

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. LXXXV

LEBANON, MISSOURI • JUNE 2013

NO. 6

“OUR BIBLE”

By DOUG HAWKINS

Paul states that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17 NKJV). These words should thrill the Christian’s soul. When Paul wrote “All Scripture,” he just as easily could have said, “Our Bible.” In other words, “Our Bible” is inspired of God and it establishes doctrine. It rebukes our sins and corrects our mistakes. Our Bible instructs us in what is right, ensures our completeness, and thoroughly equips us as the saints of God.

The Poet wrote, “How Precious Is the Book Divine, By Inspiration Giv’n. Bright as a lamp its precepts shine, To Guide my soul to heav’n.” Though beautiful, these poetic words do not surpass the eloquence of King David in the 119th Psalm. There, David extolled the greatness of “Our Bible,” as the word of the Living God. In light of this sublimity, this article offers you some great truths to consider carefully:

Our Bible is inspired of God: No other book can rightly make that claim. More than a mere claim, however; the internal and external proofs show the claim to be undeniably true. From Old Testament prophecy to New Testament history, many evidences affirm the Bible’s representation as being inspired of God. First, note some of these references to inspiration:

1. Paul acknowledged having received the Spirit of God (1Cor.2:9-13)
2. Paul certified the gospel is by divine revelation (Gal. 1:11)
3. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth (Jn.16: 13)
4. Peter affirmed that holy men of God spoke as they

were directed by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet.1:21)

In effect, these writers attribute their message to a divine source and then validated that attribution by their own deaths. With the exception of John, each of the apostles reportedly died a very violent death. Jesus even alluded to Peter’s death in John 21:18,19. Would one insanely die to protect a fraud and a scheme? Perhaps, but not 10 more, especially when the other 10 are separated by such far distances - each dying independent of the others. Would all eleven maintain a conspiracy to lie and foist such a lie on the world in the name of dying? Highly unlikely - someone would have denounced it in order to spare themselves, yet all of them to the man sealed their testimony by their blood in dying at the hands of the Jews or Romans for their faith. Why? Because Our Bible is true. Jesus promised his followers “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). The first century Christians withstood unimaginable persecution aimed at dissuasion, and lived with the threat of death hanging over them. But, they staked their soul on Jesus’ promise of eternal life.

Beyond that subtle point, however, are several other bolder forms of evidence. Take for instance the facts of the Bible’s compilation. Our Bible was written over a period of 1,600 years by 40 different contributing writers, all of which were separated by time, distance, and some even by language and culture, yet one sees a continuous harmony from start to finish -continuity, without contradiction. How could such a remarkable feat be achieved without the aid of divine intervention? It could not. Even still, this book ranks among the world’s best-selling titles and more copies are distributed world-wide than any other. Why? Our Bible is inspired of God.

What is more, look to the scientific facts revealed in the Bible - facts that could have only been known by God at the time they were written. When I first read this next passage as a teenager, I recall taking a long pause and seeing goose bumps whelp my arms. It had

continued on page six

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXXV No. 5



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 8

Our Bible..... 1

The Greatest of These is Charity PART 2 .. 2

Querist Column..... 3

I AM 3

A Mother Church..... 5

Baptism: Sacrament, Symbol, or 12

FROM THE FIELDS 11

PUBLISHER

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

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814

EDITORIAL STAFF

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

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

Editorial

“THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY” PART 2

By: DON L. KING

In the May issue of the paper, we wrote concerning some of the ingredients of love, or charity, as it is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13. This month we would venture to mention a few more things written of Paul in the later portion of the chapter. Possibly of all the things one might read in the Scriptures, the things mentioned in chapter 13, 1-13 bring about a more introspective examination of us. It is here that one may realize how lacking he really is and how he is actually seen of God the Father. Many of us have a personal perspective that is usually quite flattering to ourselves; but when we view our person in the light as we are seen by God, we then realize we are perhaps sadly deficient. My father used to use an illustration about this. He said, “There is Tom, as Tom sees Tom; there is Tom as his friend John sees Tom, and then there is Tom as God sees Tom; and each of the three views may be very different.” This can be quite a revelation to a person when he or she realizes others may not see them as they see themselves! This fact is driven home by the Lord Himself in Revelation 3:17. “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” What a profound difference in the way God saw the Laodiceans and the way they perceived themselves. We had better walk carefully, brethren.

Now, let us notice verse 5. “Doth not behave itself unseemly, (unbecomingly DLK) seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Can you recall a person you loved becoming irate, when another person not popular with them was mentioned? Most of us can truthfully say we have seen such behavior. What do we know when this happens? There is a lack of genuine love. That just isn’t the way Christian love behaves. We know this because of what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:5. In fact, such behavior may reveal more than just a lack of love; it may also show downright dislike, or worse. If you have ever been in the company of a person who acted that way toward another, you may have felt a need to distance yourself because of embarrassment. It has been said that good manners often give the measure of the person. God’s people should always use good manners toward everyone. Even when we may disagree, we can be

continued on page seven

QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: What should our association be with family members who have left the church and been gone for a number of years?

Answer: Our association with wayward family members depends in part on the kind of life they are living. In I Corinthians 5:11 Paul writes “ But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner not even to eat with such a person.” If the family member, falls into one of these categories, named by Paul, we are to have no social interaction with them. We are to reprove and encourage them to repent and return to the Lord. If, on the other hand, one has merely drifted from the church, we should feel obligated to do everything in our power to encourage them to return. Association with them would seem to be a viable avenue by which that might be accomplished. It seems to this writer that when we cut off all communication and association with those who have left the church we close a door that might have led to their restoration. The example of a faithful Christian is very powerful. We are to “let our light shine” so that those astray can “see our good works” and thereby be constrained to return to the fold and glorify God. There are many today whose heart aches for loved ones gone astray. We must continually pray for their return and diligently pursue every scriptural opportunity available in an attempt to win them back.

Question: If heaven and earth have not yet passed away, are we not still under the law as Jesus suggests in Matthew 5:17-18?

Answer: I don’t believe Jesus makes such a suggestion in these verses. The Lord points out that His purpose was not to “destroy the law,” but to “fulfill it.” He came to bring the law to a state of fulfillment, not to demolish it. Paul in Eph. 2:15 explains that the work of Jesus “abolished ...the law of commandments.” The word translated “destroy” carries the idea of a tearing down or demolition; whereas “abolished” carries the idea of “to render

idle or inoperative” that is “to deprive of force.” Jesus did the latter, not the former. (Col. 2:14 and Eph. 2:15) In giving us the new covenant, Jesus made the first old (Heb. 8:7-13. This abolition (not destruction) of the Mosaic law is an important element in rightly dividing the Scriptures. There are many false doctrines being taught today that have their basis in a misunderstanding of the two covenants. The book of Hebrews over and over again refers to the “better” covenant under which we live today. The phrase in verse 18 “till heaven and earth pass away” merely denotes the certainty of the fulfillment of the law of God. We all know the material universe will someday pass away, but not until it has fulfilled the purpose God has for it. In like manner the law of Moses would not pass away until it had all been fulfilled. Any attempt to teach that the law of Moses is still binding on people today flies in the face of all that Jesus accomplished in His death on the cross. We are told that He “nailed it to the cross.” (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield,MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

“I AM”

By C.A. Smith

Have you noticed a word that keeps popping up today? The word of which I speak is “whatever”. This word can have several meanings, I guess, but it seems to be used primarily to end discussions. At first, I thought it was used only by teenagers, but I have since heard it from people of all generations. It is used to say, “it doesn’t matter enough to talk about it any further.”

For example, a parent may say to a child, “You should do this or that.” The child replies, “Whatever.” A teenage girl tries to encourage her friend “to do the right thing” in a situation, and the answer is “Whatever,” or two adults argue over politics until one of them has had enough, so he shrugs his shoulders and says, “Whatever.”

On a more significant level, “whatever” can mean that truth does not matter to people. It can communicate that you are entitled to your view of truth, I am entitled to my view of truth, and we can assume that we are both equally right.

In John 8:12-59 Jesus challenged the spirit of “whatever.” His message is bold and his claims cannot be ignored. In the end, you either respond to Him with

a joyous “Yes!” or a defiant “No.”-- but He will not allow you to answer “Whatever.”

Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world.” in John 8:12. Although modern readers tend to focus on the “light of the world” part of His statement, the most important aspect of what Jesus was saying is found in the first two words: “I Am”. That small phrase has a rich Old Testament background, and to Jesus’ first-century Jewish audience, it probably was the most controversial statement He had ever made. To them it sounded as if He were saying, “I am God.” In the context of the Gospel of John. That is exactly what He was saying!

“I am” is the way God spoke of Himself in the Old Testament. When God met Moses in burning bush, Moses asked about His name. He was told, “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:14) Then, later in the Song of Moses, God declared, “See now that I, am He. And there is no God beside Me. It is I who put to death and give life” (Deuteronomy 32:39),

Centuries later, the prophet Isaiah wrote “You are my witnesses” declares the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, In order that you may know and believe Me, and understand, that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. “ (Isaiah 43:10).

Consequently, “I am” was holy language and to use it to apply to someone other than God was blasphemy.

Jesus says, “I Am” As we continue to read in John 8, Jesus begins to use the two words, “I am,” to refer to Himself. I am the light of the world (8:12). I am He who bears witness of Myself (8:19). I am from above (8:23) I am not of this world (8:23)

Each time He used this language, the people who were listening must have winced. Without saying that He was divine, Jesus was using the language of divinity. If Jesus had never said anything more, we would be left to wonder what He meant.

Three times in His interaction with the Jewish leaders in chapter 8, Jesus used the two inflammatory words “I am.” The people knew then, as we know now, that Jesus was declaring Himself to be the Son of God. “I said therefore to you, that ye shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins .”

Confusion followed, and the Jews again asked Jesus, “Who are You?” (8:25). He replies, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and

I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.” (8:28.).

As John continued the record of this conversation, he indicated that Jesus was speaking to “those Jews who had believed on Him” (8:31) They insisted that they were children of Abraham and that, since they had never been enslaved, they did not need Jesus’ offer of freedom. When Jesus accused them of trying to kill Him, they claimed that Jesus had a demon (8:48). As they became more hostile, they claimed again that they were children of Abraham. Jesus replied that Abraham had rejoiced when he had seen the day of Jesus. How could this be, they wondered, since Abraham had been dead for centuries. Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:58).

This was more than they could stand to hear! They picked up stones and, in keeping with Leviticus 24:16, planned to stone Him. Jesus, however, slipped away and left the temple. Everyone recognized the significance of what He had just said; they realized that He had made the bold claim to be one with God, to be the Son of God, to be divine.

What are we to think of Jesus’ claims today? Most people are willing to accept that Jesus lived and that He was a good man, but many are not willing to accept that He is, indeed, the Son of God. Jesus made such a view absurd. He did not claim to be just a good man; He calmed to be “I am.” He did not present Himself as a great philosopher; He presented Himself as the only way to the Father. He did not teach that He had special insight into God; He claimed that He was one with the Father. His bold claims force us to believe or reject His true identity. When it comes to Jesus, “whatever” is not an option. In this matter, the furious Jewish leaders with stones in their hands understood what Jesus was saying better than do the unbelievers today who talk about how Jesus was “a good man.”

Years ago, C. S. Lewis came to a similar conclusion, when he said, “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him. I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must never say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a good moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic-on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg- or else He would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.

You can shut Him up for a fool you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with our patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Well, now, what does all of this mean for us today. First, for those who have grown up in the Christian faith, it forces us to move beyond the “Jesus who was a nice man” phase of our own spiritual development. We are forced, when our children grow up, to want them to be impressed at an early age by Jesus’ kindness and gentleness toward people who are hurting. Having such a picture of Jesus is good. However, if our children never grow beyond that picture of Jesus, if they never realize that Jesus was not only gentle but also bold and demanding, then their faith will fail to mature. Jesus claimed to be “I am.” The old saying is true: “Either Jesus is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all.”

Can’t you see that the encounter with Jesus in John 8 hits sleepy, apathetic Christians Monday through Saturday, this meeting with Jesus is a call to make a decision. Each of us must stand on the side of faith or on the side of disbelief.

What do you think about Jesus? Was He a blasphemer? Was He a liar? Was He a lunatic? You must decide: “Whatever” is not an option. - C. A. Smith, 7 Old Lampasas Trail, Odessa, TX. 79765

**A “MOTHER CHURCH”
STILL IN EXISTENCE (A HISTORY)**

BY RONNY F. WADE

In the mid 1880’s and 1890’s a few men moved into and settled in a rural community which is now called Lowery, Alabama. The men got together and established a congregation of the Church of Christ. They started meeting down a dirt road, across the railroad track, in an old brush arbor. (This road is now known as County Road 20 in Geneva County, Alabama). They worshiped for some time in the brush arbor. In 1908, a preacher by the name of Van A. Bradley came through the area preaching and baptizing people into the church. Sometime later about 1920 the brethren moved up the railroad track and bought a plot of land between the railroad track and Bear Branch Road. They put up a wood frame building and started worshipping there. (“Nothing Fancy”) They had a few benches, but some of the seats were made with planks laid on top of wood blocks in order for all to have a seat. (This day if you don’t have padded pews!!!) The

heat came from an iron wood heater. They worshiped in this building until the mid 1940’s. Some of the gospel preachers who held meetings at this place were Clovis Cook, Homer L. King and J. D. Phillips. In the mid 1940’s the brethren bought a plot of land by Highway 52 and constructed a block building. The congregation met here from the 1940’s through the 1950’s and into the 1960’s. This building was still nothing fancy but was plenty nice. The lights hung down from the ceiling on a cord, and the one where the preacher stood had a yellow light bulb to keep the bugs away. During the years at this place we had 10 day meetings to 2 full weeks. (No three day meetings) During these meetings a singing school was taught every summer. During the 1940’s thru the 1960’s the Lowery church was known all across the brotherhood for its great gospel singing. During this time such great gospel preachers as Homer A. Gay, Homer L. King, E.H. Miller, Clovis Cook, Fred Kirbo, Barney Welch, Ervin Waters, J.D. Phillips, M.J. Buffington, Edwin Morris, Lynwood Smith and B. F. Leonard, to name a few, held these 10 day to 2 week gospel meetings. Every night the house would be packed with standing room only. The doors would be opened and the windows raised, and the people would be standing 3 and 4 deep by the windows outside, listening to the gospel being taught. The singing was something to hear back then. The entire community attended these meetings and singing schools. Some nights there would be as many as 15 people come forward to obey the gospel. One summer almost 60 people were baptized. In the mid 1960’s the brethren bought land across the highway and had a nice brick building built with indoor plumbing and bathrooms (the very first). It was nothing fancy but a lot nicer than the two previous buildings. The congregation who moved into this building in 1967 was very large. From the late 1960’s thru the 70’s, 80’s and into the 90’s we averaged about 98 members. During those years such gospel preachers as Don Pruitt, Carl Johnson, Joe Hisle, Ronny Wade, Miles King, Barney Owens, Taylor Joyce, Paul Walker, Don King, Don Jackson and William St. John held gospel meetings. We remained a large congregation until November of 1977. A problem came about, that left Lowery with only 45 members. We remained this size until 2007. At that time another problem arose leaving only 33 members. We have lost some by death, but still have an average of 28-30 meeting regularly. In 1997 Brother Lynwood Smith called the Lowery congregation “A Hundred year old Mother Church.” The members still meeting there are at peace with one another, and thank God for the few men who settled in a little rural community in the 1880’s and started a congregation of the church of Christ down a dirt road, across the railroad track in an old brush arbor.

The above account was sent to me by sister Zelda Whigham member of the Lowery church since 1947. I have known Zelda since 1952 when I attended for the first time the Lowery church. That summer I was traveling with Brother Homer A. Gay who held a meeting at Lowery. As this report stated, every night of that meeting the building was packed and people were standing outside the windows on hot summer nights listening to the old old story that never grows old. One night a gnat escaped the yellow light bulb over his head and landed in Brother Gay's mouth. With a big gulp he said "there's one bug that is going to be late getting home tonight." It has been my privilege to preach many times in that area. I have been privileged to know some wonderful people who worshiped at this church thru the years. Men like W.H. Reynolds, Chapman Grimes, and many others helped keep the torch burning through the years. Our prayer is that for many years yet to come, this church will continue to be a beacon of hope to the people of that area.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
 OUR BIBLE continued from page one

a definite effect. The Bible declares in Job 26:7 "He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing."

Only by confirmation of modern science have these amazing facts been shown to be true. With the naked eye, one cannot detect an empty space in the sky or determine upon what mechanism the world may be suspended. Even the ancient Greeks once believed that Atlas, a mythological god, held the world on his shoulders. Only within recent years has the world been able to see the absolute fallacy of that belief and the absolute accuracy of this bold statement in Job. Gravity! - the invisible force that holds the earth on its course. "He hangs the earth on nothing" - Find this passage's equal in the Qu'ran. Do the works of Joseph Smith reveal anything so telling? Not in the least, and yet, such is found within what is said to be written by Him who is the "Ancient of Days."

You cannot find anything in the entire literary world that compares to this grand ole book divine. Read Shakespeare. Ponder Philosophy. Look to antiquities. Search the shelves of libraries. Scour the internet to its end. You will be left to conclude as Peter did, "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

Time and space prevent a discussion of the many archeological finds, the outside corroborations of

secular history, or the many fascinating Biblical references to geology, astronomy, and oceanography. Volumes and volumes of works have set these evidences forth in great detail. I, then, can only assert their truthfulness with the hope that you will be like the Bereans of old and "search ...whether those things are so."

Suffice it to say, these evidences lie beyond question or reasonable contradiction for the fair minded man and for every sincere soul who seeks the truth of God. After all, His word is indeed the source of real truth. Jesus said, "...thy word is truth" (John 17:17), leaving little wonder as to why the Lord also says, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Our Bible is worthy of our respect, our time, and our consideration because it is inspired of God.

Our Bible is Authoritative: Paul said, "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor 14:37 NKJV). Our Bible could not be profitable for doctrine (2Tim.3:16) without also being authoritative in its declarations. Obviously then, our Bible reveals the commandments of God and the Lord admonishes us to take great care in our reading and application of the scripture:

1. "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).
2. "...stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15).
3. "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13).
4. "Be diligent to show yourself approved of God... rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15).
5. "...keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you" (1 Cor.11:2).

As being authoritative, our Bible permits and restricts. It allows and forbids, and it both legislates and regulates. Take, for instance, the familiar topic of the Lord's Supper. Our Bible both legislates the observance of the Lord's Supper and regulates the manner in which it is to be observed. Paul commanded the Church to observe the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11, and then offered as a pattern what Jesus did in instituting it as Paul set the matter in order at Corinth. Our Bible provides instruction as to how and as to when the Lord's Supper is to be observed.

By implication, our Bible teaches the use of a single loaf of unleavened Bread as the communion of the body of Christ and a single cup of unfermented fruit of the vine as the communion of the blood of Christ. The historical record of Acts then also informs us that the disciples met on “The First Day of the Week” to “Break Bread” It says, “Upon the first day of the week, WHEN the disciples came together to break bread...”(Acts 20:7). In taking all that is written, we synthesize the day on which, the manner in how, and the reason for observing the Lord’s Supper.

Now, my real point is this: Today very few can go as far to say “that is how it must be done.” Rather, the prevailing attitude states “that’s how we’ve traditionally done it” or “there’s nothing wrong in doing it that way.” Such a lack of certainty and such a lack of conviction demonstrate a fundamental disbelief in the authoritative nature of the Scripture - that the scripture can be exact, precise, and demanding. However, may I kindly say that a man only reveres the Lord to the degree that a man reveres the word of the Lord. God said, “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word” (Isa 66:2 NKJV). The authority of God and his word extend to all matters divine. Through his word, He controls the mission, function, purpose, and organization of the church. He directs worship. He establishes the qualifications of the church’s officers and overseers. He imposes duties upon us as parents, as saints, as workers, as employers and even as citizens of these United States; all the while, expecting faithful obedience to his word and to all of his commands.

Our Bible Comforts, Consoles, Leads and Guides: Where would we be without the influence of the Bible in our lives? As a nation? As a community? As a church? As a family? Nothing consoles; nothing comforts; and nothing admonishes like our beloved ole Bibles. Paul said, “wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess.4:18). Peter asked, “Lord to whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68)? I read the story a number of years ago about Robert Ingersoll touring this country of ours lecturing against the Bible. As it is told, one time on the Kansas’ plains in a small township he lectured to a rather large group of hearers. The infidel’s stinging words caused an elderly woman to become very upset as she listened to him rail, and rail, and rail against the Bible and faith toward God. The story says that she clenched her worn out Bible in her hands and began to softly sing, “Stand up, Stand Up for Jesus...” That Bible had been her everything. It had seen her through so many hard times - through

the death of loved ones, and the parting of friends. It had consoled her grief and lightened her way. Oh, that every soul would simply read and understand the timeless message of the Bible. They could come to see the wonderful, wonderful blessings that are given through God’s living and abiding Word. May God bless you as you read “Your Bible.”



THE GREATEST OF THESEcontinued from page two

kind and respectful. In other words, we can disagree but should not be disagreeable.

In the same verse Paul said, “...Thinketh no evil. Does this mean we should be so naïve that anyone can fool us because we just never think that something may be out of order? Of course not; however, we ought not to be so suspicious of others that whatever they do we imagine some evil purpose is behind it. If we don’t care for the person, we are much more likely to feel suspicious of their good deed. Have you considered that if a good friend of yours tells something about you that turns out to be inaccurate because he was simply ill informed, you never think of accusing him of telling a lie. However, put the same situation in play with a person you don’t care for having told an inaccurate thing about you; and you are likely to think he has lied. See the point? Many of us have been in this very situation.

In verse 6 the apostle said, “Rejoiceth not in iniquity” (unrighteousness) Genuine Christian love does not rejoice, or take pleasure, in seeing sin committed nor in the downfall of those who are overcome with it. Paul mentions the same idea in Romans 1:32: “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” In Romans 1 Paul had named a long list of sins commonly seen today, but he said we should not have any pleasure in them that do them. Conversely, genuine love is happy when the truth of God’s Word wins over Satan and sin, no matter who the person may be who has been defeated by the truth. McGarvey mentions that this verse (1 Cor. 13:6) may also include the malignant joy which many feel at the mishaps or of misfortunes of others. He says it certainly condemns false charity, or love, which compromises truth. Solomon said, “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.” (Proverbs 17:15) What is the bottom line here? We must not allow our hurt feelings, etc., to either justify

sinful acts or condemn righteous ones. Both of these are very common among men today.

In verse 7 Paul wrote: "Beareth all things... This means such love endures wrongs without complaint or retaliation and absorbs the adversities, troubles and vexations of life without murmuring or telling everyone about how badly we have been treated by life or brethren here or there. Many good people just cannot allow themselves to deal with the infirmities of life, financial setbacks and foreclosures, or mistreatment from others. They simply must publicize their pitiful situation. In these difficult financial times, many of us have known good brethren who have weathered one set back after another and never said a word to anyone. They just suffered in silence. Others are just the opposite. The apostle wrote in Philippians 4: 11, 12: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

"Believeth all things:" (Verse 7) In short this simply indicates that this wonderful kind of love sees things in their brightest perspective rather than in the dark and dismal ones. Such love will always put the best possible motives on a brother's conduct. Solomon said, "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins." (Proverbs 10:12)

"Hopeth all things" (Verse 7) This means Christian love causes us to hope for the very best in our own lives and in the lives of others. Have you noticed how difficult it is for a loving mother to give up on a misbehaving son or daughter? She just can't bear to do it because she is always hopeful that he or she will turn around and be a good person and Christian. We have all heard church members say of another: "that person is hopeless." Such a perspective should come only after every possible avenue of help has been exhausted.

Finally, Paul says love "endureth all things. (verse 7) Such a person will endure whatever it takes. Whether it is persecution, suffering, financial hardships, mistreatment from others and on and on the list could go. This ingredient of love is the cardinal quality of fortitude. Such a person just looks forward to a brighter day someday. I have read of those who spent years in prisoner of war camps. They went without everything. However, in their minds they envisioned a day when they could go home and sit at mother's table with their siblings and all would be well. This attitude

made them invulnerable to the enemy's terrible treatment. Listen brethren, we also look forward to a better day! We also look toward a reunion with all the redeemed of the world. We anticipate heaven and being with those ancient worthies we have read so much about for so many years. We too can endure all things. Think on these things. -DLK (more next issue)

Announcements

MISSOURI 4TH OF JULY MEETING

June 29-July 3 Springfield, MO Held in the Remington Center 1655 West Republic Road Conducted by Smith Bibens and Billy Dickinson Hosted by Mission Hills Church of Christ. Motel Information: Hampton Inn 3232 S. Glenstone (Near Battlefield Mall) Phone: 417-882-6611 \$82.00 plus tax (Tell them you are with the Church of Christ) Holiday Inn Express 310 E. Monastery Phone: 417-887-8500 \$99.00 plus tax (Tell them you are with the Church of Christ) Sleep -Inn 233 El Camino Alto Phone 417-866-2462 \$74.00 plus tax (Tell them you are with the Church of Christ) Candlewood Suites 1035 E. Republic Rd. Phone: 417-881-8500 Studio suite \$84.00 or One Bedroom King \$119.00 (Tell them you are with the Church of Christ) All rooms are priced per night with free hot breakfast in the mornings.

For more information contact Larry Ford 417-818-9080 or Floyd Harris 417-886-9846 or Chad Smith 417-839-8222



THE NEW DIRECTORIES ARE NOW AVAILABLE:

Where The Saints Assemble 2013-2014

The directories are \$4.00 plus shipping. Please see shipping rates below. Orders will be filled when payment is received.

Shipping Rates:

1-6 books- \$4.00, 7-12 books- \$5.00,
13-18 books- \$6.00, 19-24 books- \$7.00,
25-30 books- \$8.00, 31-36 books- \$9.00,
37-42 books- \$12.00, 43-48 books- \$14.00
49-over books- \$30.00

Mail checks to: Rick Martin 300 Clubview Terrace
Woodstock, GA 30189

Directories may also be ordered at
www.oldpathsadvocate.org



THANK YOU

I want to thank all those who have lifted me up in prayer for the past several weeks. You will never know how much your phone calls, letters, cards and expressions of concern have meant to me and Alfreda. At this writing I am doing well. The Doctor has given me permission to resume my traveling and preaching schedule. The medication seems to be working and hopefully will continue to do so. I return for a check up in four weeks and if everything is well, I won't have to go back for three months. Please continue to remember me when you pray.- Ronny Wade

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

CAMBODIAN WORK REPORT

By MICHAEL BOLTON

Thursday 28 March 2013

Leaving early to travel to brother Dara Ken's congregation at Stung-Trong. We arrived about noon. Studied with brother Dara on the relationship between the Old and New Covenants. Discussed ways to reach the lost in his area, as there was no one wanting to study. There seems to be no mass communication method such as mail [they have it, but it is not reliable]. Loudspeakers seem to be the predominant method used [The Buddhists use one so large the whole town must hear it whenever they use it]. Social contact seems to be the best method right now, although Radio and T.V. also might be valid options. In the larger cities there are also newspapers.

Friday 29 March 2013

Studied some more with brother Dara on the relationship between the Old and New Covenants. Left Bible tracts on "Words of Life" in Kimhr and some pocket New Testaments in Kimhr. No Bible studies with any local residents were made.

Saturday 30 March 2013

Caught an early [5:30AM] van [15/21 adult passengers + kids and luggage] to brother Song-Sing's place at Barite, Baray Kampong thom. We arrived about 9AM. About 9:30 Savorn and brother Song were talking about the Bible and Jesus Christ to a man, who turned out to be the head man over a Muslim Mosque in the next town. Brother Song knows him through another Muslim friend he has, who is the president of the entire country of Cambodian Muslims. Is the Lord working here, or what?

Around 11:30AM a couple of young ladies arrived [Som-Setha and her girl-friend who's name we didn't get], who we had studied with the last time we were in this area from the village of Sdaach, about an hour

and a half on back roads from Barite. We studied with them [the entire Sing family and brother Savorn and I] until about 4PM. Setha made the decision to be baptized, even after being informed of the necessity of assembling on the 1st day of each week with the brethren, which could be quite a hardship on her to get there. Her friend wanted to study with her husband before making a decision.

At 4:15PM Saturday 30 March 2013 brother Savorn Him baptized Som-Setha by full submersion in water, for the forgiveness of her sins in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit into the spiritual body of Christ, His church [Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38, 47; 8:26-39; Romans 6:3-5; etc}

Sunday 31 March 2013

At 7:30 AM the church at Barite, Cambodia assembled for worship. The same children and adults that attended the service the last time we were here [3 weeks ago] with one addition, sister Som-Setha was there to observe her first Lord's Supper, which was scripturally observed. I gave the lesson on sin, in particular Acts 15:29, on "abstaining from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality." [Also Matthew 4:1-11; Exodus 20:3-7; Leviticus 17:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 6:10-18; etc]. I believe Acts 15:29 is especially important, considering the Cambodian/Asian culture.

After services we caught a bus back to Phnom Penh. Arrived about 4PM. On the bus ride back Savorn sat by a man from the area he grew up in, and began studying the Bible with Him, He [didn't get his name] was very excited to hear about the God that created the world, and wanted to read more, so Brother Savorn gave him his Bible and a "Words of Life" tract as we boarded the bus. [I'm sure he also has his name and cell number].

Monday 01 April 2013

Savorn and his nephew, Keam-Pisith, went to visit his step-daughter's [Srey-mom] dad on the coast, and was back by lunch time. He talked with him about the Gospel, but he was not interested. Left him a "Words of Life" tract. We spent the rest of the day getting ready to leave Phenom Phen airport in the morning.

Tuesday 02 April 2013

Left Phnom Penh airport at 12:45 PM. Arrived Sea Tac in Seattle at about 7PM. Ordered another case of Kimhr Bibles [16] before I left, so they would be available, if needed by any of the congregations there.

Our Departed

WILLIAMS, Sister Joie Williams of the Hartwell congregation near Huntsville, AR departed this life May 6, 2013, just 6 weeks after the death of her husband, Vernon. Joie was 76 years of age at the time of her passing. She is survived by one son, one daughter, and three grandchildren. Joie had been ill for several years and had suffered from a number of physical maladies. When able she always attended all services of the church. A large crowd gathered on May 9th to pay their respects to the family and her memory. Burial was in the city cemetery in Huntsville. This writer and Jimmy Smith conducted the service.- Ronny F. Wade

EVERN Edwin Lawless of Jerusalem, Arkansas, was born April 16, 1931, in Cleveland, Arkansas, to Everett and Alta Freeman Mills Lawless. He died April 14, 2013, just two days before his 82nd birthday. Evern served in the Korean Conflict, was a lifetime member of the VFW, and drove a truck 20 years for Gordon Transport. He was a longtime member of the Cedar Creek Church of Christ. He is survived by his wife Glynnna Sue Roper Lawless of the home; one son, Bobby Lawless of Jerusalem; four brothers, Charles Lawless of Sauna, Oklahoma; Ray Lawless of Ozark, Arkansas, Mack Mills and Barney Mills of Jerusalem; three sisters, Aleda Bateman and Cordell New of Jerusalem; Lena Cossey of Pottsville, Arkansas; and nieces, nephews, and many friends. I first met Evern at the Fourth of July Meeting in Sulphur, Oklahoma, in 1970. I had just graduated from college and had begun preaching full-time. He and Sue were members of the Little Rock congregation at the time and he arranged for me to conduct a weekend meeting at Little Rock in October of that year. I stayed in his home for that meeting and we became fast friends, a friendship that would last the rest of his life. Evern loved the church, gospel preaching, and gospel preachers. While he was physically able he and Sue traveled many miles each year to attend gospel meetings. Their presence was always an inspiration and encouragement to me. A standing room-only crowd came to the funeral services at Cedar Creek to pay its respects to the family, to remember, and celebrate the life of Evern. Terry Hays of Little Rock led us in congregational singing and it was beautiful. I am honored the family called me to conduct the service. May God bless Sue, Bobby, all the family, and all of us who loved Evern in this time of loss. -Carl M. Johnson

MADDOX- Vince Maddox was born Jerry Vincent Maddox to Houston and Carolyn Maddox on September 15, 1970. He departed this temporary residence for his eternal home on March 25, 2013 at the age of 42. He was a son, a husband, a father and most of all, a Christian. He was married to Tammy Howell Maddox for 14 years. To this union were born three beautiful children, Hannah, Thomas and Halley Jo. He was also the brother of Angela Maddox Wilson, Wife of Mike Wilson and mother of Alex and Alanna. Many will remember Vince as the man that counted the number of attendees to the New Year's meeting in Dothan, Alabama, but he was far more than that. Vince

was a unique man in our modern world. Throughout the storms of life, He loved his family with unconditional love. He was adored by his children and his nieces and nephews. But his love was not just for his family, but for the church, its members, and his fellowman as well. Vince believed in helping others with no desire of glory or fame. He would willingly see that the poor were fed and was quick to forgive debts owed to him. He did most of this even without those closest to him even knowing. As instructed by Christ, he did his alms in secret. His fervent desire was for his children to be raised in the Lord's church and to become members at the age of accountability. Alas, his life was cut far too short to see his desire fulfilled. Vince was a capable teacher for the Hartford Highway congregation in Dothan and was always willing to help out when needed. His loss was felt strongly by not only his family, but the congregation where he attended and all that knew him. He will be missed by all. Kevin Presley and I were both honored to speak at his funeral. - Greg Jordan, Chelsea, Alabama

WEAVER - Brother Gary Dale Weaver was born January 2, 1956 and passed away April 21, 2013 at the age of 57 years, after a very long battle with health problems. He was united in marriage with Peggy Lynn King July 23, 1977. To this union were born four children, three boys and one girl. The memorial service took place in a most beautiful edifice at Lebanon, MO, April 26 with a large crowd attending in memory of this good man. Gary was a loving father who preached the Gospel, and was interested in saving souls. The funeral director and owner of the chapel told me that he and Gary grew up together and were with one another almost every day, and "this funeral was for a great man". Gary studied for the ministry under his father-in-law, Chester King, after moving to Kansas City. He had the ambition to preach the Gospel, and so applied himself. He and his family moved to Houston, MO where he used his talents in preaching in the congregation and used his skills to help support his family by repairing office machines in his own business. His ambition for preaching the Gospel prompted him and his wife to move to Rolla, MO to establish a faithful congregation. Their move was successful. Brethren backed the effort, but in order to help support his family, Gary set up his own business of repairing office machines. He learned this skill from his father who was in that business in Lebanon, MO. They acquired property in Rolla for a meeting place and Gary started a weekly Gospel radio broadcast in order to reach more of the population, and was on the air for a long time. He did personal work, contacting and teaching people the plan of salvation, and contending with digressives who opposed his work. He held gospel meetings as he was called, and made trips to Russia and Ireland to preach and teach the Gospel. While in Russia he contracted a serious disease, and had to be treated after returning home. And, yet, he said he would go back with the Gospel "in a heartbeat." Gary suffered a debilitating stroke several years before his death, but he was patient, and when members of the church would visit him, he was pleasant and would greet them with a smile. I never heard him complain nor blame the Lord one time for his incapacity. He had a gentle spirit and was never vindictive toward those who

maligned or spoke evil of him, or mistreated him, but was an example of a man with a Christian spirit. He never had the ambition to be a “big preacher”, but simply a servant of the Lord. He leaves behind, his wife, Peggy Weaver of Rolla, MO, three sons: Andrew and his wife Rachel of Arlington, TX; Micah of Kansas City, and Nathan and his wife, Rachel and their son, Aidyn; and one daughter, Sarah Weaver of Rolla, MO. All three sons are teachers of God’s word in their respective home congregations. It was to me an honor to share the speaking arrangement with Brother Cecil Smith of Brookhaven MS. a close friend and student preacher of Gary’s. The singing was beautifully rendered by brethren and friends of the family. - Paul O. Nichols

NELSON- Sister Zora passed away April 17, 2013 At home after a long illness. The wife of brother John Harvey Nelson and mother of seven children: Richard of Turlock, Raymond (Kari) of Placerville, Rodney (Richelle) of Hughson, Robert (Gay) of Hilmar, Roberta (Ralph) Osburn of Newburg, Oregon, Roger, (Cheryl) of Riverbank, Roy (Machelle) of Riverbank, four siblings: James (Lela) Bennett of Hickman, Lennie Worsham of Modesto, Lonnie (Marilyn) Bennett of Hilmar, Howard (Jeri) Bennett of Arizona. 21 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren. A large crowd of 250 gathered to show their respect to the memory of this godly woman. Zora was born in Madera California to Alfred Elmore (Johnny) Bennett, and Sarah Francis Bennett October 1935. She obeyed the gospel at a very young age. She married brother Harvey and together they raised 7 children to be Christians. They were married for 60 years, a wonderful tribute of faithfulness to their marriage vows, while so many today are divorcing over trivial matters. Zora by her faithfulness to God was a “mother in Israel”. She was a great woman, and attended to her household as a home maker caring for the needs of her husband and children. She was a real good seamstress for the children, and also served others by house cleaning and ironing for members of the local community. Zora and Harvey were “charter members” of the church in Turlock. She was ready unto every good work for the Lord’s Church. She came to the services when she was in pain, distress and anxiety. What an example she was to other Christians. She lived for the Lord and her family, always concerned for the welfare of others. Certainly Harvey, her children grandchildren, great grandchildren could call her blessed. The memorial service was held in the church building in Turlock and interment was in the beautiful Turlock memorial park. The congregational singing was beautiful being led so well by Ivan Costa. The song Ivan wrote; “Someday” was requested by Zora along with other beautiful songs. I was honored to officiate at Zora’s request, along with brother Greg Branch a dear brother from Oakdale. Zora’s life will be remembered as a beautiful one, and an encouragement for those left behind to continue in the faith. We will meet again some wonderful day. She will never be forgotten. -Richard DeGough

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, May 15, e-mail old_paths@juno.com The meeting at Fossil Creek congregation was, in my opinion, a good one.

Good crowds were in attendance with some outsiders as well. Several preachers were with us one or more nights including Melvin Blalock, Clint DeFrance, Doug Hawkins and undoubtedly others I have overlooked, my apologies to them. I enjoyed visiting among the brethren as always and enjoyed the hospitality of the church. I do want to mention the superb singing during the meeting. Fossil Creek loves to sing and they love to sing new songs. A number of capable leaders were with us and the singing was just great. I enjoyed staying with Randy and Rhonda Cantrell, as always. I could not have been treated better. The church at home is doing very well. We are at peace which is wonderful. I want to encourage preachers to send articles and field reports to the paper. Summer is often a “lean” time for the paper as the old timers used to say because preachers are on the road. Please, don’t forget to encourage folks to take the paper. Let us do all the good we possibly can. You will notice a new name among the editors of Old Paths Advocate as of this month. Brother Doug Hawkins has agreed to go on as editor and do his part to help in the work. We are happy to have him and look forward to a beneficial association with him.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820 carlmj@cablone.net May 7--We recently conducted meetings at Cable Ridge and Fieldstone, MO. I think both meetings accomplished some good and we enjoyed them very much. Phyllis and I stayed with Larry and Doris Thomas at Cable Ridge and Ron and Judy Wood at Fieldstone. Both families are longtime friends. A lot of folks drove long distances to come and encourage us in these efforts so we had good attendance with some outside interest from both communities. Here is my schedule for the next several months: Yuba City, CA (May 10-12), Hillcrest, MS (June 9-16), Shenango, PA (June 23-30), Chapel Grove, TN (July 7-14), Napoleon, AL (Aug. 4-11), Neosho, MO (Sept. 22-29), Jamesville, MO (Oct 4-6), and Mill Creek, KS (Sept/Oct). May God bless us all as we strive to do His will.

Brett Hickey, 8373 Highway 5 South, Mountain Home, AR, 72653; -870-736-0774; unityseeker@hotmail.com; May 9, 2013. In recent months, we began preaching, praying, and leading singing at a local nursing home on Wednesday afternoons. An older brother who took his stand with us several months ago assists me. The turnout and discussions following convince us our time is well spent. We have Bible studies in progress with several TV leads in the Ozarks and others over the Internet. Several have completed the correspondence course recently and have been distributed to leaders/preachers near them. I’ve enjoyed meetings at Green Oaks (Arlington, TX), Moore, OK, McGregor, TX, Stockton, CA, and Queensborough (Shreveport) and the preachers laboring among them (Joe Norton, Nathan Battey, John Strain, Wayne McKamie, and Bobby Cunningham). Each congregation has unique strengths and great potential for the future. I look forward to the following upcoming meetings: Powe, Mo (5/17-5/19); Blue Springs (Mt. Vernon, KY- 6/9-6/16); Temple, GA (7/21-7/28); Union City, TN (8/9-8/11); Bolivar, MO (8/21-8/24); Labor Day meeting (Oakdale, Ca - 8/30-9/1). We look forward to Frank Brancato’s meeting here July 14-21. We rejoice to hear the truth spreading and souls being converted!

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

If the date near your name and address reads 6-13 your subscription expires with this issue. Please renew promptly. DLK
Send all subscriptions to: Matt Martin @
1000 Stonecroft Ln., Woodstock, GA 30188

THE BACK PAGE...

CANADA COURT ENDORSES SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

By *CARL M. JOHNSON*

The Supreme Court of Canada has struck down part of Saskatchewan's human rights code banning any speech that "ridicules, belittles, or affronts the dignity of any person or persons," and in doing so has set out guidelines for all provinces to use in determining what may be construed as hate speech.

The top court found that most of the province's human rights code was constitutional, and it ruled against William Whatcott who had distributed anti-gay pamphlets in Saskatchewan. It said two of the four types of flyers he handed out were in fact, hate speech and that he must pay \$7,500 to two people who received them. The other two flyers did not meet the definition, according to the court.

Whatcott called the judgment "complete rubbish," and said he would not be paying the sum and would continue to hand out flyers. "I'd rather follow God than seven socialists who wear black robes and think they are smart," Whatcott said in an interview with Postmedia News. He added, "I'm very concerned regarding the state of religious liberty and free speech in this country in light of this ruling."

However, David Arnot, chief commissioner for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission said, "The Court has made its position clear. When it comes to speech, we are free to be critical, controversial and even careless, but we cannot be hateful."

Don Hutchinson, vice president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada added, "Essentially the court affirmed the biblical principle of 'speaking the truth in love.'"

Hutchinson's reference of "speaking the truth in love" is found in Ephesians 4:15. Paul's words have not been made the law in America, but they are law in the kingdom of Christ.

Paul explains in Ephesians 4 that all believers begin as babes in the faith, but that we must grow toward maturity. God wants us to be childlike, but not childish. Paul warns that immature Christians are unstable and become easy victims of the cunning craftiness of false teachers (Eph. 4:14). "Cunning" is from the Greek word for the dice used in gambling, and where cheating was the standard practice. "Craftiness" means they were ready to do anything to take an unfair advantage. False teachers cheat and adulterate the truth. They will do anything they can to deceive and lead others off course. Their father is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).

Paul warns us that we must not remain at the mercy of false teachers, but we are to arm ourselves with the truth, the only antidote for cunning lies. We do not fight the father of lies with greater lies and more subterfuge, but we fight with the full armor of God, which begins with truth (Eph. 6:14). Truth, however, must be inseparably married to love. God does not allow us to be cruel and hateful under the pretext of being honest and truthful. Good tidings spoken hatefully are not good tidings; the charm of the message is destroyed by the discordant spirit of the messenger. Any claim of loyalty to truth which results in a lack of love stands as much condemned as any claim to all-embracing love which lacks the truth.

I confess that when I see members of the gay community on the news parading and celebrating their sexual perversion while sneering and spewing the most hate-filled invective at anyone who dares to disagree with them, I sometimes have an urge to respond in kind. Yet I know that if I want them to understand marriage from God's perspective, I must converse with them in a spirit consistent with God's heart. I must speak the truth to them in love as I would to any other eternal soul that is lost in sin.

There is a possibility that our country's Supreme Court will legalize same-sex marriage nationally this year, and if that happens, the church will face challenges like it has never faced before.

The biblical ideal of self-sacrificing, lifelong, heterosexual marriage is already a minority belief in our culture. However, we must still uphold and celebrate God's wise and magnificent design in this unique, complementary, and irreplaceable relationship between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:18-24; Eph. 5:22-33). We must teach coming generations of its benefits and beauty, and above all, we must model it well.

We must recommit ourselves to the task of teaching on the subject of the sanctity of marriage. We must train our children about this issue, first in the home, and also in the assembly (Eph. 6:4).

We cannot deny that tremendous damage to the institution of marriage has been done by those who have treated it carelessly. The divorce rate among Christians is lower than the rate among the general population, but it remains too high. The greatest single argument we can present to the world on this issue, therefore, is to live out our own marriage in all its God-ordained fullness and radiant beauty. What better way could there be of speaking the truth in love on this subject? cmjthebackpage@gmail.com