

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

# OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. XCIV

LEBANON, MISSOURI • JULY 2022

NO. 7

## WHAT ABOUT CLOSED-COMMUNION

BY CARL M JOHNSON

The Catholic archbishop of San Francisco says that U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is no longer allowed to receive communion because of her vocal support for abortion rights.

Salvadore Cordileone, the archbishop, says he had previously made his concerns known to Pelosi in an April 7 letter after she promised to codify into federal law the right to abortion established by the Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade. Cordileone says he never received a response from Pelosi.

Cordileone adds, "After numerous attempts to speak with her to help her understand the grave evil she is perpetrating, the scandal she is causing, and the danger to her own soul she is risking, I have determined that the point has come in which I must make a public declaration that she is not to be admitted to Holy Communion" (NPR.com May 21, 2022).

This story reminds me that the Roman Catholic Church is a longtime practitioner of "closed-communion" and it also reminds me of another highly publicized case. US Representative Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. Kennedy was fully aware that the Catholic Church condemns abortion as murder, but he vigorously supported the pro-abortion movement as a politician. Resorting to political double-speak Kennedy said he can oppose abortion privately while supporting publicly a woman's right to have an abortion. In spite of his rhetorical mumbo jumbo, Catholic Bishop Thomas Tobin condemned Kennedy's position and instructed him not to "receive Holy Communion" (USATODAY Nov. 23, 2009).

In many instances closed-communion is based upon a

misunderstanding of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:27, "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

The practitioners of closed-communion argue that communion is serious business and it would be unwise on the part of the church to allow persons to eat of the bread and drink of the cup if there were some doubt concerning their worthiness. They argue that our allowing persons to commune who are unworthy would cause us to be complicit in their eating and drinking damnation to their souls.

However, according to the Analytical Greek Lexicon, the word "unworthily" (*anaxios*) means, "in an improper manner" (24). Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon says, "in an unworthy manner" (40). The American Standard Version, the English Standard Version, and the Revised Standard Version translate the verse, 'Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner ..."

It follows that the word "unworthily" is not referring to our moral condition, but rather it refers to HOW we are to partake of the emblems.

Paul is warning the Corinthians against making a mockery of the Lord's Supper by their treating it as though it is a common meal. It is not just a matter of the Corinthians' minds being preoccupied with worldly thoughts, but they engage the supper with a spirit of irreverence and levity. They exhibit a spirit of divisiveness (verse 18), intemperance (verse 21), and selfishness (not waiting on one another, verse 33), and they exhibit neither faith in nor thankful remembrance of the great mystery commemorated by the meal (verse 29).

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**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

Single Subscription One Year.....\$15.00

Also On The Internet

Published Monthly by **Old Paths Advocate**,  
Lebanon, MOA.C. Brockman, 2033 King James,  
Lebanon, MO 65536

periodical postage paid at Lebanon, MO 65536

Send Form 3579 to **Old Paths Advocate**

1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550.

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

**Editorial****WITHOUT A WEDDING GARMENT**

By DON L. KING

The parables of our Lord are nothing less than profound. They are full of meaning and continue to furnish knowledge virtually every time one studies them. The parable found in Matthew 22:1-14 is no exception. Often referred to as "The Marriage of the King's Son," it is one the Lord spoke to help his hearers grasp several points about the kingdom of Heaven. As He began other parables, He began this one similarly. "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." He taught many things in the following verses, all of which are wonderful in and of themselves, but we wish to notice what He taught about the lack of a wedding garment in verses 11, 12: "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he said unto him, Friend, how earnest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."

Ancient Kings sometimes made opulent marriages for their children, spending large amounts of money to do so. Many animals would be slaughtered at the last moment to furnish ample food, and costly garments were sometimes furnished each guest so that the audience would be properly dressed to suit the King's desire. By so doing, everyone was dressed in beautiful array. In this parable, the King came in, probably at the last moment, to view the guests and was dismayed to find a man sitting among his beautifully attired guests in very ordinary clothes! He was insulted, and angry, and eventually had the fellow thrown out in bonds.

Obviously, Our Lord had a point in mind which delivered a spiritual message even to us today. Richard Trench, in his great commentary of the parables, indicates that the wedding garment appears to represent righteousness itself. Just as the fellow was inappropriately dressed without the garments the King had apparently furnished, it is also inappropriate for church members to live lives lacking an influence given them by Christ. God expects us to live as though we know the Lord. This man had obviously been invited! He had been given a wedding garment, but the language used seems to indicate that he had refused to put it on. Some church members refuse to live as the Scriptures direct. The King was outraged and had the obstinate fellow tied up hand and foot, *continued on page 9*

**KINGDOM OF CHRIST  
VS.  
KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD**

*BY LYNWOOD SMITH*

*Continued from last month*

**May Christians Vote in the Political Elections?**

This question is really answered in the foregoing. For, if a Christian would not be allowed to go forth into battle, would he be allowed to elect the men to office whose duty it is to declare the war? If he could elect them to office, could he not go forth in obedience to their orders? Could he not fight in the war that his men have declared? To reason otherwise would be very inconsistent. We have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, have put off the works of darkness, and have put on the whole armor of light. Now can we cross over the boundary line and go back into these kingdoms of darkness to help carry on their political affairs? I am persuaded that such would be displeasing to "him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). We are commanded to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Can we heed that injunction and assist in the prosecution of the affairs of the "power of darkness?" We are also commanded to "reprove them." Can we reprove them and at the same time be doing everything within our power to propagate and advance them? It is God who appoints the rule of these kingdoms for Daniel says, "He ruleth in the kingdoms of men" (Dan. 4: 17). "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for the wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:20, 21). Thus, we learn it is God who does the setting up and the removing of the worldly rulers. Who are we to cast a ballot for a ruler when it is God who attends to that. Should we cast a ballot for one man, and he be defeated, another being elected in his stead, would we not be arraying ourselves against God.

**May Christians Hold Office in the Kingdoms of this World?**

Having proved that it would be sinful for Christians to engage in carnal combat and vote in the political affairs of human governments, it is logically implied that it would be wrong to hold office in these same kingdoms. Yet we will go into a more detailed study. When the

Savior said, My kingdom is not of this world," he also meant that those who are in his kingdom must not be of this world either. For in James 4:4, we read, "Know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God." From this it is evident that it would be incompatible with the divine law for a Christian to go into the dismal powers of the condemned and sit as a ruler. The only place that a Christian has a right to rule is within the domains of the "holy nation" into which we have been called (1 Peter 2:8). Daniel says, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4: 17). What kind of men does God put over these kingdoms? Daniel says "base" men. Such an office would be inconsistent with Christian profession, and God does not use a Christian for that evil work. Again in Eph. 6: 12, Paul says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Thus, Christians are to put on the spiritual armour and wrestle against the "rulers of the darkness of this world." How could he be a "ruler of the darkness of this world" and at the same time wrestle against these rulers? Would he not be wrestling against himself and opposing himself, (2 Tim. 2:25)? Rulers are also ordained of God to do certain works that would be sinful for Christians to do. They must keep order at all cost. They must do everything within their power to enforce civil law, regardless of the law. Paul says of these officers in Rom. 13:4, "He is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou shalt do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he's a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Could a Christian hold this office and do this work? No, for a Christian must "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom.12:17). Even running for an office would be wrong for a Christian. For, when one announces himself for office, he must exalt himself to the extent that he makes himself the most competent man in the entire world for that office. He also makes it very manifest that no one on earth can perform the duties of that office as efficiently as he, and, as a rule, many boasts, and brags are made which are never performed. Does this sound like the spirit of the lowly Nazarene? -or even the spirit of one of his followers? No, in no wise. In Phil. 2:3, Paul says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory: but in lowliness of mind, let esteem other better than themselves." How far in a political election would a candidate get if he followed that injunction? He would be defeated at the beginning.

But the truth of the matter is they that run for office go out for self. Therefore, it is wrong for Christians to hold or run for office.

### Some Duties to Civil Powers

In Rom. 13:1, Paul says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for powers that be are ordained by God." Some try to believe, from the import of this Scripture, that they are duty bound to obey everything that is commanded by civil powers. But it must be agreed that this scripture is conditional; the conditions are not stated but implied. For there are certain things that civil powers command us to do that the Lord says not do. So, unless we accept this command as conditional, we will have scriptures contradicting. We must be subject unto the higher powers until the higher powers contradict the laws of God. Then we must be subject to the divine law. We might put it like this: God has sovereign authority. He has delegated certain authority into the hands of civil powers. This is delegated authority. Delegated authority is limited by sovereign authority. So long as the delegated authority is in keeping with the sovereign, we may obey the delegated authority. But should the delegated authority command something that would be a violation of the sovereign, then we are commanded to obey the sovereign.

In Acts 5:29, we have an example of this thought. Here the delegated authority made a command that, had it been obeyed, would have violated the sovereign. Christ, the sovereign authority, commanded the apostles to preach the gospel (Matt. 22: 18, 19). The officers, the delegated authority, commanded the apostles not to preach the gospel. What did they do? Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." This explains the question. When the two authorities' conflict, always obey the sovereign, which is God's. There are some things that we are commanded to render unto the worldly governments found in Roman 13:7. Paul says, "Render therefore unto all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." (1) Tribute to "taxes" (Wilson's Emph. Dig.). We Christians must render taxes unto the civil powers. We can do that and not violate the divine law. Therefore, we are commanded to do it. According to Romans 13, we Christians pay our taxes for the protection that we get under civil powers. So, when someone who is unlearned on this question, makes the wild statement that, because we do not fight,

we should not have the government's protection, I tell them that we deserve that, since we pay our taxes for it, according to Roman's 13:4-7. We are walking in the footsteps of our Savior when we render tribute to the higher powers, for we find Matt.17:27, where Christ commanded his followers to pay tribute or custom. Also, in Matt. 22:21, when they came unto him to tempt him concerning the tribute money, Christ took the coin and asked them. "Whose is the image and superscription? They say unto him Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; but unto God the things that are God's." This is just what Paul commands. We render unto the rulers their money with their image thereon, but we render ourselves unto God because we are created in his image. And Paul commands us to "Present our bodies unto God" (Rom. 12:1). (2) "Custom to whom custom"- "Custom" is a duty to a prince or king on the importation or exportation of goods" (Cruden's Concordance). It's used interchangeably with tribute in Matt. 17:25. We can see by this that it is closely related to tribute. In fact, it is tribute but is somewhat of a sales tax. (3) "Fear unto whom fear" or, as Moffatt renders it, whom respect is due." We are commanded to respect or fear the higher powers. 1 Peter 2: 13, 14,"Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." (4) Honor to whom honor"- we as Christians are commanded to honor those in office, those who have rule over us. "Honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17). If we honor them and do all we can toward scripturally obeying them, Paul says we, too, "will have praise of the same" (Rom. 13:3)

### Conclusion

So let us, as members of the kingdom of Christ, ever strive to do that which will meet with the approval of the great king. For at last he shall descend from heaven with "his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance" upon all the ungodly and disobedient. Then, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that' forget God" (Ps. 9:17). But while this old earth is melting with fervent heat and the flames of God's wrath are leaping high, this blood bought kingdom shall spread its, wings, as it were, and ascend to meet the Lord, bearing on its pinions every faithful citizen, to live forever with the great and mighty King of kings, and Lord of lords. "Even so come, Lord Jesus, Amen OPA 1944

## SPEAKING AGAINST A BROTHER, PART 1

BY HOWARD MEENTS

*Editor's Note: I am glad to share an article by my dear friend and brother in Christ, Howard Meents of the Montreal, MO congregation. Howard was raised in the church at Lebanon, MO as I was being raised out in the country ten miles away at Lee's Summit. Our families have known one another in the church for over 100 years. I appreciate and share his concern that the error he describes in his article could be tolerated, embraced, and encouraged among us. Multiple issues from past decades are a grim reminder such actions wound us all and have contributed to tragic losses in our families and congregations. In the scriptures, Paul's exchange with Peter in Galatians 2 reminds us that being brothers in Christ does not exempt any of us from being in error, or from being corrected, and that loving someone deeply does change error to truth no matter how eloquent the appeal. Howard's article will be presented in two parts.*

*Greg Gay*

Sometime ago, I heard a lesson in which the preacher gave the impression he would never speak against a brother, (for any reason), and that nor should we. Admittedly, this is not something any Christian should want, wish, or would ever hope to need to do! But is it always automatically a sin? Or is it possible that it is a sin to sometimes not make a statement about some that are in error?

First, I suppose those who say they will not speak against a brother are referring to “speaking evil” of their brethren. If that is the case, and I think it is, then it becomes important that we understand the meaning of this term.

There are not a lot of examples of this term being used. But let's begin with James 4:11 where the first portion of the verse says, “Speak not evil one of another, brethren.” The Greek term for evil in this case is Kataleto. It means to slander, to speak against.

In 1st Peter 2:1 The Apostle Peter says “Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings ... “ The Greek term for evil in this case is Katalalia. Its meanings are listed as defame, backbiting, evil speaking.

In Titus 3:2 the Apostle Paul says, “To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.” The Greek term for evil in this case is blasphemero. The meanings for this term are listed as vilify, speak impiously, blaspheme, defame, rail on, revile, speak evil. In this case, blaspheme when used towards men, means speak evil of, slander, or abuse. Rail or revile kind of have their own lane and are sins in their own right.

I believe we would pretty well have to agree, that the main meaning as for how evil speaking is used in our verses and in this context, seems to be to slander, (to make false statements against), to defame, (to attack the reputation), to vilify, (to falsely impute a scandalous behavior). I believe we all understand the basic meaning of all this and how that would fit into situations we Christians might find ourselves.

Basically, “evil speaking” would be to speak or pass on untruths to harm a brother, possibly for the one doing the defaming or slandering to benefit themselves in some way.

It is important to note, that evil speaking is not the reporting of evil that is being done and we will be showing that as we continue.

About twenty years ago, it seemed that various Christians, (whether mistakenly or purposely) changed the term evil speaking to have a different meaning to where we just couldn't say anything negative about anyone, or any group of individuals, or a congregation. Though in politics, many times, terms and meanings get changed to control discussions, and politicians and media get by with this, we are still tied to God's word. As I have shown, in God's word evil speaking is not merely speaking negatively but speaking falsely with intent to harm.

In God's word, we find some places where reporting evil or error is commanded, and we see bible examples of reporting being done by Christians, and not just by any Christians, but also by the apostles. So, let's look at and discuss bible examples:

In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus gives commandments as to how to handle a sin between brothers. He says: “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go

and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

So, we see here an example of how this situation where a brother who sins against a brother, which would also be a sin against God, is to be handled. By this reading, the harmed party has a duty, (without speaking of this to anyone else), to go to that brother to try to get his brother to repent of this sin and to correct this matter with both him and God. Failing in that, he is to then report this sin to one or two more brothers in Christ so that there are now two or three witnesses to again try to get this brother to repent. Failing in that, this is then to be reported to and taken before the church. If the brother does not then repent, to all the congregation, he is to then be as a heathen and a publican from which we are to separate.

Now based on this, when this brother failed in his direct attempt to correct this wrong and then reported the situation to one or two brothers, or if it reached the point of being reported to the church, would the wronged brother be evil speaking? Of course not! There is no slander or defamation but instead the truth was shown and evil reported. And here is a case of this negative reporting being commanded by Jesus.

In 1st Corinthians, the Apostle Paul's epistle to a very troubled and erring church, in the 1st chapter, verse 11, he says, "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."

Now, were these of the house of Chloe speaking evil against this church? Did the apostle tell this congregation that I corrected these sinful people for speaking evil of you? The answer to both of these questions is no. He received a truthful report and began to immediately try to correct this congregation.

Further into 1st Corinthians, in chapter 5, the first part of verse 1 starts with the statement, "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you ..." So

does the Apostle Paul then say I have condemned these who are making these reports. No! He just speaks of it being commonly reported and chastises them for their failure to correct this matter.

In Galatians 1:6-9, we find that the congregations in that area had removed themselves from God by following another gospel which he immediately declares to them was not another gospel because there is only one. Instead, they had followed after perversions, (in this case mostly that these Gentile Christian men also had to be circumcised to be saved). In verse 7, we find that there were men who were troubling them and perverting the gospel.

Now, the Galatian brethren would have known who these men were. They knew to whom the apostle Paul was referring and would have known their names. Based on the new definition that some seem to have applied to evil speaking, these Christians could have accused Paul of doing so. But we all know that instead of evil speaking, Paul was explaining their error and warning these Galatians of the danger. He was letting them know where these false teachers stood with God. In fact, in verses 8 and 9, he let it be known that they were to be, accursed. End part 1.

**WHAT ABOUT....**      *continued from page one*

Therefore, Paul is not saying some Christians are worthy and some are unworthy to partake of the Lords' Supper. None is actually worthy to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. If the table of the Lord were only for worthy people none of us could ever approach it. Paul's discussion deals entirely with observing the Lord's Supper in the proper manner.

However, there are Christians and professed-Christians today who still harbor the misconception that one must be worthy to commune. I have seen faithful Christians, serving God to the best of their abilities, who sometimes refuse to partake of the bread and the cup because they are feeling spiritually low and unworthy on that particular day. Ironically, by refusing Jesus' command to commune ("This do ... "1 Cor. 11 :24-25), they only compound the problem by adding another sin to their account.

Many Churches of Christ in Great Britain in the 19th Century also practiced closed communion for several generations. Finally, the majority settled in favor of “opening” communion and allowing each communicant to examine oneself.

Calvinist churches in Scotland practiced an even more extreme type of closed communion. For awhile some churches literally placed a fence around the communion table, with a gate at each end. The members of the congregation were allowed to pass the gate on showing their communion token, a specially minted coin which served as an admission ticket and was given only to those who were in good standing with the local congregation and could pass a test of the teaching of the church. Elders would visit members of the congregation during the week to determine who would receive communion tokens. Examples of this type of practice are still to be seen in a very few Scottish churches.

One of the major problems with closed-communion should be obvious. It is the practice of certain members from within the congregation arbitrarily determining who is worthy to participate and who is not worthy to participate. It is the practice of Christians examining one another when the plain command by the apostle is to “let a man examine HIMSELF” (1 Cor. 11:28). While we are to examine ourselves daily to see whether we are faithfully serving God (2 Cor. 13:5), the word “examine” in 1 Corinthians 11:28 refers to examining ourselves to see whether we are observing the Lord’s Supper in the proper manner. Burton Coffman explains,

Before taking part in such a service, the very least we can do is to conduct a rigorous self-examination. The word used here means “to test” and was used of testing metals. The point is that no Christian should observe the Lord’s Supper in a casual or flippant manner, treating it as something ordinary. It is the central ordinance of Christianity; and the believer’s fidelity to it, or infidelity, is fraught with eternal consequences (commentary on 1 Corinthians 184).

One further argument against closed-communion is that the bread and cup of the Lord do not sit upon YOUR table or MY table. They sit upon the Lord’s Table. The table belongs to Him, and He alone can read one’s heart and know if one is genuinely partaking of the bread and

the cup in a worthy manner.

No one is worthy of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but we readily take advantage of the benefits of that sacrifice when we obey the gospel and are freed from our sins. By the same token we are not worthy to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, but we must readily take advantage of this wonderful ordinance as well. When we partake of the communion in the proper manner, we strengthen and edify ourselves and we glorify God. These are the true objectives of every item of worship. We glorify God the Father and the Lamb that was slain, because they alone are worthy (Rev. 5:12-13).

### **ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN**

*BY RICK MARTIN*

In Hebrews 8:5 we see that Moses was instructed to make all things according to the pattern when building the Tabernacle. Today many ridicule the idea of a pattern for the work of the people of God.

When someone speaks of the New Testament pattern, they are referring to a concept of a pattern that includes a belief and acknowledgment that the Scriptures are divinely inspired and that they apply to all generations. The scriptures have all authority. If one rejects this basic belief, then they are saying the Word of God is irrelevant and man is just drifting.

The concept of a New Testament pattern includes the idea that the scriptures provide the guidelines to know the will of God and how to carry out that will in everyday life and worship. These guidelines tell us the boundaries for what is acceptable and what is not. It gives the specific requirements of what must be done and a sense of how these things are to be done to please God. Where a pattern can be identified and followed there is no need for guesswork and mistakes.

Patterns are valuable in almost every aspect of life. Patterns are important when baking a cake, making a dress, or building a house. Jesus left a pattern that Christians might “follow in his steps”, 1 Peter 2:21. Patterns are very helpful. What is wanted and decided by one party can be carried out by all. This is the purpose of a pattern.

In the Old Testament, there are some verses that explicitly teach the concept of a pattern. The Lord began the idea of a pattern with Abel. The Lord clearly specified animal sacrifices and not vegetation. So began the pattern of animal and blood offerings and it was continued by Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Offerings with blood were essential in God's covenant with Israel.

God gave Noah specific instructions on how to build the ark. Moses in building the tabernacle was given instructions by God .. God gave Joshua exact instruction on how to take the city of Jericho. He also gave David a blueprint for the Temple.

Had these men done any more or less than what God had set forth or, had they in any way altered or substituted in the plan they would come under the condemnation implied in the warning from Hebrews 8:5. "Make all things according to the pattern."

All these examples teach us that God wasn't content to merely request that these men do a certain thing. He was not going to depend upon the accuracy or inaccuracy of their knowledge. He told them exactly what was to be done and how it was to be done. He wasn't content just to say, "build it" or "do it," He gave exact details. God has always given a pattern for his people to imitate.

In 2 Timothy 1: 13 Paul says "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Paul is giving Timothy a pattern or picture, or a sketch or diagram set forth in words which can be described as sound or valid. Timothy was to hold to and follow the pattern.

Because the scriptures are God's inspired and eternal word, our goal must be to follow the Bible as closely as we can. The directions or patterns that are given must not be looked upon as being outdated or irrelevant, even though they may be unpopular with the world's way of thinking. They must not be changed or abandoned for ways that are more consistent with a modern, secular society.

We must be Bible Christians not cultural Christians. Some have allowed the culture of the time to sway and to determine how the Word will be interpreted. Many

have seen how the world does things and, like Israel of old, they have a desire to be like the nations around them. People of the book must keep their eyes on the word with its inspired direction and pattern and honor and follow it to its precise details.

It is still God's will that we seek to know and do, and we prove our love for him when we follow his commands (John 14: 23) "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

The patterns and the teachings found in the New Testament are essential to identify and separate the Church of Christ from false religious groups. One of the things that we must be concerned about is our worship and is there a pattern that we must follow.

It is easy to say what you do in worship is unimportant, just so long as you worship. This is certainly the attitude of the majority of people because man does anything and everything and calls it worship. Jesus teaches that what one does in worship is important and if one offers worship that is of human origin it is worthless. Matthew 15:9 "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

If worship is so important to our spiritual well-being, would God forget to leave us instructions about its proper observation today, when He was so specific about it in the two previous dispensations? God has not left us without a pattern concerning worship.

We have a pattern for our singing Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. We should sing without the use of an instrument. Our objection to instruments in worship is not out of a desire just to be different. It is because in churches led by men who were filled with the spirit, no instruments were used in worship. There is nothing to authorize their use.

We have a pattern for observing the Lord's Supper. It must be observed on every first day of the week because we have an example of a pattern in Acts 20:7. We are also given a pattern of how we are to observe it, in the examples found in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and 1 Corinthians 11. We see the Lord used one cup containing fruit of the vine and one loaf of unleavened bread. This is the pattern that must be followed.

We also have a pattern concerning the teaching. We observed that the teaching done in the Bible was always done in an undivided assembly. We have Old Testament examples, as well as New Testament examples. In 1 Corinthians 14 we are also told that the teaching should be done by men because women are to be silent in the assemblies of the church.

We also have a pattern for contribution; 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2. These verses tell us when, who, what, how much and why. There is no command given for doing it on any day except the Lord's Day or for doing it in any other way.

We also have an example of disciples continuing in prayer; Acts 2:42. Prayer is a command of God, and it is an important part of the Christian's life. It should be part of our worship.

What some want to pass off as worship today is nothing more than entertainment designed to appeal to the senses of men, who have more interest in satisfying their own appetites that they have in worshiping God. We know that over the years the church has been divided over man's insistence on following his own ways, rather than observing God's pattern.

God planned from the beginning of time for men to be pattern-keepers, but from the beginning pattern rejectors began to appear. Man's pride over and over again has led him to spurn heaven's directions. Let "all things be done according to the pattern".

#### **WITHOUT A WEDDING ...continued from page two**

carried out of the feast and cast into "outer darkness." The Lord said there would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Verse 13) What must be the thoughts of our Lord and God when He sees some among His redeemed who live like the world? Can we honestly expect to see Heaven when we live just as the world does?

Just as a wedding garment was something the people wore to a wedding feast, so we also are given a wedding garment when we obey the gospel. We put on Christ. In Galatians 3:27 the apostle wrote: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." It isn't proper to be baptized into Christ and then continue in sin as before our obedience to the

gospel. There must be a change in life, a putting on of Christ, so that as we continue our Christian lives we become more and more like our Lord. In Romans 6:12 Paul wrote: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

It is troubling and discouraging to realize some obey the gospel but continue to live worldly and sinful lives as the years go by. There are few activities the world involves themselves in that some church members hesitate to partake. It seems that some are virtually the same as the world around them. They use language that sounds like the world, they dress like the world, they associate more with the world than with other members, they attend the same attractions as the world, etc. If it is mentioned, they retort "Not everything the world does is wrong!" That is true, but some things they do are wrong; and if we are no different, are we not just as wrong as the world? One of the old preachers once remarked that he believed it would not be difficult to convert the world if only those who are trying to convert them were not just like them!

I have been asked several times in my lifetime what I consider the worst problem the church faces. In my opinion, there are two major things: One is apathy (one just does not have interest in spiritual things) and the other is worldliness. Which one is the problem? Actually, either one will cause the other. Apathetic church members will easily fall into worldliness and worldly members will certainly become apathetic given time. Either way, it is a great problem for the Lord's church to overcome. The congregation afflicted with these problems, unless resolved, will eventually die.

Think on these things. DLK

#### **WHY DEMONIC FAITH DOES NOT SAVE** by Aaron Battey

The denominational world has produced much confusion over the Bible subject of faith. So weakened by various false doctrines is the subject of faith that many might burst a carotid vessel as they passionately advocate for belief in Christ, yet they know nothing more about faith than what they are misled into by charismatic evangelists. Open the Bible to follow along with this study on faith to discover If you have the same faith as demons.

First impressions can be deceiving. This is a common and sage piece of advice most people are familiar with. With this advice in mind, consider the fan favorite method of studying the Bible. That method goes as follows: a person opens their Bible at random, he reads a single verse, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31)," he closes his Bible, and he determines he does not like the God of the Bible. Another person opens their Bible at random and reads, "For God so loved that world that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3: 16)," he closes his Bible and determines he likes this gracious God of the Bible who requires nothing more than a stated belief in Jesus. This method of Bible study is at the root of misunderstanding the Bible truth on the subject of faith. Faith is more than a feeling. Faith is more than a confession. Faith is more than a demonic acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ. The faith of demons is the same faith enlisted by so many religious leaders the worldwide.

James 2:19 says, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble." Demons are rational beings, and being rational they could logically deduce that Jesus was the Christ (see Mark 5:6). Demons indeed have faith, but that is not the same as saying that demons have saving faith. With this being said, no proclaimed Christian wants to share the faith of demons. There are at least four key components to a saving faith, and demons only have two of those components.

The four components of a saving faith are here listed. First, saving faith requires knowledge. Knowledge is "what" a person believes in. The Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip to baptize him. Phillip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may," (Acts 8:37). The Ethiopian eunuch went on to confess the knowledge he was just taught by Philip, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," (Acts 8:37). Even demons have knowledge of the Christ. Thus, making this confession did not save the eunuch. Second, saving faith requires mental assent or mental agreement with the knowledge under consideration. The eunuch obviously agreed with the knowledge of the Christ and so do demons (Mark 5:6 and James 2: 19). Third, saving faith includes trust or conviction in the stated knowledge. Hebrews 3:18-19 illustrates the idea of trust that is expressed in saving faith. The writer is in the middle of retelling Israel's

disobedience in the wilderness as they journeyed to the rest awaiting them in Canaan when he says the following: "And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Notice two key words: obey and unbelief. When the game is on the line, so to speak, people act on what they truly trust or believe. This brings up the last component of faith. Fourth, saving faith is contingent on obedience. Demons do not obey Christ, and this is why they cannot be saved. Hebrews 3:18-19 should be more than enough to illustrate the point. For volume sake, read also James 2:17-18, "Thus also faith by itself, if It does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." This does not contradict other passages of the Bible such as Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 4: 1-8; rather, it provides clarification on a subject made murky by centuries of false doctrine.

Much, much more could and needs to be said on this subject, but permit these proofs on the subject of faith to be enough for now. Consider one last instructive thought: what is the proper name for someone who says they believe something but act as if they do not? The answer is a liar and a hypocrite. 1 John 2:4 says, "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Interestingly enough, Satan (a demon) is the father of lies (John 8:44). Consider why you believe what you believe and do not share the same faith as demons.

#### A Little Fellow Follows Me

A careful man I ought to be,  
A little fellow follows me.  
I do not dare to go astray  
for fear he will go the self-same way  
Not once can I escape his eyes:  
Whatever he sees me do he tries.  
Like me, he says he's going to be.  
That little chap who follows me.  
He thinks I am good and fine,  
Believes in every word of mine.  
The base in me he must not see,  
I must remember as I go.  
Through summer sun and winter snow  
I'm building for the years to be  
That little chap who follows me.

author unknown

## Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, June 14, old\_paths@juno.com. Since last report we have kept busy preaching near home, and once at home. We gladly look forward to Joe Hisle being here for a meeting beginning this coming Sunday lasting through the following Lord's Day. My meeting schedule over the next few months is as follows: Weatherford, Tx, July 6-10; New Salem, MS August 7-14; Fieldstone, MO September 11-14; Nashville, TN October 12-16; McAlester, OK, October 26-30; Oakdale, CA November 11-13. We appreciate the confidence shown us by brethren to hold their meetings and look forward to being at each and every place. Livermore, CA is scheduled to host the California Labor Day meeting and Carl Johnson is to be with us for that. The times in which we live are difficult and it is a comfort to know that God is still on His throne and still in charge. Lord bless the faithful.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, May 19. Our meeting back in March with the Hoyte, TX congregation was spiritually uplifting to all who attended it. This was the third time Jerry and I held the meeting together, taking turns preaching every other service, and we had visitors from far and near. Richard and Carolyn Keele, our sister and brother-in-law from Houston, TX, came and stayed over the weekend. It had been a while since spending some time with them and we're so glad they made the trip. Melvin and Alberta Blalock also came one night from Cleburne, TX and we enjoyed visiting with them. Melvin has been a dear friend for many years and is highly respected as a preacher for his soundness in the faith and effectiveness in evangelism. Also, James Starks came from Paris, TX to attend the whole meeting. Great cooperation like this made it a memorable experience. Thanks so much to the brethren at Hoyte for their hospitality and the invitation to be with them again! Here is the rest of my meeting schedule for this year: July 13-17 at Claxton, MO; Aug. 3-7 at Little Rock, AR; Sept. 7-11 at Chestnut Ridge, KY; Oct. 26-30 at Sharonville, OH. Incidentally, the annual Missouri 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO will take place this year on the dates of June 29- July 3. Brad Shockley and I have been asked to coordinate the services. It should be a great meeting and we're looking forward to seeing brethren from all over the brotherhood. What a wonderful time

it will be, Lord willing, for great preaching, uplifting singing and grand fellowship! We're hoping to see you there.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820 carlmnj33@gmail.com June 3, We had a wonderful meeting at the Crescent Ridge congregation in Birmingham, Alabama, in April. The annual Spring Meeting is always scheduled to end on Easter Sunday. The Pandemic hindered the meeting the past two years, but we had an excellent turnout this year. We stayed during the meeting with our son Corey and his family, which was an added treat. Phyllis and I just got home from an 11-day trip to Europe. Again, our son Corey and his family were in London for the month of May. Corey was teaching a course during the month through the global office of Samford University. We took advantage of those circumstances to visit them. We had a opportunity to worship with brother Graeme Pearson and the brethren in Dunfermline, Scotland, on the first Lord's Day and we worshiped with brother Ken Nwabogu and the Kentish congregation in London the second. We were warmly welcomed at both congregations and it was a thrill to have the opportunity to preach in Europe for the first time in person. My schedule for the next couple of months includes: Greenville, PA (June 22-26), Goshen, OH (July 17-24), Piedmont, AL (July 26-31 ), Tulsa, OK (August 7-14 Homecoming Meeting), and Livermore, CA (Aug. 31-Sept. 4 California Labor Day Meeting). We had Frank Brancato with us for our annual spring meeting in Ada in April and he did an excellent job of preaching. Please keep us in your prayers.

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## WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

### HOWEVER, HIS HAIR BEGAN TO GROW AGAIN!

BY JERRY DICKINSON

"Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him and his strength left him. And she said, the Philistines are upon you, Samson! So he awoke from his sleep, and said, I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free! But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison. However, the hair of his head began to grow again, after it had been shaven." (Judges 16:19-22)

What a tragic fate for the champion of Israel! Samson's parents were visited by an angel before his birth and told that their son would grow up to be a Judge over Israel and deliver them from their enemies. He was to be raised as a Nazarite, which meant among other things, that his hair was to never be cut. His long hair was a sign of the Nazarite covenant and as long as he kept the covenant, God would be with him and bless him. The Philistines had tormented and oppressed Israel for forty years. Finally, they cried out to God for deliverance and the Spirit of God moved Samson against the Philistines. His feats were amazing!

On one occasion he caught 300 foxes, tied their tails together two by two, tied torches to the tails, and let them go. The 150 pairs of foxes, with their tails on fire, went through the fields of the Philistines and burned up their wheat, their vineyards, and all their crops. Furious, the Philistines came with a thousand men to a town in Judah and demanded the inhabitants surrender Samson to them. The people went to Samson and whined, "Samson, what have you done to us? Don't you know we serve the Philistines?" It is amazing that they did not stand up with Samson and defeat the Philistines. How cowardly and faithless they were. Instead, they turned him over to the Philistines, who tied him up with two new ropes and led him away.

Once again the Spirit of God came upon Samson and he broke the ropes as if they were thread. Unarmed, he saw the carcass of a donkey by the road, and taking the jawbone of the donkey he killed 1,000 Philistines! He even named a hill that was nearby, "Jawbone Hill." Again and again Samson overwhelmed the Philistines and delivered Israel. His strength, however, did not come from himself. He wasn't strong because he lifted weights and worked out every day. No, his prodigious strength came from God, and as long as he remained faithful to God and the Nazarite vow he was undefeatable.

Enter Delilah. Samson, for all his strength was a weakling when it came to women. Earlier, he had even married a Philistine woman and had experienced all kinds of problems. Not learning his lesson he fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. He loved her but she did not love him and made a bargain with the Philistine warlords to find out the secret of his strength. After several unsuccessful attempts Samson told her it was his long uncut hair. She had his hair cut and the Philistines overcame him, gouged out his eyes, and made him a grinder in the temple of their god Dagon. Poor Samson, once a mighty champion, brought to this by the wiles of a greedy woman! However, the Bible says; "His hair began to grow again." That means Samson has repented! His growing hair indicates that he has put his trust in God, realizing that he is now helpless without the Lord's help. One day, he is brought out into a stadium packed with thousands of Philistines who are mocking him and God and Samson prays for help, one last time, to overcome his enemies. God hears his prayer and Samson brings the whole stadium down, killing more Philistines on that one occasion than all the others combined. Thus, Samson died a hero because he repented and trusted in the Lord in the end.

His hair began to grow again! That is the fruit of repentance and the Lord always accepts and honors that. Paul clearly teaches in I Corinthians 11 that a woman is to have long hair. The words "have long hair" come from one word in the Greek and literally mean, "to let the hair grow." Paul says her long hair is "power on her head". Samson lost his power, but when his hair began to grow again the power returned. Christian women who have cut their hair need to repent and let it grow again. Some translations render I Corinthians 11: 10, "A woman ought to have a symbol of power on her head." Samson had a symbol of his submission to God on his head which he lost. But he got it back! May the Lord help us, when we stumble and wander away from the way of right and duty, to repent as Samson did and let our faithfulness begin to grow again!