

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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FIVE P'S IN THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION

By JERRY DICKINSON

“And He said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.” (Mark 4:26-29)

The above parable of Jesus suggests that every crop that is harvested goes through certain stages. First a farmer purposes to raise a crop. He makes up his mind to plant a certain seed before he ever tills the ground and plants the seed. The crop exists in what can be called the purpose stage. Once the seed is planted there is promise that his purpose will be fulfilled. Now the crop exists in promise as well as in purpose. Jesus says the blade, or sprout, comes up first, so now the crop has passed from the purpose and promise stages to the prophecy stage. When the first sprouts appear the farmer starts predicting, or prophesying, that there will be a harvest in due time. Eventually, the head appears and the farmer knows it won't be long now. He gets his sickle and other harvesting tools ready. The crop has passed into the preparation stage. Finally, the full grain is ripe and so the grain is harvested. The crop no longer exists in purpose, promise, prophecy, and preparation, but in reality, or perfection.

What is the point? Is Jesus, in the parable, just teaching a lesson on agriculture? Is the Lord trying to tell us how to raise a crop or a garden? No, He begins his parable with the words, “The kingdom of God is as. . .” showing that there is a spiritual point and application. The plan of salvation, the church, and God's entire plan for redeeming man through Jesus has passed through the same five stages as the crop in the parable. How awesome is God's scheme of redemption! Notice the five stages as they unfold in the pages of God's Word.

PURPOSE: In Ephesians 3:9 Paul writes about the mystery which from the beginning of the ages, he says, was hidden in God. This mystery was God's plan to redeem man through the sacrifice of His only begotten son on the cross. The word mystery is from the Greek word, *musterion*, and it refers to a secret that was previously not revealed. God purposed to send Jesus to redeem sinful man but did not reveal it until the proper time. Paul says he and the other apostles (and the church) were now revealing that mystery. “To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which was accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10,11) Notice that Paul says this was all according to God's eternal purpose. When man sinned in the garden God purposed to send Jesus to save the race.

PROMISE: After a while the purposed plan of God for saving man passed from the purpose stage to the promise stage. God appeared to a man named Abraham and promised him that in his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. (Genesis 12:3) God has now made a promise that in due time a Savior will come. Paul refers to this in Galatians 3:8 where he writes, “And the scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed.” Did you know that the gospel was preached to Abraham? How? In promise! He was promised that all nations would be blessed in his seed.

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Editorial

“THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY” PART 3

By: DON L. KING

In the previous articles, we discussed the tremendous characteristics of charity, or love. We studied through verse 7. Beginning in verse 8 the apostle shows the lasting qualities or permanence of love and contrasts it with the supernatural, but temporary, spiritual gifts which were discussed in chapter 12 and somewhat in chapter 13. In fact, we are shown that it will survive all things with which it might be compared. This informs the reader of the great value of love as compared with spiritual gifts. Love is going to remain but the gifts will not. This news likely did not please many of the Corinthian brethren because they cherished the spiritual gifts, and many seem to have delighted in showing them off to others. Many even today want to believe those gifts are yet in existence, especially tongues, and enjoy speaking in what they claim are languages given to them from God. In view of what the apostle states, we know there are no such gifts today. When the last man on whom an apostle had laid his hands died, those gifts ceased to exist as well. In verse 31 of chapter 12, the apostle spoke of showing the Corinthians a “more excellent way.” Why anyone would desire to hold on to the temporary gifts when a more excellent way was coming is amazing and would seem to indicate a lack of understanding.

If spiritual gifts have indeed passed from the church as transient, it follows that those things which were produced by temporary things would be permanent. No one in the days of the Corinthian congregation had a printed New Testament, so it was needful that some brethren would possess spiritual gifts so they could lead and teach the members. Today no preacher or teacher has any genuine knowledge of spiritual things unless it comes from the New Testament. In the apostolic days, miracles confirmed the teaching of the inspired men. Today the New Testament has been confirmed, and men simply need to believe and obey it. Those who claim to be able to perform miracles today get rich from it, but we don't find any apostle ever taking money for the performing of a miracle.

In verse 9 Paul says we “know in part, and we prophesy in part.” Paul shows that all men at that time had a partial knowledge of God's Word and their teaching was also imperfect or partial. His point was that a time would come when teachers could know the complete will of the Lord because the New Testament would be completed and their teaching could also be complete rather than partial. How could this be? Because, that which is perfect would come and that is what verse

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Is it scriptural to offer a prayer for the contribution just before the collection is taken?

Answer: In the view of this writer a weekly collection is authorized in Acts 2:42, and I Corinthians 16:1-2. Abounding in the grace of giving is commanded in 2 Corinthians 8:7 and 2 Corinthians 8:1-4. The scriptures say nothing about offering a prayer for the collection just as there is nothing said about offering a prayer for the singing, or teaching. We are explicitly, however, taught to offer thanks for the bread and the cup of the Lord. The following passages in the New Testament specify the privilege we have in giving thanks for those things we receive from God 1 Thess. 5:18, Col. 3:17, Phil. 4:6, and Eph. 5:20. There is, of course, no prescribed order of the things involved in the worship service. Most congregations where I am privileged to attend begin with a short prayer, followed by singing and then a longer prayer, and usually a prayer at the end of the service. The number of prayers during a service seems to be a matter of judgment, with the exception of those at the Lord's Table. If a prayer is offered before the collection one might well ask why or for what purpose? Often, in the denominational world such prayers are a part of high pressure tactics to motivate people to give more. This is especially true of some T.V. evangelists who in their prayers try to make people feel guilty for not giving a certain amount. Any practice that would work against our giving gratefully, purposefully, and cheerfully while giving liberally would violate New Testament teaching. Had the Lord expected us to pray specifically for the contribution, the singing and/or the teaching, He surely would have told us about it. On the other hand, would it be sinful to offer a prayer asking God to help us participate scripturally in all parts of the worship service? Obviously, no one could say such is wrong.

Question: Do you believe it is wrong for a Christian to go to the movies?

Answer: I was raised in a time when all movies were frowned upon. My parents did not allow me to attend "moving picture shows." In fact almost every preacher who came to Ft. Worth preached against attending movies. Those years (1940's and 1950's) were very "tame" compared to the world today. The movies were also vastly different. Usually there was no profanity, no nudity, or explicit sexual scenes involved. What comes out of Hollywood today is generally filled with all kinds of vile language and explicit sexual scenes. There has been a feeble attempt to rate all movies as "G" or "PG" "PG-13" "R" or "X". These ratings are

designed to indicate the amount of filthy language and/or behavior included in the picture. While most of what comes out of Hollywood today is not fit for a clean minded person to watch, neither is what is telecast over television. Often the TV station will warn those watching "viewer discretion advised." That usually means what you are about to see is not fit to watch. There are a number of valid studies that show when young children are exposed to violence over time, it has a negative effect upon them. So what is the answer? First of all there is nothing wrong with a picture as such, nor is there anything wrong with a "moving picture." The content of the pictures determine whether they are wrong for a Christian to view. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar business today. It matters little whether the picture is still or moving, both are wrong. In the view of this writer those parents who allow their children to attend movies that contain vile language, sexual situations, nudity etc. are asking for real trouble. Those adults who feed upon such filth soon become depraved often ending in sins of the flesh and the destruction of good marriages and happy homes. In Galatians 5:19-21 Paul deals with the works of the flesh. In I John 2:15-17 the Holy Spirit warns about the works of the flesh and the degrading results it produces. Parents who indiscriminately allow their children to attend movies of all kinds are making a grave mistake that might have devastating effects upon them. Parents and Christians beware. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com

HAVE I BECOME YOUR ENEMY?

By Rick Martin

At the beginning of their relationship, the apostle Paul was treated with great love and respect by the Galatians. On his first visit to Galatia, he was "received.., as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" Gal. 4:14. They loved him so much that they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him if possible Gal. 4:15. However, as time went on their attitude toward Paul changed. They treated him with coldness and suspicion because he pointed out their faults and the dangers to their souls. This is why he asked the question, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Gal. 4:16.

The duty of the gospel preacher often involves the delivery of an unpleasant message. In life all is not roses, there are thorns also. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not all sweetness and pleasantness. There is no doubt that God's Word is full of edification, comfort, and pleasant thoughts, but it also contains prohibitions, condemnations, threats, warnings, and negative

statements. The message presented by the gospel preacher must be balanced. It should be edifying and comforting, but it must also include warnings and admonitions. This is where the conflict begins.

If you haven't noticed, truth is not very popular today. We should not be surprised to know that those who proclaim it are not very popular either. Today is similar to the time that Isaiah wrote about: Isa. 30:8-11 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Here we have a group of people who wanted their ears tickled. Many of the inspired doctrines were a reproach to them. The dedicated messengers likewise were reproached and despised. Those who spoke the truth were treated as the enemy.

The man who preaches the truth must not waver. He must stand strong in the face of opposition always remembering his duty. Paul discusses the duty and work of the gospel preacher in his second epistle to Timothy: 2 Tim. 4:1-5 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

The preacher must denounce the sins of the people. John the Baptist rebuked his own countrymen. Jesus Christ spoke some of the most scathing, yet loving, words spoken, Matt. 23. The preacher of the gospel has the responsibility to present all the truth. Paul expressed that duty in Acts 20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house. Acts 20:25-27 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul declared the whole council of God. All gospel preachers have that same obligation and the duty to speak the whole truth in love Eph. 4:15. One can preach all their life, never preaching any error, and still not please God in their preaching. Those who preach the truth must present the truth on a variety of biblical topics, keeping back nothing that is profitable to the audience, but declaring the whole truth.

Why must an unpopular message be delivered? The answer is found in Rom. 3:23 for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. This is the basis of preaching; like it or not, we are sinners. The purpose of preaching is to bring sinners to repentance. How can a sinner repent of a sin that God will hold him accountable for if he is never reminded of it? One cannot turn from the wrong and do right when the wrong and the right are not proclaimed. Jesus stated in Luke 6:39, "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

Instead of becoming angry at Paul and considering him an enemy, the Galatians should have appreciated the fact that he corrected them. The purpose of spiritual correction is the salvation of souls: 1 Tim. 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee Jam. 5: 19-20 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

It is important that we also recognize the importance of spiritual correction. Just because a person does not know the truth does not lessen its truthfulness. It is still the truth. Our acceptance or rejection does not change the truth. When Saul of Tarsus rejected the truth of the gospel (to the extent of condoning the brutal stoning of one of its messengers: Stephen) did this lessen its truthfulness? When Paul preached the gospel to the city of Lystra and was then stoned and left for dead Acts 14:19, did their rejection lessen their responsibility to obey the message? Rejecting the message or messenger does not change the truth-it only hinders the treatment. A doctor may inform me of a serious health problem. What good would it do for me to get mad at him for delivering the message? If I want to be helped, I need to accept the doctor's message, face the problem, and seek treatment.

The man speaking the truth is often treated as an enemy by the very people he is trying to help. It would be wonderful to expect fair treatment when it comes

to proclaiming the truth, but that will not always be the case. If the Prince of Preachers could not please everyone with His preaching, neither will we. Even though that was the case, He did not stop preaching and loving His brethren. The Apostle Paul's message was rejected by some, but he did not stop preaching it. 2 Tim. 4:14-18 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. The man who preaches the truth has the Lord on his side. Men may reject the message, but the Lord will provide a reward. When the truth is taught to us, we must not reject it, nor attack the messenger. Remember the man who teaches the truth is NOT our enemy. -Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189.

PAGES FROM THE PAST

By HOMER A. GAY

Brother Homer A. Gay wrote many things for the paper during his life. One of the things he was known for was his witty manner of saying things. He passed away May 24, 1958 after preaching some 48 years. This "Timely Suggestion" written by him was published in the February 1, 1949 issue of Old Paths Advocate and certainly speaks for itself. We hope all enjoy it. DLK

The Withholding Tax. Most all wage earners are familiar with the withholding system of taxes, where so much is kept back out of each pay check. Then, at the end of the year, when the books are finally balanced, many of the wage earners get a good sum of money back. More was withheld than they were supposed to pay in income taxes. This, of course, is a big help as it usually comes back just at a time when it is most needed. But, when this is being held out of the pay check which may not be more than forty or fifty dollars a week anyway, before the taxes come out, it sure does hurt.

Now, all of these years that I have been preaching I have noticed that my pay check has been short, and have wondered why- but it is the withholding tax. It sure does hurt when you do your very best, and promise the wife and children that you will get them clothes, etc.; and promise the grocer that you will pay him when you come back only to find when you are

paid off that the check has been cut about half in two with the "withholding tax" and that you are not able to pay all of the grocery bill, without getting the clothes!

I believe that as many as fifty times in my life I have had brethren tell me at the close of a meeting, "Now Brother Gay, we know that this is not enough pay for you, but this is all that we can do right now. But when we get some more money in the treasury we will send you some more." I then loaded into some brother's new car, who took me from his nice, comfortable home to the depot. But of all those who have told me this, one - only one - congregation ever sent me the rest of what they said they owed me.

There are a few congregations among us, and a few individuals who have gone their limit, "Yea, and beyond their power," (2 Corinthians 8:3) to make up this deficiency; and it is because of their liberality that I and others have been able to stay in the preaching field.

With all of this, however, I have managed to stay in the field. We have had something to eat, sent the children through school, have had a place to live, a few clothes and more debts than any preacher should have and I am not complaining. I appreciated what Brother Ervin Waters and Brother Barney Welch said along this line in recent issues of the Old Paths Advocate. But I am still wondering about the condition of those brethren at the Judgment, who have made these promises and did not keep them. Will they come under the heading of Revelation 21:8? Or, of James 5:4? If brethren will be lost for such as this should they not be warned? Are we preachers doing our duty when we do not warn them? What will become of us? (Acts 20:26)

Suggestion: Let us read Philippians 4:11-17, after which we will be led in prayer by the innocent ones. "Not that I speak with respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me . . . Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." Let us pray.

We always feel better after prayer: then let us do better.

One thing the income tax business has done for us, it has taught us the necessity of keeping books. Let us keep books with the Lord too. Let us be "Laborers together with God." (1 Corinthians 3:8) - Homer A. Gay

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FIVE P'S continued from page one

Abraham, of course, did not understand that Jesus was the seed promised. He knew nothing about the cross, or the church, or the plan of salvation. Abraham was never baptized for the remission of sins. He was not a Christian. These things were still secret, only to be revealed after Jesus came, died on the cross, and the Holy Spirit was sent to guide the apostles into all truth. The gospel was preached to Abraham, not in perfection, but in promise.

PROPHECY: By and by, on the hills of Israel, there appeared men who were called prophets who began to point with indexed fingers toward one who was coming who would be the fulfillment of all God had purposed and promised. It is estimated that there are over 300 prophecies relative to Jesus in the Old Testament scriptures. They predicted such things as:

The place of his birth - Micah 5:2 The tribe He would come from - Genesis 49:10 He would be a descendant of David - Isaiah 11:1 and Jeremiah 23:5,6 How He would suffer and die - Isaiah 50:6 and Isaiah 53 How He would be resurrected - Psalms 16:8-11 How He would establish a new covenant - Jeremiah 31:31-34

The prophecies even indicate that He would come in the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44) and that the plan and the kingdom would be initiated in Jerusalem and that all nations would flow to the word of the Lord. (Isaiah 2:1-4) God's scheme now exists not just in purpose and promise, but prophecy!

PREPARATION: One of the prophets, Isaiah, predicted that just before the Messiah would appear, a man would be sent from God to prepare the people for His coming. He is referred to as a voice crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" (Isaiah 40:3) In John 1:23 we are told that man was John the baptizer. He preached that the kingdom of God was at hand, or drawing near, and he urged the people to repent and be baptized in order to prepare themselves for His coming. Jesus did come, of course, and began His ministry, during which He proclaimed that He was going to die, be resurrected, and then build His church. (Matthew 16:18) After His resurrection, He appeared to the disciples for 40 days, preparing them for the coming of the Holy Spirit and the execution of the eternal plan of the ages. It was a time of preparation!

PERFECTION: Just before His ascension into heaven, Jesus told the apostles to stay in Jerusalem where they

would receive power. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell on them and they began to speak in other languages. A huge crowd heard of this and gathered before the apostles. Peter stood and proclaimed for the first time in history the plan that God had purposed, promised, predicted, and prepared. The gospel plan of salvation now existed in perfection! Acts 2 informs us that it was indeed in the days of the Roman Empire, it happened in Jerusalem, and there were people there from all the nations of the earth. All the prophets had predicted was fulfilled! No wonder Paul exclaimed, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation..." (Hebrews 2:3) How humbling it is to know that God created and executed this great plan so that even you and I could be saved. How unsearchable are his riches and His ways past finding out! Let us give glory and thanksgiving for the gift of salvation offered to us freely through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! -misterjld@msn.com

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THE GREATEST OF THESE continued from page two

10 teaches. The Bible says: "The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." (Psalms 19:7) Hence, it seems certain that "perfect" refers to the completed or fully revealed word of God. Obviously, when that time came that which was in part (partial knowledge, etc.) would be done away. Why hold on to a partial knowledge when the fully revealed Word of God is available?

Verse 11 is an illustration showing the truth of what the apostle had just written. A child speaks as a child while he is a child. Once maturity is reached he doesn't continue to use childish language and phrases. The point is that spiritual gifts were needed during the infancy of the church when the Word of God was only partially known and taught. Now, maturity is possible through knowledge of the completed New Testament. Hence, the spiritual gifts are no longer useful. This illustration is continued in verse 12 by referring to seeing through a glass darkly. The mirrors in Paul's day were not of the clarity we have today. They were normally just polished metals and the images were inferior. A better day was coming when a clear understanding could be had, and when this happened the Lord's will could be clearly seen and understood. When would this take place? When that which was perfect was come! The position that "perfect" referred to our getting to Heaven doesn't fit. As Burton Coffman wrote: "...who can believe that Paul was trying to control the outrageous situation in Corinth by assuring them that all of those miraculous gifts would finally disappear when they all got to heaven?" Surely, the child Paul spoke of in verse 11 would not remain a child until heaven was obtained. No, the church would be in its infancy only until the New Testament was fully revealed and then maturity

could be attained.

In the last verse of chapter 13, Paul mentions that faith, hope, and charity are abiding for now but the greatest is charity. Why did he say that? Because charity, or love is forever while faith and hope are not. When we get to heaven faith will no longer be needed. As long as we are in this age, we will need faith; but that will give way to reality once heaven is gained. The same is true of hope. As long as we have faith, we can also have hope; but hope will also vanish when heaven is ours. Paul wrote to brethren in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We have faith and hope for things we have not yet actually seen. But someday, thank the Lord; we will have eternal knowledge; because we will actually experience heaven with all of the redeemed. Charity, or love, will be eternal. We will always have that even in heaven. This is why the apostle said, "The greatest of these is charity." (Verse 13) In view of the fact that love is eternal, it is little wonder Paul spoke of it as being the greatest! Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

PLEASE READ

The congregation at Atwater, CA is no longer having midweek due to the very small number they now have. They still worship at 10:30 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. on Lord's days and all are welcome. Atwater brethren

New Book Think On These Things A collection of Editorials 1986-2013 By Don L. King Publisher of the Old Paths Advocate Order from: RAM Publications 300 Clubview Terrace Woodstock GA, 30189 Price: 20.00 includes shipping and handling



CORRECTION

In the last issue of the paper the article about the work in Cambodia was mistakenly attributed to Michael Bolton. The actual author of the material was a brother Crawford. Sorry for the mistake.

Our Departed

ELMORE- Stanley James Elmore, son of Johnny and Sally Elmore, husband of Lehua, brother to Joni and Kim, father to Jonathan, Stephen and Katy passed away May 12, 2013 at Freeman Hospital in Joplin, MO. He was fifty-six years of age at the time of his departure. A large crowd of family, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ gathered in



Ardmore, OK to pay their respects to his memory and comfort the family he left behind. Stan traveled widely in earlier years preaching the gospel and teaching singing schools. He was known for his ability to sing and encouraged many others to not only appreciate good singing, but become better participants in this area of worship and praise. At the time of his death he was teaching school in Carl Junction, MO. He was admired and loved by his students and their families. At the viewing in Joplin hundreds filed by his coffin and signed the registry testifying to the esteem in which he was held in his home community. He always wore a smile and his hearty laugh was legendary among his friends and the many who came to know and appreciate him. Stan left us too early. His health had declined the past year or so and it was evident to all that he was only a shadow of his former self. The difficulty he had in getting around signaled what we all feared would soon come. He will be fondly and lovingly remembered by those of us who knew him best. Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to his family in this time of loss and sorrow. The writer conducted the memorial service, after his father, brother Johnny Elmore, gave a touching account of his memories of Stan's early life. -Ronny F. Wade

WELLMAN Glenna Avonell McKeand Wellman, 84, of Kenova, WV, wife of Bill Wellman passed from this life on May 16, 2013 with her family at her bedside. A memorial service in honor of her wonderful life was conducted on May 21st with a full house at the Garretts Creek congregation meeting house in Wayne, WV. Her son Darrell spoke some words on behalf of the family, with brother Terry Brumfield leading congregational singing and also singing done by a special relative in Glenna's family. It was my privilege to speak a few words about sister Glenna in commemorating the great Christian lady she was. Glenna was a true inspiration to all who knew her. Her family and friends looked up to her as a great example to follow as she served the Lord. She was a splendid homemaker and was known far and wide for her dedication in serving others with kindness, generosity and hospitality. Glenna was raised in a godly home and was reared at the feet of some of the greatest preachers of our time. Her demeanor of a meek and quiet spirit reflected her attitude toward life to the many people she loved. She will be greatly missed by all, yet she will be remembered for her many godly works of faith, hope and charity. Please keep brother Bill and the family in your prayers. -Wyn Baker Wayne, WV

JORDAN- Vera Juanita Jordan, daughter of Roy and Emma Fritz, was born on Feb. 25, 1918 near Hartville, MO. She died on April 30, 2013 at the age of 95 years, 2 months, and 5 days. She attended Durbin School and graduated from Hartville High

School in 1935. She was married to Arnold Jordan on Sept. 15, 1938 and to this union a daughter and son were born. She and Arnold made their home north of Hartville on the farm where she was raised. She is preceded in death by her parents and husband. She is survived by her daughter, Deloris Owsley, and her son, Jack Jordan; 5 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, as well as several nieces and nephews. She was a faithful member of the Lord's church, her home congregation being at Claxton, MO. Due to declining health, she resided in Nixa, MO at the end of her life, attending the Jamesville congregation. Like the virtuous woman described in Prov. 31:28, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." She will be missed by all who were touched by her life and godly example. Ron Alexander, a long time friend to the family, spoke words of comfort and warning to the family and those attending the funeral. Burial took place in the Durbin Cemetery near Hartville. We are confident that we will be reunited with her in the resurrection at the last day (John 11:24). - Submitted by Billy Dickinson

VANDEKERKHOVE- Maxine D. Vandekerkhove was born Oct., 4, 1923 in Jamesville, MO to Virgil and Flora Pruitt Cox. She passed away on May 25, 2013 at the age of 89. At the time of her death, she was residing at Bradford Court, an assisted living facility, in Nixa, MO. She married Clarence Middleton on July 31, 1942, a marriage that lasted for 30 years, and three children were born to this union. After Clarence's death in 1972, she later married Fred Vandekerkhove and they shared more than 25 years together. She was preceded in death by her parents, husbands, 8 siblings, a son (Ron Middleton), and a grandson (Mason McEntire). Maxine is survived by her 2 daughters, Lavonne McEntire and Libbi McCoy, both of Nixa; a stepson, Terry Vandekerkhove of Battlefield, MO; 6 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, as well as several nieces and nephews. Sis. Maxine was a faithful member of the Jamesville congregation where she will be greatly missed. Like the godly women described in I Pet. 3:1-5, she lived a life of purity coupled with godly fear, possessing "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." She was, indeed, a woman of grace, strength, and great dignity. I was honored to conduct the service, speaking words of comfort and warning from God's word, and paying tribute to her good life. Burial took place in the Jamesville Cemetery where our dear sister will come forth in the resurrection to receive her reward. - Billy Dickinson

A TRIBUTE TO J.B. SPRADLEY

By JOE NORTON

The Fort Worth-Dallas metroplex recently suffered the loss of the man who, no doubt, had the most profound influence on the church in that area than any other one person: Joseph Bryant Spradley, Sr. J.B., as he was known, was a long-standing member of the church in Fort Worth, having moved there in September of 1941, when he began worshiping with the Vaughn Blvd. congregation. Even though a young adult, he soon assumed an active leadership role. Never wavering, he remained with that same congregation as it left Vaughn Blvd., relocating to Trentman Avenue where it met for many years before moving to its present location on Green Oaks in Arlington, TX. J.B. died Thursday, May 23, 2013, at his home in Mansfield at the age of 93. He was born March 10, 1920, in Lee County (near Austin), Texas, to John Ernest and Lula Florence Ponton Spradley. His funeral service was Tuesday, May 28, at Laurel Land Memorial Park, Fort Worth, TX. When J.B. was nine years old, the Spradley family moved to West Texas near Eola, where he grew up and graduated high school. He obeyed the gospel at Eola when he was 13 years old; Bro. Homer Gay baptized him. After his graduation, he moved to Wichita Falls for work, worshiping with the faithful congregation in that city. In 1941, he moved to Fort Worth where, on his first Sunday at worship, he met Louise Hayes whom he married April 24, 1942. She preceded him in death two years ago; they were married for 69 years. Except for war times in the 1940's, J.B. and Louise lived and worshiped in Fort Worth for almost all of their adult lives. He served in Tennessee and Colorado during World War II, working in CO camps. After returning to Fort Worth in 1945, J.B. resumed a leadership role and was soon respected for his insight, wisdom, and faithfulness to the Word. J.B. and Louise's home became known for its hospitality, and many preachers and church members across the brotherhood enjoyed staying in their home. Vaughn Blvd. was the only faithful congregation meeting in the metroplex at that time, but that situation soon changed. Under the Vaughn Blvd. leadership, moves were made that promoted the Cause of Christ in the metroplex as well as in Africa. The Vaughn Blvd. congregation made a large contribution that made possible Paul Nichol's first mission trip to Nyasaland, Africa, in the early 1950's. One of the first moves locally was to begin the annual Texas Labor Day meeting, the first of such meetings in the country. J.B. was a driving force in promoting the meeting; congregations in other parts of the country soon picked up the idea, and now there are several Labor Day meetings across the brotherhood. J.B. was also a part of the leadership when the Vaughn Blvd. brethren planned

the first local mission effort in the metroplex, specifically in Dallas. As a result of continuing efforts, at least ten faithful congregations were established just in the metroplex. Because of other efforts outside the metroplex, congregations are now in Paris, Mineral Wells, Weatherford, Cleburne, Amarillo, Gun Barrell City, Tyler, and perhaps others. J.B. was a man of vision, and he wanted to promote the Cause anywhere there was potential for success. Another creative contribution to the Cause was his idea to begin our worship services with a prayer. As far as I know, this congregation was the first in the brotherhood to adopt such a practice. Like the regional Labor Day meetings, this idea caught on; and almost every congregation now begins with an opening prayer. A self-less man, J.B. served as general contractor when the congregation constructed the building on Green Oaks Blvd., and he refused to take any compensation for his many months of hard work. As well, he spent his life in service to others, always answering calls for assistance in doing household or mechanical repairs as well as in assisting people with spiritual problems. His greatest legacy is a solid congregation that stands on the foundation of Speak Where the Bible Speaks. A man of few words but lots of action, J.B. was always forthright in what he believed was right scripturally and in the best course of action to follow in the Lord's work. The church on Green Oaks in Arlington already misses his wisdom and the leadership he provided for so many decades, but his death reminds us that life is fleeting and all must be prepared to meet the Lord someday. His survivors include his son Joe Spradley and his wife Linda as well as Joe's son, Joby, and his two children, John and Kelsey. All five are faithful members of the congregation on Green Oaks. Other survivors are J.B.'s daughter Beverly Crouch and her husband, Tom, their three children, Jim, Kristin, and Kathryn, plus 17 great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild, two brothers, and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

A HERO DURING WWII - J. B. SPRADLEY

By JERRY DICKINSON

Recently, J. B. Spradley, a longtime leader of the church in the Fort Worth/Arlington, Texas area, passed away. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Several years ago during a meeting in the area I visited with J. B. and asked him about his experience as a conscientious objector during World War II. I do not remember all the names of the young men, but along with J. B. there were several others who served in a camp in Colorado during the war. They worked on various public work projects (clearing public lands, building highways, etc.) in lieu of serving in the military. I asked him if they were treated as cowards because of their convictions and he said at first some of the

supervisors were pretty hard on them, especially because there were other conscientious objectors from other religious groups there who were lazy and disrespectful. But, when the supervisors saw how convicted J. B. and the rest of the young men from churches of Christ were, plus how hard and honorably they worked at their tasks, the attitude of the supervisors changed toward them. Like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in long ago Babylon the Lord gave them favor in the eyes of the supervisors because they stood by their convictions with grace and dignity. Some of the young men were married and their young wives moved up to Colorado so they could be close to their husbands and see them as often as possible.

I thought, as I listened, J. B. and these other young men were heroes during World War II. They were not heroes because they carried weapons or killed anybody. They were heroes because they stood by their convictions and refused to serve in the military, even at the expense of being vilified as shirkers and cowards. That, no doubt, took a tremendous courage, just as tremendous as going into battle as a soldier. I do not intend to minimize the courage many young men faced during that war, or any war, when they did what they thought was right when their country called them to arms. I do, however, want to emphasize and praise the courage and convictions of these young men who were conscientiously opposed, on scriptural grounds, to serving as soldiers in a carnal war. They were heroes! We need to be careful to teach our young men and women in the church what the Bible teaches about Christians and carnal warfare and we need to make them aware that others before them have taken a stand for their convictions at great risk. These are the heroes we want our young people to emulate! My dad served in World War II before he was a Christian, but after he obeyed the gospel he came to the conclusion that it was wrong for a Christian to serve in the military and take up arms to kill in carnal conflicts. When I turned nineteen years old in 1968 the Vietnam War was raging and I had to register for the draft. I requested a conscientious objector (CO) classification, which meant that I could not serve in the military, but I was willing to work in an authorized facility (hospital, Goodwill industries, etc.) in lieu of military service. I put together a packet of letters of recommendation from preachers, and church leaders, articles about carnal war, etc. and sent the packet to the local draft board. They rejected my request, so I asked for a personal appearance before the board, which I was granted. I was to be given 15 minutes to explain my position. I was only nineteen years old and extremely nervous as you can imagine. I went into the board room and there were at least 10 men sitting around an oval table. One of the men gave me permission to speak and I started quoting scriptures and explaining why

I could not serve in the military. I had only talked 4 or 5 minutes when one man stopped me and said, "We know what you believe. We don't need to hear anymore. You will receive our decision in the mail in a few days." Since they did not let me finish I assumed they would vote to give me a CO classification, but when I received the letter in the mail I had been classified 1-AO, which meant I did not have to carry arms, but did have to serve in a non-combatant role such as a medic in the military. My position was, and is, that a Christian cannot serve in the military in any role, combatant or non-combatant. I began to think that I was not going to be given a CO classification at all, and later learned that the local draft board that had jurisdiction over me had never given such a classification. My next alternative was to appeal the local draft board decision to the regional board in Austin, Texas. I wrote a letter to the board, sent them my packet and waited with concern and prayer for their decision. When the letter came I was relieved, and thankful to the Lord, that the regional board unanimously voted to classify me as a CO. Soon thereafter I began working in an experimental lab at Scott & White Hospital in Temple, Texas. I worked there for 2 years, the same time I would have served in the military if I had been drafted. The Doctor I worked under had been reared as a Mennonite and he was very respectful of my convictions. I have related my experience in some detail in order that, hopefully, young men and young women among us will crystallize their convictions now on the relationship of Christians to our government and serving in the military. There is no draft at the present, but the day may again come when young people have to stand up and now, not then, is the time to make that decision. Back when I appeared before the draft board the man who stopped my speech asked if any member of the board had a question. Only one man spoke up. "How long," he asked me, "Have you believed this way?" I told him my parents, including my dad who was in the D-Day invasion had taught me all of my life that a Christian cannot serve in the military. I added quickly, however, that it was not just because of my parent's teaching, but because of my own study of the Bible that I was a conscientious objector. Sometimes, brethren, I think to myself that it would be good for all our young people to have to stand up before a group like that and make their stand for the truth of their convictions. I am glad, of course, that there is no draft, but it does strengthen your faith when you are forced to stand up for the truth. There are a host of men my age who served in various facilities just as I did. Ask some of them about their experiences and every one of them will let you know they are glad they stood by their convictions. May the example of men like J. B. Spradley, and countless others, help to inspire a new generation of Christians to be courageous, bold, and steadfast.

We are after all, strangers and pilgrims in this world. (I Peter 2:11) Our citizenship is in Heaven. (Philippians 3:20) The kingdom we are a part of is not of this world. (John 18:36) 502 Mitchell Ryan Wake Village, TX 75501 misterjld@msn.com

TOMPKINS - Early Wednesday morning -on May 1 -we lost our good friend Charles Tompkins, a longtime leader at the Lexington, Oklahoma Church of Christ. Charlie -who lived the biblical threescore and ten but left far too soon - had been baffling a rare lung disease for almost a decade. Doctors never were able to figure out exactly what the disease was. Over the past few months his condition worsened, and while he would sit and study God's word with us for hours at a time - his steps grew few. Charlie leaves a wonderful wife Bettye behind. Bettye is such a beautiful and strong Christian woman. The night before the angels descended majestically- in a way we cannot even imagine -- he called Bettye to his bedside to talk to her, and he asked her to hold his hand. "We never held hands," Bettye would tell us later, with a smile, but they did that night. It was a sweet moment between two Christians who had worked side by side for nearly half a century. Bettye told him that evening, "Charlie, you're going to leave me," and Charles said, "I know, but I'll be waiting for you there." During the night, indeed, our good brother did leave, bidding farewell to two good sons Rodney of Newcastle, Oklahoma and Ryan of Mansfield, Texas - along with their wives and children. He also leaves behind his sister Arlene Cloud and her husband Randall and son Steve, a threesome who are invaluable to us in the work of the Lord in that area. Charles and Bettye's daughter Christie died tragically in 1995. Charles was a conservative man, preferring the King James Version, a request we and most preachers who came along were glad to oblige. When Allen Bailey first introduced us to the work in Lexington in 2008, Charles wanted to know, "Allen, is he solid?" That was Charlie. He wanted everything to be true to the word of God, no deviation "to the right hand or to the left" (Joshua 1:7). Charlie caught us by surprise by leaving so soon. Marilyn and I visited Charles and Bettye one last time before heading home after closing our meeting with Jerry, and then we flew to Atlanta and drove to Gatlinburg with our best friends Mike and Gloria Thompson. Early the next morning, Steve called with the news. Bettye would not have us come home, but we were honored that Allen came down from Oklahoma City and assisted the family. He did a beautiful job we would have had a difficult time doing. It is hard to imagine our work down these dusty Oklahoma roads without Brother Charlie. He was one of our balcony people, someone who sits in the grandstands and roots for us every step of the way. Balcony people are hard to come by, and it is particularly difficult when you

have to say goodbye to a special one. The hearts of his family and the entire Lexington congregation are heavy still. But we are all thankful for Brother Charlie. We are thankful for his gracious spirit, his love for his wonderful family, his love for the church of our Lord, and for his beautiful and rare offer of validation - Steve Bowen

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail: old_paths@juno.com, June 6- The home church is doing very well. Recently, there was one confession of wrong. The brethren seem to be energetic in taking care of the affairs of the church and we are at peace. We look forward to hearing Frank Brancato in his meeting at Oakdale, Ca, and we are to preach at Yuba City this coming Lord's Day, if the Lord is willing. We again remind the preachers to send their reports and articles to the paper. Please don't neglect to send reports. Brethren want to know where you are working and the results as well. We are grateful that the Philippine work is still growing and at peace. We thank everyone who is involved in the work. Your money could not be better spent, in our opinion. The reports we get tell us that the brethren are working together for the Cause of Christ. We look forward to being at the 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO this next month. May God bless the faithful.

Bob Johnson 4248 Reserve Rd.#102 Lexington, KY 40514 bobusj@gmail.com June 5, 2013. My weekend meetings for the Allen and Mineral Wells, TX congregations in April and May went well. Several visitors were in attendance for the latter. Also, during the month of May, I was privileged to speak Lord's Day morning for the church in West Monroe, LA. We were in the area the weekend during our granddaughter's graduation from Louisiana Tech. I also spoke for the Denton County congregation in Lewisville, Texas on a Wednesday evening, a very loving congregation. Lord willing, with the warmer days I am able to go door to door in my evangelistic efforts in hopes of gaining some home studies. We are looking forward to our upcoming Gospel Meeting with brother Melvin Blalock, July 10-14. My wife and I attended the funeral of brother J.B Spradley while in Texas, a most faithful brother who departed this life at the age of 93. Brethren from all over the Dallas/Ft. Worth area were in attendance and some from out of state, there was standing room only in the facility used at the funeral home. J.B. will be greatly missed, but we are most confident he is now at home with the Lord. The first Wednesday evening of each month I speak for the Walnut Grove congregation outside of Somerset, KY. This is now the main focus of brother Zac Evan's efforts as he evangelizes in that area. We had knocked doors and worked together for a period of time until his move

to Somerset, KY. We continue to assist one another when the need arises. Zac is easy to work with and I appreciate his love for the Lord and the church and his diligent studies in the scriptures. His sweet wife, Emily, is truly a preacher's wife and they both have a special place in our hearts. Our home congregation is at peace for which we are most grateful. Please pray for the work being done in this area as well as for other faithful congregations that continue to labor for the Master.

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com June 5 Since last reporting we have been preaching at various churches in Southwest Missouri, including Montreal, Lee Summit and Springfield. We have also been working with the brethren at Hartwell near Huntsville, AR. This congregation is trying hard to reach the community about them with the gospel. Recently a brother from the digressive church came back to the church and placed membership with them. We look forward to others in the near future. Brother Jimmie Smith will be holding a short meeting at Hartwell the first part of June. We anticipate good preaching and good results. The Lord willing we look forward to the following meetings in the near term: Dear Park (Houston, TX) June 9-16 and Lytle, Texas June 19-23. In July we plan to be at Aurora, MO July 21-28, if the Lord wills. We hope to see many of you at the annual 4th of July meeting here in Springfield. May the Lord bless us all as we try our best to faithfully serve Him.

Steven R. Bowen- steven.bowen@redoakisd.org mail to: steven.bowen@redoakisd.org 972-824-5197: Lord willing, by the time you read this, our new book - 3000 Words That Could Lead You To Heaven - will be out. You will be able to hand the booklet to co-workers or friends with a simple, I'd love for you to read this, knowing that when they do they will read the simple truth on both the plan of salvation and the Lord's Supper. Guy McAlister of Edmond, Oklahoma designed the book to make it beautiful. Our first printing was 5000 with 4200 orders already in so e-mail us today with your orders before we have to go to a second printing. The cost is as low as possible, \$35 per 100 (including shipping). Undoubtedly, the book should be in every Christian's hands to share daily with others ... The Lord continues to bless us and the work, but, as always, we ask for your prayers. Lord willing, we will have vocal cord surgery on July 5 that will "quieten us for a couple of months. ... Remember, too, the families of these dedicated laborers who left us too soon: J.B. Spradley (93), Charles Tompkins (70), and just as we wrote this report Roger Wilson (52). We are confident these men are witnesses of scenes and sounds that are not lawful for a man to utter (2 Corinthians 12:4) Please pray for two other great Christian couples: Mark and Faye McAlister who just celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary and my uncle a great preacher of the gospel Alton Bailey, along with his wife Florence. I owe all of these Christians a great debt. May the Lord continue to bless you!

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THE BACK PAGE...

IF ONLY I HAD THOUGHT

By CARL M. JOHNSON

After discovering the new world Christopher Columbus was invited by the Grand Cardinal of Spain to come to Barcelona for a banquet where he was introduced to the highest ranking noblemen in the country. At least one of the noblemen became weary of the attention and praise Columbus was receiving, however, and he said, "What you have done is really no big deal. If you had not discovered the new world, someone else would have come along and discovered it."

Tradition says Columbus did not reply directly to the man, but picked up an egg from the table and asked, "Do you think you can balance this egg on its end on this tabletop?"

The man took the egg and tried unsuccessfully to balance it on its end. Finally, in frustration he replied, "It's impossible!" The egg was passed from one man to the next sitting at the table and each one tried unsuccessfully to balance it. Finally, it was returned to Columbus.

Columbus tapped the egg on the surface of the tabletop just hard enough to smash the end of it flat, and then he set the egg on the flat end.

At that point Columbus 'critic jumped up from his seat, pointed at the egg and protested, "I could have done that if I had just thought!"

Columbus replied, "Yes, and you could have discovered the new world if you had just thought."

I am convinced the major difference in people is not skin color, facial characteristics, or bodily form, as much as it is mental force. Some people allow themselves to think and others do not. How many times have children hurt their parents, not by design, but because they did not think? How many times have people hurt themselves or the church because they did not think through the consequences of their actions?

Often people will defend unsavory entertainment such as immoral movies and pornography because they say it has not led them to do anything bad. This argument, however, does not take into account the content of their minds. Solomon says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). We can remain meek and mild yet have a brain swirling with the most poisonous images. When Jimmy Carter was running for president in 1976, he gave an interview to Playboy magazine. When the interviewer asked Carter if he had ever committed adultery, Carter answered, "No," but he added that he had committed adultery in his heart. The media laughed at his answer because it hardly seemed like a moral infringement. Carter, however, was referring to a Bible truth that it is possible to commit sins in the privacy of our minds that will be exposed and punished by God in Judgment (Mt. 5:28; Ecc. 12:14; Lk. 12:2; 1 Cor. 4:5).

In spite of these Bible warnings unthinking Christians will sometimes expose themselves to dangerous influences just to prove how strong they believe themselves to be. It is the spiritual equivalent of tightening your abdominal muscles and challenging someone to punch you in the stomach so you can boast afterwards, "See! It didn't hurt."

We cannot always tell at the moment, however, how things will affect us in the long run. The evil influences planted in our heart today may not come to full fruition for several years, but they will come to fruition. Paul says, "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Solomon warns, "Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be seared?" (Prov. 6:27-28). Solomon is saying that if you play with fire you are going to get burned. There are no exceptions.

Jesus says our thoughts determine our speech, behavior, and character (Mt. 15:18-20). In essence, He is saying that whatever you dwell upon in your mind will tend to occur in your life. If you continue to think as you have always thought, you will continue to act as you have always acted. If you continue to act as you have always acted, you will continue to get what you have always gotten. If you want different results in your life or your work, you begin by changing your mind.

If you have been filling your mind with evil thoughts, you must change your mind (the Bible definition of "repentance") and begin filling it with the Word of God (Ps. 119:11). Paul explains that we must set our mind on things above, and not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2) and that the constant themes of our thoughts should include the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5).

As the Word of God instructs our conscience, we must think carefully about the immediate and long term consequences of our behavior. We will save ourselves a lot of grief and will not have to face the lingering self-recriminations of "If only I had thought." cmjthebackpage@gmail.com