

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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NO. 7

## “100 YEARS AGO”

By *JERRY DICKINSON*

Things have changed a lot since 1915, one hundred years ago! Consider the list below.

1. Life expectancy in the U.S. was only 47.
2. Only 14% of homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.
3. Only 8% of homes had a telephone.
4. There were only 8000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads in the U.S.
5. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 MPH.
6. Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee had greater populations than California.
7. The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.
8. The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents an hour, and the average worker made \$300 a year.
9. 95% of all births took place at home.
10. Most women washed their hair once a month with either borax or egg yolks.
11. Only 6% of Americans graduated from High School.
12. The five leading causes of death were: 1. Pneumonia and influenza 2. Tuberculosis 3. Diarrhea 4. Heart disease 5. Stroke.

It would be superfluous to add that there were certainly no computers, ipads, iphones, etc. Those did not even exist 50 years ago when I was a boy! We did not even have an air conditioner when I was a boy growing up in South Texas. I will never forget the first time I saw and felt an air conditioner. I was 9 or 10 years old and the neighbors across the street had put in a window air conditioner. I went into the house but the air felt odd and the smell was worse. I did not stay in the house long. I remember wondering why anybody would want that smell and that feeling. I have to admit now, of course, that I could not do without air conditioning in the summer. The smell and the cold air have grown on me!

100 years can seem like a longtime, but really it is a small fraction of the time man has been on the earth; and of course, it is just a blip when compared to eternity. Too, some changes are bad and others are good and beneficial. This is true temporally and spiritually. Recently I attended a meeting in Shreveport where the Midway congregation celebrated the fact that the church has been in existence there for 100 years. This “Centennial Meeting” was a celebration of all those who had persevered in the Lord’s work for so long. Somehow this got me to thinking about another centennial event in the Lord’s church that needs to be remembered, but certainly not celebrated. There was a notable preacher in 1915 named Grover Cleveland Brewer. In his autobiographical book, *Forty Years On The Firing Line* he wrote the following.

“I think I was the first preacher to advocate the use of the individual communion cup and the first church in the state of Tennessee that adopted it was the church for which I was preaching, the Central Church of Christ in Chattanooga, Tennessee, then meeting in the Masonic Temple. My next work was with the church at Columbia, Tennessee, and, after a long struggle, I got the individual communion service into that congregation. Of course I was fought both privately and publicly and several brethren took me to task in the religious papers and called me digressive. In the year 1915, Brother David Lipscomb wrote a short paragraph in the *Gospel Advocate* saying that he had changed his view in reference to the communion cup and that he did not believe it was any digression. This brought that controversy to an end and, from then on, the churches began using the individual communion cup everywhere.”

When G.C. Brewer boasts that he was the first preacher to advocate for individual cups, he means he was the first preacher in the churches of Christ. The individual

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**Editorial**

**WAS THAT THUNDER?**

*By DON L. KING*

The meaning of the word “Editorial” is actually an article presenting the opinion of the publishers or editors.” (Webster) So, let us notice a passage found in John 12:23-29. Here, we will print only verse 29. “The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake unto him.”

In the case under consideration, God spoke from heaven to Jesus in response to a request made to the Father. Jesus was troubled about his impending death as we can see from reading verse 23 and 27. In verse 28 Jesus asked, “Father, glorify thy name...” It was then the voice of God was heard from heaven in response.

As one reads these verses, it might seem that God had experienced some form of communication problem. We know that can’t be the case, because God does not have difficulty speaking plainly. The problem is not that God can’t make Himself understood, but it is often those who hear who have the difficulty. A person’s own bias may cause a misunderstanding. Sometimes folks don’t understand because they can’t accept what the Lord says. People sometimes go to absurd extremes to avoid the obvious meaning of a Bible passage. If they have been taught otherwise by someone in whom they hold great confidence, they will reject the truth outright.

We know God speaks to us today by and through His word. In Hebrews 1:1,2 Paul wrote: “God who at sundry (different DLK) times and in divers (various DLK) manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom He made the worlds.” This means when we read, or hear, the words of Jesus and the apostles we are hearing the voice, or word, of God. The Book says in John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” Jesus no longer walks the earth as He once did with the disciples and others. He now sits at the right hand of God in Heaven. However, His words remain with us today in the Scriptures. When Jesus sent out the seventy disciples, He said: “He that heareth you heareth me.” (Luke 10:16) This means that when one speaks the Word of God to us it is as though God is

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## QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

**Question:** Would you please address the way people come dressed for church services?

**Answer:** Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel; with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness with good works." Gareth Reese in his comments on this verse says that the word "adorn" speaks of woman's dress as they are attending public worship." Paul insists that her clothing must be modest and discreet. She must select clothing that does not violate the boundaries of propriety. Her dress should not be too short, low cut or form fitting. The word shamefacedness signifies anything unbecoming. I hardly see how a woman can "profess godliness" when her dress is so short that it barely covers her bottom. When she has to tug at her skirt in order to get it to cover her knees something is wrong. When her dress or blouse is so low cut that her breasts are showing she is certainly not professing godlikeness. Paul continues by noting some things women should avoid such as "braided hair, gold, pearls or costly garments." These prohibitions are designed to expose the sin of extravagance. Women of that day often entwined their braids with wickerwork, chaplets, etc., which often represented fortunes. Gold, pearls, and costly garments are all considered inconsistent with the feeling that the principal ornament is that of the heart. Women who give more attention to their physical appearance than they do the condition of their heart are wrong. Women who dress lavishly and in a way that emphasizes their jewelry disobey the intent of this passage. The opposite of this instruction deals with those women who come to the assembly looking as though they just crawled out of bed, clad in a sloppy fashion like one going to worldly entertainment. I have seen women come to the services of the church in a pair of jeans so tight that one wonders how they ever got them on, or garments that emphasized every crease in their body. Such garments are shameful and wrong wherever worn, much less in the assembly of the saints. Men also bear responsibility in their appearance, especially those who take leadership roles. It is strange to me that men often dress-up for work but come to the

assembly as though they are ready to dig in the garden. The denominational people have arranged special "worship assemblies" to fit the taste of their crowds. "Casual service" is designed for those who want to come dressed or undressed as they please. Some men dress for the services of the church in a way they would not dress for work, a funeral, their own wedding or some social event. Do we not meet the Lord in our services? Are we not in the presence of Deity? If you were invited to the White House to dine with the president of the United States, how would you dress? You would, of course, wear the best you had. Every Lord's Day we are invited to dine with the King of Kings. We eat at His table, yet some come dressed as though they are going to a picnic in the park. Brethren, it is all about respect. Have we lost our respect for God? Have we failed to realize we are gathered together for a special purpose and God is in our midst? I personally believe that proper attire is especially necessary for those who participate in the public services of the church. Why, oh why, do those arranging the services call on men to participate when they look like they just got out of bed, often clad in sloppy jeans with shirt hanging out. These same men wouldn't think of going to work that way. Wouldn't dress that way for their wedding or even a funeral, yet appear that way for church services. Our dress says a lot about who we are and what we are about. Make no mistake about it if you go for a job interview the way some men come to church services, you can be sure you won't get the job. Message clothing is popular and often a sign of the times. Shirts that read "I'd rather be golfing," say much more than the individual realizes. Such clothing worn to the assembly may actually tell where our heart really is. In the event that someone might say "what if you don't have any better clothes to wear?" Certainly the Lord requires of no one something beyond our ability. If I have only a pair of overalls, that is acceptable. However, they should be clean and presentable. The object of this discussion is not to present a standard that people are incapable of meeting. It is to recognize the fact that we must give God the best we have. When we assemble for worship, let us come with the realization that God is there and we are in His presence.

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

## HANEGRAAFF'S HERESY: NO BAPTISM FOR SALVATION

By ANDREW RICHARDSON

Rummaging through a box of freebies, I found a small book called *The Bible Answer Book*, authored by Hank Hanegraaff, the proclaimed "Bible answer man." In it, Hanegraaff provides his answers to eighty-one questions, but sadly, many of his answers are wrong, including the one to the most important question -what must I do to be saved? So the souls of his followers are at risk, headed straight for the ditch (Math 15:14). (My first suspicion this would be the case was when I saw he allows himself to be called the "Bible answer man.")

Hanegraaff's answer starts off in a decent direction. He begins: "you must realize you're a sinner, [and] recognize your need for a savior" (p. 12-13). This is true. We all need redemption. The Bible declares that "all have sinned" and "come short" of God's glory (Rom. 3:23), and, yes, such must be acknowledged; otherwise we wouldn't seek salvation in the first place.

Next he says, "Repent of your sins..." This too is correct. It is commanded (Matt. 4:17; Mark 6:12; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30). We cannot willingly continue to practice sin and expect to be accepted by God (John 5:14; Rom. 6:1ff; Gal. 2:17). Of course, nobody will repent unless they first know they should; they must first hear the gospel and believe (Rom. 10:17).

Unfortunately, his answer then becomes clichéd and vague:

"Finally, to demonstrate true belief means to be willing to receive. To truly receive is to trust in and depend on Jesus Christ alone to be the Lord of our lives here and now and our Savior for all eternity... According to Jesus Christ, those who realize they are sinners, repent of their sins, and receive him as Savior and Lord are "born again..." (p. 13)

"Receiving Jesus as savior" is a commonly used cliché that lacks adequate truth to the question at hand. In other words, it doesn't really tell us anything! Of course a man must accept Jesus as savior, because rejecting Him as savior certainly would not lead to ones salvation. The fact is that "receiving" and "trusting" Jesus is really the same thing as "believing on Jesus." If we have faith in

Christ, we will necessarily accept Him as the one who saves, and we will trust in Him to save us if we comply with His will (Heb. 5:9).

A necessary part of "receiving Jesus as savior" (believing on Him) incorporates the acceptance of what He has taught and acting upon it. This leads us right back to the question: "What must one do to be saved?" What has our savior, Jesus, whom we have received as such, told us to do to be saved?

Hanegraaff says those who repent and receive the Lord are "born again," "according to Christ," but the same Christ who said "believe" (John 6:29) and "repent" (Luke 13:3) also said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). So, "according to Christ," salvation for the believer requires baptism. Jesus' statement is very simple and direct.

God has only ever accepted and "saved" those who responded to Him in obedience. Just as Abraham, who was counted righteous by believing (Rom. 4:3), obeyed God from the outset (Gen. 12:4). He believed; therefore he acted. Thus his "faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect [Greek - teleioō = complete] " (James 2:22). There are always men in our day in age deceiving others by teaching that man is saved at the moment of belief. Man's faith must I say again, must move him into obedience or God will not extend His grace (Heb. 5:9; James 2:24).

Hanegraaff omits what Jesus Christ requires, but it is Jesus who saves, so He gets to decide how He will do it. By grace He provides the means-His atoning blood-and He also gets to decide how we must respond in order to benefit from it. Hanegraaff has salvation before the baptism of the penitent believer while Jesus has it after.

Peter also puts salvation after baptism (for it is in baptism when the Lord, by His grace, removes the sins of the believer). On the Day of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, Peter spoke to the mass of Jews about Jesus so they might believe, and his speech was effective. The fact that they were "pricked in their heart" (felt remorse for crucifying the Lord) indicates they believed Peter's message. Feeling guilty about murdering the man that Peter has convinced them is the Messiah, they ask what they should do (v. 38). How could they remedy what they have done? Peter doesn't respond by saying,

“repent and receive Christ and you will be born again” (as what Hanegraaff’s cliché teaches). No, Peter says, “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”

Hanegraaff admitted that a man must “repent” before being saved, so by his own words confirms that those Jews were not yet saved (even though they heard Peter’s speech, believed it, and asked what they should do), because Peter had not yet told them to repent. It is clear that repentance and baptism precede the forgiveness of sins.

“For the remission of sins” is the same term found in Matthew 26:28 and logically points toward a goal. Man cannot be saved without baptism because baptism is “for the remission of sins”; it is when Jesus forgives the sins of the believer.

That God doesn’t remove the believer’s sins until baptism is further evident in the case of the apostle Paul. Paul received instant faith when Christ spoke to him on the road to Damascus in Acts 9 (note that after Jesus identifies Himself, Paul calls Him “Lord”). In verse eleven, we see that after this vision, Paul waits in the city “praying.” Not only that, but he was fasting—neither eating nor drinking for three days (Acts 9:9), which shows his repentance (cf. Neh. 9:1; Jonah 3:4-5). So, even though Paul believed in Jesus (calling Him “Lord”), prayed, and repented, he was still not yet saved, because Ananias came to him and said, “...why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Notice Ananias’ use of the words “wash away”; it is in baptism that our sins are “washed away,” i.e., forgiven by Jesus (remember Peter linked baptism to the remission of sins--Acts 2:38).

Observe that though Paul had already prayed to Jesus and had already called Him “Lord,” he had not yet been “calling upon the name of the Lord” until baptism. Though “calling upon the Lord” has itself become a cliché in our modern religious world, the phrase biblically embraces a deeper concept than just prayer (though not excluding prayer). It is an appeal to Jesus for His good graces by submitting to His will, just as Zephaniah 3:9 connects “calling on the name of the Lord” with “**service.**” Peter also spoke of “calling on the name of the Lord” in Acts 2:21 and went on to tell

the Jews to “repent and be baptized.” (Note: the same Greek word translated “call on” in Acts 2:21 is translated “appeal” in Acts 25:11. By “appealing to Caesar,” Paul had to submit himself to the system’s required process to be heard by Caesar. Likewise, a sinner’s call upon God consists of his submission to God’s requirements for salvation.)

We can see the necessity of baptism in the example of the Philippian jailer. The Jews on Pentecost believed the gospel preached by Peter and as a result asked what they must do, but when the jailer asked what he must do to be saved (Acts 16:30), he did not know the gospel or know Jesus, since Paul didn’t preach “the word of the Lord” until afterwards (v. 32). So, unlike the Jews, the jailer did not have faith at the time he asked. (Though he must have heard enough from Paul and Silas to conclude they had information on the subject.) Paul answers: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (v. 31). Paul knew that true faith would cause the jailer to submit to the will of God which would result in his salvation. (In Mark 5:25-29, the faith of the woman with the blood issue led her to touch Jesus’ garment, which in turn healed her. Jesus declared that her “faith made her whole” (v. 34), but it was after it led her to act.) Paul then preached “the word of the Lord” to the jailer (so he could believe), and next we read: “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway” (v. 33). The jailer was baptized in an act of faith (cf. Gal. 3:26-27; his faith led him to submit to the Lord’s will) and so by faith he was saved just as Paul had said.

We see the attitude of the jailer’s heart in tending to their wounds. His new faith produced in him a penitent heart (which Hanegraaff says is necessary for salvation). It also led him to be baptized. It stands to reason that baptism was necessarily a part of “the word of the Lord” (v. 32), because this was the jailer’s response to hearing it.

#### BAPTIZED “INTO HIS DEATH”

To further grasp the incredible fallacy of barring baptism as a prerequisite of salvation, which most do, we need to look at its purpose. Paul said:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore

we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection..." (Rom. 6:3-5)

It is the blood of Christ that removes the sin from the believer. Jesus shed that blood in death, and it is "by baptism" that buries us "into His death." He said that His blood was shed "for the remission of sins," and Peter said "repent and be baptized... for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). The connection between the blood of Jesus and baptism is apparent. The blood of our Lord is the source of our forgiveness, but water immersion in the name of Jesus is when this occurs.

Paul also said:

"...in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (ASV. Col. 2:11-12).

The "circumcision of Christ" is the "putting off" (removing) of the sin from the soul, and this spiritual circumcision is when we are "buried with him in baptism." Those who have not been baptized have not had their sins removed.

Also, baptism is "through faith of the operation of God." The act is done by those who have faith in God's power; thus baptism is an act of faith. Just as the marching around the city of Jericho was an act of faith (cf. Joshua 6:3ff; Heb. 11:30); God promised to bring the walls of the city down if they followed His instructions. They did, and "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30).

"Having been buried with Christ in baptism," we can stand with a "good conscience toward God":

"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ..." (1 Pet. 3:21)

#### BAPTIZED "INTO CHRIST"

Many people speak of baptism as nothing more than an "outward sign of an inward change," but the inspired Paul speaks more on its purpose:

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:6-27).

Can somebody tell me how the language here is only symbolic? It is explicit that baptism is the mode by which a believer gets "into" Jesus. Not because there is any magic in the water, but because God has decided it to be so. Redemption is "in Christ" (Rom. 3:24); "In Christ" is where there is "no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1); we are "one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5); and "salvation" is "in Christ" (2 Tim. 2:10), and it is by baptism that the believer moves "into Christ." And let me ask this: if "as many" of us "as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ," then how many of us as have not been baptized into Christ put on Christ? The "Bible answer man" has the wrong answer! It's a terrible shame and an utter iniquity to leave out of salvation what Christ includes. Let us avoid the teaching of men like Hank Hanegraaff, lest we be deceived into believing there is nothing we must do in righteousness and in obedience to possess eternal life. Jesus has provided the means, so let us all obey the gospel today:

Have Faith (John 1:12; 3:16,36; 6:40; 1 Tim. 1:16)

Love (Faith must "work through love"; Gal. 5:6; 1 Cor. 13:2; 1 John 4:7)

Repent (Matt. 4:17; 9:13; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)

Confess Jesus as Christ and Son of God (Matt: 16:15-17; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:36-37; 1 John 4:15)

Be baptized for the remission of sins (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12)

After this, the believer is "in Christ" (where he has salvation-2 Tim. 2:10), and as a Christian he must continually strive to please the Lord (Col. 1:23) and walk worthy of the calling (Eph. 4:1), growing in knowledge and love (Eph. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18).

#### HERE AND THERE- JULY

By Rick Martin

The great novelist, Robert Lewis Stevenson, was stricken by a disease that left him unable to speak. Anxious to finish the novel on which he was working,

he learned sign language and, by that means, dictated the rest of the novel to his step-daughter. He made a tremendous effort to finish the novel. How much effort are you making to live the Christian life? There is power and help from above. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me", Phil. 4:13. Now this does not mean there is nothing for us to do. The Bible does not teach us that we are relieved of our responsibility. It does not teach us that we do not have to put forth our best effort. It is necessary for us to work and plan as if though everything depended on us and to pray and believe that all depends on God. When a person has this attitude, the story of his life will always be well-rounded and complete.

Strife, discord, and division are ugly words when used to describe that which should be harmonious, peaceful, and united. When these words are used to describe the church of Christ, the family of God, the kingdom of heaven, and the bride of Christ, they should cause God's people to weep like Jeremiah did when God's people went astray in his day. What a shame when we see and hear of fighting and bickering in and among congregations of God's people. 1 Cor. 3:3-4 "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not / carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" Galatians 5:15 "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." John 13:35 "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

I am convinced that some people don't realize the Lord knows there are higher denominations of money than one dollar bills. Some people miss church because of sickness, but when they return the next Sunday, they give their same usual Sunday morning amount to the Lord. They forget about their obligation to the Lord from the previous week. They wind up with a little extra spending money that month. Even though the Macedonian Christians lived in poverty, they were a wonderful example of liberality. You could easily apply to them the same that was said of the poor widow who put her two mites into the treasury; they gave of their "want", Luke 21:4. The Macedonians were a wonderful example of generosity and selflessness. They far surpassed Paul's expectations of them and gave beyond their ability. When people completely give themselves

to the Lord they have no difficulty in the giving of their material things.

One of the greatest tragedies in Christianity is the "sin of doing nothing." This has always been a prevalent sin among God's people and a great hindrance to His cause. One of the most notable examples of this sin was the city of Meroz. Because Meroz was evidently in a good position to render support to the Israelites, but failed to do so, it was cursed by God, Judges 5:23 "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The curse was so bitter that Meroz ceased to exist. Are you guilty of doing nothing? If so, you need to repent and decide that this sin will not hinder you any longer. You need to dedicate your life to the Lord and set your mind to doing all you can for Him and His cause.

It amazes me how some men can be so vocal in their support of error, but when given the opportunity to speak up for the truth they remain relatively silent.

By the time you read this, the 4th of July meetings will be history. I hope you were able to attend one of the meetings and enjoy the fellowship.

That's all for now. Pray for the brotherhood.

**THE WORD OF GOD AND HOW  
HE WANTS IT PREACHED**  
By Paul O. Nichols

Regarding our salvation, we are told that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and on this premise we base our faith, and we try to understand how the Author of the Bible wants it published. After all, as the apostle Paul informs us in 1 Corinthians 1:21, "... it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." In the early days of the church there were some who considered the preaching of the Gospel as foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18), and the same is true today. So it really makes no difference to such individuals how it is preached, it is still foolishness. But the apostle says, "unto the saved it is the power of God unto salvation."

A true man of God, such as was the apostle Paul, cares not what people of the world think, nor should we even consider their criticism. This great man of God declared

to the Romans, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). With this attitude he preached without fear and without favor. He laid the facts out in language that could be understood by both saint and sinner. He said, "woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:17).

When we seek to know how the Lord desires the gospel be preached, we can do no better than to go to Christ and the apostles for our examples. They were not showmen nor entertainers. Preaching to them was the most serious business in the world. God had chosen it to save the lost who were doomed for the horrors of Hell. The Bible declares, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). It is not an easy profession for one who takes the preaching of the word of God seriously, and realizes that he speaks to dying men and women who are going to live somewhere forever, either in Heaven in immortal splendor, basking in the sunlight of God's love, or in the torment of hell in fire and brimstone for the ceaseless ages of eternity, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:46). Preaching the Gospel of Christ is an awesome responsibility. Souls of men and women are at stake.

Some of the boldest preaching recorded in the New Testament was done by Jesus. Just read the 23rd chapter of Matthew and see how he pointed out in uncertain terms the lamentable condition of those religious leaders, showing them His utter disdain for their unholy attitude and their religious inconsistencies. While setting themselves up as the most righteous and knowledgeable of the Jews, they were a bunch of bigoted hypocrites. And Jesus striped them of their self-righteousness and exposed them for what they really were, right there in the presence of all the people. In this day and time we have never heard such straight forward and hard preaching.

The apostle Paul is a good example for us who have a desire to dedicate our lives to the preaching of the gospel. He suffered many things for the Cause of Christ. But he said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). His attitude was reflected in his writing

to the Galatians. He said, "...do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:10). He wrote to the Thessalonians, "... as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others" (1 Thes 2:4-6). This is a genuine example of a faithful servant of Christ, a preacher of the gospel. And he asked the brethren to pray for him, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in bonds that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19, 20).

If the gospel was preached boldly in the days of the early church, why should it not be that way now? Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue of the Jews at Iconium, and the Bible says, "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord..." (Acts 14:3), and because the message stirred up the people, in their anger they were on the verge of stoning these men of God. But they were spared. Paul wrote to Timothy, a younger preacher, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 2:7).

Although Paul was probably the most educated of all the apostles, he said, "For Christ sent me... to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. He said, "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3:12). And his preaching was done with love (Eph. 4:11). Because of his love, he kept back nothing that was profitable to his hearers. He was not a coward. He refused to shun any subject just to spare feelings or to gain favor; and he taught publicly and from house to house (He was not just a "pulpiteer"). In every day life he showed by example what he taught others (Acts 20:20), and he warned people night and day with tears (Acts 20:31). He was a man of compassion, and was not ashamed to show his sensitivities. He wrote concerning some, "I tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

This great man of God set an example for all time of what preaching the gospel of Christ is all about, and every preacher from that time until now should be influenced to do the same.

**IS CHRISTIANITY UNITY POSSIBLE?**

Submitted By Paul O. Nichols

This is a question that more and more people today are asking. Many are trying to do something to bring about an affirmative answer to this question, but on wrong terms.

Some are saying, "It would be wonderful if all churches would unite, but I don't believe this will ever happen." As long as this attitude exists we may never see the oneness in Christianity that should be.

Is unity possible? Yes! Jesus prayed for unity in John 17. God wants unity. The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, pleaded for unity in 1 Corinthians 1:10. Jesus died on the cross in order that the warring parties (Jew and Gentile) might be one (Ephesians 2:11-22).

Yes, unity is possible. Certainly we are not going to close our eyes to the division which exists in the religious world, and say we are united. There are hundreds of denominations with all their parties and factions in this country. What is wrong? Is God to blame? No! Is Christ to blame? No! Can we blame the Holy Spirit? No! People are to blame! Man, not God, is responsible for the division that exists. This is the result of men refusing to let God direct us all by His word.



*100 YEARS AGO. . . continued from page one*

communion cup service had been invented and patented by a denominational preacher 20 years earlier. Churches of Christ, however, would have nothing to do with this digressive innovation at first. When Brewer, and a few others, began to clamor for the innovation to be brought into churches of Christ there was, as he wrote, fierce opposition. In fact, J.W. McGarvey wrote several articles against what he called, "Those Individual Cups" and he strenuously opposed the use of more than one cup. David Lipscomb also opposed the individual cups and wrote against changing the communion service as the Lord set it up. It is true, as Brewer wrote that toward the end of his life (and under pressure from some brethren) Lipscomb wrote the short paragraph Brewer refers to in his book. It is telling, and sad, that one short paragraph from David Lipscomb carried such weight that many churches changed from one cup in the communion to the individual cups. Brewer is completely incorrect, nevertheless, when he asserts that this ended the controversy and all the churches began to

use individual cups. Not all churches! Yes, the majority accepted the innovation. That is always the case. But there were many courageous and conscientious brethren who would not and could not go along with the crowd. Thank the Lord for those brethren! Today, 100 years later, there are still churches of Christ around the world that worship scripturally using one cup in the communion. Yes, 100 years seems like a long time, but the church worshipped using one cup for 1900 years before individual cups appeared on the scene. May the Lord give members of churches of Christ that use individual cups today the courage to go all the way back to the New Testament pattern. misterjld@msn.com



*WAS THAT THUNDER? . . . continued from page two* speaking to us. Likely, people wouldn't feel so free to write notes to each other, talk among themselves and even send text messages to unknown acquaintances, if they realized God was speaking.

In 1 Peter 1:25 Peter said: "But the word of the Lord actually endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Theological scholars may not agree on some things but, my brother, they agree on this. When the Word is preached, God speaks!

Interesting isn't it that when Mark 16:16 is read, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." some people hear not the truth that baptism saves us but only thunder. They look at one another as if to say, "Was that thunder?" Again, 1 Peter 3:21, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..." THUNDER? They just will not accept the Bible fact that baptism saves us. Listen brethren, some of our own are making arguments they have learned from the denominations as though it came from the Bible. Some of our own are hearing only thunder when God speaks.

So many examples could be cited now. Some of the Lord's people accept what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 about the communion, (some won't even accept that!) but when he wrote about the covering in verses 2-16 of the same chapter they hear only thunder and argue that he was dealing only with a cultural situation existing at the time in which he lived. What is the problem? Did the Holy Spirit have a communication problem? Of course not, the hearers are at fault. It didn't thunder at all. God spoke to us that women should allow their hair to grow and men should not. It would appear

in some places that some are hearing only thunder when Paul wrote by inspiration about this matter.

What do we do with what Paul commanded in 1 Timothy 2: 9, 10, 1 Peter 3: 3, 4, etc. about our being dressed in modest apparel. Women of the world are rarely dressed modestly, and some sisters aren't either. Did it thunder or could it be that God really spoke what we can plainly read? Brethren, we know that was not thunder. No indeed, that was the voice of the Lord; and we had better hear. Think on these things. -DLK

## **DRUNKENNESS, REVELRIES, AND DRINKING PARTIES**

By Aaron Battey

Alcohol is a topic that draws a lot of attention among religious thinkers. This is understandable as many social conventions revolve around beer, wine, or perhaps a martini. Some people when asked, "Do you drink?" respond, "No, I just drink wine." Alcohol is alcohol. This discussion covers the SparkNotes a Christian should have regarding alcohol and the Bible.

The typical promotional arguments for the acceptance of alcohol among Christians are the frequent Bible references to "wine" and the fact that Jesus turned water into wine in John 2. Both of these arguments fall short for the same reason: ignorance. Ignorance is not bliss as some would rally. Ignorance can lead to a spiritually lethal misunderstanding of God's word. What are people missing when they make this argument? The fact that the word "wine" we are familiar with has not always referred to an alcoholic beverage is the misunderstanding. Many times in the Bible, the word "wine" refers simply to grape juice. While there is more than one Hebrew word for wine, the interpretation of the word lies in the context. Studying the context of a Bible passage often reveals if the "wine" under discussion is alcoholic or not.

Perhaps the best, all inclusive passage a Christian could read arguing against the drinking of alcohol is found in the book 1 Peter. 1 Peter 4:3 reads, "For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries." The opening statement by Peter makes it clear that the list provided is something a Christian should not partake in. Peter conveniently

details every type of alcoholic intake one might imagine. Drunkenness- the individual so dependent on alcohol that he must have a shot of whiskey to get the morning started.

Revelries- the typical party where everyone gathers to get smashed with beer. Drinking parties- an elegant affair in which people enjoy a cocktail or two while visiting. Peter could have used further descriptors, but the fact is clear from the passage. Christians should not partake in alcoholic consumption of any kind.

The conclusion is this: be careful when attributing a Bible reference to wine with alcohol, and have 1 Peter 4:3 at hand for free thinkers who would claim the Bible condones alcohol. Read Proverbs 20:1 in closing. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

## **Our Departed**

**RICHARD "RICKY" DALE FRIZZELL:** Born August 29, 1950, and passed into rest May 17, 2015, at the age of 64. Raised in El Cajon, California, he moved to Oklahoma and attended East Central University at Ada, OK. He was instrumental in the Lord's work with the congregations of Mt. Home, Harrison, and Batesville, AR. He worked with the Miami, OK, congregation and was a member of the West 60 Neosho, MO, congregation at his death. He suffered a stroke in 2011 and subsequently declined in the years following, until Sunday morning, May 17, when his trials were over. He leaves behind his wife Teresa, four grown children, and their families. His funeral service and visitation were attended by a wide spectrum of the brotherhood and community. Brother Joe Morgan of the Whispering Hills congregation, Miami, OK, delivered the obituary. This writer gave the message of hope and comfort to those attending. Submitted by Nick Nichols, on behalf of the West 60 Neosho, MO congregation.

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## Field Reports

Richard DeGough, 1809 Flora Vista Dr. Hughson, California May 29,2015 rdegough@gmail.com: Our Memorial Day meeting with Don King was good with large crowds on the weekend. Attending were young people in great numbers, as well as Christians from several states. The young people conducted themselves as Christians should, letting us know by their good conduct they were serious about serving the Lord. The services during preaching were quiet and orderly. I for one was very pleased with the cooperation by all that attended and our brethren in Turlock were happy to host the meeting The singing was beautiful at every service. Don's preaching was timely and very edifying. The congregations that assisted us were Oakdale and Manteca. We plan on hosting this meeting, the Lord willing for years to come. For the good done the glory belongs to God as always. We thank all who took the time and expense they were out for coming, which without them the meeting would not have been inspiring as it was. Our brethren are the greatest people in the world. Thank God for the Church.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, oldpaths@juno.com: June 13- The meeting at Turlock turned out very well. Large crowds attended and a great spirit was manifested by all. (See Richard DeGough's report this issue) The church at home is doing well in the new location and we invite all to stop by and worship with us when you can. Ron Jordan recently taught for us one Lord's Day and though I was absent the report was that all enjoyed having him. Tomorrow, Lord willing we are to be in Yuba City for the morning and afternoon services and we are to leave soon for the Springfield, MO 4th of July meeting and then on to Marietta, GA for a meeting. We are looking forward to all of the above. Preachers, please try to remember the paper this summer as you travel and offer to send in subscriptions for brethren. Also send us your reports and articles as you can, we value your assistance. Lord bless us all.

Steven R. Bowen, 105 N. Lenard, Red Oak, TX 75154 steven.bowen@redoakisd.org: With the Lord's tremendous blessings, we have been able to continue the intense travel schedule we began last year. We continue to see and feel tremendous growth among those with whom we are so blessed to labor. Certainly, many are active in "giving all diligence" in adding to their faith (2 Peter 1:5,7). We know how difficult it is

for us all to "prune" our lives and engage in the Lord's work, adding that necessary spiritual growth as we go. Such discipline doesn't happen overnight, but I believe the Lord expects us to pull out the clippers and trim our lives and hearts - a little here, some there (John 15:2). ... We continue to enjoy this second year of work in Little Rock. One great helper we haven't mentioned in previous writings is Chad Balding, a great encourager to us and a young man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord" for sure (Psalm 1:1). I am so thankful to the Lord for sending us a devoted Timothy to help us along (1 Timothy 4:12) . ... In January we started an Old Testament survey in Deer Park on the Saturday night before the 1st Sunday, in kind of a "Preacher's Study" format. Many of our Fairbanks' friends come over to encourage us in that work. I want to mention Theron and Betty Spradley particularly because of their obvious "hunger an thirsting" for truth and righteousness (Matthew 5:6). Randy Ballard comes, too, regularly, and helped introduce the "Tabernacle" one evening a couple of months ago. We recently "crossed the Jordan" in our study, the highlight, no doubt, of OT history, a period rich in symbolism and edification. We look forward next to studying the "Golden Age" of the OT - and learning better how to live,\ as we go - that follows in the book of Joshua. We have also been blessed at these studies with visitors from the community, I believe, at every session, along with some further private study opportunities as a result .... Another study of interest is a private study we began recently in the home of Dale and Tammy Wells in Oklahoma on "How to study the Bible," one that, like the OT, shows how much we have to learn. We are very hopeful this format will be attractive to some of those who are not members of the church and who desperately need to hear the gospel. We're so pleased that Dale and Tammy invited us and a few others over for that study just a week or two after we buried Tammy's mother Mildred, a longtime member of the Lord's church in Washington and Lexington. Carl Johnson had just closed a beautiful meeting for us in Lexington when the Lord took our sweet friend Mildred one Monday morning unexpectedly ... Thank you all for any prayers you can offer for us, our family, and for even more success in the sharing of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 3:1). Thanks for your prayers, too, for Marilyn's mom Jimie Dickinson and dad Bill. "MeMaw" is not well after breaking her hip in March, and the entire Dickinson family continues to cope with that. Feel free to e-mail us if you would like copies of notes from either of our on-going studies. God bless!

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## THE BACK PAGE...

### THE MARK 16:16 CONTROVERSY

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Several years ago a man formerly associated with Churches of Christ wrote an article on the Internet entitled, "Are Unbaptized Believers Lost?" In his first statement he asks sarcastically, "Can salvation be found anywhere other than at the bottom of the baptistery?" He concludes by arguing Jesus' words in Mark 16:16 ("He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned") does not prove baptism is necessary for salvation. The writer is just another of a multitude of detractors trying to dismiss the plain teaching of this Bible text.

It is fundamentally true that Bible passages that announce the conditions of salvation are the easiest to understand. Mark's account of the Great Commission demonstrates this truth and shows in a straightforward way the connection between baptism and salvation.

Obviously, Mark does not mention every condition necessary for salvation in this text. He makes no mention of repentance which is unquestionably a condition of salvation (Lk. 13:3-5; Acts 2:38; 17:30), nor does he mention confession (1 Tim. 6:13; Rom. 10:9-10). It is common in the NT for writers to emphasize certain conditions relating to salvation without mentioning the entire catalog of requirements (cf. Jn. 3:16; Acts 17:30; 1 Pet. 3:21). Students of the Bible would do well to remember this simple principle.

However, Mark does list two conditions of salvation (belief and baptism) as co-conditions, having equal value. Those who read Mark's words for the first time must have understood them in this way; it is the only natural reading of the words. However, theologically biased critics continue to look for ways to dismiss them.

One common way of dismissing Mark 16:16 is to claim it is not a part of the original NT text, but that it is an interpolation (an addition to the original text later inserted by a scribe or copyist). Their argument is based upon the fact that Mark 16:9-20 is missing from two of the oldest manuscripts and from some of the early versions. However, the authenticity of the text has been defended by a number of able scholars. Even if critics could prove Mark 16:16 is an interpolation, the Bible doctrine of baptism is not diminished. There is nothing in this verse that cannot be learned from other NT passages about baptism. (For a fuller discussion of this controversy see pages 11-16 in the introduction of *Contending for the Faith Commentary on The Gospel of Mark*, by Carl M. Johnson).

The most common tactic used to dismiss Mark's words about the necessity of baptism, however, is to focus on the second part of verse 16 where Mark makes no mention of baptism. He says, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Baptist scholar AT. Robertson argues that because Mark does not say, "He that believeth not AND IS BAPTIZED NOT shall be damned," proves that baptism is not essential to salvation. He concludes, "Condemnation rests on disbelief, not on baptism." (*Word Pictures of the NT* 405).

In his massive "Grammar of the Greek New Testament," Robertson admits that sometimes the grammar in the Scriptures must yield to theology (389). In other words, sometimes it is necessary to ignore what the text actually says for the sake of your own theological bias. His theological bias shows very clearly in his comments on Mark 16:16.

Mark makes it clear that salvation rests upon belief AND baptism, but that disbelief alone is enough to condemn. A sinner must believe the gospel before he is baptized (Acts 8:36-37); consequently, if a sinner refuses to believe, he is condemned already (Jn. 3:18) and does not have to refuse to be baptized to be condemned. Furthermore, the unbeliever is not going to seek to be baptized anyway. If he does, it would be meaningless if he does not believe.

Alfred Plummer of the "Cambridge Greek NT" agrees. He says, "There was no need to say anything about baptism; that of course was rejected" (374).

Compare the following statement, "He who turns on the TV and tunes to channel 10 will see the program; he who refuses to turn on his TV will miss the program." Two things are essential: turn on the TV, AND turn to channel 10. Since turning on the TV is basic to everything else, there is no need to mention turning to channel 10 in the second part of the statement.

This is the most reasonable explanation for the omission of baptism in the second clause of Mark 16:16, and is the way it would most likely be understood by anyone seeing the statement for the first time.

Thus stands Mark 16:16 in all of its clarity. It cannot be dismissed by textual critics or those with theological bias. The words are profoundly simple, yet demanding. They must be believed, obeyed, and then preached- so help us God. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com