

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).

VOL. LXXXIV

LEBANON, MISSOURI • APRIL 2012

NO. 4

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES

ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE

PART 3- *By SHAHE GERGIAN*

In parts one and two of this article, we have considered three emotions which do not equate to repentance (guilt, fear and sorrow), a Biblical definition of repentance (a changing, a turning, a returning and a conversion of mind and life away from sin and directed toward God), and three evidences of repentance that should be seen in a penitent person's life (Godly sorrow, a reformation of life and restitution).

Change is very difficult for many. It speaks to our ego and tells us that we are not right. Some do indeed like change, but most are more stubborn and set in their ways and need motivation to change. Thankfully, God gives us at least three wonderful motives to help inspire us to make spiritual changes in our lives.

First, God's goodness ought to motivate us to repent. “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4).

Has God been good to you? Has God blessed you? Has God given you more than you deserve? In the fifth chapter of Romans, Paul reminds us that God's great love was manifested in the giving of Christ and that the gift of Christ was given to unrighteous, sinning, enemies of God (Romans 5:6-11). I ask you again, has God been good to you? Absolutely, He has! If there was nothing else given to mankind by God but Christ alone, each and every human being must admit and acknowledge God's goodness.

However, Christ isn't even all we've been given. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from God (James 1:17). Even the sunshine and the rainfall are blessings from the Father (Matthew 5:45). The food we eat, the clothes we wear, the roof over our heads, the jobs we work, the families we love, the Church of Christ we belong to, and the Savior we adore are all blessings from God. The question then becomes: shouldn't God's goodness motivate us to repent? Shouldn't His gracious kindness encourage us to change when He asks us to change?

Second, God's patience should also motivate to repent. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that

any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

The words “slack” and “slackness” may be unfamiliar in this setting, but they simply mean “to delay” and “tardy.” In other words, Peter wrote that God is not delaying His promise of eternal life in Heaven as some would be tardy in fulfilling a promise. A man may tell his wife that on their tenth anniversary he will take her on a trip to any place in the world she wants to visit, but when the anniversary approaches he examines their financial status and other obligations and says to his wife, “how about our fifteenth anniversary?” He is unable to fulfill the promise that he made with good intentions, and seeks to delay it. Such is not the case with God. God is not delaying eternity because He is unable to make good, He is delaying eternity because of His patient waiting.

God is exercising His patience with mankind. Why? Peter tells us it is because He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Remember what Jesus said about repentance? “...Unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3,5). God continues to allow this world of sin and sorrow to exist only because He is patiently waiting for people to repent. Shouldn't that motivate us to change? Every time we take in a breath of oxygen, every time we blink our eyelids, every day in which the sun rises and sets, should be viewed as an opportunity for us to repent, because one day God's patience will run out. The very next verse that Peter pens says, “but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night” (2 Peter 3:10). God's patience is not eternal and one day He will send Jesus to destroy this world and judge mankind. Nonetheless, as long as you have life within you, you have time to repent.

Third, a conviction of sin ought to motivate us to repent. “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2:37-38).

On Pentecost, the apostle Peter lays the blame for Christ's crucifixion at the feet of the people. In his sermon, he had proved that Jesus was truly the Christ because God had testified with signs, wonders and miracles, because Jesus

continued on page nine

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXXIV No. 4



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS	10
All Should Come to Repentance	1
He Was Lacking	2
Querist Column.....	3
Building a Christian Home	3
The Story of a Compromiser	4
The Church at Corinth	5
Disrupting the Order	6
The Lord's Supper	8
A Pardon for Billy the Kid.....	12
FROM THE FIELDS	10,11

PUBLISHER

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

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240

EDITORIAL STAFF

Bennie Cryer	Greg Gay
Billy Dickinson	Carl Johnson
Jerry Dickinson	Barney Owens
Johnny Elmore	Kevin Presley

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Subscription One Year..... \$13.00
Also On The Internet

Published Monthly by **Old Paths Advocate**, Lebanon, MO
A.C. Brockman, 2033 King James, Lebanon, MO 65536
periodical postage paid at Lebanon, MO 65536
Send Form 3579 to **Old Paths Advocate**
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550.

All articles published in **Old Paths Advocate** contain the view of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors and publishers. If you have any questions, please direct them to the author listed at the heading of the article.

Editorial

HE WAS LACKING

By: HOMER L. KING

The Bible tells us of a young man coming to Christ and asking “What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life” (Matt. 19:16). The young man was also a “ruler” (Lk. 18:18). He was unlike most of the people of this day and time who think they have to do nothing “good” to obtain eternal life. He understood there was something to be done. Jesus did not tell this man nor anyone else there was nothing to be done or that there was nothing he could do. Instead, He said, “But if thou wouldst enter into life keep the commandments”. Christ named six of the commandments and the young man readily replied, “All these have I observed ...what lack I yet?”

From the foregoing it is obvious the man was good morally, peaceable, truthful, respected his parents, very rich and religious also. Today if a man possessed these qualities many would wonder how he could possibly be lacking in anything, he would be esteemed a fine Christian man. But the Lord told him he was lacking and also what to do about it. “And Jesus looking upon him loved him and said unto him one thing thou lackest, go sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in Heaven and come follow me.” But so often we think more of our possessions than we do of Christ and this rich young ruler was no exception. The Bible says “he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions”. When he was called to meet his Lord in judgment, how much did his possessions amount to? Jesus said in Matt. 16 “For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” This man was told to keep the commandments not just a part of them. But when it came to a test between his possessions and keeping the commandments wholly, he chose his wealth, “for he had great possessions”.

Martha is another example of “lacking” that should be observed. Evidently she showed hospitality, the Bible says she “received” Jesus into her house. But while her sister, Mary, sat at Jesus feet to hear the wonderful words of the Master, Martha was “cumbered about with much serving”. She was concerned with housework and cooking and this was taking first place in her life. She finally complained that her sister had left her to serve alone and asked Him to bid Mary come help her.

Would you assume He rebuked Mary for being lazy and not doing her share of the household chores? But He did not. Instead He showed Martha what was lacking in her life, “thou art careful and troubled about many things but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her”. Martha gave too much time to temporal things of this life and neglected the spiritual things.

continued on page nine

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By *RONNY F. WADE*

Question: Would you please explain how 5000 people can be served the communion when only one cup is used?

Answer: It is unlikely that 5000 people could be served using one cup. That being said, does this prove that the use of more than one cup in the communion is scriptural? No, it does not, anymore than how one man could baptize 3000 people in a day. Some argue that since this would be impossible it must be all right to sprinkle instead of immerse. The scripture states that "there were added to them 3000 souls that day." How was this done? Obviously more than one person was doing the baptizing. Was there ever a time when 5000 individual cups were used? If so, where is it recorded? I cannot cross a bridge until you show me the bridge. Where did a crowd of 5000 people ever assemble in the bible to observe the communion? Some suggest Pentecost. But where do the scriptures teach or infer that? What we do know is that Jesus in the institution of the Supper used a single loaf "he took a loaf Mt. 26, Mk. 14, Luke 22, and I Cor 11. Then he took a cup containing fruit of the vine and commanded the disciples to "drink from it." Never did he take a plurality cups. What Jesus did and commanded, the Holy Spirit delivered to Paul in I Cor. 10 and 11. It would be unthinkable that the early church would go contrary to the example of Jesus and the teaching of the apostle Paul by using individual cups to serve a large crowd. But someone might ask "what is to be done if a church grows until it is difficult or impossible to serve the congregation with one cup? The answer is simple: start another congregation. We have scriptural precedent for more than one congregation, but none for more than one cup in the communion. Instead of trying to come up with possible problems in carrying out bible commands and examples, our time would be better spent in doing exactly what the bible teaches. Individual cups in the communion are the invention of men, not Christ. Their introduction was not due to large crowds or big churches, but sanitation. People did not want to drink after someone for fear that they would contact some disease. The large crowd argument came much later. Both are merely dodges in an attempt to get around what the bible teaches on the subject.

Question: Would you please address the following: Is it appropriate to open the services of the church by saying "The gospel has called?"

Answer: Paul teaches that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation... in Romans 10:16. Again in 2Thess. 2:14 "to which He called you by our gospel..." Romans 10:16 "But they have not all obeyed the gospel..." These passages all indicate that through the agency of the gospel God calls us to salvation in Jesus Christ His Son. It is God's power to save. The opening of a church service is in effect the call to worship. We are called by the word of God for that purpose. By example Acts 20:7 and by command in Hebrews 10:25. It would seem to this writer that it would be more appropriate

and correct to say "the word of God has called us together," or "God has called us together," than to say "the gospel has called us." (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240 or rfwade@charter.net)

BUILDING A CHRISTIAN HOME THE MOTHER'S PLACE

IN THE HOME

By *Homer A. Gay*

I know but very little about a mother from actual experience, for my mother died when I was only five years of age, but I surely do know what it means to be without a mother.

Someone has said that the three sweetest words in the English language are "Mother," "Home," and "Heaven," but like many of the fathers of today, many mothers fail to realize and appreciate their exalted position in the home. It surely is sad - even disgusting, to see mothers with fingers stained with cigarette smoke, the smell of liquor on their breath, parading the streets, or maybe, in a car with another woman's husband, while the children are left at grandmother's or with a disinterested hired girl.

We are "building a Christian home," and Christian mothers do not act like that; they want to be what God wants them to be.

Paul says that the married women should "bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:14). In the 10th verse he says of the widow, "Well reported of for good works, if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saint's feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." It is also said of the deacons' wives that they are to be "grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (I Tim. 3:11). Here are some qualifications, which show the importance of the mother in the home, and the weight of her influence there. A mother is to be interested in her home and children. She is to be well reported of for good works - not merely for "good looks." She is to be the home keeper, and should keep the home in such a way as to not be ashamed to have visitors (she is to "lodge strangers).

Right here, I may get my red hair pulled out, but I say this from the bottom of my heart - I do not believe that a mother can hold down a job in a factory or anywhere else and do the part by her home, children, and husband that God expects of her. I have already shown that it is the father's place to provide for the family. And, when women leave the home and children and get a job so as to have their "own money to spend as they please" (this is usually the reason given), they begin to lose interest in their home, husband, and children! I believe that if all of the wives, and especially the mothers would go back home, and take up their duty there as home keeper and the fathers would go to work (they would have plenty of jobs), and provide a living for the family, the greater part of the so called "Juvenile delinquency" would

be solved.

The woman being entirely out of her place has caused the “adversary to speak reproachfully” of them. I believe today, as perhaps, never before, we need some “older women to teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).

In I Thess. 2:7-8, Paul gives us some idea of how a mother feels or should feel and act toward her children. Hear him: “But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so being affectionately derisive of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.” The true Christian mother feels just that way about her children. There is no one on earth that can take the place of mother. Her lullaby soothes the baby’s pain, and quiets its fears. Her influence is so great that kings cannot overthrow it. She determines the destiny of souls and of nations.

There is a tenderness in the love of a mother to her children that transcends all other affections of the heart. It is neither to be chilled by selfishness, nor daunted by danger, nor weakened by worthlessness, nor stifled by ingratitude. She will sacrifice every comfort of hers for their convenience; she will surrender every pleasure to their enjoyment; she will glory in their fame and exult in their prosperity; and if misfortune overtakes them, they will be dearer to her because of the misfortune.

Timothy, of whom Paul said “I have no man like minded,” was brought up in the faith of a mother and a grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5). Mothers should realize what influence they can wield and be sure that they wield for good.

I do not believe there is a purer picture in this world than that of a mother, modestly dressed, long hair, in a clean, well kept home, with her children about her knees - there teaching them reverence for God and His word.

There is not a more sacred spot on earth than a good Christian mother’s grave. “There sleeps the nurse of infancy, the guide of our youth, the counselor of our riper years - our friend when all others deserted us.” May God give us more Christian mothers! More next month - OPA

THE STORY OF A COMPROMISER

By RICK MARTIN

The light of Aaron is dimmed by the brighter light of his brother Moses to the extent that many fail to recognize the full stature of the man and his ministry. We know that lesser lights always fare badly in the presence of the greater: for example the moon before the sun.

Aaron was a great man in his own right. Moses was the

great lawgiver for Israel, but Aaron was the founder of the priestly line that lasted until the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Aaron came to wear the “holy garments” of the priest in ministering unto the Lord. Ex 39:1 And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses. Ex.40:13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office. That great Aaronic line of priests became one of the glories of Israel to be finally surpassed and rendered useless by the greater priesthood of Jesus Christ after the order of Meichizedek, Heb 7:1-28.

Moses was slow to speak, according to his own confession, so the Lord chose Aaron to be his mouthpiece. Ex.4:15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. It is clear that Moses is God’s chosen instrument for leading the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. As a matter of fact, Moses was too humble and God became angry because of his reluctance to do God’s will. Moses needed Aaron, who was especially chosen to play a secondary role. The majority of us have to occupy subordinate roles in life, so the case of Aaron should be of interest to us. Aaron was a satellite of Moses, so for that reason it is not always easy to separate their personalities and task. God would speak directly to Moses the prophet; the message would be relayed to Aaron who was the orator then Aaron would give the message to the people. Aaron was glad to serve God and help Moses in this position. Ex. 4:14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. EX. 4:27 And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. In this capacity we see Aaron at his best. Aaron was second fiddle to Moses and unfortunately the only time he played first fiddle he made a fool of himself.

God called Moses to meet him on top Mount Sinai. Moses left Aaron in charge. After several days the people began to murmur. Ex. 32:1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. The children of Israel began to question whether Moses was coming back and they started to pressure Aaron to come up with a new god to guide them. Same old story, out of sight, out of mind!

Here was Aaron’s great opportunity! Such a time may only come to a man once. If eloquence was ever needed, it was needed now! Like many a preacher since that day, Aaron compromised with the people and encouraged their restless doubt. He became a follower of the crowd, instead of becoming a leader. He stood in the place of Moses, but

acted the part of the coward. The pressure from the people for new gods began to mount and he caved in. He was more concerned with his popularity with the people than with his loyalty to God. Ex. 32:2-5 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.

It is always a mistake to please people at the expense of pleasing God. If there is ever a situation that requires us to do one or the other, no matter how difficult it may seem at the time, pleasing God is always the right choice. The church stands at a crossroads today. The souls of men are at stake. How sad it is today to see men of great eloquence, who could make a difference, but they compromise, they play to the crowd and build them their "golden calf." -Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH THE AROMA OF THE GOSPEL

Paul, the author of both epistles to the church in Corinth, taught that church that the gospel of Christ has an aroma to it, (2 Corinthians 2:14-16), "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"

This fragrance is smelled by God, by those who accept the gospel, (in other words the saved), and by those who hear the gospel but reject it. The apostle emphatically protected this special odor because it was a matter of pleasing God and a matter of "life unto life" unto those who were saved, and a matter of "death unto death" to those who were perishing in sin. The word "triumph" helps us to understand the meaning of some of these phrases. Barnes in his commentary on these verses tells of the triumphant entry into the capitol city after a significant victory over the enemy. This was the custom of both Romans and Greeks. It was a magnificent affair. The people would cast flowers along the route of the great parade. Incense was burned on the altars of their gods while sacrifices were offered to their deities. Thus it was a sweet smelling affair with the fragrances from these offerings being diffused throughout the city. The conquering general loved the smell of these offerings. The odors signified victory and triumph. However, there were some in the possession that did not enjoy these fragrances. The conquered who were also in the parade knew that at

the end of the conquering general's parade they would be put to death. So the good fragrance meant something else to them. It was the smell of death to them but a smell of triumph to the conquerors. No wonder the Holy Spirit chose this imagery to illustrate the end of those who reject the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ (death unto death) and the wonderful salvation enjoyed by those who loved the fragrance of the gospel because to them it was "life unto life." If you do not love the smell of the true gospel of Christ you need to learn to love it, adjust your spiritual olfactory nerve, and walk in the wonderful odor of the knowledge of Christ. Then you can enjoy the triumphant march of victory provided by Jesus Christ.

But why were Paul and his fellow workers considered a "sweet savor of Christ" unto God? And, in addition, they were the "savor of life unto life" unto them that are saved. The story is told about Dr. Charles Weigle who composed the famous song, "No One Ever Cared For Me Like Jesus," One day he visited Pasadena, California. Early that morning he had an opportunity to walk through some of the famous rose gardens when the full fragrance of the flowers filled the air. Later in the day he arrived at the hotel where a Bible conference was being held. As he took his seat, a man turned to him and said, "Dr. Weigle, I know where you have been. You toured one of our lovely gardens, for I can smell the pleasing aroma on your clothing." (Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations.) Just as the aroma or fragrance from the roses permeated the clothing of this man and people around him could smell it, so it is with Christ, his workers, and his gospel. But it must be the pure gospel. This fragrance can only come from God. If it has any additions or subtractions it makes the one proclaiming it stink. It ascends to God as a very bad odor. Romans 3:13 declares what God thinks about this stink: "Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lip:." Have you ever smelled the decaying body of a dead man? It has a horrific odor. This is what a person smells like to God who teaches false doctrine. In 2 Corinthians 2:17 Paul writes, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God." "Corrupt" describes one who hucksters or peddles something (Here the word of God.) for sordid gain of some sort be it money, power, or even a congregation. Paul says we do not do that because it would stink all the way to heaven. Brethren, it still does today.

There was a remnant in Corinth that had not repented. They still rejected the gospel Paul preached. They were like this because they hated the messenger. And there were some things in the gospel the apostle preached that they did not like. The attitude of this group is best described in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." This minority group did not want Paul to come preach the pure gospel, they wanted a man to come to scratch their itching ears. One who would go along with them in their folly. They would measure the teacher they wanted by themselves, 2 Corinthians 10:12. Not by the true

revelation of the gospel. They stunk to the third heaven.

What were the warnings the apostle gave them? How long would God permit them to be in the church? We need to know the answers to these questions for at least two reasons: 1) because there are those today who would like to permit them to linger on in the church, because, after all there were still some good people at Corinth, and 2) there are some who use some of the seven churches in Asia (five of the seven) as examples for congregations to let error abide in churches without doing anything about it. Somebody was not doing a good job preaching the pure gospel in Asia because the Lord had to intervene by threatening and warning them. Some like to use Sardis as an example, Revelations 3:1-6. Jesus wrote, "For I have not found thy works perfect before God." How long did Christ expect to leave them in this condition? Since we have no record of the demise of the false practices in Sardis, we have to turn to Corinth and see how longsuffering Jesus is to such churches. I think we can depend on this because I do not believe Jesus is a respecter of churches.

The theme starts in 1 Corinthians 4:21, "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" In 2 Corinthians 2:9, For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient unto all things." "Proof" means "a test." He wrote the first epistle to them and now he calls it a test. Most of the church had passed the test but a remnant had not. They had failed and, as any good school teacher should know, there would be consequences. 2 Corinthians 13:2, "I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare." Though he gave these sinners in the church time to repent when he would come back, and evidently it would be soon, he would not spare them. They would be disciplined. Did the Lord treat the church in Sardis differently? I think not. Just as the church in Corinth mostly repented he expected Sardis to do the same. Why? Because some there did not have the good aroma of the gospel but stunk to high heaven.

DISRUPTING THE ORDER

By BARNEY OWENS

The children of Israel were delivered from Egypt by the hand of God whereupon He gave commandment to Moses regarding the construction of the tabernacle and all the vessels within it. This was the "sanctuary of the Lord," that is, the place where God would meet with the people through the appointed means. It was therefore necessary that the Tabernacle be built according to the specifications of God. Moses was told, "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." (Ex. 25:9). This is a principle that man has always found to be

problematic. Refusing to follow the pattern laid out by God has brought untold havoc and problems among the people. This paper shall present some of the things that have become deficient before the Lord because the pattern has not been followed.

Marriage And Co-habitation

A man and a woman living together was established by God. This arrangement was to take place after the two are married. "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." (Mt. 19:4-5). This arrangement is not a matter of choice but of Divine decree. "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." (I Cor. 7:1-2). It has become the common practice for men and women to live with one another in a relationship instead of marriage. When someone speaks of their boyfriend or girlfriend I catch myself thinking "does that mean they are already living together?" While in the doctor's office waiting a few days ago, I picked up People's Magazine. Listed were some of the outstanding happenings of 2010. A couple of Hollywood actors were pictured with their children (I suppose about 5 to 8 years of age,) who had served as flower girl and ring bearer at their recent wedding. The couple stated that it was a wonderful experience for their children to be involved in their wedding. The ignorant couple had disrupted the order established by God. God's arrangement is marriage then cohabitation. Failing to follow this arrangement puts one in a soul damning position. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Sexual relations before marriage and outside of the marriage violate the arrangement of Jehovah. We will never make a dent in the disruption until we begin to look at the practices of some people in our era that are engaging in the same outright fornication as did the people in ancient Corinth. It does not change the practice nor the condemnation of God to call the situations "relationships." If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like duck-ahas, it must be a duck. Call it what you will, it's still fornication. While it is flaunted in magazines, newspapers, movies and television, people of integrity and conviction must stand four-square against it because the Bible does. It must be Marriage THEN Co-habitation.

Co-habitation Among Those Of The Same Sex

The United States of America is being flooded with propaganda that glorifies the cohabitation of two men or two women, living openly in sin and rebellion to God. It is not a matter of what the laws of a particular state may be or for that matter what the federal government may decide upon the matter, what is important is what the will of God stipulates. Such is clearly revealed. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their

foolish heart was darkened Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools... For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which is meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." (Rom. 1:21, 22, 26, 27, 28). Homosexuality is all too common in the world and sadly, vapors of the practice are arising in the church. As Christians and especially as teachers and preachers we must lift up our voice and refrain not to cry out against the practice. Adults are overwhelmed with it as it is paraded in the street and places of public gatherings. While sitting in the living room of a brother, I noticed as the three major networks appeared one after another on TV. One had a group of women commentators, one was a very vocal lesbian, on the other station, the lady in charge was a convicted felon, and on the final one, the shows star is a lesbian. Little wonder that the defenses of people are breaking down. Children and young adults are taught in our schools that the practice is normal and legitimate and failure to accept it means one is a bigot and unnecessarily narrow-minded. No longer is it considered out of place for two men to kiss in a restaurant, or two women to embrace while walking down a street. Born that way? Hog-wash! Such is also the claim of the child molester and those "straight" people who claim to be addicted to sex. The point is: the practice is sinful and must be checked. Don't take this to mean that I am advocating mistreating anyone, as nothing could be further from the truth. But, homosexuals must see the gravity of their situation that will sever them from fellowship with God and His Son Jesus. The practice of homosexuality is a disruption of God's order.

Baptism And Faith

"The great majority of those who call themselves Christians throughout the world, have been baptized in infancy, so that there is a general denial by Christendom that immersion is essential to the sacrament of baptism ...Reputable authorities in church history agree that infant baptism was practiced as early as the second century." (The Popular And Critical Bible Encyclopedia And Spiritual Dictionary, Pg. 229).

I shall not pause to argue whether an infant is capable of believing as in my opinion, all capable of rational thinking will agree that these youngsters cannot believe. Therefore, when they are baptized (according to the doctrine of men, I am not considering the scripturalness of sprinkling here), baptism comes before faith or any other act of obedience. That is not the order or pattern given by the Lord. The disciples were commissioned to preach the Gospel (Mk. 16:15), whereupon believers were to be baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). God's order is faith then baptism. When Philip preached to the noble man from Ethiopia who requested baptism, he assured himself of the man's faith first, said he, "If thou believest

with all thine heart, thou mayest." At this point, the noble man said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37). Without further investigation it is apparent that the Apostles and early preachers of the Gospel practiced and taught Faith first then Baptism. Thus, the practice of infant baptism is contrary to God's order. I might add, those of you that were baptized as infants should move swiftly to obey the Lord and be baptized now that you believe.

Citizenship In The Kingdom Before Baptism

In the political realm, there is much discussion about illegal aliens who have come to our country. Many of these are enjoying the status of citizens. Clothing, housing and food is supplied at great cost to the government. My purpose is not to speak about what they should or should not receive, but to point out that to treat these as citizens is a disruption of the constitution.

While this is shocking to many people regarding the nation, they fail to accept the concept religiously. Jesus declared that His Kingdom would come into existence before some of the disciples with Him would die (Mk. 9:1). He assured the disciples that they would eat and drink at His table in His Kingdom (Lk. 22:30 an obvious reference to the Lord's Supper, Verses 17-20). When Jesus made the promise to build His church, He explained it to be His Kingdom (Mt. 16:18-19). Men who are called out of the world are placed in the Lord's Kingdom, which the Apostle Paul said is the body or church of Christ (Col. 1:13 & 18). The Hebrew writer lamented that the Hebrews had lost the services of Temple worship, but a means of greater significance had been given them as now they were citizens of the greater Kingdom (Heb. 12:22-23 & 28). Entering the Kingdom is by obedience to the Gospel, of which the final act is baptism. Said the Lord, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:5). There is no doubt that this "water" refers to baptism. What other act of obedience is complied with in water? To Titus Paul wrote, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Tit. 3:5). Without question, it is by God's mercy we are saved, but there is a question-at what point are we saved by His mercy? It is when we pass through the washing of regeneration. "Regeneration means the obedient is brought back to the point of generation (See. Mt. 18:3 & 19:14--the state of innocence or a new beginning Rom. 6:3-4). Paul knew this as it was true in his own case (see Acts 22:16). The point is, one enters the kingdom and becomes a citizen when he is washed (baptized) and not before. As citizens in the Kingdom there are many blessings which we enjoy now and possess the right to look forward to with hope. Preachers (and there are many,) proclaim far and wide that the benefits of citizenship in the kingdom of God can be enjoyed by aliens-making them sort of illegal beneficiaries. Hear them as they proclaim abroad for sinners (aliens) to pray, a promise granted only to citizens in the Kingdom. "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth, his will, him he

heareth.” Peter reminds citizens in the Kingdom of this well understood truth, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the fact of the Lord is against them that do evil.” (1 Pet. 3:12). It is not my wish to disparage the character of anyone, but if you have not been baptized into the body of Christ and are not a member of the church revealed in the New Testament, and you try to pray, eat the Lord’s Supper or engage in other activities reserved only for citizens, then you have disrupted God’s order.

Let me add, if that pictures you, seek out a Gospel Preacher or a Christian who can be of assistance in helping you to become a citizen in the Lord’s Kingdom.

Forgiveness Of Sin Then Baptism

One thing denominational churches that are opposed to infant baptism find common ground on is that one is forgiven of sin before, apart from and without water baptism. This is viewed as a good work for a Christian. If one who has received the forgiveness of sins wishes to be baptized, he may. In some circles, that person is allowed to have baptism administered upon the judgment as determined by a committee that accesses the candidates’ conversion when related to them. Therefore, forgiveness comes before baptism.

Clearly, this is a contradiction of New Testament teaching. A quick survey bears this out. Take note of a few verses that mention both baptism and forgiveness (or its equivalent) and notice how they stand to one another. Why not read these verses in their entirety in your Bible?

Mk. 16:16 Baptism then Salvation Acts 2:38 Baptized then Remission of sins Acts 8:38-39 Baptized then He rejoiced Acts 22:16 Baptized then washing away of sins Rom. 6:3-4 Baptism then Newness of life I Cor.12:13 Baptism then The one body Gal. 3:27 Baptized Men Put on Christ Col. 2:12-13 Baptism then forgiveness of trespasses I Pet. 3:21 Baptism then (now) saves us

I do not mean to infer that there is a space between baptism and salvation, remission of sins, rejoicing, washing away of sins, newness of life, entering the one body, putting on Christ, forgiveness of trespasses, and again being saved. That is not the case, as the moment one is baptized these blessings occur. The point is however, that baptism precedes all these. Those claiming these blessings before and without baptism are deceived. Those who teach that one can obtain these blessings without baptism is teaching false doctrine and souls will be lost because the pattern or plan of God’s order has been disrupted. -Barney Owens 11/02

THE LORD’S SUPPER

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The term, “Lord’s Supper” is used with reference to the memorial established by Jesus the night of His betrayal

by one of His own apostles. Judas had already made the agreement with the enemies of our Lord for the paltry sum of “thirty pieces of silver” (Matt. 26:14-16). Jesus was aware of the pending betrayal, and it was His intention to establish the memorial before His death to show them how He wanted it observed until He comes again (1 Cor. 11:26). He did this by example and by command. He showed the apostles and then commanded, “This do in remembrance of me” both with the bread and with the cup (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25). This is an explicit command of our Lord; nor do we have authority to do it any other way.

The time of observance of the Lord’s Supper is not determined by command, but by apostolic example. The apostle Paul said, “Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). In Acts 20:7 we have the apostolic example of Paul and a number of other disciples meeting on the first day of the week “to break bread” (the Lord’s Supper). The Sabbath of the Old Testament was considered a holy day to the Jews, which was the seventh day. And if they broke divine law by violating that day, they were subject to the penalty of death (Num. 15:30-36). But the members of the church of our Lord met to observe the Lord’s Supper on the first day, not the seventh. We know it is safe to do the same, because of the example of the apostle Paul in approving by his presence and participation in the service. There is no other day mentioned for this service after the death of Jesus.

This memorial of the most important event in the history of the world was designed to constantly remind us of the terrible agony that was suffered by the Son of God to pay the price for sin. “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). The Lord does not want us to either ignore nor forget the price paid for salvation. It was a terrible and unfathomable price, and without fail, disciples of Christ are reminded to not forsake its observance (Heb. 10:25-29). The Lord does not take it lightly when members of the church deliberately “forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”

The Lord’s Supper is not referred to in the scriptures as “Eucharist” nor “Sacrament”. Some religionists have dubbed this sacred institution with foreign names, names unknown in the scriptures. But we prefer to call Bible things by Bible names.” The Lord’s Supper is also referred to by another scriptural term. The apostle in writing to the Corinthians said, “the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” It is indeed. Also, he said, “The cup of blessing, ... is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” And to every person partaking of the “Lord’s Supper” in its proper observance is communing with every other participant, that is, he is “jointly participating” in his eating and drinking of the scriptural elements authorized by Jesus, and with the proper attitude. It is scriptural to refer to it as a communion service, in which the Lord’s Supper is eaten.

When Jesus took bread, He offered thanks, and after the

Announcements

THE HAWAII WORK - By Don L. King

Very recently Pat and I returned from visiting the work in Hawaii. We were there for two Sundays and enjoyed it very much. We were present for the very first service there when the work began and have remained interested from that time until now. It was my privilege to preach both Sundays as well as hold a short meeting toward the end of the week. The brethren had advertised the effort by going door to door and inviting those who lived near the building to attend. We were delighted to see visitors at virtually every service either from their efforts or from personal invitations. A few weeks ago, Eric Stone had baptized a young man who soon faded away and was not seen again until our meeting. However, the last service of the meeting he was restored and all were elated. There are approximately 20 members there and they have a mind to grow. While there have been obstacles, as is often the case, their opportunity for growth does exist. They have at least three men who are talented and able to do most things in the service. Eric Stone is capable and seems determined to do all he can to be of value there. He recently relocated his family to Hawaii for the express purpose of working with the church and we commend him for that. He is presently being supported until he is able to locate suitable secular employment and continue his work with the church while supporting himself. They have a comfortable place for worship, purchased about 15 years ago, and Eric and his family have living quarters in the building. A need for help to make payments on the building continue to exist and the payments are about \$1500 per month. A little over \$161,000 is owed for the property, which is worth approximately \$400,000. Real estate in Hawaii has always been expensive and continues to be so. If you know of a way for the church to pay the building off, please, let us hear from you. We do believe there is a future for the church there and we pray that with new leads coming in they will be able to grow. Please, pray for this good work and consider doing what you can to help. -DLK

WHERE THE SAINTS ASSEMBLE

I would like to express my thanks for all the people who have supported my efforts in publishing the directory. As soon as such a work is published, it becomes outdated. People move, telephone numbers and emails change, and unfortunately some congregations close their doors. To keep the directory as up to date as possible, I have posted an update page on the Old Paths Advocate website, www.oldpathsadvocate.org I would urge everyone to look at this occasionally and keep your directory updated. If your congregation has changes, you may submit them at this website. A new directory will not be printed until 2013. I ask for your prayers and patience as I attempt to take on this service to the Brotherhood.

You may order directories at: www.oldpathsadvocate.org or send an order to my address. -Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189

COMMENTARIES - Commentary Update

Everyone who signed up for the Commentary Bookclub list, that is, every volume as they become available, needs to confirm your current address. It has been ten years since we published our last volume and many addresses have changed. The next volume is in the hands of the printer. It will be the "Gospel of Matthew" written by Mike Criswell. Lord willing, it will be available in May. This Fall, the commentary on "Hebrews" written by Mark Bailey will also be available. We are also reprinting all eight volumes that are currently out of print. Please, let us hear from you soon. Please contact Allen Bailey 4216 Abigale Drive Dr Yukon, Oklahoma 73099. Call or text 214-505-8242. Perhaps the easiest way is to sign up online. Go to Gospel Preaching. com - click on commentaries; fill out the simple address form and click on submit. -Allen Bailey

* * * * *

PLEASE READ

TO: The Brotherhood
FROM: Church of Christ at 84 West
SUBJECT: **Open Door Policy**

This is to confirm that the Church of Christ at 84 West, Brookhaven, MS 39601 has solved any problems related to our Open Door Policy. Any person regardless of race, color, or creed will be welcomed into our church or to any fellowship pertaining to the church.

SIGNED: Hwy 84 Church of Christ Brethren

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, March 14, 2012, e-mail oldpaths@juno.com The Fremont congregation is presently enjoying our meeting with Cullen Smith. He is preaching the gospel with fervor and we are the better for it. It is our pleasure to have him in our home this week. Crowds are good and cooperation from the congregations in the Valley is appreciated. Manteca has especially been of help. Lord willing we are to preach at the Atwater congregation the last Lord's Day of March and we look forward to being with the church at Napoleon, AL May 6-13. We are enjoying peace at home and appreciate all who are working together here. Preachers, we need your reports and articles as well as your encouragement to others to take the paper. We want to remind you that the OPA is also available on line now. If that works better for you, let us hear. Many receive it in the Philippines on line and it is bringing results there. We continue to hear good things from that part of the world. To all who participate in the Philippine work, supporting preachers, etc., thank you and may the Lord bless us in the work everywhere this year.

Eric J. Stone- 94-371 Iketono St. Waipahu, HI 96797
 Church of Christ Dec - Feb 2011-2012 Field Report-
 The Lord's work continues on the Island of Oahu. Over
 the last three months, we have had 14 local visitors, and
 18 mainland visitors from California and Oklahoma.
 One of our local visitors just happens to be a military
 family, and the mother is a childhood friend of my
 wife's. A couple of the brethren and I also had a home
 bible study with a family after there was a disagreement
 over doctrine. We didn't come to an agreement on the
 scriptures, but we were pleased that they were willing
 to meet with us. Our prayer will continue to be that we
 will all be blessed with the necessary knowledge and
 understanding to please the Lord, and that those who
 are in error will see the truth and turn. On a brighter
 note, we just finished our gospel meeting with Bro.
 Don King, which seems to be just what we all needed in
 order to be revitalized. Several days in a row, we went
 door to door passing out flyers advertising the meeting
 along with two new tracts that were recently completed.
 Throughout the meeting, we discussed some effective
 methods of evangelism, and strategies for developing
 teachers within our congregation. By far, the highlight
 of the meeting was the return of a dear brother who had
 been out of service. We are really looking forward to
 working with him, and seeing how his talents can be
 developed for the cause of Christ. All in all, I believe
 we were all greatly edified, and the Lord was glorified.
 However, I think I can speak for everyone when I say
 we were all so sad when it was time for them to leave
 us, and can't wait for their next visit, Lord willing! In
 His Service.

From: Roger Owens rowens700@yahoo.com
 FREEMAN ROAD NEOSHO, MO. 64850 (Roger L.
 Owens) 1-417-776-8123 Greetings to fellow laborers
 in Christ. Wonderful things to report, and some things
 not so good. I failed to report that back in November
 2011 of last year Jimmy Cating came to our area and
 delivered us some wonderful sermons, solid teaching.
 Paul Nichols came this month and spoke about the
 years of service in the African work. Paul spoke on
 Sunday morning and evening. What a wonderful time
 to hear him and learn at the feet of an older preacher.
 Paul has some great tracts that all would benefit from
 in your local call to the lost of this world. This month,
 February 2012 we have baptized two more into Christ.
 One young lady about 13 and a man of middle age
 whose wife has been a member from our start 3 1/2
 years ago. Our labors in Casper Wyoming are going
 well. I recently spoke with a brother in that area and

he is excited it seems to have us come and do some
 work with them. The Sunday news articles continue
 to raise questions and comments. Some have asked
 if I am moving to that area. That is not my intention
 at the current time. I believe it would be a mistake
 with so much going on here to simply move there. I
 believe we need to do more investigation there before
 we commit more time and money. However I do plan
 to make a number of visits as time and opportunity
 arise. The congregation here is growing and learning so
 much from our bible studies. Our people have all gone
 through about 7/8 of the Bible over the past 2 1/2 years.
 Our plan is to begin again once we have completed. We
 request your prayers for our older members Fred and
 Rose Moore, Terry Aidridge, Jane Gilstrap, etc. We are
 all praying for brother Joe Hisle. Joe will be with us
 later this year. We remember our fallen and pray for
 the families of those that mourn losses, Green, King,
 Owens, and so many more. One thing that has come
 to our attention is the need to root and ground brethren
 in the truth. We are pained as we think about brethren
 that have allowed worldly social religious actions to
 become a part of their name and influence. We pray for
 those men who now are unable to travel due to illness
 within their own homes. How noble these men to care
 and give comfort unto their wives in times of sickness.
 Johnny Elmore, Wayne McKamie, and others perhaps
 we are not aware. Pray for us and the work we attempt
 to do in His name. Peace be with your spirits. Amen

Greg Gay, March 19, 2012. I was in a meeting at
 Grapevine, Texas March 7-11. These brethren are among
 the many in the Metroplex who are to be commended
 for their stand for the truth in spite of influences and
 area examples to the contrary. I stayed with Lyndon
 and Lynn Cox and enjoyed their hospitality immensely.
 Other brethren were great to take the time to host meals
 and spend time together. I appreciate the encouragement
 from area gospel preachers that included Nathan Battey,
 Joe Norton, Melvin Blalock, Mark Bailey, and Alton
 Bailey. Visitors from area congregations filled the house
 Friday and Saturday nights which was wonderful to see.
 Our work continues with the 64th. St. Congregation
 in Sacramento with studies and following leads from
 the TV program that the congregation at Oakdale, CA
 generously sponsors. Cassie's mother, Mary Baker, of
 Houston, Missouri is ill with cancer of the bone, liver,
 and lungs. Thank you for prayers for her comfort and on
 the family's behalf. 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville,
 CA 95747 papagreg@aol.com

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

If the date near your name and address reads 4-12 your subscription expires with this issue. Please renew promptly. DLK
Send all subscriptions to:
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550

THE BACK PAGE...

A PARDON FOR BILLY THE KID?

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

One of the most bizarre newspaper headlines I have seen in a long time declares, "Pardon is denied for Billy the Kid" (The Oklahoman Jan. 1, 2011). According to the story, a New Mexico attorney spent many working hours in an effort to get the governor to pardon Billy the Kid for one of several murders he committed before he was gunned down himself in 1881 by Sheriff Pat Garrett. While Governor Bill Richardson denied the pardon, I remain perplexed as to what good a pardon would do Billy the Kid now anyway, 131 years after his death.

Throughout history some people have been obsessed with rewarding or punishing other people after their deaths. The Roman Catholic Church believes that all believers go to purgatory after death with some stain of sin still on their records. They believe, however, that those sins can be purged from them in purgatory before they are presented to St. Peter and Christ at the gates of heaven. In Medieval times, surviving family members could purchase "indulgences" on behalf of the deceased persons in purgatory, the church would pardon those persons, and they would be released from having to pay the penalty for their sins in purgatory.

In 1517 Johann Tetzel traveled the regions of Wittenberg, Germany, preaching about and selling indulgences, pleading with people to have pity on the souls in torment and to redeem them by paying a mere pittance. His infamous slogan was, "Once the coin in the coffer clings, a soul from purgatory heavenward springs!"

Tetzel's unseemly solicitations were actually the tipping point for Martin Luther, who began the Protestant Reformation at that time.

The Mormon Church also believes we can affect the eternal destiny of lost persons after they die by being baptized on their behalf. Mormons believe that departed souls can accept or reject these baptismal rites, but those who accept the proxy baptisms will be saved. The church uses as its prooftext, 1 Corinthians 15:29, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" (See "The Back Page," OPA Oct. 2010 for a discussion of this doctrine.)

The Mormons caused uproar a few years ago when it was discovered they were baptizing one another on behalf of Jews who were killed in Nazi concentration camps. Jewish Holocaust survivors protested the Mormons' behavior and the Mormons agreed to stop. News surfaced last month, however, that the Mormons were continuing their proxy baptisms unabated.

The Scriptures say, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

This statement denies any idea that there will be a second chance to believe after death, since immediately after the reference to the fact of death comes the phrase "and after that comes the judgment," with no hint of any intervening opportunity for change of status. The final judgment will take place when Christ comes again-He died once as an offering for the sins of many, and he will appear a second time in judgment. Furthermore, we shall be judged by what we have done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10), and salvation is an individual, personal matter. Paul says, "Each one shall give an account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

Just as mystifying to me as the efforts to reward persons who are already dead are the efforts to inflict further punishment upon them. Posthumous execution and punishment, however, have been practiced for centuries.

After King Saul's death the Philistines cut off his head and nailed his body to the city wall (1 Sam. 31:10). In 1429, Bible translator John Wycliffe was burned 45 years after he died. In 1661, Oliver Cromwell's body was exhumed from its tomb in Westminster Abbey and hanged and thrown into a pit.

All such cases are mere exercises in futility. Jesus explains, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do" (Lk. 12:4).

The phrase "after that," is arresting and revealing. Men can kill the body, but after that they have no more that they can do. Killing the body is the absolute limit. When the martyr lies dead, he is done. Therefore, we should not fear those who can kill the body only.

There is One we have good reason to fear, however. Jesus says, "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Lk. 12:5).

The One to fear is Almighty God. He alone has the power to reach beyond death and convey us into heaven or hell. Proxy baptisms and purgatory indulgences are useless, and it will take more than a governor's pardon to help Billy the Kid. Our sole purpose is to "Fear God and keep His commandments," and we must do that before we die (Ecc. 12:13-14). cmjthebackpage@gmail.com