

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. LXXXVII

LEBANON, MISSOURI • DECEMBER 2015

NO. 12

“WHEN GOD SPEAKS WHO LISTENS?”

By GREG GAY

Recently at my day job, a longtime coworker asked my opinion about a current topic that involves morality issues. Before I could answer, she amended her question to say, “Perhaps I should ask, what does your church believe?”

Having had and overheard discussions like these in the past, the rest of the conversation is usually quite predictable. Comparing church opinions is safe and relatively harmless compared to expressing personal convictions about any religious topic.

In our politically correct culture of today, stating a personal conviction that something is wrong or sinful is totally taboo. Those who practice religion are usually more comfortable expressing their religious views at arm’s length rather than personally, hence the greater comfort with the question, “What does your church believe?”

In this case, I referred my coworker to the scriptures and let her know that it is our belief and intention in my church that we should always use the Bible for our personal opinions and that the church has no opinions separate and apart from the scriptures.

Perhaps we need a reminder of this fact ourselves, and perhaps we need to remember how very different we are in this regard from the religious world as a whole.

Pew Research reported in 2012 on the number of individuals who practice the world’s religions. Their research indicates the world’s religious population includes “2.2 billion Christians (32% of the world’s population), 1.6 billion Muslims (23%), 1 billion Hindus (15%), nearly 500 million Buddhists (7%) and 14 million Jews (0.2%)” (<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>).

By “Christians,” Pew Research refers to those who claim to follow Jesus Christ in any way. Their breakdown of the 2.2 billion Christians is as follows: “About half of all Christians are Catholic (50%). An

estimated 37% of Christians belong to the Protestant tradition, broadly defined to include Anglicans as well as independent and nondenominational churches. The Orthodox Communion, including the Greek and Russian Orthodox, make up 12% of Christians. And people who belong to other traditions that view themselves as Christian (including Christian Scientists, Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses) make up about 1% of the global Christian population” (<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-christians/>).

The object of reporting this survey is to remind us of how few in the religious world intend or attempt to follow the Bible at all. Even fewer intend or attempt to follow the New Testament scriptures today and allow those teachings to be their only guide in worship, salvation, and issues of morality.

Of the major religions listed: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jews, none believe in or attempt to follow the New Testament. They either reject it completely or accept it only as a book of interest, not as God’s revelation to mankind for today. Those religions’ adherents number over 3 billion souls, almost half of the earth’s population.

Within “Christianity,” most religions do not accept the Bible’s New Testament as today’s complete and sufficient revealed will of God, or else there would be no place for denominational creeds and official statements from religions’ headquarters around the world.

Let us be reminded we are different from the religious world in general because we do believe in the inspiration, accuracy, completeness, and all-sufficiency of the scriptures.

Today, we live under the time of the New Testament law. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The Old Law is no longer in effect. Paul writes:

continued on page six

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXXVII No. 12



ADVOCATE

When God Speaks 1
 Editorial 2
 Querist Column..... 3
 Things That Hinder 4
 The House Church Movement..... 5
 The Remission of Sins..... 8
 Announcements 9
 Our Departed 10

FROM THE FIELDS 10
 THE BACK PAGE..... 12

PUBLISHER

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

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

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

EDITORIAL STAFF

Bennie Cryer	Greg Gay
Billy Dickinson	Carl Johnson
Jerry Dickinson	Doug Hawkins
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..... \$15.00
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

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

By DON L. KING

In the book of Exodus, we read of the time when God wished his people to finally be free of the Egyptian captivity. Moses and Aaron, at God’s command, approached Pharaoh to ask that he allow the Israelites the freedom to go into the wilderness to hold a feast of worship. Most of us are familiar with the several plagues God sent upon Egypt because of Pharaoh’s continued refusal to allow them to go. The Egyptian ruler did not wish the chance of losing his hold on Israel. They were valuable slaves and their number was growing. It was too good to risk. Hence, his refusals and the plagues from God.

Finally Pharaoh was willing to compromise and bargain. We won’t have the space to deal with all of his bargains. However, we will notice at least one. As I think of them again I am so reminded of the familiar sound even today as Satan tries to bargain with us. Little has changed. Remember that Paul wrote, “For whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning,...” (Romans 15:4).

SACRIFICE IN THE LAND

In Exodus 5 Pharaoh was asked to allow them to journey into the wilderness so they could worship God. After several plagues had been suffered by the Egyptians, Pharaoh began to bargain. Exodus 8:25 reads, “And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye sacrifice to your God in the land.” But this would never do! Moses said, “...It is not meet (suitable DLK) so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination (that which the Egyptians held sacred DLK) of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?” (Exodus 8:26).

Moses and Aaron were faced with the decision of whether or not to compromise. God had specifically said for them to journey into the wilderness. They were to leave Egypt entirely if they were to obey God. Pharaoh was willing for them to worship, yes, but only in Egypt. What to do? Compromise? Many today would do just that. However, Moses perhaps realized that one never compromises toward strength and truth Rather, compromise is always toward weakness and error in the realm of spiritual things: Yes, always that is the case, To
continued on page six

QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is “marking” in Romans 16:17 considered withdrawing fellowship?

Answer: The passage in question reads “Now I urge you brethren, note those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them” (NKJV).

The King James translates the word (skopein) “mark,” while the New King James uses the word “note.” The meaning of the word is to “look out for, notice, keep one’s eye on i.e. “look out for those who cause divisions and avoid them.” The apostle is telling the brethren to be on guard and watch for those teachers that sow discord that results in division. To cause division refers to those actions that create difficulties resulting in division. “Divisions” translates the word (dichazo) which according to Thayer (p.158) means to “cut into two parts, cleave asunder, dissever.” These individuals create problems in the church that result in opposing parties that destroy the peace and unity of the brethren. The “offences” they cause refers to the fact that those involved are drawn away from the truth to the doctrines of men, resulting in error or sin.

The division thus created is “contrary” to the doctrine or teaching they had learned. The teaching they had learned had come from the apostles. This teaching was “of the Lord,” that is it had its origin with the Lord (Acts 2:42; 13:12; 2John 9,10; Romans 6:17). The teaching promoted by these false teachers came from other sources. The people Paul warns them about did not receive their teaching from the Lord and His authorized proclaimers, but had its origin with men, hence it was contrary to or in violation of what was right. It is likely that the ones to whom Paul refers were Judaizing teachers who were intent on convincing all Christians that they had to be circumcised and keep the law in order to be saved. How should these teachers be treated? Were they to be welcomed in and coddled with the hope that they would change? Paul says they should be avoided. The meaning of “avoid” is to “turn away from” or “to keep aloof from.” The idea is essentially “have nothing to do with these teachers.” One is reminded of the numerous times false teachers have slipped in among churches and eventually worked their way into the fellowship of the brethren, only to sow false

doctrine that resulted in division. Robertson Whiteside comments “Said Paul, “mark them” eye them closely. Do not shut your eyes to what they are doing, nor make excuses for them, nor for any others who cause divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the gospel, but turn away from them. This means that the brethren should have no fellowship with them.” Moses Lard makes the following comment on (and turn away from them) “This turning away amounted to a withdrawal of fellowship; and the withdrawal was to continue, so long as those withdrawn from, continued to produce divisions. It was a separation of true brethren from false; and without a reformation, it was final.” It seems to this writer that the “marking” is merely “identifying” or making note of the individual or individuals who are creating problems, while “avoiding” them refers to the process of having nothing to do with them. How long will it take us to learn that when men come among brethren with “strange” or “unscriptural” doctrines and they are welcomed and embraced and justified in spite of the falsehoods they propagate we are only asking for trouble. Trouble, that more often than not, results in division and lost souls.

(Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

Announcements

You are invited to the 2015 Preacher’s Study

Hosted by the Church of Christ in Grapevine

Conducted by Johnny Elmore and Ronny Wade

Dates: December 21st-24th
The study will start at 9am on Monday
and end on Thursday at noon.

Place: The Church of Christ in Grapevine
713 North Lucas Drive
Grapevine, TX. 76051

For more information, contact:
Ronny Wade – ronnywade36@gmail.com
Johnny Elmore – johnnyelmore@gmail.com
Lyndon Cox – lyndon.cox@verizon.net
Don Coon – donald.coon@gte.net

THINGS THAT HINDER

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

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

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

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

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

scriptures, but by inspiration Paul even includes "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim 3:4). Things that are not wrong in themselves can become sin to us by keeping us from being the strong Christians the Lord wants us to be. Our Lord teaches us to "seek first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33), and we are told, "Be strong in the Lord and the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10).

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

Members of the church who refuse to cooperate in the Lord's work impede our progress and discourage others who want to do what is right. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Ephesus and said, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). In the Old Testament we are informed that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:23). Those Christians who have no time to contribute to the success of any program of work that is decided on by the brethren hinder and discourage others who want to cooperate and to do what they can for the Lord. Such individuals will give account in the day of Judgment.

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

The first class can be depended on. They are the backbone of the church. They are the ones who will be present every time the church meets (if at all possible). They do not rely on excuses to justify poor church attendance or lacks of personal service these people are "ready to every good work". If there is anything

. . . continued to page seven

THE HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT

BY RICK MARTIN

The purpose of this article is to discuss the House Church Movement. These house churches are not local churches that begin by meeting in someone's home. The movement is not specific to the church of Christ and is found in many denominations. In this article I will explore some of the aspects of this movement and expose the errors in it.

The first issue I want to notice is worshipping in houses. The early church certainly met in homes of the disciples. The question is, is this exclusive apostolic pattern? The answer to that question is no. A simple reading of the New Testament shows that the early church met in other places also. They met in the temple (Acts 2:46), by a river side (Acts 16:13), in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9) and in a synagogue-type place (Jas. 2:2). This shows us that there is no exclusive pattern regarding the place where Christians of the first century met. It is apparent that the place where early Christians met was determined by expediency.

Of the very first church, it is said "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, Acts 2:42-44.

The second issue is the emphasis on spontaneous, informal worship. Many advocates of the house church movement say that if worship is more spontaneous and informal, it will allow more people to participate.

One of the reasons for emphasis on the spontaneous, informal worship may be to increase the role of women in worship. In some of the house churches women address the assembly, converse during the Lord's Supper, and lead chain prayers. It makes no difference where the church assembles the role of men and women must be recognized; 1 Cor. 14:34-35 "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church". 1 Tim. 2:11-12 "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence".

What does Paul have to say about informality and spontaneity in worship? He speaks to the Corinthian church about this. Their assemblies had become so informal and spontaneous that they were chaotic. Instead of giving every brother an opportunity to verbally participate, Paul instructed some to "keep silent" 1 Cor. 14:26-35. He added, "Let all things be done decently and in order", 1 Cor. 14:40.

The charge that all may not participate in the worship of the church is untrue. Every Christian is to blend his/her voice with others in song; to participate in the contribution and partaking of the Lord's Supper; and everyone is encouraged to listen very carefully to the sermon and prayers, Luke 8:18 "Take heed therefore how ye hear".

The third issue with the house church movement is elimination of the weekly contribution. Many leaders of this movement contend that the contribution is not a mandated item of worship. The idea is that giving is a way of meeting special needs whenever they arise. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 says; "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come". In this passage Paul gives instructions to the church at Corinth on providing for the needy saints of Jerusalem, however this passage is more than a benevolence passage, it is also a collection passage. It is necessarily implied by this passage that the church at Corinth kept a standing church treasury. It was done, upon the first day of the week so, that there be no gatherings when I come. If there were to be no gatherings when Paul came there had to be a standing treasury.

The fourth and final issue is a perversion of the Lord's Supper. The idea presented by the house church movement is that the Lord's Supper should take place as part of a common meal. The argument is that because the Lord's Supper was instituted during the Passover meal, which they contend was a normal, ordinary meal, it should be observed today in the same manner.

The Passover meal was not a "normal, ordinary" meal.

It was a very unusual meal. It was observed only once a year, and designed itself as a memorial. The food of the meal was strictly regulated (Exo. 12). It consisted of roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. I doubt seriously that this is the typical meal in every house church. If the food of the “common” or Passover meal can be changed, would it not be logical to assume the elements of the Lord’s Supper can be changed? The Passover was by no means, a typical meal.

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, it seems they were practicing the very thing advocated by those in the house church movement - eating the Lord’s Supper in conjunction with a common meal. Paul told them to stop; 1 Cor. 11:22 “What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not”. Again he says, 1 Cor. 11:34 “And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come”.

In conclusion, this is by no means a comprehensive list of what takes place in all house church assemblies. Some of the things mentioned may not be practiced by all such assemblies. Likewise, some things not mentioned may take place. It has been the purpose of this article to point out some of the errors found in this movement.

Perhaps one of the reasons behind the house church movement is to come up with something new; something to eliminate what some consider a staleness in worship. May we remember that some things that are old are that way because they are divinely revealed by a God who knows us better than we know ourselves. The reason some things are old is because they have been tried and tested and proven reliable. Our Lord said, Matt. 24:25 “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away”.

More often than not, the reason some people decide to meet in their home is because of some problem with the leadership of the congregation they were attending. This problem is usually not doctrinal in nature, but rather something personal. To leave is a dividing of the assembly.

The Bible teaches that there is a need to assemble together with those of like precious faith:

- Acts 20:7 -- “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread”
- 1 Corinthians 11:18-20 -- the church came together in

one place.

- Hebrews 2:12 -- “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee”
- Hebrews 10:25 -- Forsaking not the assembling of yourselves together.

God’s church is a body made up of many members. Each local congregation is designed by God to function together. There is a need to have fellowship with those of like precious faith. Assembling at one’s house, defeats the purposes of assembling together. It is a dangerous thing to leave an established, faithful congregation to meet in one’s home.

300 Clubview Terrace
Woodstock, GA
mmartin@bellsouth.net



WHEN GOD SPEAKS. . . continued from page one

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col 2:14).

The Bible reveals that New Testament teachings are necessary for our life and salvation: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3).

The Bible teaches that all we need to know from God is in the scriptures. We have no need for special revelations, or additional testaments, or official church statements: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

When God speaks, as he has through his word, we know most in the world pay no attention. The more personal question is this: How much do we listen to God? Do we allow his word to be, as David said, “a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path?” (Psalms 119:105). 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com



EDITORIAL . . . continued from page two

compromise is to accept a bit of error while giving up a bit of truth. They could not afford to do that, and we cannot either.

To worship in Egypt would have brought about both the wrath of God and finally the Egyptians themselves, Moses knew. They would have to sacrifice animals considered sacred by the heathen Egyptians. They would surely bring trouble, so that option was out.

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

What a lesson for us. To hold the feast in the land of Egypt would be to lower God's people to the level of those heathens. God wanted, demanded, their complete departure and separation from those who sought to enslave them. He wants the same for His people today! We cannot and must not allow ourselves to sink to the level of those who worship God in idolatry, denominationalism or innovations. We are to be separated from all that, just as Israel was to be separated from the Land of Egypt. Jesus wanted us free from sin. He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32).

NO WORSHIP IN EGYPT

No, there could be no tabernacle or altar in Egypt; for any religion which could allow them to remain in Egypt could never be from God. Reader, take careful note: any religion which allows you to be a part of the world in all its glory cannot be from God, cannot be right. Hear the Apostle Paul, I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) Notice, Paul said he was crucified with Christ. Of course, he had not literally died physically as did Christ. However, he had died to sin; and he had died to his old way of life. When we die, we leave all we have behind, and this life holds nothing more for us at all. That is exactly what Paul means here.

He had forever closed the door upon his old way of life. Why do we believe we can be different? Why try to bring the old ways of sin right along with us as we come into the Kingdom, or church? Why try to convince ourselves and others we are really Christians now when we live essentially the same lifestyle as those we seek to convert? How different are we really? Hear Paul again: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Galatians 6:14) There is no doubt about it. Paul had completely forsaken the old way of life. He said, "...the world is crucified unto me,..." In other words they are completely separated from me. Oh, we know Paul still lived among the world. He made tents and continued to conduct the daily affairs of life among them. He undoubtedly had to hear the profanity of the world. He must have seen the sins of those who lived around him. However, it was not a part of his life! He kept himself apart.

May God hasten the day when church members in our own time can come to realize this great truth. Let those of Egypt (the world) do the drinking, dancing, swearing, gambling (yes the lottery is gambling) carousing and

movie going. Let us try to remember we are crucified to all that. Let's get on with the business at hand. We are Christians. Our mission is to convert the lost to Christ. We must be different than they are if this is ever to occur. There must be a recognizable difference. This needs to be evident in our lives and even in the language we use when teaching the Word of God. Be careful that you don't allow the use of common street language to mask the beautiful overtures of Jesus Christ. His message to the lost is surely worthy of the best effort we can put forth. Let us become crucified to the world, leave it behind and press onward and upward. Think on these things.



THINGS THAT HINDER..... continued from page four they can do to help the church, they are ready. You can depend on it. They are a good example to all, including their children. They are a source of encouragement to all others.

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

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

their best. The apostle James says, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). This same apostle says. “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). Again, this same writer says, “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed”(James 1:25).

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

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

THE REMISSION OF SINS ACTS 2:38

By DAVID GRIFFIN

In Acts 2:38, the apostle Peter has just charged his audience with the sin of crucifying the Son of God. He then tells them they must “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.” Most of the denominations say the phrase “for the remission of sins” means “because of the remission of sins”—that is, be baptized because your sins have already been forgiven. Does Peter mean repent and be baptized “because your sins have been forgiven” or repent and be baptized “in order that your sins be forgiven”? There are at least three ways to address this question.

First, the broad context of Acts 2 provides the first line of response. It is quite clear that Peter’s audience has been convinced of their sin. They have just seen the miraculous effects of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles; they have just heard Peter’s soul-stirring, scripture-filled sermon highlighting their guilt in executing Jesus of Nazareth. Verse 37 says Peter’s audience is “cut to the heart” and they cry out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (NKJV). It is clear they are a people under conviction of conscience. They have just come to realize they killed the long-promised Messiah. Their response is not that of a people who have already experienced the “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” in the forgiveness of their sins. Quite the contrary! Their response is that of a people who know they are under sin’s condemnation and are pleading for a way to escape. “Men and brethren, what

shall we do to be forgiven of our sins?” is the essence of their cry. Peter’s response in verse 38 is precisely the response that a guilty people, not a forgiven people, would be seeking to hear. And Peter’s response is just the response that an inspired man would give to a people he knew to be in that condition. “Repent,” he says, “and be baptized!” Why, Peter? “In order for your sins to be forgiven.” Hence, the broad context of the narrative teaches us that baptism is not “because God, for Christ’s sake, has already forgiven your sins,” but baptism is for (i.e. “in order to receive”) the forgiveness of sins. This conclusion is the most logical one considering the spiritual condition of Peter’s audience and the tone of their request in verse 37.

Second, the immediate context of verse 38 itself requires that “for the remission of sins” means “in order to receive forgiveness.” We focus on the specific words “Repent and be baptized...” These words contain two commands, paraphrased thus: 1) you must repent, 2) you must be baptized. These commands are joined by “and” which couples them as a grammatical unit. As such, both commands are equally important and together share the same aim and result. That is, “Do these two things—for the remission of sins.” Thus, whatever the reason the Lord commanded them to repent is also the reason the Lord commanded them to be baptized.

Why does this matter? Because those who say that Peter tells the people to be baptized because they are already forgiven also believe the opposite about repentance. In their view baptism follows forgiveness while repentance precedes it. This view, however, puts Peter at odds with himself because it assigns differing purposes to the two grammatically joined commands, repent and be baptized. It makes Peter use the word “for” to mean “in order to” regarding the repentance part of the command, and “because of” regarding the baptism part. “Repent in order to receive forgiveness, and be baptized because you have been forgiven.” Can anyone believe that the ordinary rules of language will bear out such an interpretation as this—to make the word “for” have two different, even opposite meanings in the same place at the same time? This obvious contradiction is clearly one of the reasons you virtually never hear Acts 2:38 quoted or alluded to by “faith only” preachers, including the popular ones of “Christian radio.” Just take your pick of them.

The third point focuses on the single word “for.” This point is a bit more technical, and that is why it is introduced only after introducing the two above

arguments which any Bible student may easily deduce from his or her English translation. But this third point is worthy of notice. The matter at issue here is not whether Peter is giving the purpose (the reason why) of baptism. It is generally agreed that he is giving his audience the purpose for being baptized. Rather, the question is whether the reason lies in the future or in the past at the time of baptism- forgiveness as a result of baptism, or baptism as a result of forgiveness. Hence, the following discussion of the word “for.”

“For” in our translation is the rendering of the little Greek word *eis* (pronounced “ace”). This little word is capable of a variety of nuances-one of which is purpose, the very issue under consideration. The scholars are virtually undivided on the significance of this word as it relates to purpose. Here is a brief summary: *eis* is a preposition whose basic meaning, when expressing purpose, is “for, in order to, toward” (see virtually any Greek lexicon). This summary is not comprehensive but it is sufficient to demonstrate that, when expressing purpose, *eis* has a prospective, “forward-looking” significance rather than a retrospective, “backward-looking” significance. In fact, it carries this idea in all of its nuances and not just when expressing purpose. Conversely, when the Greek language expresses the idea of “because of (something),” it does not use the word *eis* at all. Instead, it uses the little word *dia*-a word that does not even appear in Acts 2:38.

It is true, however, that the English word “for” can have either a prospective or a retrospective meaning, depending on how it is used. For example, when a mother says to her son, “Son, please go to the store for a loaf of bread,” she uses the word “for” with a prospective meaning-i.e. go to the store in order to get a loaf of bread (focus toward the future purchase of bread). But if we say, “When the son comes home with bread, the mother jumps for joy,” we use the word “for” with a retrospective meaning-i.e. She jumps because of the joy that already seized her just prior to her “jumping” (focus toward joy previously received). It is this latter usage that people have in mind when they say baptism is because of the remission of sins in Acts 2:38. However, while the two above examples demonstrate that the English word “for” does indeed have such flexibility, *eis* indeed does not. Therefore, since the English word “for” can have either of these meanings, but *eis* cannot, then we must construe “for” (when a translation of *eis*) to have only the meaning *eis* is capable of having in such cases. We may not shift to a meaning that “for” can sometimes have but *eis* can

never have. Therefore, Peter commands his audience to repent and be baptized in order that they may have the forgiveness of their sins.

Furthermore, this prospective idea of “for” is also evident in the words of Jesus when instituting the Lord’s Supper in Matthew 26:28. Jesus speaks of “My blood... which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Virtually all can see the prospective idea in the word “for” in this passage. That is, the outpouring of Jesus’ blood on the cross is for the purpose of establishing a provision which was previously non-existent, but after his blood was shed, it is available to all who will obey the gospel.

Significantly, both the phrase in Matthew 26:28 and the one in Acts 2:38 are exactly the same words-in both English and Greek! Both employ the word *eis* in a prospective sense-one speaking of Jesus establishing the provision of forgiveness, the other speaking of repentant sinners gaining access to that provision. Why people can easily see the prospective idea of “for” in Matthew 26:28, but they cannot see anything but a retrospective idea in Acts 2:38, can be due to nothing but the blinding influence of the “faith only” doctrine? Let the denominational world give up its allegiance to Martin Luther’s “Faith Only” and heed the words of the Lord through His inspired apostles!

Announcements

CARNAL WARFARE

We have received the following announcement from Damien Enos, 3525 Iowa Avenue, Rowley, IA 52329: Although I am registered for selective service, I am a conscientious objector because of my faith in Jesus Christ. I know that I shouldn’t engage in carnal warfare because 2 Corinthians 10:4 reads: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” Also in Matthew 26:52 Jesus said that all who “... take the sword shall perish with the sword.” I also recognize that we don’t war according to the flesh even though we walk in the flesh, as stated in 2 Corinthians 10:3. Therefore, I believe carnal warfare is wrong. Since I am a Christian, I fight a spiritual war rather than a carnal one. Also, I am to love my neighbor as myself and believe that killing is wrong even if it is for the Country in which I live. I hope there will never again be a draft so I may live peacefully. However, I will obey God rather than men- Damien Enos

Our Departed

BAILEY - Florence Evelyn (Miller) Bailey was born February 9, 1935, in LaGrange, Georgia, and died October 8, 2015, in Sentinel, Oklahoma, at the age of 80. Florence married Alton Bailey, a well-known preacher, January 27, 1952, their marriage lasting 63 years. He preceded her in death by one year. She was the daughter of another well-known preacher, the late E.H. Miller and his late wife Zona Bell Miller. Florence is survived by her children, three sons and one daughter: Alton Bruce Bailey, Jr., William Mark Bailey, Charles Allen Bailey, and Mary (Bailey) Reid, and their spouses, plus eleven grandchildren. A sister, Louise Bowen, and a brother, Raymond Miller, preceded her in death. Florence was a member of the church, having been baptized at the age of 12. From that time forward, she was a faithful member of the Murphy Avenue Church of Christ in LaGrange before she and Alton moved to Irving, Texas, to live near their children and then on to Sentinel. It was a unique situation that Florence spent her entire life living in the home of a gospel preacher-from her parents home, she married a young preacher and lived with him until he died; and after his death, she moved into the home of her son, Mark (also a preacher), and his wife Janice.

The Cause lost a dedicated servant with the passing of Florence, whose life was the church. Under the influence of her father and of her equally strong and faithful mother, Florence grew up to become a woman of great faith and a strong defender of the truth, always remaining in the role the Lord designated for her. She loved the church and would work day and night to be a "servant of the church" like Phoebe whom Paul commends in Romans 16:1. She was one known for her hospitality. Like her mother before her, she was the essence of southern hospitality. Her home was always open, and she was always ready to serve a meal or to help others in any way they needed. Her home was the one in which most preachers stayed when they held gospel meetings at LaGrange. And when a gospel meeting came along in LaGrange, Florence did everything she could to make the meeting a success. She visited people in the community and invited them to the meeting as well as cooking many meals. She did not eat of the bread of idleness that Solomon speaks about in Proverbs 31:27. As well, she was a faithful wife and mother, always standing beside and being supportive of her husband to help him continue in his

role as a preacher. And she provided a loving home for her children who have risen up to call her blessed. In fact, two of her sons are gospel preachers. Not only her children but also their spouses and other loved ones had a special place in their hearts for her. One of her daughters-in-law wrote a special tribute about Florence for the funeral, expressing the special place she had in their hearts. The church is better because it had a dedicated member like Florence Bailey, and she is greatly missed by all who knew her. It was an honor to be asked to assist her son Allen in conducting the funeral and to be able to speak words of comfort and hope. It had been only one year since Allen and I stood in the same place as this family commemorated the life of their father. - Joe Norton (jlnorton9@gmail.com)

LAMKINS -, Wilma Maxine Lamkins born July 18, 1923 in Oologah, Oklahoma passed away October 12, 2015 in Springfield, MO at the age of ninety two years. Maxine was married to Clyde Lamkins in March of 1941. They spent many happy years together before his passing in September of 2005. Maxine was in many ways the example of what every Christian wife and mother should be. Our family spent many happy hours in her house. She was an excellent cook, a gracious hostess, and wonderful friend. She traveled with Clyde to several places as he preached in Southwest MO and northwest Arkansas. Wherever she went, she was known for her kindness and loving spirit. She and Clyde had two sons Wayne and Don. Wayne preceded her in death and Don took good care of her in her declining years. She loved the church and those who knew and loved her were blessed because of her goodness and kindness. She will be missed. Her funeral took place October 16th in Lebanon, MO. Her earthly remains were laid to rest beside Clyde in the Winnipeg Cemetery to await the resurrection. The writer was honored to conduct the service. - Ronny Wade

Field Reports

Armando C. Aguan, Mindanao, Philipines, November 5- Greetings to you all and the brethren everywhere. The gospel of Christ still has the power it has always had and the work in Mindanao, particularly North Cototabo continues to grow and prosper. Recently we had a gospel meeting at Tumanding Arakan. Preachers Rodrigo Aguan, Arcenio Laman Mario Landas, Leonardo Sicao and myself did the preaching. Eight souls were baptized in the Tumanding river nearby. All glory and praise goes to God. NOTE: One must keep in mind how difficult conditions are in such areas. In another report we were told how three preachers rode a single motorcycle a long distance to arrive and preach.

The roads were muddy and rough and the area is considered critical and unsafe to visit. Yet these fellows made the trip and preached the gospel and eight souls were added to the church. DLK

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com Nov. 3: We recently closed a wonderful meeting at the Lee's Summit congregation, near Lebanon, Missouri. I have conducted several meetings at Lee's Summit since the first one in August of 1975, so Phyllis and I have a long history with these folks and it was so good to be with them again. We had a full house almost every service including folks from the community and surrounding congregations. A large number of preachers from the area came and supported the effort. We made our home with longtime dear friends Dave and Lela Doing. Our family was saddened last week by the death of my brother-in-law Darrell Gould. Darrell was married to my sister Rosa for 61 years. He had a larger-than-life personality and it would be impossible to measure the impact he had on our family. I loved him dearly from the time I was five years old. We had his funeral yesterday (November 2). Joe Hisle conducted the services and did a great job. Please keep us all in your prayers.

Paul Melton, 809 S.Main, Elmore City, OK 73438: The Lord has been gracious to us here in Southern Oklahoma! I am so very thankful to announce that in July of this year, the brethren from the Ratliff City congregation and those of the Healdton congregation made peace. As many of you know, the church that meets in Ralliff City was started about 17 years ago due to a disagreement over the eldership, but I can happily announce that the issue has been resolved. Hence, the brethren at the Ratliff City church of Christ have agreed to close its doors as of January 1, 2017, and attend neighboring congregations. Though located in a very small country town, the congregation of Christ in Ratliff City has been a great blessing to so many people! We praise God for having used us in the conversion of several people to Christ throughout the years and for having been able to support numerous evangelists here and in foreign fields. "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Co.3:7). In regard to my work as a minister of the gospel of Christ, this year it was my pleasure to preach the good news in Julicalpa, Honduras in a weeklong evangelistic effort the last week of July. I then returned to the U.S. for three days and left once again to hold a five day meeting in Monterrey, TX where several brethren who were out of duty made confessions and two young ladies gave their life in service to the Lord Jesus. It was my honor also to be invited to McGregor, TX in October to hold a short meeting for the Spanish congregation that meets there, and to preach at the English congregation as well.

Thank you for your prayers and encouragement as I and many other faithful preachers continue to take the gospel to the lost as we wait and long for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Note: This was inadvertently deleted last month. Our apologies. - DLK

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Court, Dothan, AL 36303 - November 10, 2015 The fall months have been a busy time in the Lord's work. The last 6 weeks has taken me to Mission Hills in Springfield, MO; Moore, OK; Sharonville, OH; Rogers, AR; and this coming weekend, to Birmingham, AL. Each meeting was an encouragement to me and I hope each effort left the church stronger and some seed left to grow in a wayward heart. In Rogers, the meeting concluded with one young lady obeying the Lord in baptism. We were also pleased to have more than 50 community visitors with at least half of those coming as a result of our television program that has been airing in NW Arkansas for 6 years. If your congregation would like to use our broadcasts, contact me for more information. The Alabama New Year's Meeting is fast approaching. The dates are December 27-31 with Bro. Clint DeFrance conducting the meeting. We hope you are making your plans to be with us. Information can be found at churchofchristnym.com or on the Facebook page for the Hartford Highway Church of Christ.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, email: old-paths@juno.com November 15- At present we are engaged in a gospel meeting at Oakdale, CA. Lord willing, we close there this coming Lord's Day eve. Crowds are excellent and all are in a fine spirit. Some outsiders are attending it seems, and cooperation from other congregations is great. We have had a number of gospel preachers help out as well and we really appreciate their being with us. We have held a number of meetings in Oakdale through the years and so it is a pleasure to be with them again. Their hospitality to Pat and me is admirable. I appreciate the articles and reports we have received from preachers this month and encourage them to continue. Brethren everywhere enjoy and benefit from knowing where you are and how the work is going. The year is drawing to a close and it has gone by so fast I can hardly believe it. Oakdale is our last meeting for the year and we wish to thank all the brethren who used us this past year in meetings. All were enjoyable and we pray beneficial as well for the Cause. It will soon be time to go to the Philippines again and we look forward to a safe and profitable work among the brethren there. As always, we ask your prayers for us and the work everywhere.

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

If the date near your name and address reads 12-15 your subscription expires with this issue. Please renew promptly. DLK
Send all subscriptions to: Matt Martin @
1000 Stonecroft Ln., Woodstock, GA 30188

THE BACK PAGE...

I JUST DONT KNOW WHAT TO SAY

By *CARL M. JOHNSON*

Several years ago a midwestern newspaper conducted a man-in-the-street survey asking people how long they thought it took to mourn the loss of a loved one. The answers varied from 48 hours to two weeks. Clinical tests reveal it may take from 18 months to two years or more. About the only people who know how long grief may last are those who have experienced grief themselves. As a society we have been almost without knowledge about grief. No one has told us what it feels like or how long it lasts.

One of the unfortunate consequences of our ignorance is that we sometimes abandon the grief-stricken because we do not know how to respond to them. It is not uncommon to hear people say things like, "I haven't seen Bill or Mary lately. To be honest, I guess I have kind of avoided them since the death of their child. I feel so awkward around them. I just don't know what to say."

This is a very common pattern of behavior. We do not know what to say to our grieving friends, we dread being in the situation, and the dread leads to avoidance.

Grieving people need the opportunity to acknowledge the pain they are suffering, and they need to be able to express the pain. If you have one good friend who will listen to your expression of hurt you are lucky.

Much of the tension between those who are grieving and their friends could be removed if friends could understand it is not necessary to "say" anything. The most important response is to listen and reach out and touch.

When someone tells us his problems we think we must have an answer. If we have no answer, we feel as though we have been no help at all. The frustration of having no answer can cause us to say anything rather than nothing. In most cases such things would have been better left unsaid.

The story of Job (Job 4-23) is a classic example of this very situation. As Job is grieving over his devastating losses, three friends come to console him. The first of the three, Eliphaz, acknowledges Job has been a source of strength to many others (Job 4:3-4). They think they can help him get back to normal quickly if they can explain the reasons for his suffering, but their logic is badly flawed. Because they really do not know what they were talking about, their words actually compound Job's grief.

Our friends do not really expect us to give them the answer to the whole problem of grief. They mainly just need someone with whom they can talk. Grief has to be lived- through. It cannot just be answered.

Here are a few practical suggestions of things we can do as a care-giving friend of a grieving person:

Share your convictions of faith, God, immortality, prayer, life, and death. The best care-giver will point the grief-stricken person to God's Word first.

Do not enforce on them an artificial time-frame for recovery. Everyone is different and the process will vary.

Never tell a person (especially a child) something he or she will have to unlearn later.

If you do not really care about the person, then get out of the role of care-giver.

Reach out to them non-verbally. Hold their hand. One response to grief is anger, but they cannot fight with you if you are holding their hand.

Never tell them how they are supposed to feel. Everyone is different. You can say, "I wouldn't be surprised" if you feel this way or that way.

Write down the day of the death of the loved one. On the anniversary of that day, call your friend and say, "I'm thinking of you during this difficult moment."

Have a list of folks to whom the grief-stricken can go for support. Many people who have experienced the death of a loved one themselves have developed tremendous insight. They understand the value of sharing. They may help the bereaved to reach out of their isolation to an important support system. Fellow sufferers often become second families to one another.

Bereavement and grief are the most universal of all human experiences-and the most painful. The Scriptures teach us to "weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15), and to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2). We may have been ignorant, however, about the best way to go about fulfilling these commands. Like Job's friends, we may have put forth our very best effort to help people in times of crisis, but we have not always been well-informed. As Mark Twain said, "It's not what people know that gets them into trouble; but it is what they know that isn't so." God's Word is filled with wisdom to help. The time has come to inform ourselves, and to put this information to work in a practical, beneficial way. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com