

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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BUSY HERE AND THERE

BY RICK MARTIN

In 1 Kings 20:39-40 we read of an event that took place in battles between Ben-hadad and Ahab. “And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, so shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.” This servant was given a serious charge to keep the prisoner until the battle was over. When the king returned to get the prisoner, he was not there. He was gone. The only excuse the servant could give for the prisoner’s escape was “while I was busy here and there he was gone.” This man failed to keep the charge that was given to him.

We have been given some duties and responsibilities to perform and we must be good, faithful stewards. (1 Corinthians 4:2) “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Stewardship involves every obligation and responsibility the Christian has in both physical and spiritual matters. We need to understand what it means to be a steward and get our lives in order. The steward was given control over the belongings of someone else. He was not overseeing his own property. Likewise, we have been given duties and responsibilities and we must carry them out.

Are there perhaps times in our lives while we have been “busy here and there”, doing this and that, and we fail to do what we were sent to do? Have there been times when we failed to do what we were charged with? While we were “busy here and there”, taking care of things that really did not matter, we failed to do the important things. In this article I would like to mention four areas that perhaps we have neglected, because we have been

“busy here and there.”

The first area is parenting. How many parents have been “busy here and there” and they look around and their children are gone? As parents we have a responsibility to make sure that our children are taught the truths of God’s Word. That responsibility cannot be shuffled off to local church leaders, teachers, evangelist or anyone else. (Ephesians 6:4) “And, ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” If the ways of God are important to us, then we will reflect these values to our children. Moses told the people of Israel to teach the words of God diligently to their children. They were to be willing to invest the time, energy, effort and patience to teach their children the truths of God. As they went about their daily activities, these principles were to direct their thought patterns and govern their actions. We are living in a time of materialism, sexual promiscuity and negative peer pressure. These are moral and social forces that can destroy our children if we are not careful. The challenge of rearing children in the biblical way is perhaps greater today than ever before.

Some parents get “busy here and there” and fail to teach their children about God, Jesus and the Church. When we take time for our children, we affirm their self-worth and value to us. Commitment, diligence, and perseverance are essential attributes of Christian parents. These attributes are necessary to rear our children with godly values that will withstand the pressures of a godless age.

The great American writer, Mark Twain took a trip to Europe and was accompanied by his youngest daughter. Everywhere Twain went he was greeted by kings and queens and dignitaries of all types. Toward the end of the trip Twain’s daughter, getting caught in the excitement exclaimed, “Poppa, you know everybody, but God!” I wonder how many parents have gotten their children so

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Editorial

THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH - MATT 16:13-18

By DAVID GRIFFIN

In Matthew 16: 18, Jesus says, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church” (NKJV). This promise assures us that the church Jesus built rests on a solid and sure foundation-this rock! No building is stronger than the foundation on which it is built. It matters not how well-built the building; if the foundation is weak, the building is weak. The church that Jesus built, however, rests on a firm foundation.

1) What is “this rock”?

It is clear from Jesus’ statement that the rock on which he would build his church is the fact stated in Peter’s confession in verse 16. Earlier in verse 13, Jesus asks the disciples what people are saying about him. They respond, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (v 14). Jesus then asks, “But who do you say that I am,” and Peter replies, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v 15-16). This reply immediately receives a hearty blessing from the Lord. “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” (17). Peter’s confession, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the focal point of all that this passage is teaching. It is the central truth at the heart of Jesus’s promise to build his church.

Some have mistakenly interpreted Jesus’ statement, “on this rock,” to mean that Jesus promises to build his church on Peter as its foundation. This misinterpretation comes from the fact that the name Peter itself means “rock.” However, a closer look at the passage reveals that Jesus has something else in mind. When Jesus says, “I say also to you that you are Peter,” the name Peter is the Greek word petros. This word indicates “a stone” as in a small rock. In the New Testament it only occurs as the Greek personal name of the apostle whose name in Hebrew is Simon. However, in Jesus’ statement “on this rock,” the word rock is petra, generally, “bedrock or massive rock formations” (BDAG, 2000). While wordplay does seem to be in evidence here, such wordplay cannot be understood to mean that Peter is the foundation of the church. “This rock” is the great

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FORBIDDEN BATTLEMENTS*By J. WAYNE MCKAMIE, FEB. 1982*

Jerusalem was God's beloved city; in infinite mercy he had tended her. Through foul and fair, for many a weary year, God had upbuilt her into queenly beauty and now when the sun had vanished from her sky, and the enemy was thundering at her gate, Jeremiah delivered what must have seemed a very bitter and heartbreaking message. "Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." Jer. 5:10 Those battlements were the city's pride. They were the hope and comfort of the capital. Broadbased and firm-set with tower and bastion--they could defy attack and laugh at the invader. Like the wail of a cold winter wind came the cry, "Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." How harsh and cruel it must have sounded. It was, however, the very opposite. Judah was building upon foundations and trusting in securities that had no sanction in heaven. And God commanded that they be swept away that His people might be brought to lean upon the everlasting arm. That was the cry which rang in the streets and high places of Jerusalem. That cry has gone ringing down through the ages. And there is a very great need to catch the echoes of it even now.

Think of the Word of God, that to which our debt is infinite; that revelation of the love of God, crowned in the priceless gift of a Redeemer. It is the book whose words we learn in childhood; it is the book we turn to when we die. It is the book that comforts us in trials, cheers us in battles and uplifts us in toil. It is higher than our highest thought; and deeper than our deepest need. It reveals that Sacrifice without which we cannot live and without which we must not die.

The Bible is indeed an inspired book. Valid proof of God in scripture is necessary and we are to ever be ready and able to give a reason of our faith. God, being God does not insult us with a faith which is irrational. And while we must be able to move against powerful and sophisticated foes on the battlefield of inerrancy, verbal accuracy literal rendering of historical detail, etc., we must be careful about erecting battlements that are not the Lord's. In our time there are treatises on saving faith that would turn us into skeptics. There are volumes on the atoning death that handle the subject as if it were a problem of geology. Elaborate, bloodless arguments are very much in evidence on every hand. Such are battlements the Lord has never owned.

Consider the Church. The cry of both the Reformation and Restoration was "Takeaway the battlements, for they are not the Lord's." Our thoughts turn to the medieval church, the scarlet woman upon the seven hills. Never has a greater array of defenses been raised. What buttresses and bulwarks she built! Battlements deep as hell and high as heaven, against which kings and emperors seemed to fling themselves in vain. She and she alone could give pardon; it was through her that the bliss of heaven was gained; through her the pain of purgatory was shortened. Her wealth was boundless--her civil power supreme--she could make monarchs and cast them down again; to be her favorite was to be blessed, and to be excommunicated was death. Battlements they were, battlements forged and fitted with such intricacy as to defy the batterings of time. And then, across the whole of Europe passed a heroic figure, crying, as Jeremiah cried, "Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." And wonder of wonders, they were taken away! Her walls were ruined, her defenses shattered, and her pride and glory humbled to the dust. And as the earthly settled into ruins the divine began to shine forth. Faith revived, the Word of God was read and the bride of Christ began to outshine the concubine of Caesar.

Although we have no part with the scarlet woman, the Lord's people must ever be careful of building ungodly defenses. An unknowing zeal of God can cancel the cross. Let us never forget that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things, things despised, things which are nothing, to bring to naught things that are. Senses exercised through reason of use should be aware

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of modern forbidden battlements. Surely all are aware of a sort of busyness in the religious marketplace; a busyness that has replaced teaching and converting the lost. The pep talk, the cheerleader philosophy, and a get-the-numbers-at-all-cost attitude has replaced the long, arduous planting, watering, and cultivating process outlined in the Word. So easy it is for us to become enraptured with numbers and success that we become discontented with precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little. Strange when we turn to the enemies of truth to learn how to preach the truth! Stranger still when we trade the Sword for unproven armor and weapons of the world. "Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." Take them away; they are a mockery. Such is no fortress for the bride of Christ. Take them away, and give us back again a Church whose battlement is faith in God; a Church whose prayer is uttered from the heart, whose music is the simple voice of praise, whose preaching to the souls of sinful men is the message of everlasting truth.

"LIVE SOBERLY"

BY EDWIN S. MORRIS

Titus 2:12

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world". Soberly--with sound mind, that is, moderately, temperately, discreetly, showing self-control. To live soberly is to discharge the duty one owes to himself. It is a habit of self-government, whereby a person can restrain his appetites, his passions, and his affections, as often as the gratification of his appetites and the yielding of the impulses of his passions and affections are in any respect sinful.

When we live soberly, we have the proper attitude toward the word of God and are ready to defend it. In I Pet. 3: 15 "But sanctify the lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear". Sanctify is to set apart. We could paraphrase like this "but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord."; Look to Him as our guide, our Lord and the Supreme Being. Let Him be honored and referenced. Give an answer-The words "give an Answer" are the translation of a Greek word used as a legal term in the courts. It means lit. "to talk off from" and was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge preferred against him. He presented a verbal defense.

The exhortation is to Christians to talk the Bible off from the charges preferred against it, thus presenting for it a verbal defense. We are to defend the Bible of any charge that is brought against it. Any time that any of its teachings are questioned we are to present a verbal defense. By that we mean for example: Those who say, "one church is as good as another", "nothing in a name", "baptism not essential to salvation", "do not have to assemble each Lord's day" "worship as our conscious dictates", "not essential to worship as word directs" and on and on." When we live soberly, we will be ready to give an answer why we believe what we do and will defend the same.

Let us notice some instance where we are to be sober-minded.

(1) In our inquiries after truth, as opposed to presumption. Jesus said in John 8: 32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The world today struggles hard to try to promote the idea that we do not have clear-cut teachings on what God requires of us. I deny this. We are taught when to assemble, and how to worship when we come together on the first day of the week. We have scriptural authority on how to sing, pray, teach, observe the Lord's Supper, and give. If we live soberly there will be no problem. It is when we do not think soberly that the problem arises. We are taught the type of life that we are to live. We are taught the things that are sinful and wrong. We are taught how we are to dress and adorn ourselves, both men and women. The person that has a sober mind and looks at these teachings in the proper perspective has no problem. It is sad that when Christians study such passages as I Cor. 11:1-16 they are not of a sober mind. The world around them guides them instead of the plain scriptural teaching. A person that is of a sober mind can readily see that these scriptures are just as binding on the man as they are the woman. The scriptures plainly teach that we are to adorn ourselves in modest apparel and the women are to do it with shamefacedness and sobriety. Again, too many are guided by the world around them and not by the word of God. The women more and more want to dress like the man with their pants, blue jeans. Not only do they wear many garments that reveal their bodies instead of concealing it as was God's plan. Men often go around with much of their bodies revealed. This is not living soberly.

(2) "In the things necessary in this life, as opposed to covetousness." God has provided that we can have things in this life, but only when we seek the kingdom

of God first. Then he promises to add these things to us. A sober thinking person realizes this and does not seek after the things of this world and does not put these things ahead of Christian duties. Too many in the church let jobs, pleasure, family and other things interfere with their Christian duties. A sober-minded person realizes this should not be.

(3) "In the use and estimate of the things of this world, as opposed to excess." The scriptures teach us that we brought nothing into this world and that we will carry nothing out. Therefore, we should use the things we have to glorify God. So many want only to give God that which they think is bound upon them. I have often thought about people that will spend hundreds of dollars for an extravagant vacation but will never give some extra money for a good cause in the work of the Lord. Our lives should reflect that we are using the things of this world that we have been blest with to glorify God and promote his cause here on earth. Let us be sober-minded in this respect.

(4) In trial and afflictions, as opposed to impatience. We are taught to live soberly even though we are beset with trials and affliction. Satan is always busy putting upon us trials and afflictions. We are taught in the scriptures to endure these afflictions. Many people let these things cause them to do things that are wrong. So many times, church members become discouraged because of various things and finally just quit the church. They take their frustration out on the Lord. I have experienced that when you are in the right in these trials and temptations that in time if we remain faithful that it works out for good God sees and knows things that we do not see and know. A sober-minded person believes this. An older brother told me when I was younger that time is a great healer. This has proven true many times. Sometimes we are too impatient in the results of the preached word, the growth of the members etc. Yet God says that His word will not return unto Him void.

(5) In forming our judgment of others, as opposed to harsh, rash, censorious judgment. Far too many times we are guilty of putting the worst construction on the actions of others. Too many times we judge harshly and are censorious. A sober minded person gives others the benefit of the doubt until true facts are known. Many times, preachers have been accused of preaching just for the money, brethren who have ability to lead are accused of seeking power, brethren who want to get things done are accused of desiring to run things, and on the list goes. If there are those that have these

abilities, we can prove that we are living soberly by joining in and helping them get the job done. Many times, circumstances changes our way of life. By that I mean oftentimes people who have been real active have to slow down due to illnesses or things beyond their control. Let us not be too quick to criticize them.

(6) "Of speaking of one's self, as opposed to egotism." It is not wrong to tell others of things that we might have done as long as it is in the proper way. I really think that it would be good if more of this was done. I would like to see more brethren and even preachers mention things in the O.P.A. that have been accomplished for the Lord. In this they would be giving God the glory. This would be opposed to trying to outdo everyone else, refusing to let any tell you anything that might help, a know it all person, a person who thinks they have done more than anyone else etc.

In conclusion if you will note in Titus 2:1-6 that Paul instructs the aged men, and young men to be sober and teaches the aged women to teach the younger women to be sober. It is commanded that we be sober minded and live soberly.

PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following article, by Homer L. King, appeared in the January 1948 issue of the Old Paths Advocate. In this article Brother King writes about support of human institutions and how participation in such can take away the glory that is due God and the Church. Christians should be careful how they spend their time. Too much involvement in social organizations can be detrimental to the Church. —Rick Martin

WHERE GLORIFY GOD?

By Homer L. King

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Eph. 3:21.) Paul plainly tells us in this to glorify God in the church, not in the Sunday school, Bible college, fraternal orders, or other human institutions. My dear brethren, all the good that can be done through these human institutions, can be done through the church, hence, to the glory of God. I contend that when we do a part of our work through the above institutions, that we are robbing God's divine institution, the church, of the glory that is due it. To rob the church of the glory that is

due it, is surely to rob the Lord of the glory that is due Him. But hear Him: "I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory-will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." (Isa. 42: 8.) - From the foregoing, we learn that the Lord is a jealous God and that He does not consent to divide His, glory or honor with anyone. How can we conclude that God will be well pleased with us when we attempt to offer our service and honor to Him through institutions unauthorized by the God of heaven?

Why is not the church accomplishing what it should be? One of the main reasons is, because brethren of talent, means and influence have devoted an important part of their means and influence to the fostering of human institutions instead of glorifying God in the church, as are directed to do in His blessed Word. If all the money, time and influence that are devoted to the perpetuation of human institutions, were devoted to the church of the living God, it would shine forth in its splendor and grandeur of a city set on a hill. But alas, brethren will persist in their robbing God of the glory that is due Him and His church, in order to be popular with the world, it seems.

I have not one day of my time; not one cent of my money; not one vestige of my influence to give to the fostering of bodies, other than the dear old Church of Jesus Christ: We are not our own; we are bought with a price-bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, let us glorify Him in the blood-bought institution. God help us to love the church and to love and respect His blessed Word. May we be able to sing with hearts o'er flowing with love and admiration: "I love Thy Church, O God; Her walls before Thee stand. Dear as the apple of Thine eye; Engraven on Thine hand." HOMER L. KING 309 E. Platinum Ave., Deming, NM. (In "The Apostolic Way," July 15, 1925) We ran across the above, incidentally, while searching through the files of some old copies of the above paper. I see no reason why the simple things I said then are not as true now as when written nearly 23 years ago. I still believe the things I said above, for the Bible reads just as it did then. -H. L. K.

BREAKING BREAD

By CLOVIS T. COOK

Breaking bread (Acts 2:42; 20:7,11; I Cor 11:24) as used in this article, is one of the items or acts of worship observed by the apostles and early Christians,

in obedience to a simple command given by the Lord (Matt 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19), who in turn, passed it on to the church. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, or teaching, of which "breaking bread" was a part (Acts 2:42), I like the way F.W. Emmons, expressed it, who began writing on "The Ancient Order" as far back as 1837 when he said, "The disciples," it is said, "unremittingly attended to the teaching of the apostles." And., "breaking bread, when the whole church came together (1 Cor 14:23), to break bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), they never ceased doing, but constantly attended to this act of public social worship."

"Breaking bread" is used in some of the passages we have already cited, figuratively, in which a part is put for the whole, and the figure is called a synecdoche, which mentioned one thing "breaking bread" to imply the whole communion service, but that which is mentioned must be true or else that which is implied is not true.

"And taking a loaf, and having given thanks, he broke it, and gave to them, saying, 'This is that body of mine which is given for you; do this in my remembrance'" (Luke 22:19) Emphatic Diaglott. I think it is, or should be, admitted by all that Jesus "broke" the loaf. It should be just as freely admitted that we are commanded to do the same. What we need to find out is just how he broke it, and then we will know what we are to do. The expression "do this" or "this do" means to do exactly what Jesus did. There are more ways than one that Jesus could have broken the loaf. Let us pause right here and point out that Jesus "took bread" which in the Greek means "loaf" (singular). A loaf means one loaf. "A" is from the Anglo Saxon meaning "one" when followed by a singular noun (Harper-Cowan debate), and Webster says of the language, "plain blunt language of old English order."

In every place where it is said that Jesus "broke" the loaf the word is from a Greek verb, which means to "break off", so defined by several lexicons. W.E. Vine says, "To break, to break off pieces." The noun form means, "fragment, piece, crumb, a piece broken off, that which is broken off, a splinter." If when Jesus "broke bread" it means he broke it in or near the middle, and every disciple was to do exactly what Jesus did-I ask you friend, how could this be? If Jesus "broke the loaf" into as many pieces as there were disciples, and each disciple was to do exactly what Jesus did, the second dilemma is no better than the first. However, if Jesus took a loaf and broke off a piece, a fragment, and "tasted

it” (as some writers affirm when explaining what Jesus did when he “broke the loaf”), or ate that piece of bread which he broke off-which of course is what I believe he did, then each disciple could “break” and “eat” and do exactly what Jesus did. The inescapable, inevitable conclusion is: “Breaking bread” (Acts 2:42, 20:7) and “eating.” (Matt 26:26; Mk 14:22) are both involved in the same command, making the “breaking” necessary in the “eating.”

Did Jesus eat the piece of bread that he broke off of the loaf? Unmistakably, he must have. He said, “He, that eateth bread with me” which is a reference to Judas, eating the bread in the institution of the Lord’s supper (Jno 13:18) and the expression “my bread” is from Psa 41:9. “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine...”, (Matt 26:29). Is it reasonable to argue that Jesus drank the fruit of the vine, which represented his blood, but, did not eat of the bread which represented his body? In 1937 Bro. Homer L. King was on his way to Deming, New Mexico, to debate D.J. Whitten, on the communion question, of which “Breaking Bread” was one proposition. While staying over a couple of days in Wichita Falls, Tex., where we were living at the time, we paid a visit to the home of L. S. White, a man of unusual Bible knowledge. When forty years of age, he was chosen to meet Charles T. Russell in a debate. He was seventy years old at the time we visited him. After we assured him that we had no intention of provoking an argument, but respecting his vast knowledge of the scriptures, we wanted to know if he believed that Jesus ate bread, after breaking it? He finally answered “yes.” He said he believed that Jesus “broke the loaf” and ate the piece he broke off-he saw no reason to dispute that, he said.

The first year of my preaching-July 1932 until 1933-1 preached for several congregations, before the division on the cup question, and most of these congregations broke the bread after thanks, in or near the middle, which they claimed had to be done to represent the “broken body” of Jesus. As I remember, this was one of the main arguments made for such a practice. I once had the pleasure of talking to a very well read man in Denver, Colorado, who was well along in years at the time-as we talked on we found agreement on many things. When we got to the question of “breaking bread” he turned to me in all honesty, and said, “Bro. Cook, I would never partake of an unbroken loaf.” I quickly said to him, “I wouldn’t either,” then I proceeded to show that when the communicant broke off a piece from the loaf that it was no longer an unbroken loaf,

regardless of what the communicant did with the piece broken off. The loaf from which a piece was broken off of was still one unit of bread. Since the Lord had one physical body, and since the church is “one body” (Eph 4:4; Col 1:18; Eph 1:22,23), and since...we are all partakers of that one bread” by “breaking” and “eating” (1 Cor 10:16; Matt 26:26; Mk 14:22; I Cor 11:24). Thus when “we” the assembled have all done this, we have shown unity and cohesion in the “communion of the body of Christ.” “This my body which is broken for you” (I Cor 11 :24), referred not to the “bread” in the Lord’s Supper, but to the body of Christ, of which Luke says, “This is my body which is given for you” (Luke 22:19). We must remember the body of Jesus as a unit, not one broken into pieces, but one that was “... wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities” (Isa 53:5).

The word “broken” is not always used literally. So, when the word is used with reference to the Lord’s body, it cannot mean that his body was “broken” into pieces, for David said, “He keepeth his bones: not a one of them is broken” (Psa 34:20). This scripture was fulfilled during his crucifixion (Jno 19:36) “ .. A bone of him shall not be broken.” In Psa 69:20, “Reproach hath broken my heart ... ‘, a reference to the last days of our Lord. Those who break the communion loaf into two or more pieces claiming it must be done to qualify the bread to represent the “broken body” miss the point completely. One of the most authoritative works ever written is *The Voice Of One Crying In The Wilderness*, by J.D. Phillips, on “Breaking Bread,” and one of the most simplistic illustrations on the “Breaking Bread,” question appears in the Communion by J. Ervin Waters. No Bible student should be without them. —OPA

BUSY HERE....continued from page one

involved in every frivolous, unimportant thing you can think of, but have failed to show them that they know God. That’s what’s important. Commit yourself to spending more time with your children, teaching them about the importance of God, Christ and the Church. If we get too “busy here and there”, we may look around and our children may be gone.

The second area is our material possessions. Have we gotten “busy here and there” and misused the material possessions that God has placed in our trust? Most of us are fortunate in that we have about anything we want

or need. How are we using these things? Do we use our money in the service of the Lord? Are our homes a place of Christian hospitality? (1 Timothy 6:17-18) “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.”

The third area is our knowledge of God’s Word. Sometimes people get “busy here and there” and we look around and the knowledge of God’s word is gone. The prophet Amos spoke about a famine for the Word of God. (Amos 8: 11) “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:” Many people lack a basic knowledge of God’s Word. The Word of God has been placed on the back burner because people think other things are more important. Consequently, the Word is often neglected and abused.

We must feed on the Word (1 Peter 2:2) “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:” We appreciate the value of nourishment for our bodies and our souls do not deserve any less. Our souls were created in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. A lack of knowledge has always destroyed God’s people. (Hosea 4:6) “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children”.

We need to make sure that we study the Word on a regular basis.(Acts 17:11) “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

We need to be ready to give an answer and contend for and defend the Faith. (1 Peter 3:15) “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” (Philippians 1: 17) “But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel”

In some places people have become dependent on the preacher system. Congregations will often hire a preacher to come in and work, because the members are “busy here and there” with other things. This will often

soothe the member’s consciences, because they have hired a man to do the teaching and the personal work. We need to keep a watchful eye and not let this get out of hand. We must All have knowledge of God’s Word.

We must demand that the Word be taught without addition, subtraction, modification, or revision. It has been put in our trust. We need to be careful, because when we get “busy here and there” we neglect to study the Word. If we are not paying attention false teachers will appear teaching things that are unscriptural.

The fourth and final area is evangelism. Many people have gotten so “busy here and there” that they have failed to reach out to the lost. They don’t have the time. They are more concerned with other things. They are more involved with the world and its ways. People need to realize that sharing the Gospel is not as complicated as some make it out to be. You don’t need a master’s degree or courses in the Bible from some college. When we get too “busy here and there” we miss opportunities to share the Gospel.

Jesus must become our role model in conviction, love, compassion, and service. If we are to be Christ-like we will make soul-winning a central focus of our lives. Until we grow to that maturity level we will flounder in frivolous, worthless things of life. Instead of making money our goal, sports our king and the things of this life our master, we should seek to serve only our master Jesus Christ. Jesus has appointed the way of usefulness to all Christians. (John 4:35) “Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest? Behold I say then unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest”

It’s Harvest Time and we fail the Lord when we get too “busy here and there”.

God has entrusted us with many precious possessions. He expects and demands that we be faithful stewards. We must live up to our responsibilities. We cannot neglect the important things. We need to be sure not to get too “busy here and there”.

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THINGS TO CONSIDER....continued from page two

truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the solid substance of the confession that Peter made.

Moreover, the common misinterpretation described above goes even further. Those who say that Peter is the “rock” on which Jesus promises to build his church, also say that after Peter’s death, other men succeed him in this position. Thus, not only Peter (a mere man) but a long line of successors through the centuries (also mere men) are the foundation of the church in successive ages. This idea is absolutely foreign to the passage under consideration! It is a case of “reading ideas into a passage” in the extreme! But the great truth of Peter’s confession needs no “successors.” It is the eternal foundation that “standeth sure,” will never pass away, and will be succeeded by no one!

2) Jesus is the Foundation

Now, consider some other passages that prove Jesus is the foundation of the church, not Peter. In 1 Corinthians 3:11 Paul says, “...no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Here it is clear that Paul does not make Peter the foundation of the church. He says there can be “no other foundation” than Jesus Christ. This is plain enough.

In the book of Ephesians, a book that is all about Christ and the church, Paul writes that Christians (the church) are “...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (2:20). Here Paul uses a metaphor of the church as a building with the apostles and prophets as part of the foundation. They are described this way because they were instrumental in establishing the church and revealing the word of God. Yet even here, Jesus is said to be the “chief cornerstone” of that foundation. That is, Jesus is given the place of prominence and the inspired apostles and prophets play a subservient role to that of the Lord. This fact is made even clearer in the verses that follow. Verse 21 says, “in whom the whole building ... grows into a holy temple in the Lord.” And verse 22, “in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” In both verses, the prepositional phrase “in whom” is singular, referring back to “the Lord” at the end of verse 20. Thus Jesus, as the chief cornerstone, is the one “in whom” the temple grows, and the one “in whom” the dwelling place of God is built (Ephesians 2:20-22).

This truth is evident even in Old Testament prophecy. In Isaiah 28:16, the prophet says, “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.’ This passage is best understood by letting Jesus himself

explain it. In Matthew 21 :42, Jesus asks the Pharisees, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” In Matthew 21, it is clear that the Lord applies the Isaiah passage to himself, “the chief cornerstone,” the one rejected by the chief priest and Pharisees. Even the apostle Peter himself quotes this Isaiah prophecy and applies it to Jesus, not himself. In his first letter he writes, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” (1 Peter 2:6). He refers here to Jesus. We read again the words of Peter in Acts 4:11-12. “This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Once again, quoting the Isaiah prophecy, the apostle affirms the prominence of Jesus as the “chief cornerstone” of the foundation. There is salvation in no other!

3) Conclusion

No building can last longer than its foundation. When the foundation gives way, the structure itself begins to break apart. History reveals that religious institutions that look to mere men as their foundation are weak and unstable. That is why God made sure the church of Christ has a permanent and solid foundation—the eternal truth that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.” As you consider these things, ask yourself what or who is the foundation of your church. If it is not Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, you need to consider the church of Christ.

Announcement

BOOKS FOR SALE

We have been asked to mention that Brother Richard DeGough has religious books for sale. He has decided to sell his personal library. I know he has some good ones so if you are in need of some give him a call: 209-883-4168. —DLK

Our Departed

FIELDS - Wanda Faye Brown, Turner, Everett, Fields was born on September 21, 1936 in Vian, Oklahoma to Albert and Eunola Brown. Wanda passed away

peacefully at her home on April 28, 2021 in Ceres, California with her husband and her daughter with her. She is survived by her husband, Henry Fields; her sister-in-law Sandie Brown, her brother Don Brown passed away a couple of years ago, twin to her brother Jon Brown and wife Carolyn; her three children, Randall Wayne Turner Sr., Terry Albert Turner and wife Jennifer, and Jennifer Lorene Smith, husband Scotty; Grandchildren, Charity Dyson, R. Wayne Turner Jr., Amanda Fransen, Tamra Turner, Nathan Turner, Morgan Cutter and Mallory Cutter; Great-grandchildren Gabryel Dyson, Isabella Turner, Randall Wayne Turner III (lil' Wayne), and Lilyana Fransen; her nephews Eric, Levi and Kyle Brown, her nieces Trina and Leslie (Brown). To say she was one of a kind is an understatement. She lived her life for the Lord, serving others and taking care of her family. She was such a bright light to all who knew her. There was never a dull moment with her around and never a more independent lady. She was the rock of our family, having converted her first husband to the Lord who was faithful till death. The last few months were hard but she never gave up wanting to go home. We were thankful we were able to bring her home where she wanted to be and now she is in her forever home rejoicing without any pain and suffering. Her American Flag afghan that she hand-made was placed over her casket. Her grandson Wayne provided American Flag masks for the family to wear at the viewing and service, though she was not political. The viewing was outdoors at the Funeral Home due to covid restrictions, etc. At her request, she had a private family graveside where her two sons conducted the service that she had written out. She wanted it "Short & Sweet" (smiles). She didn't want a "big to do" over her, which shows her humility. She did not want a crowd to take a chance on contracting the virus because of her. Always thinking of others. We miss you and love you Mom! —Randall Turner

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, July 13, 2021, old_paths@juno.com. Since last report we were able to attend two nights of the 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO preaching once. Crowds were very good, we thought. We heard it was estimated at near 700. It was wonderful to see so many old friends and brethren and we so much enjoyed the good visits with all. A good spirit prevailed which made it seem even more wonderful. We very much enjoyed a

great visit with our old friend and preaching brother Rick Martin and his wife Jane, who picked us up at the airport in Springfield, and returned us in time for us to make it to Weatherford, TX where we were to hold a gospel meeting. It was our first time to be there though we did know several from past experience. Crowds were very good and the building was pretty well full throughout. Area congregations helped so much with attendance and we were happy to have a number of outsiders and several from denominations as well those who use cups and classes on more than one occasion. Several preachers also attended one or more times. It was good to see Bob Johnson again and Melvin Blalock and his wife were there every service except the Lord's Day when they were at their home congregation. Kiason Turner and family also were there all week except the last night. He seems to be a fine young man who desires to preach and we certainly wish him the very best. I have likely forgotten others and if so, our sincere apologies. Gary Robinson and his wife picked us up at the airport and returned us for our flight home to CA. Our heartfelt thanks to them. There were no visible results but interest was high and we hope and pray there will be results soon. Lord willing, we look forward to returning perhaps next year. Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj33@gmail.com, July 13. We just closed a wonderful meeting in Neosho, Missouri. We had excellent crowds throughout the meeting. Friday night was our largest crowd and it included a lot of young folks. The singing was absolutely beautiful! It was good to see and visit with preachers Don Pruitt, David Griffin, John Anderson, Roger Owens, Eric Bullock, and Zac Evans. Zac is currently working with the Neosho congregation and studying with some aspiring young preachers. We had several folks from the community attend the meeting including preachers Victor Knowles and Bob Chambers. Phyllis and I attended one night of the Sulphur Oklahoma Fourth of July Meeting. We were pleasantly surprised by the large crowd and the mild temperatures. The meeting was well organized and the speakers did an excellent job, Kiason Turner, Chuck Morris, and David Griffin. We enjoyed it very much. The church here in Ada is doing well. Longtime member Buddy Kessinger recently turned 80 years old and had never given a lesson at church services here before, but, he decided to take his turn at teaching and gave both lessons on a Sunday. They were phenomenal! He sounded like a seasoned preacher! Buddy's father was preacher Clarence Kessinger, a contemporary of

Homer King, Homer Gay, and Clovis Cook. You can be sure that Buddy will be on the speaking schedule again in the near future! Please keep us in your prayers.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@iuno.com, July 8. Since my last report I have conducted two meetings. First, it was a joy to be with the Blue Springs, KY congregation in May, an area where the church is strong in faith and evangelistic zeal, and we had good cooperation from surrounding congregations. I enjoyed the hospitality and opportunity to develop new friendships with brethren in that part of the country, although I also renewed some old acquaintances while there, and I returned home with renewed optimism that things are starting to get back to normal. Philip Permenter is working tirelessly among them, conducting home studies and preaching in the area, and I enjoyed my visits with him and his family. Also, I was able to spend a considerable amount of time with Marcus Reppert, someone I admire for his godly influence and leadership skills in the church there, and one day he took me on a tour through the countryside to see where various congregations are located. What a beautiful drive and how encouraged I was by this experience! Incidentally, I am looking forward to returning to the area next year, Lord willing, when I am to hold a meeting with the Chestnut Ridge congregation in September. I was also at Columbia, MO in June for an 8 day meeting that Jerry and I conducted together, and it is always a delight to be with them. They are constantly looking for ways to evangelize the community and we had visitors from near and far. We stayed in the home of Bill and Karen Smith where we were graciously provided for in every way! Austin Maddox is laboring among them and has developed into a fine preacher of the gospel, someone who has impressed me with his studious demeanor, and we need more young men like him who will make a serious commitment to preach the gospel. As always, Jerry and I enjoyed being together and preaching every other service during the meeting. Before concluding, let me say that the annual 4th of July Meeting here in Springfield is now history and it was uplifting to everyone who attended. Although we have seen a larger attendance in past years (something to be expected), there was probably around 700 people present at the final service. The preaching was superb and the fellowship was grand! Finally, I am looking forward to a meeting at Paris, TX on the dates of Aug. 22-29. If you are in driving distance, please come and be with us.

Greg Gay, 3816 Tambos Trl, Edmond, OK 73034,

papagreg@aol.com, 916-804-3787, July 8, 2021. June 9-13, I held a meeting at Cleburne, Texas that was well attended by members and area visitors including preachers Steve Bowen, Bob Johnson, and Aaron Boone. Kiason Turner of Cleburne has been ordained as an evangelist. He is doing a fine work helping at home and area congregations while being a family man and having a regular job. I know well that balancing act and appreciate Kiason and his family for their commitment. Cassie and I enjoyed getting to see and visit with everyone, but especially Melvin and Alberta Blalock. Melvin has been in the area many years and is highly respected for his work and faithfulness. We attended Springfield's 4th of July meeting and were thrilled to see so many again. My thanks to Mission Hills for all they do to continue the great tradition of the meeting and to Smith and Nate Bibens, who conducted the meeting this year, the first father-son duo to have that honor. There was an amazing group of young people who attended from all over the country bringing great enthusiasm to the meeting and wonderful hope for the church's future. With Covid loosening its grip here in Oklahoma, I have been able to have local preaching appointments at Moore and Edmond-Sandstone Hills. We have recently enjoyed attending area meetings to hear Michael Bolton at Edmond-Oakwood and Mike Criswell at Moore. Our work continues at the West View congregation in Piedmont, OK. Our hearts were broken in May with the sudden death of David McFarland in a collision with a drunk driver. The McFarland family has known much sorrow in the last year with the passing of Robin, David, and Robin's father, Winston Cutter. We appreciate Mike McFarland being with us at Piedmont and being steadfast as he mourns these losses. Kevin Presley was with us for a great meeting in May. We had visitors each service including a family from the multi-cup brethren who watch Kevin's TV show each week. We have resumed our second service each Sunday and I am beginning new studies with members of the congregation. We have approached some out of duty members in our area, with much more work to do. Please let me know of anyone near Piedmont you would like us to contact. My Facebook group, God's Good News from Greg, continues to have good interest reaching 500 -1,000 with each video. I am currently in a series contrasting God's requirements before and after the cross. The most recent serious questions concerning the church have come from Kenya in Africa and Northern India, near the Himalayas. I appreciate the calls I am getting for meetings. Lord willing, our next travels will be to Pleasant View, MO and Fieldstone, MO in August. We are looking forward to seeing all who can attend.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

IN THE YEAR KING UZZIAH DIED!

By JERRY DICKINSON

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!' And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.'" (Isaiah 6: 1-5)

Uzziah, also called Azariah, came to the throne at age 16 and reigned for 52 years, the second longest reign in Judah. His father, unpopular because of a great military disaster, met death by mob violence. Uzziah became king with the popular acclaim of the nation (2 Chronicles 26:1) and, because "he sought after the Lord", he was supremely successful in subduing the Edomites, Philistines, Arabians, and Ammorites. The record declares that Uzziah's "name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt" for he waxed exceeding strong." Uzziah gave Judah strength and prosperity it had not enjoyed since the days of Solomon.

About ten years before the end his reign, however, Uzziah made a terrible mistake. Filled with pride he arrogantly entered the temple and decided he himself, though not a priest, would burn incense. For this presumption he was stricken with leprosy and had to live in seclusion the rest of his days. Finally, he dies and is not even buried in the royal sepulcher. A good king who had done so much for his people dies in dishonor because of pride and presumption - a cautionary tale for sure!

The year that King Uzziah died was, and is, an important milestone. It certainly was to the people of Judah, and to Isaiah in particular. Really it is a milestone in history. (Some sources maintain that the year Uzziah died is the year that Romulus the founder of Rome was born.) Uzziah had been a popular king and had brought safety and prosperity to the nation. Now the throne is vacant and anxiety fills the hearts of the nation. What will become of us now? Who can replace the king? Apparently, even Isaiah was anxious and concerned. Isaiah was concerned, however, not just for the temporal and political future of the nation, but for the moral and religious future as well. His prophecies detail the moral decay of the nation and he calls on them to repent and return to holiness.

It was precisely at such a moment that Isaiah goes to the temple and there the Lord gives him a vision of unparalleled beauty and majesty. He sees the Lord (Adonai) sitting on His throne surrounded by seraphim, a fiery host or army of six winged angels. They cry out: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD (Jehovah) of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory!" What an overwhelmingly awesome vision! But what did it mean? The Lord was declaring that although the throne on earth was empty He was still on His throne in heaven! Lift up your eyes and look beyond the earthly realm and see and recognize that the LORD is always on His throne and always in control. No need to worry about the future! Don't put your trust in earthly rulers! The LORD reigns and the earth is full of His glory. We must look up, nevertheless, beyond the earthly vale and by faith see the LORD on his throne.

Please note that Isaiah uses two Hebrew words translated Lord and LORD. The first word he uses is Adonai translated Lord with a capital L and lower case letters. The second word is in all capitals in our translation because the Hebrew word is Jehovah or Yahweh, the personal name by which God made Himself known to Israel. The significance of that for us as Christians is because John declares that, "In the beginning the Word was with God and the word was God." Further in John 12:41 John declares that when Isaiah saw his vision of the LORD it was Jesus he saw. Isaiah saw "His glory and spoke of Him." The context shows the reference is clearly about Jesus. Isaiah is often referred to as the Messianic prophet and he indeed speaks about the coming Messiah and His glory. The vision of Isaiah was a vision of Jesus! He is reigning on the throne in heaven! He is the LORD of hosts! The earth is full of His glory! No wonder we sing along with the fiery seraphim and the guardian cherubim:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;

Holy, Holy, Holy, Merciful and Mighty! God in Three persons, blessed trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy, All the saints adore Thee, Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;

Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, Who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

John received an awesome vision similar in many ways to Isaiah's. He saw a door standing open in heaven (think of that) and when he looked he saw One who sat on the throne surrounded by beings who cried out night and day, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come." (Revelation 4:8) Let us lift up our eyes and look. Our LORD reigns and is coming! The earth is full of His glory! Amen.