to attend the meeting. The work here in Bakersfield continues to move forward in a positive direction. We still have private bible studies each week, and we pray for God’s increase. We have several on the Bible correspondence course, and we have had some recent responses to the T.V. Program.

If the Lord wills, my last meeting of the year will be in Arlington Texas (November 28 - December 2). Also if the Lord permits, I plan to leave for the Philippines with Don King in early January. This will be my 10th trip with Don, and I am looking forward to it very much. Please remember us when you pray, and may God continue to bless His faithful everywhere!

Paul O. Nichols, 14217 Rosehill, Overland Park 66221, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com. I am happy to report that the Kansas City Stony Point congregation continues to contend earnestly for the faith. We stand for the old paths, as the church here has for more than 60 years. It has been my privilege to continue to work with them since 1994. We have been very impressed with people whose consciences are tender and they are humble enough, if they think that they need to, make a public confession of faults. We have results to the teaching quite often. We love each other and prove it by our actions. We have seven teachers now besides myself, who when one of them gives a lesson and a person comes forward to be baptized or to make a confession of faults, he is able to accommodate them. Our young men and women choose to take their place at each service on the second row. The young men are good song leaders and have given lessons from the pulpit. I am ninety-six now and when I pass, the congregation will be left in good hands and will continue to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). I still preach periodically, but after traveling and carrying the Gospel around the world for so many years, I am no longer able to do that. However, I am happy to encourage others who do the work of an evangelist. May the Lord bless us all as we prepare for the Judgment and eternal life in Heaven with the redeemed of all the ages.

Jimmy Cating, (904) 782-0085, jbcating@hotmail.com. As another year draws to a close, I thank God for the many opportunities He has given us to share the message of salvation in 2018. The gospel is being taken all around the world and the kingdom is spreading into new territories. I am thankful for my preaching brethren who are so capable of presenting God’s truth far and near. In January of 2018 it was my honor to hold meetings at the following congregations: Ada, OK; Weatherford, TX; Dothan, AL; Springfield, MO (Pleasant View); Huntington, WV; Oakdale, CA; Farmerville, LA (Park Church of Christ); and Washington, OK. Each place refreshed us by the warmest of hospitality and a steadfast desire to grow and stand in the truth. Over the past two years, Jim Bradford and I have traveled to Togo, West Africa where we spent several weeks conducting leadership studies and gospel meetings. The success of the gospel in these areas is worth our time and treasure. Lord willing, in January of 2019, Mike

Criswell and Marcus Mathis (an aspiring preacher from Wichita Falls) will assist us in Togo. We solicit your prayers. Also, in the summer of 2019, if the Lord wills, my family and I will be relocating to work with the congregation in Oakdale, CA. We are extremely excited about this new chapter in our lives. After 17 years in Wichita Falls, TX it will be hard to leave many friends and brethren that are family to us. We are thankful for the opportunities we've had to learn and grow but are excited to see what the future holds. Please message me if you have family or friends in the Oakdale area that could benefit from our outreach efforts. We ask for your prayers as we make this important transition.

Terry Studdard, tstuddard75@gmail.com. I hope this finds everyone happy and healthy! It has been quite a while since I have reported in so, I am quite behind. I am glad to report that I finally retired from teaching school in June of this year. Angie has to go one more year and she will be through too, Lord Willing. It has been such a pleasant change of pace; it is hard to explain. I sent her a text a few days ago at work and told her I had so many things to do that I just didn't know where to start - so, I just didn't. Those of you who know her also know how much she appreciated that - how cute she thought it was! In late July (6/18 - 6/22) we had a meeting with the Earlytown Church of Christ in Earlytown, AL. The attendance was very good with attendance from the members, all of the surrounding congregations and also from the community. It was wonderful to see those that we love and respect in the Lord's work. It was also good to see the improvements that June Broxson has made. She has had a rough go of it for too long now. Keep her and Larry in your thoughts and prayers. We just finished up a meeting at Blue Springs, KY in mid-October. It was so nice to see all of the members there that we have grown to love and appreciate. These brethren and this congregation hold a special place in our hearts. The local attendance was good and we also had visitors every night. This is a congregation that loves gospel preaching. We enjoyed visiting with all the members there but we especially enjoyed our time with Marcus Reppert and his lovely wife Danielle. We took a day and drove up to Cane Ridge and Lexington Cemetery to visit and see the sights. It was a great treat. We look forward to the New Year's Meeting in Dothan and hope to see everyone there; Keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

Rick Martin, mmartin@bellsouth.net. The congregation here at Marietta is doing well. We recently began sponsoring the Let the Bible Speak TV program with Kevin Presley. We have a Sunday morning, 7:30 AM time slot. The program is aired on WATC-TV57. This is an all religious station and to my knowledge this

is the first time the program has been aired on an all-religious station. Response has been good, and we have several enrolled in the Bible Correspondence course. It is our prayer that the program will be successful. If you are not aware the Old Paths Advocate has a blog page (<https://oldpathsadvocate.wordpress.com/>). You might be interested in reading some of the articles on the page. From time to time people ask about Conscientious Objectors. There is a place on the OPA website where you can put your name to show your objection to Carnal Warfare: (<http://www.oldpathsadvocate.org/public/phpscripts/carnalWarfare.php>). If you have a Facebook account, please visit our Facebook page: (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1132281087053161?ref=bookmarks>). New Year's meetings, across the country, will soon be here. You should make plans to attend one. It will certainly strengthen you spiritually.

Melvin Blalock, 214 Pearl St., Cleburne, TX 76031, Nov. 13, 2018. We continue to work with the following congregations in North Texas; Cleburne, Weatherford, Mineral Wells and Duncanville. Our primary endeavor is the Cleburne congregation. We have been blessed with growth in this congregation. Families have moved into the area which has given us a boost. The congregation at Cleburne is blessed with a good number of young people. Six of our young people have obeyed the gospel in the last couple of years. Three of our young men have begun leading songs. We are optimistic about the future of this congregation. The church at Weatherford has seen some growth, with one young man being baptized recently. He has begun leading songs for the congregation. A family of five within the last year has begun attending the congregation. They formerly worshiped with a cups group. The wife and mother have recently taken her stand with us. Another elderly gentleman has begun attending who is not a member, but we are hopeful that he will be led to obey the gospel. We usually speak at all of these congregations every month, as well as follow up on whatever leads they may have. We publish articles every week in the Cleburne, Weatherford, and Mineral Wells newspapers, as well as a couple of weekly publications. We also publish an article on Facebook every week. We have had several positive comments about the articles from people in the community. The Weatherford paper recently requested that we write another article for their weekly church page. We are pleased to comply with their request. Along with the articles we write, we announce our times of services; the TV program; and offer our Bible correspondence courses. We are endeavoring to preach the gospel and promote the church in all of these areas. We occasionally get away to conduct gospel meetings, or preach for a Sunday appointment. We pray that God will continue to bless His faithful people everywhere.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

GOOD KINGS AND BAD KINGS

By JERRY DICKINSON

“For he held fast to the Lord, he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses.” (I Kings 18:6) “Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statues, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant.” (I Kings 23:3)

The wonderful words above were recorded about two of the good kings of Judah, Hezekiah and Josiah. There were nineteen kings who reigned in the nation of Israel and none were good. “He did evil in the sight of the Lord” are the words recorded again and again with reference to all the kings of Israel. Even in Judah there were only a few good kings. In fact, of the twenty kings who reigned in Judah only six were said to be good kings. Only six of thirty nine kings who ruled over God’s people in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were considered good kings by God.

What was the criteria used by the Lord to determine who was a good king or a bad king? It is interesting and enlightening to discover that it was adherence to the pattern for worship that determined if a king was good or bad in the eyes of the Lord. It was not personal morality or wise decisions in matters of state that marked a king as good or bad. Both Hezekiah and Josiah made terrible decisions, personally and as heads of state that had disastrous result for them and the nation of Judah. They both acted foolishly but they are still considered good kings. Why? Because they followed the commandments and statues of the Lord as written in the Law of Moses. This is precisely what the bad kings did not do. In Israel all the kings followed after Baal or other gods and corrupted the pattern of true worship. Even in Judah fourteen of the twenty kings turned from the Lord and did not follow the pattern for scriptural worship. The Temple was even used at times as a place of false worship. Often the Temple was not used at all!

When Hezekiah and Josiah became kings they realized that the true worship of God had been forsaken and corrupted and both started a reformation to restore true worship. In the early days of Josiah’s reformation efforts a lost copy of the Law was found in the Temple by a priest and when the young king heard (for the first time in his life no doubt) the law regarding correct worship read he determined to restore the true worship. The Bible says he decided to serve the Lord with his whole heart and soul! Awesomely, the people followed the lead of their young king and took a stand for the Lord. What a great day in Judah when the king and the people took a stand for the pattern of true worship!

All of this is no doubt a shock and surprise to most religious folks today. After all, we are told that there is no pattern for true worship, or even if there is, it is of no real consequence when it comes to pleasing the Lord. What really matters, we are told, is personal morality and piety, not how you worship. Performing acts of kindness is more important than whether you do or do not use instrumental music in the worship assembly. Living a moral life is more important than whether you commune with one cup or individual cups. In fact, how we commune has no bearing on our relationship with God at all! The problem with that reasoning is it flies in the face of what we read in the both the Old and New Testaments.

God’s word does not minimize personal morality and piety, but neither does it minimize following the pattern for true worship. Both are emphasized as required and both are mandatory. In fact, as we have shown, the kings of Israel and Judah were considered good or bad, not because of personal morality or piety, but because of their adherence or rejection of God’s pattern for true worship. It certainly does matter how we worship! How awesome it would be if a Hezekiah or a Josiah would arise among those religious parties who have abandoned the pattern for true worship and dedicate themselves to follow the commandments and statues in the New Testament with all their heart and all their soul. Rise up, dear reader, and take a stand for the Lord’s way. Abandon anything for which there is no “Thus saith the Lord.” “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” (I Corinthians 14:37)