

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. LXXXIII

LEBANON, MISSOURI • JANUARY 2011

NO. 1

DIVERS & STRANGE STUDIES

By *BENNIE CRYER*

I have attended services of the Church of Christ all of my life. Sometimes my family walked to the services. Other times we traveled in wagons pulled by mules or horses. I have gone to church in fine automobiles on different continents. This is my 68th year as a member of the church Jesus Christ built. It stuns me to see some of the changes that are taking place in this generation especially in the roles women have been assigned to by the Lord. Gains that brethren made during the past century are being eroded incrementally with such small steps that they are hardly noticeable until the change has become so large it is staggering the brotherhood and has contributed to divisions in a few local areas with more looming ahead unless brethren and sisters too show a willingness to ask for the old paths where the ways are that please God.

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, Hebrews 13:9 is a warning for us today also. Divers means various. They come in many forms. Strange indicate they are foreign to the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Acts 1:3. Carried about has in it the idea that it is possible to be transported here and there away from the truth by these alien doctrines. Without a doubt there are divers and strange arrangements for studying the scriptures among us generally involving women leading the studies, or answering and asking questions. At the least arrangements are made so the women can speak in some way or another. This practice is not just a rumor. It is well documented not only here in America but in the British Isles and in Africa.

What are the various and strange forms the arrangements for these study groups are manifested? In one place each Sunday a sister takes the children from the congregation to her home and teaches

them. In other places the midweek service has been abandoned and in its place the same members gather in someone's home so the women can teach, ask, or answer questions. Retreats are organized for only women where they lead the singing, speak (or preach?), and maybe listen to denominational teachers. Women's conventions have been attempted but largely have failed. One brother told me he did not think Sunday Schools were wrong. Can you believe it? There would be nothing wrong with these things if those who organize the studies could give Bible command, examples, statements, or necessary inferences for these practices. Isaiah 8:20 is still true: To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. 1 Peter 4:11, If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Have we forgotten these verses in our haste to get larger memberships? Have we forgotten the admonition that God must be glorified through Jesus Christ? And that we can only do that by abiding in the doctrine of Christ? Have we forgotten that incident where Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, the High Priest offered “strange fire” before God and fire from God devoured them? Aaron, their father was upset. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified And Aaron held his peace. God is sanctified and glorified by his people offering what he requires.

Is it possible for women to help lead the church in digressing from the truth?

Absolutely. Read and understand the words Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority

continued on page six . . .

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXXIII No. 1



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 9

Divers & Strange Studies 1

Faith Delivered Once For All..... 2

The Querist Column 3

The New Year 4

A Basket of Summer Fruit..... 4

Three Dollars' Worth of God..... 12

FROM THE FIELDS 9-11

PUBLISHER

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

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

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

EDITORIAL STAFF

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

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

Guest Editorial

FAITH DELIVERED ONCE FOR ALL

By: *JOE NORTON*

When Jude writes to the saints about the salvation they all share, he affirms a fact that has stood the test of time and still stands firmly today:

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (verse 3).

The "faith" he speaks about is the complete system of faith that was preached in pre-cross times and that Jesus sealed with His blood when He died on the cross. We stand under this "faith" today, and it still controls our lives if we have submitted to its redeeming power. This faith, first proclaimed by the apostles, equips us for every good work and gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness (Titus 3:1; 2 Peter 1:3).

Because of renewed challenges to this faith in recent years, faithful men of God must be firm, shouting from the roof tops that we stand with these great men from New Testament times: we stand with them in contending for the faith.

This "faith" is under attack. And it is under attack primarily from those who say we need to change the way we understand the word of God. At least this is the basic principle through which they levy many challenges against the "faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Basic to these challenges is the idea that we need a new the method of interpreting the Bible. This call for a new method indicates there is something wrong with the old method-that is, that over the past centuries we have had flawed methods of interpretation. If this is the case, then all of our brethren from the past are lost because they did not know how to interpret the Bible properly.

Rampant in the religious world is this idea that the old method of scriptural interpretation is outdated, restrictive, and judgmental. This idea is now among us. And it is wreaking a wave of disunity that we have not seen for many years, if ever. And it is more far reaching and damaging today because of the sophisticated means of communication, primarily the Internet.

The following lists are given to help show the differences between the two methods of interpretation. They are not exhaustive lists, but they include major tenets of each.

Central to the "old" method of interpretation are these precepts:

- All scripture is equally inspired; thus, all of the New Testament is relevant for us today, not just portions of it (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- The scriptures provide authority for everything we do either by command, example, or necessary inference

continued on page six

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Would you please discuss the meaning of “baptism” in Romans 6:3-4?

Answer: The individual who submitted the above question included an article from a Baptist preacher in which he quoted Romans 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” He then adds “how this passage has suffered from the intrusion of a water baptism ritual, thus losing the full force of its teaching.” The preacher then continues by saying that “water is not even mentioned in these verses but is ‘read into’ them by the minds of many.” He further claims that the word “baptism” used here, actually means “identification with” or “initiation into Jesus Christ,” and concludes that the baptism under consideration must be “a spiritual baptism.” It is hard to imagine anyone missing the mark in biblical interpretation any greater than the preacher has done here. In effect he has taken a simple statement of fact and twisted it so badly that the result doesn’t even resemble what the apostle Paul originally taught. There is absolutely nothing in these verses that demands or implies that the word “baptize or baptism” should be given a figurative meaning. No one seems to misunderstand that when Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan a literal burial in water took place. By the same token when Philip baptized the eunuch in Acts 8 no one has difficulty accepting the fact that “they both went down into the water and he (Philip) baptized him.” So why here in Romans 6 would anyone get the idea that Paul uses the word baptize in a figurative sense? Paul plainly says “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Was the death of Christ figurative? Was His resurrection from the dead figurative? Certainly not, so why

try and make baptism (which is a picture of his death, burial and resurrection) figurative? The answer is obvious this man is trying to do away with water baptism as a part of our God’s plan for our salvation. Look at the verse again, it plainly affirms (1) Jesus died (2) we die to sin when we are buried (immersed) in baptism, (3) Jesus was raised from the dead, (4) we rise from the grave of baptism a new creature. His attempt to make baptism a figurative way of being initiated into Christ, falls short, for Paul says that it is our baptism that puts us into Christ, it is baptism that unites us to with Christ. The preacher continues “This must be a spiritual baptism since a water ceremony could not place us into Christ or be the source of holiness. It is not a baptism into water or a church denomination that makes the difference but a baptism into Christ Himself.” Why could not the act of baptism in water put us into Christ? Paul said it did. “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” Colossians 2:11-12). “For we are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” Galatians 3:26-27. Note carefully that the apostle affirms that we put off the body of sins of the flesh by baptism. Baptism is not into any denomination, it is into Christ. According to Acts 2:47 the Lord adds us to the church when we are baptized. Peter had previously told the people on that day to “Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins” Acts 2:38. There is absolutely nothing in this passage in Romans or Colossians that even remotely implies that baptism is “spiritual” and not literal. The same book that affirms salvation by faith and grace, also affirms salvation by baptism I Peter 3:21. To deny baptism in water in order to have our sins remitted is to deny what the bible plainly teaches. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 800337 or rfwade@charter.net)

THE NEW YEAR

BY: DON PRUITT

The passing of one year and the beginning of a new year brings to us a time of thanksgiving. By the mercy and kindness of our heavenly Father we have been brought safely through 2010. This fleeting year has gathered her skirts about herself and faded into the history of days gone by, and we have crossed again the threshold of time and passed into the year 2011. Another decade is finished and a new one has begun. And so we thank him and praise him for His abundant mercy and care for us. The love of God is demonstrated to us in our daily life. We begin this New Year with confidence and trust that his loving kindness shall be with us in our future. We certainly know that all things shall work together for good to those who love God and keep his commandments.

God is ever near, in his laws and institutions. When we examine the laws of behavior in our homes and in his church, we learn a great deal about the Great Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The more we worship him and study his word in our homes and in the church, the nearer to God we become. Our goal is to become like him for we were created in his image and after his likeness. Earnest faithful service of God is pleasant. It is full of comfort and peace. We are blessed immeasurably.

God is our creator and merciful Father. He has provided life for all men. He has provided spiritual life for us through the gift of his only begotten Son. Through the sacrifice of Jesus and by the guidance of his inspired Word the Father invites us to victory and eternal life. The Shepard calls and leads his sheep. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). The Old Testament warned God's people of yoking different kinds of animals together (Deuteronomy 22:10). Jesus invites us to be yoked with him. So we must be like him and work with him. We are to be co-workers together with Jesus. We cannot be independent laborers in his kingdom working within our own inventions and innovations.

As we celebrate the year past and anticipate what days may lie ahead of us, let us rededicate ourselves to God and to his word. Let us be satisfied completely with his instructions. Let us draw nigh unto him by his word. "And having an high priest over the house

of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from, an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:21-25).

—Don Pruitt, 5605 S. 43rd Street, Rogers, AR. 72758
don.pruitt2@cox.net

A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT: A LESSON FROM AMOS

BY: MICHAEL BOLTON

We should recall by way of introduction some noteworthy references in the New Testament.

1. Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

2. Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.

3. Hebrews 2:1-3 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; The above should sound a clear enough warning that the Old Testament scriptures, while not law for us in this dispensation, must not be ignored. We simply cannot afford today to have no regard for that which was said of olden time WE MUST we must pay careful attention and apply the warnings and principles found and taught in the Old Testament scriptures to our faith and practice today.

Amos was contemporary with Hosea the prophet. The Bible introduces us to him in very picturesque but simple language. He was only a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (Amos 7:14). His name means "burden." Some have suggested this burden was slow, rambling speech. The record of his prophecies does not support that hypothesis. It

seems more likely that his burden was heavy because no one would listen. Amos could serve as a primary example of the apostle's words in I Corinthians 1:27 where Paul says that "God has chosen the foolish and weak things of the world to confound the wise."

Hailing from a small mountaintop village about twelve miles south of Jerusalem; Amos appeared on the scene with a powerful message and strong searching questions. A phrase indicating it is the Lord God Jehovah speaking is used in nearly every verse. And one should pay close attention even today to what this man had to say when he said things such as:

1. Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
2. Amos 4:12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.
3. Amos 5:21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.
4. Amos 6:1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!
5. Amos 7:7-8 Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

As serious and somber as these warnings and questions are the parable found in the beginning of chapter 8 should not be ignored. Amos 8:1-2 Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit. And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.

Amos here tells the court of his vision of the basket of summer fruit. The specific of the summer fruit is very important here because it indicates that this was the last fruit to be plucked before the end of harvest. This speaks to the fact that God's great patience had run out and the people of Israel and Judah were about to fall on His judgment. So Amos

faithfully warns the people and the rulers of Judah and Israel of impending judgment. Let us look to see one reason this was soon to come.

The judgment of God is not a trivial thing. Many today seem to believe that his justice or judgment is unwarranted and unnecessary. However, the word of God holds the opposite to be completely true. In Matthew 25:32-34 we read the parable of the sheep and goats. This is a story of judgment; this is a story of separation. This is not a pleasant idea nor is it popular. But the truth must be taught that judgment and separation must and will occur.

God is cruel or unkind because he gives out justice and passes judgment on his creation, although it does make Him just and right. While we understandably do not like the idea of separation from our loved ones here on earth; and we tremble at the idea of eternal separation. The scripture unerringly holds forth the fact that only those who sell out lock, stock, and barrel will receive eternal reward. It is completely illogical to think of a reward for the righteous and not a punishment for the wicked. The word of God is replete with warnings to the sinner that are not as veiled as the parable of the basket of summer fruit found in Amos. Consider reading the following two references as examples: Isaiah 1:18-20, Hebrews 2:3.

When considering the judgment of God as awful as it is one should also note the mercy of God. Here the people of Israel and Judah were wicked and abominable but God was faithful to give them warning of impending judgment and time to repent. His nature has not changed, even today He warns us thru His word and offers us space for repentance. Consider also: Jeremiah 8:20-22, Matthew 25:1-12.

We have seen now that God's judgment is necessary to separate sheep and goats. That is to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Let us look now at some causes of God's judgment. One of the primary causes of the judgment of God is neglect of His word. Those who refuse to hear the word of God or refuse to take the necessary time to study and learn of His ways by His word incur the wrath of God. The Bible is full of God's demands to be holy, to come out from among them and be separate. But men will demand to have their own way and will try to force their own ideas and do so to great ruin. Paul warned Timothy about this as he was about to depart this life 2 Timothy 4:3, consider also Proverbs 1:24-33, Zechariah 7:11-14.

But sometime refusal to hear the word of God is disguised as poor hearing: saying things such as “I can’t understand the Bible.” It should be noted that there is no surprise that one can’t understand something he won’t apply himself to. These are blind or deaf, they can’t hear or understand. This concept causes one to recall passages such as are found in Ezekiel 12:2, Jeremiah 5:21-24, Ephesians 4:18-20 & 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

The people of Israel had reached the end of God’s mercy. Judgment was now upon them. God promised mourning Shepard’s, withering mountains, and an adversary surrounding the land which would weaken and wreck them. He also promised wailing in the streets and wailing in the vineyards. He said “I will punish you for all your iniquities”. By saying “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel”, He promised a day of reckoning. What more can be said today. If we as the church, God’s elect, the ecclesia, refuse to hear the word of God then we have no excuse. God will judge us as he did them by His word. Michael W. Bolton, P.O. Box 446, Blossom TX 76416, 903-491-6802 mwbolton2001@yahoo.com

DIVERS & STRANGE continued from page one

over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Does not this teach that Eve was deceived and entered into transgression? You can just casually read Genesis 3:1-6 and see that in the first recorded incident of Eve discussing the requirements God had given to her and her husband Adam she took the lead in this discussion with Satan and let the great deceiver lead her where God did not wish her to go. Because of the deception she succumbed to women have limitations placed on them by God as to where and when she may study and teach God’s word. Are we seeing that same deception take place today with these divers and strange studies?

FAITH DELIVERED continued from page two

(Colossians 3:17).

- “The faith” that was delivered is applicable to all people in every age of time. The New Testament transcends cultural and time barriers (Jude 3; 1 Corinthians 4:17).
- The scriptures are accepted as literal unless it makes no sense to do so. When a statement involves an impossibility, only then do we look for a logical, figurative meaning,

consistent with all other scriptural teaching on that subject

- There is one correct interpretation of the scripture. “...no Scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20).
- Bible silence forbids.
- The New Testament law is in effect until Jesus returns.

By contrast, precepts of the new method of interpretation include the following:

- Some portions of Scripture were the thoughts of man and were culturally generated for a select group of people.
- The words of Jesus are of greater value than other writings in the New Testament. Only Jesus’ words are included in the doctrine of Christ (fellowship is based solely on a common belief in the virgin birth, and the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus).
- Command, example, and necessary inference invoke human reasoning; and where human reasoning is involved, we are prone to err.

Bible silence permits; that is, if the Bible does not directly condemn something, it is allowed. We can do what we want as long as it does not violate an explicit command.

- The scriptures are an expression of the love of God instead of a book containing His commandments for mankind.

If the new method of interpretation is correct, consider some of the dilemmas we face:

- If portions of scripture were culturally generated and not intended for all people of all times, we will have a difficult time determining which portions apply to our lives today.
- If Jesus’ words are all that matter, other writers of the New Testament were not necessary and their writings did not need to be included in the faith given once for all.
- The concept that human reasoning is prone to err and must thus be eliminated cannot be found in scripture and was arrived at by use of human reasoning. It is a self-contradicting theory.
- If Bible silence permits, the sky is the limit. We can have instrumental music, many cups on the Lord’s table, multiple communion services, divided Bible classes-the list is long.
- If the scriptures are an expression of God’s love instead of a book containing God’s commands, we should regard the contents as suggestions of a lover and not as commands from a king.

Essentially the new method of biblical interpretation results in a new gospel. Paul preaches against such in Galatians

1:8: "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." If we no longer accept that the word of God means what it says, we have no hope of achieving the unity for which Jesus prayed in John 17; and, more importantly, we fall under Paul's condemnation here in Galatians.

In the end, two important questions arise: Can we understand the scriptures and Does God mean what He says?

If the scriptures are understandable, God expects us to understand and to obey them. If they are not understandable, either they do not matter or God is out to deceive us. If we accept that God means what He says, we must accept all He says and not just the portion of our choosing.

Jesus says, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The writer of Hebrews says, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..." (Hebrews 4:12).

How grateful we are that Jude sent the words he did to beloved brethren and that Paul gave such strong admonition as he did to the Ephesians when he told them to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (6:10). With this admonition goes the assurance that it can be done. Our strength is called into play at this moment in time. The Cause needs us to be strong-the Lord needs us to be strong as we carry His banner and withstand the forces of evil that threaten the church today.

Our Departed

HISLE- Inez Hisle was born February 2, 1916 at Checotah, Oklahoma to Edward and Myrtle Jones Sizemore. She died Wednesday, December 8, 2010 at the age of 94. She received her nurse's training at Muskogee General Hospital and moved to Ada in 1938 to join the nursing staff at Valley View Hospital, only 8 days after the hospital opened for business, and she worked there for over 50 years. She married Walker J. Hisle on June 18, 1942. He preceded her in death on October 17, 2004. She is survived by two sons, Joe and wife Darlene of Ada, and Bill and wife Jean of Ada; four grandchildren, Deborah Holt and Jody Hisle, Beth Thomsen and Lindsay Gaston; and two great-grandchildren. Inez loved her profession as a Registered Nurse, spending most of her years in surgery. She witnessed some amazing developments in the medical field during her life. She loved her family unconditionally. She was devoted to Walker and had probably her most difficult days when he preceded her in death. She was devoted to Joe and Bill and their families, and extremely proud of them all. Most important, however, Inez loved the Lord and His church and was faithful to the end. She loved preachers of the gospel and she and Walker opened their hospitable home to many of them through the years,

and, of course, she reared a great preacher too. We had her funeral this afternoon at the church building in Ada. We had a good crowd for the service and Brandon Holt led the beautiful, congregational singing. It was an honor for me to conduct the service. We shall miss Inez, but we are comforted in the hope of seeing her again in the resurrection. Carl M. Johnson

MURRY- Brother William Robert Murry passed away on Dec. 1, 2010 at Freeman Hospital in Neosho, Missouri. Bob was 77 years, 2 months, and 22 days when death called him away. Bob lived a meek and humble life with his wife Andrea and their two grand-daughters. With the passing of their daughter Dorthy, Bob and Andrea took over full responsibility of her two girls. I never once heard them complain about this daunting task. Bob was a quiet man who just went about his own business. Many could learn from his example. A good size crowd gathered to support his family at a very difficult time. His family members traveled from far and near to be together one more time this side of heaven's gates. We were asked by the family to speak at his memorial service. Bob was a member of the West Hwy. 60 Church of Christ. I learned much from Bob but mostly to remember to just be silent and listen. Bob died in the Lord and that was blessing to all of us and a great comfort to his family. My last thought was to remind all that unlike the rich man in Luke's writing. Bob would be like the poor man who would be carried away by heavens pallbearers, the angels of God to rest. One day soon we will all go this way. Thus tomorrow has a sweeter ring than yesterdays pains. Going home is far better than suffering and trouble in this world below. I am glad that I had the privilege to know and serve this man, Bob. I look forward to our next reunion in the glory world over there. Peace is the answer to a good life. Home is closer than we might know. Roger L. Owens

BAILEY- It is with very sad hearts we announce that sister Hazel Pearl Bailey of the Panama City Florida congregation passed from this life on November 4th, 2010 at the age of 82. She was a wonderful wife to Ivory (Bill) Bailey for 56 years. She was the mother of two children Ronnie Bailey and Wanda Bailey Birchfield. Sister Bailey had been a faithful member of the Panama City congregation for many years. She had a wonderful smile, and a love for all. She will be missed by everyone here at Panama City, and by her family as well. When My wife and I moved here in February to begin laboring with the church here, she took us in as if we had known her all our lives, making sure our needs were all met. She would open her home to anyone and was a wonderful example of a Christian woman. We will never forget her, She was a dear sweet soul, and we await the resurrection to see her again. She was like a Grandmother to my wife and myself, we even called her "grandma Hazel". A large gathering of family and friends met at the church in LaGrange Ga. for her memorial. The beautiful congregational singing was wonderfully led by bro. Phillip Prince This writer and bro. Ronny Wade were honored to speak words of comfort to the family.

LANEY - Sister Christine Harlin Laney, 89 of Center Point Road, Temple, Georgia passed away November 15, 2010. Sister Laney was born on July 9, 1921 in Randolph County, Alabama the daughter of the late James Alan Harlin and Mary Etta Robinson Harlin. She was one of the founding members of Temple Church of Christ and a retired seamstress for Sewell Manufacturing Company. In addition to her parents, she was also preceded in death by her husband, Brother Hedric Laney; four brothers, three sisters, and one grandson. She is survived by children, Joyce Hammond of Wedowee, AL and Melba & Roy Karr of Temple; one sister, three brothers, five grandchildren, eight great grandchildren and four great-great grandchildren; as well as a host of nieces and nephews. Funeral Services were conducted Wednesday, November 17, 2010 at 2 pm in The Chapel of Hightower Funeral Home in Bremen, Georgia with Brother Terry Langley, Brother Terry Studdard and Brother Jeff Thompson officiating. Pallbearers were grandsons Mark Hammond and Steve Karr, and great grandsons Chris Karr, Josh Karr, Donnie Karr and Brother Doyce Henry. Honorary pallbearers were brethren of the Temple Church of Christ. Interment followed in the Center Point Cemetery. Beautiful singing was done by Patricia Prince, Glenn Prince, Cal Prince, Tim Prince, Cynthia Langley, Hannah Langley, and Billie Langley. Christine was well known for her unwavering love for The Lord and His Church, as well as her faithful attendance at her home congregation, and any gospel meeting within driving distance. As testimony to her bountiful hospitality, many gospel preachers have stayed in her and Hedrick's home where her meals were second to none. Her family can rest in the assurance that she has gone to be with The Lord whom she served diligently throughout her long life on Earth and her works do follow her. It was this author's privilege to know her and be her guest many times over the past 35 years and it was an honor to be asked to speak at her memorial service. - Terry L. Studdard 538 The Wagon Road, Piedmont, AL 36272, tstuddard75@bellsouth.net

TRIBUTES TO VIRGILIO DANA0- There was great sadness in my heart upon hearing the news of Brother Virgilio Danao's passing. But the sadness soon turned to joy knowing this great man had "fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, henceforth there is awaiting him the crown of righteousness" as Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7-8. I was privileged to make three trips to the Philippines and get to work with Brother Virgilio. He knew the scriptures well and could defend them powerfully, yet I have met few men who are as humble, gentle and kind. He had a special talent when it came time to pray. I'll never forget the wonderful prayers he led as we were preparing to return to the United States. He had a good sense of humor too! Often times we would have to make long journeys on rough roads in a van that was 'well used' yet it was bearable because he and his brother Eduardo would keep us laughing with their stories and playful exchanges. I learned much from Brother Danao about foreign mission work and count it a great blessing to have been able to work with him. My prayer is that God will raise up men to fill the void he leaves behind. --Greg Cardosa

Remembering A Good Friend

I met Brother Virgilio Danao several years ago while traveling with Brother Don King to the Philippines. It was my privilege to make three of these trips where I came to love and respect Brother Danao very much. I respected him for his Bible knowledge and for his courage to stand for the truth. Brother Danao was one of the most knowledgeable men that I ever met, while at the same time truly possessing a humble heart. A hard and dedicated worker for the cause of Christ, and for whom the work in the Philippines owes its very existence. I will always appreciate the encouragement that he gave me while traveling together. But of all the trips that I was so blessed to take, it was the third one that I will cherish the most. The joy of seeing results in the field certainly goes without saying, but this trip was so much more than that as I enjoyed being together more than ever. When the trip was over and it was time to go home, it was with tears that I said goodbye to a good friend. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to talk with him one more time before he made his final trip home to the Philippines. Though he was very sick, he still spoke of his love for the work in the Philippines and for his desire to travel together again some day. I will always be grateful to Brother Don and Brother Danao for allowing me to be a part of one of the greatest works in the world. I will always cherish the fond memories of laboring together in the vineyard. Brother Danao's passing was certainly our loss. The church lost a great asset, a great preacher, and a great man. But those of us that had the privilege of getting to know him personally lost so much more. We lost a good friend. --Frank Brancato

He was a figure who commanded your respect from the moment you met him. He was always "Brother Danao" to all of us. He was quite the dapper gentleman favoring bright Hawaiian shirts. His sense of humor was keen but understated. He understood Americans well and was adept at reading and adapting himself to different personalities. He spoke three languages well enough to preach and translate in them. He also was educated in Greek and Hebrew. But it was his Bible knowledge that was most impressive. When he came into our fellowship back in 1981 he was already a nationally known radio personality, writer and debater. In fact, he was one of the leading Filipino preachers working for the Christian church. He found us oddly enough through the agency of Carl Ketcherside who suggested he read the Old Paths Advocate. His approach to us was cautious and thoroughly studied. When he came over to us the Christian church threatened to use his own writings about the use of instrumental music against him. But none of these things moved him, nor did he count his life dear to himself for his unswerving goal was to finish his race with joy and to testify always to the truth of the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). Once on the island of Mindoro I was privileged to see Brother Danao in action. A particularly difficult question came up in a question and answer session of a study. The speaker and the translator were both having a little trouble catching on to the issue. Without hesitation Brother Danao asked for permission to "say a few words"; whereupon he began an impromptu debate with the

questioner who was a new convert from a Pentecostal church. I listened in amazement as Brother Danao with no notes listed and explained a succession of some two dozen verses which answered every quibble the questioner had. I would turn to what I thought should be his next passage and each time he followed organizing an unassailable set of proofs that the age of miracles had ended with the completion of the revelation and the death of the apostles. I guess you just had to be there but I assure you it was awe inspiring. Because of Brother Danao's ability to teach and to train faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2) the work in the Philippines will continue to develop and mature to the glory of the Lord. But oh, he will be sorely missed! What a great man of God he was! I must also mention that I will never forget listening to him lead prayer. His devotion to God was unmistakable. I remember thinking when I first heard him lead in prayer that this must be how the Restorers felt as they listened to Jacob Creath Sr. pray. Alan Bonifay; 522 Perlegos Way; Lodi, CA; 95240; alanbonifay@comcast.net

A great soldier has fallen in Zion. Brother Danao was a Christian gentleman and a dear friend. Twice I was able to work with him in the Philippines. He was a man who learned the truth about worship and would have nothing else. The Old Paths Advocate was a journal with which he came in contact along with Paul Nichols and Jim Franklin. He had a good and honest heart that never left him when truth was to be learned and preached. He loved Brother Don King and the various brethren he brought with him to encourage and preach to those in the Philippines. He was a leader among brethren. His son wrote of him: "Indeed he was a perfect husband to my mom and a very good father to us his children. We will never forget the thoughts of him." This I know, his works will follow him. He left a great legacy and we will not forget him. Don King was his dearest friend. -Richard DeGough

Brother Danao was among my most cherished friends. We came in contact back in the late 1970s by mail. He had read the OPA and realized he had been worshipping in error. We studied by mail for some time about the Lord's Supper, instrumental music and Bible classes, among other things. After about four years he accepted the truth and the changes were made in a single congregation at Roxas, Philippines. A short time later Brother Jerry Cutter and I visited that Country and worshiped with them in what may have been the first scriptural service there. Our friendship and preaching companionship lasted just 2 months short of 30 years. Only the Lord knows how many miles we traveled, and sermons we preached together, in the various provinces of the Philippines, Canada and the USA. What a powerhouse he was in the pulpit! His brethren loved him, as did I, and I never ceased to be amazed at his abilities. He could read and write in Greek, preach in any number of languages as well as English, and discuss most any subject of the Bible. He worked tirelessly in Hawaii for 13 years and we have a small group there today because of him. In the Philippines the congregations number in the hundreds and his influence is present in each congregation. Words

cannot express my personal sadness and sense of loss at his passing. The Lord's work has truly lost one of our finest. May God bless his legacy among us. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to all of his family and especially his cherished wife, Lucena. -Don King

It was a great blessing to have known Brother Danao and to have worked with him on several occasions. It was my privilege to work ten different times with him in the Philippine work. Brother Danao was one of the best preachers and men that I have ever known. I think one of the things that impressed me most was his love for the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Danao could see potential in others and lead people to higher ground through his influence. He would even share what little money he received with others if he thought it would help the work. It was my privilege to work with him in the Hawaiian work. I stayed in his home, and we engaged in several studies together. It was always an honor to be at his side and work. Truly a fine Christian has passed from us, and we will miss him! It is through God's divine grace that Brother Danao continues to live in my heart and will always be a part of me. God bless the brotherhood! P. Duane Permenter Duane and Iaurie@yahoo.com

My heart ached when I received the news that Bro. Danao had died. While we believe he is in a better place and free from pain the successful work in the Philippines and Hawaii will miss him. What great and precious memories flooded my mind at his passing. It was my pleasure to meet him and his wonderful family. What a delight it was to have him and his wife in our home and enjoy some of her Filipino cooking. How hospitable they were when we visited in their home. Bro. Danao's real strength was in the Bible knowledge he had and his ability to use it in wisdom. He was always ready to wield the sword of the Spirit and false teachers and false doctrine would fall before his powerful attacks. He not only proclaimed the gospel he defended it. Honesty was also one of his great strengths. His life can be summed up by just saying he loved the cause of Christ. We miss him already -Bennie T. Cryer

Announcements

The congregation meeting at 85th and Euclid in Kansas City, MO will change its Wednesday Evening service to 7PM beginning January 5, 2011

Continue to send all material for the Old Paths Advocate to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 800337 or rfwade@charter.net until further notice.

Field Reports

Stan Owens 8432 Cox Rd. West Chester, OH 45069. Dec. 13th- We just returned home from an uplifting meeting at the Lexington, KY congregation. There was great support from neighboring congregations and also the community, as various brethren from surrounding congregations were used. I was glad to be a part of it. 'In November I was

also privileged to hold a weekend meeting at Bandy, KY. The brethren there seem to be an extension of my family and they have been to me a "home away from home" for many years now. In mid-November we were in WV where I was given the opportunity to speak at the Garret's Creek congregation. Wyn Baker labors with this congregation, and they continue to stand strong. We enjoyed getting to spend some extra time with Wyn, Michelle, and their family while we were there. It has also been encouraging to me to speak several times at a congregation meeting in a home in London, KY. Although it is a sad thing when division in the Body occurs, these brethren and sisters have faithfully taken a firm stand against the false teaching and practices that are going on. They have been promised the return of their building in the near future, but until then, if you are in the area, please get directions to meet in the home with them.

Brett Hickey, 8373 Highway 5 South, Mountain Home, AR, 72653, unityseeker@hotmail.com LetTheBibleSpeak.com, (870)736-0774, December 10 Our meeting at Leawood (Joplin) generated the interest we had hoped with at least six visiting the meeting from the TV program. Several drove over forty miles one way. A couple from Lamar attended Saturday night and stayed until everyone else had left. Dear brethren from five states supported the meeting at Napoleon. Sidney and Sandra Prince gave me run of their place and sent me home with an unbelievable care package. The singing was as beautiful as ever, but the Saturday night singing was incomparable. Besides a thoughtful and mature leadership, Napoleon has a number of dedicated young men that are stepping up. We look forward to the Preacher's Study and New Year's meeting in Oklahoma City. My first meeting in 2011 will be at Green Oaks (Arlington), January 28-30. Next, we will be at Ceres, CA, March 20-27th Then, we will be at 85th & Euclid (Kansas City, MO) April 8-10. Jerry Dickinson held us a great meeting at Mountain Home with timely preaching for the congregation. Billy Dickinson coming helped to make the meeting. We have a host of leads from our booth at the fair with one of the people we met obeying the gospel after several studies. This fall we had another baptism from the TV program out of Springfield. She now attends the Ozark congregation. In the last two months, we have received ninety-six letters, emails and phone calls from the TV program out of Springfield. The other nine markets that air the Springfield programs also continue to generate a good response. Congregations in Kentucky began airing the TV program out of Lexington at 8:30 a.m. on WDKY FOX 56 on December 5. Lubbock and Levelland will be putting the program on in Lubbock station KAMC ABC 28 at 8:00 a.m. beginning January 2nd. May the gospel flourish here and abroad in 2011.

Richard DeGough, 1809 Flora Vista Dr., Hughson, CA 95326, rdegough@gmail.com December 7, 2010. This year, we have been blessed to hear sound preaching from Billy Dickinson, Joe Norton, Greg Cardosa and Clint DeFrance. The church was strengthened and we appreciate these men and all who are like them. During

November, I was happy to preach three times in Green Oaks, in the Metro Plex. This is a fine congregation with preaching brethren Joe Norton and Nathan Battey among them. The passing of Howard King and Virgilio O. Danao was loss to the church in Stockton and Hawaii as well as the Philippines. The church in Fremont and Atwater have stood by me for years. Turlock, my home congregation has as well. The 4th of July meeting at Springfield, MO was great. Jerry Dickinson conducted it well. Turlock has been blessed with good teaching, peace, love for the Cause, and we are united. Our prayer is that God will bless all sound preachers with long lives to preach the gospel. May God bless the great brotherhood in this Country and abroad.

Roger Owens- Greetings to my faithful brethren. This year is all but past. I have enjoyed the gospel meetings and singing of this past year very much. Brandon Stephens just finished a wonder full meeting here at Freeman Road. I deeply appreciate his work and labor of love in the Lord. My November meeting in Blanchester Ohio was a blessing to me and I hope to those brethren as well. Many were sick and unable to come but we had good attendance from surrounding congregations. We have been very busy this past year dealing with matters of spiritual nature. We have accomplished much and still have much to get done. Many reports I get speak of congregations in trouble. Innovations creeping in by those who seek new ways unacceptable to the Lord. The Old Paths are still the only way for achieving positive true spiritual result. Satan has been hard at work this past year in some areas. Knowledge often puffs up as Paul has told us. However false doctrine is not knowledge and it only yields false peace to those who follow after its evil ways. Brethren the computer is dealing us a hurtful blow. I hear of women posting things that should not be made public. (I COR. 14:, I TIM. 2:) You see brethren somethings said privately but posted publicly constitute sin. Indeed we live in evil wicked times. Edification has its place and its messengers public and private. How sad when I see so much written and posted on computer face book that violates God's word. Leaders need to stop this foolishness and just say no. Yes I am troubled by much of what I hear and see out of many brethren these days. My heart breaks as I read and hear of men who once held firm the word, but now for pride and personal glory ignore the truth of God. I thank again those who support me and my family. The congregation here has grown and matured in the Lord more than I could have ever thought. We have gained two new converts this year. The work here goes well. We struggle financially but hope soon to overcome this stone in our path. Brethren pray for the work everywhere. Pray for the sick and those who weep over newly made graves. Our new year comes with renewed hope and zeal abounding. The battle is the Lord's and we just the soldiers set to sound out truth. Blessed be the name of the Lord. My new phone number and address 1-417-776-8123 P.O. Box 239 Neosho, MO. 64850

Darrell Crawford 208 E. Baldwin Rd. Unit S Panama City, Florida 32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com We are having a very cold start to the winter months here in Florida,

kinda makes us feel like we were back in Oklahoma! Things are going well here at Panama City, we are still having outsiders visit and have had visitors from at least one digressive congregation. We are continuing to make contacts with others as well. We are planning studies in the near future with some people we have met. One digressive couple we have met and are close to would be great assets to the church if we can get them to understand the truth. They sent a c&c preacher friend of theirs over, he came 2 services. We have recently visited and or preached at Jamesville, in the Springfield, Missouri area, the Pleasant View cong. in Springfield, NW 21st and the Capitol Hill cong. both in Oklahoma City. We enjoyed so much being with these brethren, they are so dear to us. We ask your prayers for the work here in the area that our Lord will bless our efforts. If you plan a trip to this area please stop by and worship with us. If you know of anyone we can visit, Please call or write or e-mail and we will make every effort to contact those for you. May we always stand firm for the Old Paths, and may the Lord bless His church everywhere.

Gregory S. Robbins: 1082 Winding Creek Drive, Cedar Hill, TX 75104 / www.stratfordlanecoc.org. I hope that the Brotherhood is at peace and this report find all well. Since I last reported I am still currently laboring among the brethren that meet at Stratford lane, in Duncanville Texas. The past year had seen sickness with Brother James Roe's tumor surgery which was successful as well as Buddy Johnson suffering from illness; both their recoveries are answered prayers indeed. Since January till now I have held many Sunday appointments, I still keep my third Sunday booked so that I can preach at Hoyt Church of Christ; the Bakers always look forward to good old sound doctrine. In the month of April I spoke at Capitol Hill in Oklahoma City, also I have spoken several times at McGregor where my wife Allison is from, we enjoy visiting friends and loved ones, our dear friends Cassie and Jeremy were married at the end of July the Lord bless and keep them. In September I along with Tony Melton, Johnny Herrera went to Saltillo Mexico for the Mexican preacher study, I was asked to preach on "Will God except Homosexual marriage," a topic that not only needed to be preached there, but should be a topic at the preacher study held in the states. May we never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because this nation still needs the good news preached here. Therefore preacher, PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ITS BEAUTY AND SIMPLICITY. So the need to not be ashamed for New Testament Christianity is great, this is self-evident when we have so many brethren leaving faithful congregations. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal 1:8-9) In October I preached at Ratliff City Oklahoma, we made new friends, I hope to return there on the 5th Sunday (The Lords day) January 2011, Lord willing. May we all continue to "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also

called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. (1 Ti. 6:12)

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 37073, Lusaka, Zambia, 10101, Dec 1-We continue to work hard and prepare our brethren for the future. God has been good to us and many things improve each day. We have baptized numerous individuals since last writing and to God be the glory. The devil is alive and well and does everything he can to stop us. As Peter wrote long ago we must resist him to the end! We know that through God's grace we will continue to do whatever it is that we must to promote the cause of Jesus Christ. Brother Niles Stein has been a great blessing to us here. It is so encouraging to hear him teach each time for he improves much from sermon to sermon. He is studying hard and developing as a young gospel preacher, and we thank God for the opportunity of assisting him in any way we can. Niles is the second young preacher from America that we have had here and this has turned out to be a wonderful thing for both the young men and the work in Zambia. Our motto continues to be Jesus Christ and He crucified! God bless! Duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, oldpaths@juno.com, December 8- It has been nice to be at home since the meeting at Wichita Falls, Texas. Fremont has recently had a confession of faults as well as a baptism. Not long ago yet a second was baptized into Christ. We give God all the praise and thanks for this great news. Lord willing I am to preach both services this next Lord's Day and then it will soon be time to go to the Philippines again. We are scheduled to leave January 3. It will be a pleasure to have Brother Matt Trent with me this trip. He has made at least two trips prior to this one and the brethren in the Philippines love him. This trip will be more difficult without our old friend and preaching companion, Virgilio O. Danao traveling with us. He was a man who cannot fully be replaced so we will just have to get along as best we can in his absence. We appreciate preaching brethren who knew him writing brief tributes to him in this issue. We will also miss having Brother Frank Brancato along. He is undergoing treatments for cancer and the prognosis appears to be optimistic for him. We pray for his speedy recovery and return to full health soon. I want to mention once again my appreciation for Ronny Wade taking care of the paper lately. After we return from the Philippines, we will once again resume the job. May the Lord bless the faithful everywhere. Preachers, please send your reports and articles to Ronny until notified to do otherwise. The paper needs your help as do the brethren everywhere.

**Subscribe to the
OLD PATHS ADVOCATE
Only \$13 a year!**

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

If the date near your name and address reads 1-11 your subscription expires with this issue. Please renew promptly. DLK
Send all subscriptions to:
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550

THE BACK PAGE...

THREE DOLLARS' WORTH OF GOD

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Just before Paul's execution he writes a final letter to Timothy and warns him that in the last days perilous times will come (2 Tim. 3:1-17). He says the times will be characterized by those who have misplaced affections. They will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. He implies that while God has commanded us to worship Him, love people, and use things, misplaced affections will cause us to ignore God, love things, and use people.

Paul also warns Timothy that false teachers will arise. They will set their sights on women who are gullible and who are wrestling with guilt from past sins. Such a class of women becomes easy prey for religious charlatans. The false teacher worms his way into their confidence by promising easy solutions to their problems. He offers them a false religion that momentarily satisfies the religious yearning of the heart, but does not deal with the problem of sin and the true way of salvation (2 Tim. 3:5; Rom. 1:16).

Paul is not saying that all women fit into this category or that men are invulnerable to the wiles of false teachers. In Paul's day, however, women were particularly susceptible to this kind of temptation because they had a low status in society.

In today's world, however, there is a large class of men and women who fit Paul's description of those most vulnerable to false teachers—a class with a sin-laden conscience who is tempted to look for the easiest method of relief. Wilbur Reese captures the mentality of this class in the following piece of poetic sarcasm. He writes: "I would like to buy three dollars' worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my peace. But, just enough to equal a cup of warm milk, or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of Him to make me love a black man, or pick beets with migrants. I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy three dollars' worth of God, please."

There are people today who are interested in a sack-full of the Almighty and nothing more. They want just enough to keep the guilt level below the threshold of pain. Just enough to guarantee escape from the flames of hell, but certainly not enough to make them nervous, to start punching holes in their prejudices, or start nitpicking at their lifestyle. Enough is enough. They desperately want God as Healer, or Provider, or One who rescues them from the problems they have made for themselves, but they are not interested in having Him as Lord who must be obeyed. They crave the freedom God provides in Christ, but they are not interested in submitting to the strictures of the divine pattern contained in God's Word—the very pattern Paul implores Timothy to hold fast (2 Tim. 1:13).

After warning Timothy of such perilous times, Paul offers him three crucial pieces of advice that will allow Timothy to survive the times and continue to be effective in his ministry. First, he tells Timothy to turn away from that which proves to be false (3:5). A faithful believer should have nothing to do with the kind of people Paul describes in this section (3:2-9).

Second, he urges Timothy to follow after those teachers whom Timothy knows to be true (3:10-12). Using himself as an example, Paul reminds Timothy that his (Paul's) life has been an open book, that he has taught true doctrine, practiced what he preaches, and has been willing to suffer for Christ's sake (3:11-12).

Third, Paul implores Timothy to continue steadfastly in God's Word (3:14-17). The author of all Scripture is God Himself. Therefore, Scripture is true in all that it affirms, is completely authoritative (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and is profitable for doctrine. It is no coincidence that Paul emphasizes doctrine first, just as Luke emphasizes the Jerusalem church's commitment to doctrine first (Acts 2:42). He adds that Scripture is also profitable for reproof, which means something more than just rebuke. It is the act of clarifying some truth beyond the point of dispute. It is profitable for correction, which refers to setting something straight, and for instruction in righteousness.

Doctrine is the only one of these four terms on Paul's list that is oriented toward knowledge and information. The other three on the list involve a change of life. Thus Paul concludes that right doctrine will result in right practice.

We certainly are living in the last days, and who can deny that the times are perilous? Therefore, Paul's instructions are as relevant now as ever. Turn away from the false, follow after the true, and continue in God's Word. These steps will fortify us against the false teachers who are in search of souls that are only interested in three dollars' worth of God. carlmj@cablone.net