

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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EVANGELISM PART 3 PHILIP, BARNABAS, AND PAUL

By DUANE PERMENTER

We have investigated the work of Philip the evangelist, Barnabas the evangelist, and Paul the Apostle. Especially the work of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch. Even though some may have had spiritual gifts to do the work, it was still necessary for the church in Jerusalem to send out Barnabas to help in the training of the church in Antioch. This lasted for months even though many had miraculous ability. Yet, today some believe they can go into a new area where some have expressed an interest and spend a few weeks baptizing people. Then leave them without the maturity that is needed which can take years without spiritual gifts. When people are converted to our Lord and then leave the faith Peter tells us that is worse than before. Brethren, we must ask ourselves; “Who is responsible?”

Go and make disciples of all nations...Matthew 28:19

This is still as important as it has ever been. However, we sometimes seem to be irresponsible when we are not prepared to do what it takes to bring people to a state of maturity. Jesus said; in the Matthew passage above, that after we baptize someone that we are to teach them all things. This cannot happen in just a few weeks. Depending on the circumstance it may take years. Paul, yes went to areas and stayed a short time; however, he almost always left someone behind who could carry on the work. This was also in the age when Paul would leave people with gifts of the Holy Spirit.

California Evangelism

My mother is a member of the faithful church of Christ because of the efforts that were put forth in California in the 1940's and 1950's, Much good work

was done during that time, Many congregations were established in the state of California back during that period. Several congregations died out just a few years later for there was no one to lead the local church. The people were converted to the truth and yet they were not always rooted and grounded. While this good work can be remembered, we made mistakes. I am not criticizing or putting down anyone. Please, listen to what I am saying! Experience is not the best teacher. We must take what we do and evaluate it to become wiser. Let's change the way we sometimes have done the work in the past. Someone said; “If we always do what we have always done, we will always get what we have always got!” Albert Einstein said; “The definition of insanity is to continue doing what we have always done and expecting a different result”

Back to the Pattern of Evangelism in God's Word

Paul tells us lucidly that we must fulfill our role as congregations and church leaders, Listen to his wise instruction for us in Ephesians 4:11,12; “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (NKJV) Christ first put these into the church miraculously and now it is through the teaching in the Bible and our training that these things occur and develop in the church. It sometimes takes years to develop this kind of leadership. We need to show people what it means to be a working thriving church. We need to put leaders in these roles to make this happen. How do we do that? Show them how you do it - have them practice what they see in you - have them do what you do by themselves with evaluation - have them go on and teach someone else. This is not a process that happens by accident. It takes a tremendous commitment on the part of someone. This kind of

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Editorial

A NEW WORLD TODAY

By DON L. KING

Our world today is vastly different from the world we knew a few years ago. We now live in a society far more liberal and tolerant than in yesteryear. Lynwood Smith once said: "When I was a young man, if we had seen an infidel come walking down the road, we would have all stopped hoeing cotton and watched him till he was clean out of sight." Some of us recall when just about everyone believed the Bible was the Word of God. The Bible still reads the same, but few indeed take it as seriously as they once did. Just look at our times in 2020. During the recent election preparations, one party had many individuals who wanted the nomination to run as a candidate for President of the United States. One was a man who was openly gay and married to another man. Did that raise eyebrows? Probably so, in some circles, and it certainly must have among those who claimed to be Christians. However, he was popular with many of the liberal group and they wanted him to run. In Leviticus 18:22 the inspired Word of God says: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination." In the New Testament we find the apostle Paul writing by inspiration, (see 1 Corinthians 14:37) "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (Verse 10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). In Isaiah 3:9 it says in part: "...they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not." Yes, we live in such times now.

The liberal world in which we live has an impact on the church as well, because church members are constantly bombarded with the false doctrine that some things condemned in the Bible are not really sinful. Even the worship of the church has been impacted. Many no longer see the Bible as the inspired Word of an Almighty God. How can we tell? The worship has undergone wholesale changes over the years. Instrumental music, bible classes, individual cups, etc., are common among many groups calling themselves churches today. When I was much younger and naive, I had the idea that

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QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DEFRANCE

Question: What should Christians do when there is a sharp disagreement about something? Should we handle doctrinal disagreements differently from differences of opinion?

Answer: Contention and strife within the church is both inevitable and egregious. It is inevitable because human beings - limited, sinful, and imperfect as we are - will never agree on all matters. It is egregious because the work of Christ is - at least in part - to bring His people together into "one body" (Ephesians 4:4) to be of "one mind" and "speak the same thing and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). This means where strife exists, one or more parties has not submitted fully to the will of Jesus Christ.

Strife and contention can come in three basic forms: 1) disagreements over opinions; 2) disagreements in which one party has a conscientious scruple and the other does not; 3) disagreements in which both parties are of opposing conscientious scruples,

In the first case, the answer is to be tolerant, humble, and reasonable. The apostle Paul says that we should be tolerant toward our brothers thoughts regarding "uncertain matters" even when they are drastically different from our own because it is inappropriate to judge another man's servant (Romans 14:1-23). If Jesus Christ has not legislated one way or the other and has given liberty of opinion, then we ought to respect that and not to abuse one who disagrees with us. Humility and reasonableness will allow for conversation and mutual growth. Always remember that an opinion is just an opinion - there is only one Lawgiver.

In the second case, the answer is to respect the conscience of the scrupulous party (1 Corinthians 8:1-13). It is never acceptable to violate one's conscience (to do what one is fully convinced is sinful). This 'defiles the conscience' and makes one worthless as a servant of Christ. Jesus does not need disciples who are willing to violate His commands if they receive enough pressure. Therefore, the loving thing to do when you and a brother have a conflict of understanding - if you have no scruple and are therefore free, but he has

a scruple and is therefore bound - is to sacrifice your perceived liberty on the altar of love for your brother. This removes the point of conflict and creates a climate of edification. In that climate all may grow together. Perhaps the scrupulous man will learn there was nothing wrong with the thing after all and will be freed. Or, perhaps the 'knowledgeable and liberated' man will learn that the thing really was wrong and he is better off having given it up! The point to remember is that a man with a conscience must not be pressured to violate it; he cannot move, therefore his liberated brethren must, in love, move toward him.

In the third case, the answer is to come together in love for one another and respect for the authority of God's word, and to humbly discuss the evidence together, giving honor to those who all agree are knowledgeable, spiritual, and wise to work out a resolution (Acts 15:1-33). If both parties believe the other is doing or teaching something that is contrary to the truth or will of God, the only resolution is studying to find the truth or separating. It does not appear that separating is a viable, longterm solution according to the will of God. Christians who disagree should be willing to continue discussing, reasoning, seeking the counsel of others, sharing, and listening until the truth triumphs (whichever side of the disagreement proves to have the truth) and all may be of one mind according to the will of God.

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**CREDIBILITY OF STUDY RESOURCES,
PART 2**

BY GREG GAY

In the last article I reminded all that reading and rereading the Bible is our primary source for fulfilling the command to “grow in knowledge” (2 Peter 3:18). Only Bible authors are inspired, meaning all other religious writers are not inspired and do make errors, no matter how careful they are. There are inaccuracies in the many available study “helps” that can affect the credibility and usefulness of each work.

One standard in selecting study materials should always be that the author believes in the inspiration of the scriptures, even if he or she does not understand or apply them correctly. Paul writes: “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Without inspiration there is no foundation of truth from which dialogue can flow (John 17:17). Without inspiration the Bible is more likely to be treated like any other work of literature, complete with conjecture, contradiction, and rejection. We should be extremely cautious using such resources. They may be interesting reading but are not likely to help with a better understanding of the truth.

As I said in part 1 of this article: “In the church, even the most capable among us use many resources for what we present when speaking or writing. We are responsible to make sure those resources are properly introduced to our hearers and readers and that the views and words we use from them are truthfully represented whether we are agreeing or disagreeing with them in our presentation.”

In my parent’s home our most frequently used Bible study books included several translations of the Bible, Cruden’s Concordance, B. W. Johnson’s People’s New Testament commentary, and a one-volume Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary. These works enabled us to look for verses with the same words and to review the author’s brief explanations of the verses to accept or reject.

Many brethren, then and now, can understand the scriptures well and prepare lessons with no more study materials than these. For those who want more, there

are many wonderful, credible study helps. However, as Solomon warned, “And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh” (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

Well-written and well-edited material from brethren within our fellowship should be our first choice when researching any Bible topic or adding books to our library. Usually, we can appreciate the diligent care and concern for the truth that goes into the publications and books our brethren have produced through the years.

In my opinion, books that should be in every home include the commentary series, Contending for the Faith, available through publisher Allen Bailey. We can be appreciative of the careful way each volume has been produced: with years of work by the author, public presentations for careful review, and professional editing by Joe Norton and others who work with him.

Anyone among us who is willing to share and discuss his views in public forums, like our preacher’s studies, or privately among multiple well-read brethren is likely to produce credible work that can stand the test of careful examination.

Professional editing adds credibility when the material flows well and nothing stands out such as errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, sentence structure, and consistency.

Careful review of a work prior to publication includes fact checking and verification that logical conclusions are drawn from what has been written. It also means citations are examined closely to make sure quoted author’s names are spelled correctly, their works are cited accurately, and the quotes used are represented truthfully.

Hopefully, all who write among us would much rather face scrutiny in careful review than to ever share anything in the brotherhood that has been hastily assembled or poorly researched.

A basic library of Bible study materials should include books to aid in understanding the original Bible languages. Even without a knowledge of Greek or Hebrew everyone can benefit from knowing how to use Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance and the helpful

numbering system that allows easy lookup of word meanings in Strong's and in other works that are keyed to Strong's. Helpful materials/authors in this area include: Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon (BDAG, 3rd ed.), Brown-Driver-Briggs, Gesenius, Kittel, Louw and Nida, Mounce, Perschbacher, Thayer, The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT), Vine, Wilson, and others.

While language study resources are helpful and needed, there is more. If we only look at the meanings of words, the Bible becomes a list of words instead of a message from God. We also need to know how a word fits into the message of the phrase where it is used and how that meaning contributes to the immediate contextual setting of the passage, the book, and perhaps how it reverberates throughout both testaments. For that, we need to enlarge our circle of study.

Restoration Movement authors contribute additional beneficial study materials. This refers to writers from the Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, and Church of Christ from the 1800's to date. Here, it is important to understand more about the authors, especially their beliefs at the time of publication.

The Disciples of Christ began as part of the Restoration Movement but circled back to denominationalism early in the restoration movement. One of their authors, Winfred E. Garrison wrote in 1961, "The ultimate goal [of the Disciples of Christ] is to disappear as a denomination in the larger fellowship of a United Church...We need ultimately to disappear as a separate denomination because the union of all Christians in the one church and the disappearance of all denominations is the cause for which we came into the world" (Heritage & Destiny, pp 149). While we agree all denominations need to disappear, it is not appropriate to be one in the meantime. As a result, many of their authors should have little credibility in our studies. As a group, however, they have championed the cause of the history of the Restoration Movement and give great service to all in this regard.

Restoration Movement authors, ancient and modern referred to and quoted among us include: Brents, Campbell, Coffman, Cottrell, DeHoff, B.W. Johnson, Lamar, Lard, McGarvey, Reese, Walter Scott, James Smith, Stone, Zerr, and commentary sets by College Press, Gospel Advocate, Sweet Publishing, and many

others. Most of these authors will be consistent and helpful on many familiar topics. A caution is that most Restoration writers after 1900 are among those who departed from Bible patterns to foster divisions that continue to this day over multiple cups and loaves, Bible classes, instrumental music, institutions (orphan's homes, Bible colleges, centrally funded missions), multiple Lord's Day assemblies, women speakers, and more.

There are many helpful authors from various religions through the centuries that are studied and frequently quoted by our brethren including: Alford, Barnes, Bengel, Clarke, Ellicott, Hendriksen, Henry, Home, Hovey, Jamieson-FaussetBrown, Keil-Delitzsch, Laetsch, Lenski, Macknight, Thomas Scott, Wordsworth, and many more. Some of these scholars are true to their scholarship in their comments more than they recommend their own religion's practices. Most comments in older works are considered very conservative by today's denominational and evangelical standards.

While these scholars can contribute greatly to our understanding of the scriptures, we do need some knowledge of their beliefs and practices to better understand where errors occur in their works.

For example, commentator Albert Barnes (1798-1870), was a Presbyterian who stops just short of taking a stand that baptism is essential to salvation. While he writes a lot of helpful information about many subjects it would be incorrect to refer to him as believing baptism is essential for the remission of sins. He says on Mark 16:16, "It is worthy of remark that Jesus has made "baptism" of so much importance. He did not say, indeed, that a man could not be saved without baptism, but he has strongly implied that where this is neglected "knowing it to be a command of the Saviour," it endangers the salvation of the soul" (pp 392). He also writes baptism could be something other than immersion in his comments on Acts 16:33 and commends infant baptism in his comments on Mark 10:16. All of that means we should be very careful when reading Barnes' comments on any verse having to do with baptism.

Such incorrect beliefs are common as we sort through the various scholars of the ages looking for helpful information.

Among denominational writings there are surprising snippets of helpful materials. For example, John R. Rice (1895-1980) was a Southern Baptist preacher who wrote the 1941 book, *Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives and Women Preachers*, taking an unpopular but scriptural public stand against all three. As another example, The Free Methodist Church started in 1860 over various issues including the belief no one should have to “rent or buy” a pew to attend worship. Their 1900, *Doctrines and Discipline of the Free Methodist Church* correctly states, “In no case let there be instrumental music or choir singing in our public worship” (pp 80).

Like others, I quote freely from many sources in writing articles and preparing sermons and usually do not take the time to give any information about the authors. Let me share just a little information about a favorite author, R.C.H. Lenski. Lenski (1864-1936) was a Lutheran who completed his twelve volume New Testament commentary in the 1930’s.

Much of his commentary is helpful when we weed out what is peculiar to his faith and not scriptural. One thing we can appreciate about Lenski is that he was an ardent believer in the inspiration of the Bible. Stephen Geiger writes of Lenski, “In his role as Professor of Systematic Theology at Capital Seminary, Lenski prepared a set of dogmatics notes for students to use when participating in class...His class notes present in concise form a summary of what he confessed. Under the section entitled “Inspiration,” he writes, “the Word of God is NOT IN SCRIPTURE, but the Word of God IS SCRIPTURE, and SCRIPTURE IS THE WORD OF GOD...” (<https://essays.wls.wels.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/1799/GeigerLenski.pdf;sequence=1>).

While referring to a Lutheran author’s belief in inspiration of the scriptures may seem strange, it occurs to me we may presume all religious writers believe the Bible is inspired. That is not the case, especially today.

The title of a 2016 article by Jim Hench is, “Evangelicals Are Losing the Battle for the Bible and They’re Just Fine with That.” Hench writes about a divinity school graduate who “has undergone a revolution in his thinking about evangelicals’ foundational text, the Bible, to the extent that he no longer regards the Bible as inerrant, dictated by God, historically accurate in all of its claims or even internally consistent with itself.” Hench

reports this graduate, “now directs a training program for prospective pastors at [a] Pentecostal seminary”” (<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/evangelicals-are-losing-the-battle-for-the-bible-and-theyre-just-fine-with-that/>).

As beliefs change in major religions and as their authors share their knowledge we can be influenced by their writings and not even know it is happening.

Please consider this illustration of an extreme view of the scriptures: Imagine for a moment a collection of religious scholars who look at the inspiration of the scriptures in a “new” way. In their collective musings, they have concluded gospel writers Matthew and Luke supposedly borrowed much of their material from Mark and a mysterious “unknown” source document. Imagine these same scholars believe the gospel writers assembled the material in their gospels from their own memories, or from their own notes, or from copying others. Imagine these same scholars believe the gospel writers just threw in Old Testament references as they thought might be helpful. Imagine these scholars believe the gospel writers attributed words to Jesus whether he ever said them, or said them on the occasions described, just so their gospels could be more convincing to their audiences.

If we think no one in religion today believes nonsense like that, we would be wrong. If we think no one who believes those things would ever write articles and books to explain and defend their views, we would be wrong. If we think no one among us would ever use, quote, and recommend such, we would be wrong.

Again, we can be influenced by the beliefs of others and not even know it, especially when we do not take the time to find out what the authors’ foundational beliefs are at the time of their work.

Welcome to the world of today’s scholarship in religion, where not every religious book is credible as a study resource, and where many so-called religious scholars have a very “low” view of inspiration.

Lord willing, next month we will look closer at the world of Biblical Criticism, which refers to schools of thought of Biblical interpretation among ancient and modern scholars. 3816 Tambos Trl, Edmond, OK 73034 papagreg@aol.com

When

When I get through reforming myself,
 When I've patched up the flaws I own,
 When I've ceased to struggle for self
 And bear all the burdens alone,
 When there is not a mote in my eye
 And I do everything that I should do,
 Then, perhaps, I may start to try
 Reforming my neighbor and you.

When I've cleaned up the fellow called "Me",
 When I've dusted the webs from brain,
 When I'm all that my neighbor should be,
 When no one has cause to complain
 That I'm selfish and thoughtless, and when
 I ne'er step aside from the true,
 When I have no weaknesses, then
 I may try my reforming of you.

When I am so strong that I can stand
 All the tests that temptation may give,
 When I have myself in command
 So that simply and purely I live,
 When nothing unfair or unkind
 Marks my path; when I've nothing to rue,
 Then I may, if the time I can find,
 Try reforming my neighbor and you.

— Author unknown

The Perfect Church

I think that I shall never see
 A church that's all it ought to be,
 A church whose members never stray
 Beyond the narrow way.

A church that has no empty pews,
 Whose members never have the blues;
 Where elders "eld" and deacons "deak"
 And non are proud and all are meek.

Where gossips never peddle lies,
 Or make complaints or criticize.
 Whose members all are sweet and kind
 And to each other's faults are blind.

— Author unknown

EVANGELISM PART 3....continued from page one

work will promote the church into the next generation as being strong. Listen to what Paul told Timothy, 2 Timothy 2:2; "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (NKJV)

Every Local Congregation A College of Knowledge

The church is heaven's college to lead people in the right way. Every person needs to be trained to function correctly. We need qualified teachers and preachers in every congregation. The job of leadership in the church is to work in the lives of people and encourage them to grow spiritually. Every local teacher or preacher in a congregation should be involved with leading and teaching people in the way the church should function. The problem with some individuals is we do not know what the work really is in a local congregation. Sometimes we call a preacher to help us learn our role, yet he may not know how to teach us. In other places a church calls a preacher with the intent of growing and they tell him how to grow the church and maybe tie his hands so he cannot do what needs to be done. Let's go back to the pattern of evangelism in every congregation.

A Functioning Congregation

When evangelizing a new area, we should go in with the intent of establishing a mature complete congregation. Our goal should always be to bring the local group to maturity to work ourselves out of the job. A church should have elders; however, before this the church must have trained teachers who are doing a work in the local church. These men should be educating the church both in the assemblies and from house to house. A new church needs functioning leaders who know how to run and promote the church. This will not happen in a gospel meeting. It will not happen in just a few weeks if the people have no knowledge or understanding of what true Christianity is. Brethren, when we go into a new area and spend just a few weeks no one knows for sure what we have. The training and maturity are not something that just happens without spiritual leaders. There have been many occasions where an evangelist goes in, baptizes people, and he believes he has started a functioning church. When the congregation dies

as an infant church, has the work been done? Who is responsible?

Conclusion

We must be responsible for what we start. Just going around the world and preaching a few sermons is not the work of evangelism. When we baptize and convert people in an area, we need to be ready to do what is needed. If the work dies because we have left it to go on to something else, then the evangelist or the sponsoring church has not done its duty. I know it is exciting and fun to talk about all we have accomplished; however, souls are dying, and we have a pattern in the Bible that has not always been followed. Evangelism is one of the primary works of an evangelist and sometimes that means leaving my home and go where I am needed. Both the congregation and the evangelist with the ability have to carry out that responsible work of evangelism.

A NEW WORLD TODAY...continued from page two

those who did not follow the Bible pattern in worship just didn't know better, they did not know what the scriptures really said. I now realize that was not so in many cases. Many just don't care what the Bible says.

The plain fact that the above-mentioned things are not taught in the Scriptures is often not seen as a problem. We suspect this may be one reason debates have pretty much gone by the way today. Debates were once common place and large crowds came to hear the scriptures taught and defended. Things have changed indeed. There were those even in Bible times who did not remain faithful, and we all know who they were. Such names as Demas, Philetus, Hymenaeus, etc., are still seen in the Bible and serve to remind us of once good men who fell away. Also, we can recall some of our own who have not remained true to the Book. Some have quit completely, while others defected into denominations. This is a very sad thing to contemplate.

Every generation has its challenges with which to deal. While it is certainly disappointing to witness those who leave, it seems to have happened regularly through the ages. One thing we must keep in mind is this: False doctrine is always preceded by false teachers. The false teacher comes first. Do you see false doctrine where

you live today? If so, (we hope and pray you do not) you may be assured that somewhere back down the line a false teacher was involved. A false teacher is perhaps the most dangerous fellow any of us will ever encounter. Left alone, he or she will destroy the church! The apostle John wrote of those who "...went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John 2:19) Yes, we have seen some leave because they were not actually with, or of, us. That was sad, but it is much worse if such a person who is not really with us chooses to remain with the church and continue to tear it up from the inside. That has at times been what happened. The damage, in such cases, is far worse and continues to wreak havoc for many years. Where do we think the idea that Christian women may cut their hair, or dress immodestly, came from? For that matter, how did some arrive at the conclusion that social drinking, dancing, and recreational gambling are right? It didn't come from the scriptures. No, it likely came from a false teacher somewhere and was perhaps taught privately. Christians need to seriously consider these matters. Just because a person may do something recreationally or socially, doesn't make it right if the action itself is unauthorized by the Scriptures. The apostle Paul wrote: "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

Every congregation of the faithful church needs to be especially careful who they allow to occupy their pulpits and circulate among the members perhaps teaching false doctrine. Just as good seed will produce good fruit and build strong congregations, contaminated seed (false doctrine) will produce strife and division and it can happen quickly. We have heard brethren say of some error, "Oh, he wouldn't teach that." Perhaps not from the pulpit, but privately the damage can be done, and often is! We need to wake up brethren. We have drifted. Think on these things. —DLK

Our Departed

HOWELL - James Ryan Howell, age 63, of Springville AL, was born on February 22, 1957. He passed from this life on November 1, 2020. He was a faithful leader of the Crescent Ridge Church of Christ. He is survived by wife, Sandra Howell, three daughters Lauren Martin

(Matt), Brittany Robertson (Daniel), and Andrea Colvin (Ben); grandchildren Natalie Robertson, Maya Robertson, Ivan Robertson, and Noah Martin; parents, Harlon and Annie Pearl Howell; sisters Melondy Snider, Angie Wallace (Steve), Donna Bryan (Mike), Janet Benson (Craig); a host of wonderful nieces and nephews; and great-nieces and great-nephews.

During his elementary school days, he met the love of his life, Sandy Maddox. They were married on September 17, 1977 and recently celebrated their 43rd anniversary.

Ryan obeyed the gospel in April of 1969 at the age of 12. He was baptized during the annual spring meeting by Lynwood Smith. He grew up in a spiritual and faithful family and attended worship services from the day he was born.

Ryan was an excellent tenor singer and song leader. He worked tirelessly on the Let the Bible Speak TV program, which was sponsored by the Crescent Ridge Church. He was a friendly person and never met a stranger. He had many friends from work, school, and the church that he kept up with over the years. The Crescent Ridge church building was filled at his memorial services.

It was my honor to be asked by the family to speak words of comfort. Brother Blake Wallace, a nephew read the obituary. The beautiful singing was led by Brother Kevin Presley.

Rev. 14:13 “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

—Rick Martin

Announcements

NOTICE ABOUT THE JANUARY ISSUE - Next month, in honor of our 89th year which begins with the January issue, we are reprinting the entire issue from old articles and field reports of yesteryear’s preachers. You will see material, either articles or field reports, from those who have gone on perhaps many years ago. Such men as: Homer L. King, Homer A. Gay, Edwin S. Morris, Johnny Elmore, Ronny F. Wade, Bennie Cryer, Clovis Cook, M. Lynwood Smith, Tom E. Smith, and probably several others. We wish we could include articles from every one of the old preachers who have passed away. Obviously, that won’t be possible in one

issue but we plan to also print field reports of yesteryear as well. As a young boy I can recall my father working on the paper getting it ready for printing. Early in my memory, I recall him working in the upstairs office at my boyhood home in Missouri where I was born. Later, in various places and sometimes even on the road to meetings he would work into the night getting the copy ready to send to the printers. Come what may, he was always careful to get the paper in the mail on time every month. He published the paper for approximately 30 years until he suffered a stroke in 1962. Then, Brother Don McCord published it for the next 14 years or so before Dad and I began doing the work again in June of 1976. He passed away July 31, 1983. The years have flown by and I am still doing the work. We appreciate your loyalty and pray that the paper has been a blessing to you through the years. We hope you enjoy this trip down memory lane through the pages of Old Paths Advocate. Don L. King

NEW SONGBOOK - The new songbook Redeeming Love should be available shortly after the first of the year, The book contains 241 songs and is a blend of new songs, hymns, and favorites from over the years, For orders of 50 or more books, the price will remain \$5.00 each, plus shipping, Smaller orders will be \$6.00 each, plus postage. Spiral bound copies will be \$10. We are planning to make a CD available as well for \$15. You may order at legacymusicpublishing.com; message me through text or social media; or call (334) 618-1550, I will provide updates online when the book is printed and ready to ship. Thank you for your patience as we have worked to complete the book and I am most grateful for the support of the brotherhood in this endeavor over the past 10 years. —Kevin Presley

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, November 13, 2020. The worry and news concerning the Covid 19 virus is still of great concern. Particularly, now that some in authority are talking about shutting things down again. This has been a real test for the church at home and abroad. We have rejoiced to read and hear of gospel meetings being held here and there but we have also been saddened to hear of Christians contracting the virus recently. It was touching to me recently to hear from a good brother

in the Philippines who in spite of severe shut downs baptized 6 just days ago. He sent pictures showing the baptisms. May God bless such brethren where ever they live! It was recently our pleasure to preach at Stockton and at home to good crowds. Preachers, we always need your reports and articles! Let's keep the work going. Lord willing, next month we will publish the January issue which marks the beginning of our 89th year by using material from those who have passed from this life. We plan to even use old field reports as well as articles from various preachers. We hope you will enjoy it. Lord bless the faithful.

Paul O. Nichols, 14217 Rosehill, Overland Park, KS, 66221, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, The pandemic has certainly had its influence and impact on the church. The leadership has been challenged. There have been decisions made that did not suit all the membership in various locations. Some have been opinion and understanding of the scriptures, but we are obligated through the love of Truth and love of one another to concede that decisions have been made in all honesty. The congregation at Stony Point, Kansas City has continued to meet for worship twice each Lord's day. The midweek service was canceled. We have continued to have confessions of faults, and business meetings to make decisions for the work of the church. At the same time we have practiced sanitation which has proved successful. We have various speakers from our local teachers, which keep us thinking about our love and duty to the Lord and to one another. Love and unity prevail.

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Court, Dothan, AL 36303, November 10, 2020. It was a pleasure to back with the church in Rogers, AR in November. I have grown to love the brethren there very much and enjoyed my time with them this year. It was a joy to spend a few days in the home of Don and Dianne Pruitt. Don, along with the elders and deacons, do a good work here and I always leave uplifted. The work with Let the Bible Speak continues to grow and I am optimistic about its future especially as our online outreach continues to gain many new viewers. Recently, a man contacted us from South Africa after viewing the program on YouTube. Bro. Keith Thomson put the gentleman in contact with Bro. Moses Ramsammy. We are told the man has since attended services in Durban. I continue to enjoy working with the church in Hillcrest, MS one weekend each month. The brethren are making big strides in their

teaching and other abilities in the assembly. They also continue to reach out to the community both online and through their personal influence with others. They have had several promising contacts and bible studies in recent months. I look for the church there to have a bright future. Bro. Clint De France and I will be preaching a meeting together there over the New Year, the Lord be willing. We're looking forward to that. As we anticipate the beginning of a new year, may we face the future with faith in God and a zeal to redeem these evil times for the glory of God and the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

Stan Owens, 8432 Cox Rd, West Chester, OH 45069, November 3rd, 2020. The last Wednesday through Sunday of October, we were able to have our normal Gospel Meeting. We were privileged Brother Jerry Dickinson was able to come hold it for us. It was the only series of meetings in the area so far this year, due to the circumstances in our country, but we were very thankful everything worked out. Jerry was very encouraging in his preaching and we enjoyed getting to spend time with him and Sister Judy. I have also had the recent privilege of hearing Brethren Bill Fergerson, Brandon Stephens, and Andrew Tucker. I really admire and appreciate these men for their preaching and the lives they lead in and out of the pulpit. Here at Sharonville, we continue to have visitors from the community. Lord Willing, we will be able to keep planting and watering The Seed. Keep The Faith.

Clinton De France, 14844 E. 36th PL, Tulsa, OK 74134, November 8, 2020. Things are getting back to normal here in Tulsa after the oddities of the year. We had a great meeting with Frank Brancato in October with several visitors from the Non-Sunday School church in town. Many of my meetings were cancelled this year because of COVID-19. However, I enjoyed good crowds and sweet fellowship in Nashville, TN and Forth Worth, TX. More recently I held a short weekend meeting at Blue Springs near Mt. Vernon, KY. Since my foreign trips were not possible, I have focused my attention at home and on the leads in New England. Those studies (in Connecticut) are going very well. I will return there in December, Lord willing. The interest is high among the churches that use cups and classes. Lord willing, next year I will return to Jamaica and Africa. Reports from Egypt, UAE, Zanzibar, and Jamaica are encouraging. There are lots of studies and baptisms happening in most of those places regularly.

My meetings in Imperial, NE and Brazil, IN have had to cancel, but Lord willing I will hold a New Year meeting at Hillcrest (Brookhaven, MS) with Kevin Presley. God bless the brotherhood and all the saints.

P. Duane Permenter, 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96797, 808-773-5523, pdpermenter@outlook.com, Nov 11. Since last reporting, I had a meeting at Auburn, CA and had good attendance considering the difficulty of shutting down the state by the Governor. The church here at home is doing well and we have our full crowd of 22 or 23 back each Sunday. We hope to soon start the mid-week service again. There is peace in the congregation, and I appreciate the three leaders we have developed. Even though I am leaving Hawaii in the future I am confident that they can continue to move the church forward in a good way. The three local leaders have continued to develop their public skills each service and are willing to do their part. The teaching has improved to a better level for which we praise God. The church will continue in work and worship as a local congregation without a fulltime evangelist. It may be necessary sometime in the future to put someone here again, however, I am confident that church will continue to grow and develop. Laurie and I are doing well and are glad to see some tourism return to Hawaii. We have had the Kennedy family recently here and it was nice to see them again. Pray for us and God bless everyone!

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74829, carlmj@cableone.net, Nov. 12. Brother Greg Gay conducted our fall meeting in September and his preaching was excellent. The meeting consisted of ten services and each service Greg preached on one of the ten commandments. He showed us how these commandments can be summarized into two commandments (Love God and love your neighbor), and ultimately into one commandment (love is the fulfillment of the law [Rom. 13:10]). On Wednesday after Greg's meeting I began a meeting at McAlester, OK. We had a lot of visitors. During the last three years of my college career I preached at McAlester on the third Sunday of each month and I became good friends with Bill Verner and a lot of other wonderful McAlester folks. It dawned on me as I was preaching one night that Bill's family and I are about the only ones left from those days that began over 50 years ago. Time is ever fleeting. Preachers Clint De France, Bret Hickey, John Anderson, Larry Combs, and Matt Shaffer attended, as did local preachers Randy Tidmore and Benjamin Burns.

These men were a great encouragement to me and the congregation. Phyllis and I went next to Columbia, MO for a five-day meeting. We stayed with longtime friends Bill and Karen Smith, and were thrilled to have Alfreda Wade spend the meeting with us too. It was a pleasure to meet and work with preacher Austin Maddox who was successful in getting at least one man from the community to attend the meeting more than once. I preached at Wichita Falls, TX last Lord's Day and we are scheduled to be with the Healdton, OK congregation next Lord's Day. Please keep us in your prayers.

Irvin Barnes, 3218 East Farm Road 88, Springfield, Mo.65803, irvinbarns@aol.com, Nov. 6, 2020. I am deeply saddened by the loss of my dear friend, Oscar Morris and his wife Wilma of Joplin, Mo. We met at the old Arkana schoolhouse near Mtn. Home, Arkansas in 1963. Oscar and Wilma's parents lived in the Mtn. Home area. When the Morris' visited their parents, they attended services at Arkana. At that time Oscar was not a member of the church. In later years he obeyed the gospel and eventually served as an elder at Joplin. Dozens of family members and others were influenced to obey the gospel and to stay faithful to Christ by this wonderful couple. Oscar helped in many ways in starting the church in Mtn. Home, and helped keep the work going. Four members here at Pleasant View were diagnosed with Covid. Others have been quarantined. So far, all have recovered. Our attendance has held up quite well. We have had some outside interest. William St. John was scheduled for a meeting this very week. Due to the pandemic we canceled the meeting. William could not have been here, as he too, has been sick with the virus. I am thrilled to hear about the number of people being reached by our brethren who preach on TV, internet etc. May I encourage all who support the TV work to keep it up and expand it if possible. We should all take stock that we are supporting the men well, who are laboring in this work and in all fields of gospel preaching. If you have had to cancel meetings, I suggest you contact the brother who was to do the preaching and see if perhaps he was depending on the meeting support to pay in his taxes or for that matter maybe he needed the meeting support to keep his bills paid and feed his family! Please consider sending him, at least, a part of what you would have given for the meeting. The scriptures are clear. Supporting preachers generously adds fruit to our account in heaven, Phil. 4:17.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

PUT ON AT ONCE, AND ONCE FOR ALL, THE PANOPLY OF GOD!

By JERRY DICKINSON

“When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants went down and fought against the Philistines and David grew faint. Then Ishbi-Benob, who was one of the sons of the giant, who was bearing a new sword, thought he could kill David. But Abashai, the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, ‘You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel.’” (2 Samuel 21: 15-17) Because my brother Billy knows I love to preach from Bible stories, every once in a while he will call or text and suggest I get up a new sermon on a story he has come across in his daily reading. Sure enough, just as I was preparing to write an article for this column he texted and referred me to the above text about David and his encounter with Ishbi-Benob.

Billy suggested that I could emphasize that the giant had a “new sword” and thought he could kill David with it. The word of God is the “sword of the Spirit” that we are to use in our spiritual warfare of course but, as Billy noted, many have taken up new swords and have abandoned the old sword, the Word of God. Ishbi-Benob was proud of his new sword and thought he could make short work of David, and almost did, but Abashai, David’s nephew and valiant warrior, rescued him. There is no substitute for the sword God has given us! May we not be seduced by new and shiny swords. Let us cling to the tried and true teachings of sword of the Spirit.

What I found interesting as I began to look at the story, however, is that the word “sword” is not in the original text. The translators supplied the word “sword” to complete the thought, but many scholars believe that “suit of armor” would be a better rendering. I looked at several translations that give the rendering, “Ishbi-Benob had a new suit of armor and thought he could kill David.” Of course, a new suit of armor would include a new sword, but also no doubt a new helmet, breastplate, sheaves for the legs, and even a new shield. The giant must have been resplendent in his new shiny suit of armor, and when he saw David, who had killed a former Philistine champion, Goliath, he thought he would take out David with his shiny new weaponry.

David was a teenager when he slew Goliath, but now David is 65 and he drew faint and the giant almost kills him until he is rescued by Abashai. Afterwards, his men declare that he is too old to go to battle lest the lamp of Israel be extinguished. What touching and beautiful words to describe what David meant to Israel! Some have suggested that David’s faith was weak, but I do not believe that is what the text indicates. His faith and courage were still remarkable. He did not run or turn back in the face of danger and death. It was his physical strength and vigor that failed him, and that is what so concerned his men. David is not a teenager anymore, and you cannot do at 65 what you were able to do at 17. That is a hard lesson for those of us getting older to accept! Lol

In Ephesians 5:11 Paul admonishes Christians to put on the whole armor of God, and then gives a description of that armor. It is interesting that the tense in the Greek demands that we immediately put on that armor, and that we keep it on. We do not take off our armor! Our warfare is constant, and our adversary the Devil does not relent or rest. The Greek word for “whole armor” is panoplia from which we get the word panoply, which means a whole suit of armor. Ishbi-Benob had a new suit of armor, and he was proud of it. Christ has provided a suit of armor for us so that we can stand against the Devil’s assaults and can fight the good fight of faith as soldiers of the Lord, Paul declares, “Put on at once, and once for all, the panoply of God! Charles Wesley in 1747, after reading Paul’s inspired words in Ephesians, composed a song that still resonates and encourages every soldier of the Lord. Soldiers of Christ arise and put your armor on!

Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armor on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies Thru His beloved Son,
Stand then in His great might, With all His strength endued;
But take to arm you for the fight, The panoply of God.
That having all things done, And all your conflicts past,
You may o’er-come thru Christ alone, And stand entire at last.