

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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NO. 10

THE TEARS OF AN APOSTLE

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

We have all heard someone say, “It’s enough to make a grown man cry,” implying that the shedding of tears is not a manly thing to do. Studies show that women cry five times a month on the average, while men cry only once a month. It’s surprising that men even admitted to that! After all, here is another saying that is supposed to be true in our culture: “Big boys don’t cry.” However, we must realize that crying under certain circumstances is nothing to be ashamed of, including both men and women, and it is not necessarily a sign of weakness. Indeed, it is part of being human and can be a very natural response.

It is said that hours before D-day was to begin, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, Dwight D. Eisenhower, visited with the paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division to bolster their morale. As he moved among the troops, his heart was heavy because he knew that a 70% casualty rate was possible. At 11:00 P.M., the general stood on the roof of the nearby headquarters and saluted each plane as they took off for France. As they soared past him, tears filled his eyes- “I’ve done all I can,” he told them, “Now the rest is up to you.” Who would accuse Gen. Eisenhower of being a sissy or too sentimental that day? Although trained in warfare, even a soldier has the right to weep now and then.

In the Scriptures we read about another soldier, a man who was engaged in a spiritual warfare, and in his field of activity he was as great a soldier as Gen. Eisenhower was. Yes, the Apostle Paul was an old soldier of the cross, fighting “the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12), for the Lord’s cause. Considering all that Paul suffered in his life (2 Cor. 11:23-28), he was surely a “man’s man” in every sense of the term. He exhorted the Corinthians, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). Only a person who had an appreciation for real manhood would give a commandment like that!

Yet, there were some things that made Paul cry: “Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews” (Acts 20:18-19). By considering the tears of an apostle, we learn a lot about what was important to this great man of God. Let’s notice one of the things that caused him to weep.

CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH

Paul charged the elders at Ephesus to guard the flock for whom they were responsible: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Notice they were first told to keep a watchful eye on themselves, emphasizing at least two points: (1) It takes effort for elders to constantly be aware of the needs of the congregation by keeping themselves mentally and spiritually alert, and (2) elders themselves can become the problem if they don’t remain sound in the faith.

Here is the reason for Paul’s concern: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29). Since elders serve as “shepherds” over the local flock (1 Pet. 5:1-4), they are to do as Peter wrote, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,” realizing that they will someday receive a crown of glory from the “chief Shepherd” for their faithfulness. A shepherd, of course, takes care of the flock by feeding them and providing protection from predators who would devour them. That’s why it is no accident that Paul uses the analogy of a wolf!

Just as a wolf can strike without warning, slipping in undetected under the cover of night, Paul said that this will be true of some false teachers. Our Lord

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Editorial

SO SOON REMOVED

By GREG GAY

When Paul wrote our brethren at Galatia, he expressed his surprise at their quick departure from the basic truths he and others had taught them in the past. He said, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-7).

This is not the first time God’s people had quickly forsaken what they had been taught. In Old Testament times, when Moses was up on the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments, Israel appealed to Aaron to give them a replacement for Moses to represent God to them.

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him” (Exodus 32:1).

When we look at how long Moses had been up in the mountain, we find he had been gone less than a month and a half. “And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image” (Deuteronomy 9:11-12).

Once Israel “quickly turned aside” from the way God had commanded, there was no stopping them until they had reverted to worldly behavior in the name of religion. The Exodus account states: “And when Aaron saw it (the golden calf), he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play” (Exodus 32:5-6).

This “play” lasted until Moses appeared on the scene, likely embarrassed in addition to being very angry. The

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Would it be permissible to refill the cup, while it is being passed, so that you don't run out of grape juice before the entire congregation is served?

Answer: There are a number of problems associated with such a practice. First of all there would be no joint participation (communion) between all assembled since some would partake of the first cup filled with grape juice and others would partake of the refilled cup. One could as easily ask would it be scriptural to have a second loaf available if the first loaf were totally consumed? Could we then start the second loaf and those who missed the first loaf partake of this one? Would that be scriptural communion? In essence if the cup is refilled during the communion service, you have used two cups. One might ask why not just start out with two cups to begin with? The answer is simple: that is not what Christ ordered, nor what the apostle Paul demanded 1Corinthians 11:20-29. The current craze on the part of some to build mega churches leads to all kinds of unscriptural practices. Many seem to forget that there is ample scripture to justify a plurality of congregations but none to justify the use of more than one loaf and cup in the observance of the communion. The notion that refilling the cup is scriptural, while starting out with multiple cups to begin with is unscriptural, indicates a delusionary outlook. Those groups wishing to speed up the process have been greatly helped by the company that now produces small individual cups with a piece of bread on top of the juice so that the communicant can dispense with both the fruit of the vine and loaf at the same time. It is amazing what the human mind can produce when it is unaided by revealed will of God. While it is possible to refill the cup one or more times during the course of the communion, it is not scripturally permissible.

Question: Please explain the meaning of Matthew 16:19 where Jesus said "whatsoever you shall bound on earth shall be bound in heaven and

whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Answer: We should first of all point out that what is promised here was not for Peter only, but was applicable to all the apostles. Those who claim that this passage invests in Peter papal power or authority are wrong. Peter was not the first pope. Kyle Pope correctly points out that "this binding and loosing is not something that happens at the time the apostles (or others) implement a principle. Rather, they are to implement that which had already been decreed or bound in heaven" These men merely delivered the message that originated in heaven. Deciding or determining what was lawful was not their job. Neither is it ours today. We like them must answer to the dictates that come from heaven. While Peter occupied a very prominent role as an apostle he did not enjoy or fulfill the preeminence awarded him by the Roman Catholic Church. He was not the first Pope and he alone did not make law. He along with other inspired men merely delivered the sacred oracles to fallen man. It should also be noted that there were no successors to Peter. Peter realized that he would eventually decrease (1Peter 1:13-15) and that those remaining would need to rely on what had been given by the Holy Spirit. He did not promise or imply that he would be followed by a successor who would take his place in revealing the word of God.

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THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION

By MOSES E. LARD

The spirit of innovation is a peculiar spirit. While coming in it is the meekest and gentlest of spirits; only it is marvelously firm and persistent. But when going out, no term but fiendish will describe it. It comes in humming the sweetest notes of Zion; it goes out amid the ruin it works, howling like an exorcised demon. At first it is supple as a willow twig; you can bend it, mould it, shape it, to any thing; only it will have its way. But when once it has fully got its way, then mark how it keeps its footing. It now calls for reason, for argument, for Scripture; but no more has it an ear for reason, argument, or Scripture than has the image of Baal. Argue with the spirit of innovation indeed! I would as soon be caught cracking syllogisms over the head of the man of sin. Never. Rebuke it in the name of the Lord; if it go not out-expel it. This only will cure it.

I know that I am accused of writing too severely on these matters. It is idle to so accuse me. I can not change. Others may do as they see fit; but by the Lord's help I will never tamely submit to these innovations. My whole mind, and soul, and strength shall be spent to check them. It is high time that manful and outspoken voices were lifted against them. They are the insidious leaven of Satan, and, for one, can get no countenance from me. If I go down, if my humble paper goes down, be it so. I am immovable. Defeat with truth is better than victory with error. Give me the Saviour and a cross rather than the Enemy and a crown.

He is a poor observer of men and things who does not see slowly growing up among us a class of men who can no longer be satisfied with the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things. These men must have changes; and silently they are preparing the mind of the brotherhood to receive changes. Be not deceived, brethren, the Devil is not sleeping. If you refuse to see the danger till ruin is upon you, then it will be too late. The wise seaman catches the first whiff of the distant storm, and adjusts his ship at once. Let us profit by his example.

Let us agree to commune with the sprinkled sects around us, and soon we shall come to recognize them as Christians. Let us agree to recognize them as Christians, and immersion, with its deep

significance, is buried in the grave of our folly. Then in not one whit will we be better than others. Let us countenance political charlatans as preachers, and we at once become corrupt as the loathsome nest on which Beecher sets to hatch the things he calls Christians. Let us consent to introduce opinions in politics as tests of fellowship, and soon opinions in religion will become so. Then the door of heresy and schism will stand wide open, and the work of ruin will begin. Let us agree to admit organs, and soon the pious, the meek, the peace-loving, will abandon us, and our churches will become gay worldly things, literal Noah's arks, full of clean and unclean beasts. To all this let us yet add, by way of dessert, and as a sort of spice to the dish, a few volumes of inner light speculations, and a cargo or two of reverend dandies dubbed pastors, and we may congratulate ourselves on having completed the trip in a wonderfully short time. We can now take rooms in Rome, and chuckle over the fact that we are as orthodox as the rankest heretic in the land.

Though we thus speak, and though we see the future not in the most enchanting light, we yet have hope. Many noble men are left. Many true hearts are still ready to be offered up on the altar of one Book, a pure faith, and faultless practice In God and these we put our trust.

The forgoing article was taken from "Lard's Quarterly," pages 261-262 Volume 2. It will be helpful for us to think on his comments in this modern day. Lard was writing about the innovation of instrumental music in the church. However, his thoughts describe the spirit of every innovation today in the church. Give this some thought brethren. By Richard De Gough, e-mail rdegough@gmail.com

HERE AND THERE

By RICK MARTIN

Football season is upon us. Anybody who is familiar with me knows that I like football, especially the Georgia Bulldogs. In my readings, I came across this analogy which uses some terms all football fans are familiar with. It is quite humorous, and it sure describes a lot of people in the church.

Back field in motion-making 3 or 4 trips out of the auditorium during the worship services.

Draft choice- selection of a seat near the backdoor.

Bench warmer- those who only come to the Sunday morning services.

Stay in the pocket- what happens to a lot of money that should be given to the Lord.

Two minute warning- when the preacher starts to give the invitation giving everyone time to gather up their belongings.

Sudden death- when the preacher goes into overtime.

Blitz- stampede to the door when the services are over.

Halfback option- when only a few return for afternoon, evening or midweek services.

Brother Kevin Presley has published a new songbook named "Ceaseless Praise". It's red just like the hardback hymnal that many congregations use. It has a good selection of old songs just like the hardback hymnal. Some of the differences are; 1) it has more new songs; (and it wouldn't hurt for congregations to try and learn some new songs). 2) It also will not take you as long to find your page number, 3) it is published by one of our own. Brethren, why not support men in our brotherhood who take the time and effort, and spend the money to do these things. Get in touch with Kevin at: www.legacymusicpublishing.com and buy his book.

In many places I see folks rushing in for services at the last minute or coming in late. It seems like moving the children of Israel to the Promised Land was an easier proposition than getting some folks to church on time. Folks know what time services start and the only thing that should cause one to be late is an emergency. If you are one of these late-comers start making an effort to change your ways.

I have been hearing that Brother Joe Hisle is having much success in his Gospel meetings. Joe has baptized several people this past summer. God bless you, Joe, in your efforts. May more preachers meet with greater success and let us all pray that more people will be receptive to the saving Gospel.

That's all for now; pray for the brotherhood.

Rick Martin

SAMUEL, THE MOURNING PROPHET

By MICHAEL BOLTON

When we consider Samuel in Biblical study we are surely amazed. It seems from the very beginning of his life this man was destined to be a great leader, a shining example of faithfulness. We note from the beginning of his story that Samuel was given in answer to prayer. His mother, Hannah was barren and begged God to give her a son. She vowed that after she weaned him she would give him to service to God for all the days of his life. One can marvel because of, and should imitate the strength of character demonstrated by this mother in Israel. But for the purpose of this article we are considering Samuel.

Samuel was the last judge, first national prophet, and stood in the place of Moses as a transitory leader of the nation of Israel as it moved from theocracy to monarchy. Faithfulness is a virtuous characteristic of the whole life of Samuel. God was faithful to answer his mother's prayers; his mother was faithful to keep her vow. Samuel, even when in his tender years as a lad in Eli's house, was faithful to speak God's word.

In 1 Samuel 3 we see the lad established as a prophet. He heard the voice of God calling him in the dark hours of the night. On the third call Eli instructed Samuel to acknowledge God and listen to what the Lord has to say. The scripture records for us that Samuel lay awake the rest of the night. In the morning Eli inquired what God had to say. 1 Sam 3:15-19 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good. And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. Even though Samuel was young and fearful of Eli, he held nothing back. It broke Samuels's heart to say these things, but he still "hid nothing from him". Tender sympathy never led faithful Samuel to compromise loyalty to God.

God's word was "precious" or scarce in those days (1 Sam 3.1). One can surely reason that this scarcity, was in part, because of the faithlessness of men. God had found in Samuel a man, who despite of great love of the sinner, and close relation to the one involved in wrong; would still "speak as the oracles of God;" (1 Peter 4.11).

A little while later, after marriage, two wayward sons of his own, and the people turning their back on God; Samuel anointed Saul the first king in Israel. This relationship with King Saul was as rough as the relationship he had with Eli. Saul though, humble and good when made king, soon became proud and rebellious. We read in 1 Samuel 15 that God rejected Saul as king and ended his royal line. 1 Sam 15:11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. 34-35 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul and Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

We now see a side of Samuel often overpassed. Samuel cried with a broken spirit. Those prayers with tears, in the wee hours of the morning, came from a broken and vexed spirit. This condition is often caused by the waywardness of someone in whom great confidence has previously been placed. Samuel wasn't in the least hateful or vindictive. Samuel was broken hearted over the rebellion of Saul.

Today we fight error, and do so with a broken heart. To do that we must be convinced of truth, and we must love truth supremely. Samuel didn't just proclaim God's Word coldly; he wept when the people rejected God as their king. He wept when Eli, because of his toleration of sin was sentenced to judgment. He mourned when Saul rebelled against God. We must proclaim God's word, and we must be just as faithful as this mourning prophet; but we should do so with the same brokenness that originates in a love of men and love of truth. -OPA 2105 Diamond Head Way, West Richland WA 99353, Mwbolton2001@yahoo.com

ACCOUNTABILITY

By JOEY HICKEY

One of the most popular sentiments among my generation is, "I love Jesus, but don't love religion." They contend, "as long as you have a personal relationship with Jesus, you don't need religion." As far as I can tell, they're really saying, "I love Jesus, but I don't love the church." The idea of not needing the church seemed odd to me, after reaping the benefits of growing up in the church. In all honesty, everything I know about Jesus I owe to being a member of the Lord's body (the church); without the church, I would know little to nothing about Jesus.

The other day, I stumbled across a video where a man claimed, "Jesus hated religion." This is not the picture I get when I read passages like Ephesians 5:22-33, where the Bible compares Christ and the church to a husband wife relationship, and says, in verse 29, "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church." The assertion that Jesus hates religion goes against the command to pay attention to "the flock" and "to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood," in Acts 20:28.

Why would Jesus hate his wife if he commanded each husband to love, nurture, and cherish his wife? (And what kind of husband, for that matter, would want to have a very personal relationship with someone who claimed he or she hated his wife?) Why would Jesus buy (purchase) or die to preserve something that he hated?

Why would the Holy Spirit, through Paul, devote 31 verses of Corinthians 12 to the importance of the church and each of its members, if the church wasn't necessary for spiritual growth?

If we really dig in to the core of their argument, the real issue is accountability. We don't like to own up to our sins... Or at least I know I don't! It's embarrassing, even scary, to admit our mistakes. Among a body of believers who seek to put Acts 20:28 into practice, people will be seeking to know how I am doing spiritually. However, the Bible commands us to confess our sins to receive God's cleansing from unrighteousness and forgiveness of sin (1 John 1:9, James 5:16). I confess that it is not easy to confess my sins. These scriptures aim to teach us the importance of not only being

accountable to God, but also to fellow members of the body! This aspect of Christianity is non-negotiable.

Every Sunday I'm in town during a semester at Harding, I, along with all the young people who attend the Little Rock congregation, get the privilege of experiencing fellowship and hospitality. One particular family, the Brown's, invite us all to their house after morning worship to eat lunch. Every Sunday, I get the chance to partake of the Lord's Supper with fellow Christians, to think of the sacrifices made for my salvation, and honor Jesus by doing what the apostles did nearly 2,000 years ago before he died for me. Knowing what it is to be a member of the Lord's body, I can say without a doubt, religion is not a curse! James 1:26 says, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

If we practice pure religion, what's not to love?



THE TEARS OF AN APOSTLE..... continued from page one

used this same analogy: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). This presents the idea that false teachers come disguised, pretending to be something that they are not, and they are often guided by impure motives. How do we recognize them for whom they are? Jesus gave the answer in Matt. 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." If a person is leading souls into error and causing strife in the church, you can know that a wolf is in our midst! As Tit. 1:11 puts it, their "mouths must be stopped."

CHARACTERISTICS OF WOLVES

The following characteristics demonstrate how the wolf fits perfectly in the picture that Paul is painting for us: Wolves are very adaptable- They can live in almost any climate and are adaptable to all natural environment. Likewise, false teachers enter in among brethren and quickly become an integral part of the congregation. They know how to move in and out of the flock without being hardly noticed, they can fit in with any group regardless of doctrinal differences, and they do what they have to in order to push their agenda. Also, wolves can have many colors and various kinds of fur. Their fur can vary from gray

to brown, while some are pure white on the Arctic plains or red to jet black in the sub-Arctic forests.

Since wolves have the advantage of taking on different forms, this gives them the uncanny power to infiltrate and take control at the opportune moment. So it is with the false teacher! One of the greatest advantages of "wolves" in the church is that they will lead you to think that they believe exactly what you believe, but they are spreading false doctrine privately and sowing seeds of discord. Yes, dishonest tactics are often used in order to deceive the unsuspecting, giving themselves time to gain a foothold among brethren. Sometimes the false teacher distracts people by getting them to focus on the wrong things, enabling him to do his work undetected for a period of time. Edwin Morris, one of our faithful preachers of years gone by, once approached a preacher who was becoming more and more liberal in his views. After asking him what he believed on the topic of fellowship, the obscure answer was given, "Oh, I believe what I've always believed about it." Recognizing that this was nothing more than a dodge, Bro. Morris said that he insisted on a straightforward answer from him. He had learned that everything is not always as it appears to be.

Wolves have a big appetite- With 42 teeth, including four fangs at the front of the mouth to wound, grab, and kill prey, its large stomach can eat as much as 20 pounds of food at one time. So it is with "wolves" in the church! "Not sparing the flock," as Paul put it, their intention is not to hurt only a few, but to devour the whole church. Here is what they are really trying to accomplish: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). It's significant that the word "disciple" is used because it indicates that they want to make followers of themselves. While we can only be a true disciple of Christ by continuing in His word (John 8:31), false doctrine makes us followers of men instead of followers of Jesus.

IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINAL PURITY

Knowing that an apostasy was coming, this saddened the heart of the Apostle Paul: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). This is what made Paul weep. He shed tears out of concern for the doctrinal purity of the church. What about us? -OPA

SO SOON REMOVED continued from page two

Bible says, “And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it” (Exodus 32:19-20).

Israel had great fun in their new “worship” until Moses came down from the top of the mountain. Supposedly, all they were going to do was dedicate a special time to God. Remember, Aaron proclaimed, “Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD” (Exodus 32:5). Instead of honoring God, their expressions of worship in bowing before the golden calf and the mischief that followed were not authorized, were a great insult to God, and resulted in God’s anger instead of his blessing.

When Paul wrote the Galatians, they were in danger of abandoning the truth for a perverted gospel. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-7).

Lenski: commenting on the phrase, “so quickly,” writes, “That is the fact that causes Paul astonishment; he would not have believed it possible if it were not for the complete information that he has... Paul had given the Galatians credit for more solidity and more fidelity. He is deeply pained and hurt. His confidence has been misplaced. A conclusion is involved, namely the fact that when Paul last visited the Galatians, all was well with them. Then came the Judaizers, and instead of being promptly escorted to the door, all these churches began to listen to them and to find something attractive in their false gospel. This is what happened ‘so quickly’ (pp. 33-34).

Paul made it very clear to our brethren at Galatia, no one has the right to change God’s truths: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:8-10).

In our time, in the matter of a mere decade, we have lived to see brethren who were once faithful and

steadfast among us leave us to move in the direction of and eventually embrace a much larger fellowship. That larger fellowship for some today is inclusive of various divisions in the Restoration Movement with practices that include multiple cups, multiple loaves, Bible classes, and instrumental music. Not that every erring congregation practices any or all of these things, but they openly fellowship and recommend those who do without any hint of a need for conversion and repentance for these sins. Their sermon and social media musings appear to moving in a direction of a wider circle still with greater and greater acceptance of denominationalism when they share such things as a belief that all good people in all religions will be saved regardless of what the scriptures teach.

When such brethren seek to proselytize among us at our meetings and our gatherings may we have the courage, to paraphrase Lenski, to “promptly escort them to the door,” or at a minimum, leave them alone. We should have no desire to join with those who are racing to see who can be the most accepting and tolerant of the most departures from God’s truths.

When a congregation, once faithful among us, reaches the point they boldly and publically use preachers from the Christian Church or the multiple cups and classes Church of Christ, hopefully we can agree they are certainly “so soon removed” by such practices even if their prior years of unrepented errors leading up to this are ignored.

Our ardent desire should be to attempt to influence those we know who seem bent on departure to repent before it is too late and, at the same time to be willing to let them go their way if we cannot. Our sad task becomes a duty to “mark and avoid” the very brethren we once completely trusted in the faith, lest their influence continue its spread throughout the faithful. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17-18).

Our task is not to encourage, promote, and defend their evil, as some have chosen to do in the last decade, directly and indirectly, publically and privately, lest we end up being partakers of their evil deeds. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11).

At the same time, what happened to Israel of old and to the church at Galatia is a solemn warning to all today. Departures from God's truths do happen and can happen very quickly. We need to be ready when they do. When we look back to the 1960's there was a liberal movement that swept the brotherhood. Some were caught up in this and left the faith. Many families have not recovered from those difficult times and their family gatherings have not been the same for the last fifty years. Now, in our day, some of our congregations and families are torn asunder by what has happened among us as some of our loved ones have forsaken the faith, breaking our hearts.

We dare not look on the account of Israel, or of our brethren at Galatia, or of what has happened among us through the years with any pride and declare such can never happen to each of us. After Paul refers to the golden calf incident in writing Corinth we have this verse: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

We each need to be reminded we too can easily stumble and fall. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

May we be diligent in our determination to stay strong in the Lord. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:12-14). 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747. papagreg@aol.com

Announcements

The Parables of Jesus Republished

I am happy to announce that we have republished the book "The Parables of Jesus: A Book of Sermons by J. Wayne McKamie," originally published in 1980. This exceptional collection of sermons is thought provoking and spiritually challenging. Wayne captures both the divine nature and the human nature of Jesus' words and then points out life-changing lessons from these truths, which if we truly apply them to our hearts and lives, will make us much better people in the service of our Lord!

This second edition contains the same sermons as the first edition; but during the process, we updated the introduction, the author's note, Wayne's biography, and the preface. My thanks goes to Brother Joe Norton

who graciously agreed to perform the final edit as he did on the original edition. I also thank my son David for his contribution on the graphics.

With the advances in publishing technology, we are offering Brother Wayne's book in three forms: hardback and paperback books, using print-on-demand technology, and an eBook that can be stored and read on electronic devices.

The hardback books are \$20 each and the paperback books are \$10 each. Print book prices include all sales and use taxes. To order one or more copies of the print books, contact me by email at parables@sbcglobal.net by phone at 817-598-0463, or by mail at P.O. Box 2634, Weatherford, TX 76086.

For eBook orders, the cost is \$5.99. It is currently on www.lulu.com and www.ibookstore.com. Sometime in October, it will be available on Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, and Kobo. Go to one of the websites listed above to place your order and download your eBook. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. In Him, Gary Robinson

MY POSITION ON CARNAL WARFARE

I cannot participate in military service in any form, directly or indirectly, in combatant or noncombatant service, because:

1. My duty and obligation to my God is superior to all other obligations (Acts 5:29; Matt. 22:37).
2. My God in the Bible forbids that I engage in carnal warfare in the following references: 'My kingdom is not of this world' (Jno. 18:36). "Put up thy sword", "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Jesus in Matt. 26:52). "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:3, 4). "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44). "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17)
3. To enter any branch of military service, combatant or noncombatant, I would be compelled to "swear" (take an oath) but the Bible forbids that I do so ("Swear not at all" Jesus, Matt. 5:34).
4. To enter any military service I would be compelled to be yoked together with unbelievers, which is forbidden- "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).
5. To be in any branch of military service in any way, I would be part of an organization and therefore have fellowship in the service, but such is prohibited; thus: 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).
6. To serve in any way in military service, I would be deprived of obeying the command to assemble on Lord's day to worship God in the Bible way, at least part of the time, hence would disobey God (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2).

Therefore, I cannot conscientiously engage in carnal war in any form or branch and for the above reasons, I authorize my name to be listed in support of the above principles. Colton Clyde Harrison Middick, Carter Church of Christ, Frederick, OK., Ethan Bullard, 297 Laramie Circle, Pilot Point, TX, 76258; Jared Bullard, 2249 Maple Drive, Little Elm, TX 75068; Joshua Bullard, 2249 Maple Drive, Little Elm, TX 75068.

Our Departed

DAVIS - Dalton Davis was born January 4, 1928 in Geneva County, AL and departed for his eternal home on August 16, 2014. He lived all of his 86 years on this earth in the rural community near Samson, AL. Bro. Davis was married to Sybil in 1950 and this wonderful couple made their home together for nearly 65 years. Dalton obeyed the gospel in 1965 and attended the church at Lowery and later in Opp. He lived a humble, godly Christian life until he died. Always a quiet, unpretentious man, Dalton was loved by those who knew him. His family was second only to his love for the Lord. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ralph and Gladys Weeks Davis, as well as a young granddaughter, Deidra Kimble. He leaves to mourn, his devoted wife, Sybil; a daughter and son-in-law, Wanda and Bob Kimble; a grandson, Lyle Kimble; and 2 brothers-in-law and 4 sisters-in-law. Bro. Davis was quite feeble for the last several years of his life and was faithfully cared for at home by his family. We take comfort in the Lord's promise "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." It was my privilege along with Dalton's nephew, Jeff Hughes, to speak words of comfort and admonition to those gathered for the service. His earthly remains await the resurrection in the Lowery cemetery. - Kevin W. Presley

Byrd - Melvin C. Byrd was born May 31, 1921 at Graham, OK and departed this life August 29, 2014 at Ardmore, OK. at the age of 93. Melvin was married to Mary D. Radford Feb. 14, 1960 and they obeyed the gospel and were long-time members of the 1st Ave. Church of Christ in Ardmore. He was preceded in death by his parents, Louie and Priscilla Byrd, by his wife and one brother, Loy Byrd. He is survived by a daughter, Teresa Allen, and a son, Timothy Byrd, ten grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. It was my honor to speak at the funeral for Melvin Aug. 29th at Griffin-Hillcrest chapel. Melvin's departure is another grim reminder that "we are going down the valley one by one. -Johnny Elmore

Field Reports

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com Sept. 10- Phyllis and I attended some of the Texas Labor Day Meeting and enjoyed it very much. The preaching was good and we got a chance to visit with some friends during the meeting we have not seen in a long time. Jerry Dickinson is scheduled to conduct our fall meeting here at home (Sept. 28-Oct. 5). Since my last report Phyllis and I were in McGregor, TX and Killbuck, OH for meetings. It was especially good to get a chance to spend some time with Wayne and Jean McKamie at McGregor. My brother Benny and his wife Sondra accompanied us to Killbuck and were a great asset to the meeting. We have learned to love these good brethren. They could not have treated us better. My next two meetings are at the Odom congregation, near Dora, MO (Oct. 8-12) and Weatherford, TX (Oct. 17-19). We continue to solicit your prayers.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, September 11, 2014, johnnyelmore@gmail.com. I have been remiss in reporting to the OPA, but I would like to mention that I spoke at Duncanville, TX May 4 and also enjoyed being at Freeman Road in Neosho, MO May 14-18 where I was privileged to visit with Roger Owens and others. June 2-6, I spoke in a mission meeting at Velma, OK, supported by the Hwy. 53 congregation at Healdton, OK. I was also asked to speak at my old home congregation at Ada, OK June 15. It was very good to visit with some old friends. I am glad I got to attend part of the 4th of July meeting at Sulphur and also at Springfield, MO. On July 23, I spoke at Little Rock, AR while en route to Lawrenceburg, TN, where I spoke on July 27. I am looking forward to short meetings at Grapevine, TX October 1-5, Earlytown, AL October 10-12, and Harrison, AR October 19-22. I am thankful that my brethren still think me capable of preaching the word.

Greg Gay, September 9, 2014. August 17 - 24, 2014 I was in a meeting at Lee's Summit, near Lebanon, MO. The meeting was very well attended by the members, with some outside interest even though the meeting coincided with the first full week of school. Visitors from many surrounding congregations plus many area preachers came once or more to support the meeting to the point that additional chairs were needed one night. The area is blessed with many faithful congregations, something that has not happened by accident. Cassie was able to attend the meeting with me and we enjoyed the hospitality of Dave and Lela Doing, dear family friends and past farm neighbors as I was growing up. Lee's Summit is the congregation where my people are from, where I was raised and baptized so it holds a very special place in my heart. Our work continues with the 64th St. congregation in Sacramento. We have been

thrilled to have several out-of-duty members return to faithfulness in recent months, another reminder for us to never give up on those who have gone astray! 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747 papagreg@aol.com

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Sept. 4-- I have just returned from the Eastern Labor Day Meeting which took place in Bedford, IN. What a great meeting it was! We had large crowds of about 300 in attendance and 9 states were represented by the men who preached to us. The following did a superb job of edifying us: Dennis Smith, Walter Hunter, Richard Bunner, Wilson Messer, Austin Maddox, Zack Evans, Greg Jordan, Barney Owens, Jerry Cutter, Marcus Reppert, Bill Ferguson, and Ron Courter. On behalf of everyone, I want to thank the Bedford congregation for hosting the meeting again this year. On a personal note, I appreciate them asking me to help coordinate the services. They worked their heart out and demonstrated what a fine congregation they are! Since last reporting, I've held meetings at Montreal and Bolivar, both in Missouri. We had overflowing crowds at Montreal on Friday and Saturday nights and their hospitality was grand. The new congregation at Bolivar has gotten off to a good start, they have a strong nucleus of members to build around, and they have a zeal for evangelism. It was a joy to be with Brad Shockley, one of the busiest workers in the church that I know of, and he has been a great help to them in their efforts. Bruce Roebuck held us a meeting at Jamesville in August and, as he always does, preached his heart out. We had a full house for each service, good cooperation from brethren in the area, and some outside interest Here is how I will end my schedule for this year: Sept. 26-28 at Ratliff City, OK, Oct. 22-26 at Cable Ridge, MO, and Nov. 7-9 at Shawnee, KS (Mill Creek). Brethren, being on the back side of this year, let's make the most of the few months that are left!

Rick Martin 300 Clubview Terrace Woodstock, GA 30189 mmartin@bellsouth.net It has been a busy time this past summer with Gospel meetings. In June it was good to see and hear Jerry Dickinson in LaGrange, GA. He used to work with the congregation here in Marietta, so he and I go back a long way. Next, I was able to attend the 4th of July in Missouri. A special thanks goes to Ronny Wade and Brad Shockley for their efforts, and also to the Mission Hills congregation for taking on the task of holding the meeting. Our meeting in July was conducted by Bruce Roebuck. We had a great meeting! Bruce did some powerful preaching that strengthened the congregation. Jane and I enjoyed having Bruce in our home for the week. Later in July, I heard Wayne Fussell at Temple GA. It was good to hear Wayne and see that his health has improved. In August, I heard Doug Hawkins at Napoleon, AL. I

enjoyed visiting with Doug and his preaching, as usual was spot on. A week after the meeting at Napoleon, we had our annual singing here at Marietta and it was one of our best. We, of course, used Kevin Presley's new book "Ceaseless Praise". It is an outstanding songbook and I thank Kevin for his effort in publishing the book. Kevin preached for us, Sunday morning and afternoon. His sermons were strengthening and uplifting. At the end of July-first of August, I held a very enjoyable meeting at Piedmont, AL. Jane and I are thankful for the hospitality of our long-time friends, Terry and Angie Studdard, and also others in the congregation. The attendance by the members is to be commended. I would also like to express my thanks to the people of the area who attended the meeting. I recently had my usual 5th Sunday appointment at Napoleon, AL. I enjoy going there and appreciate the congregation for allowing me to preach. This congregation is special to me because it was the home congregation of my late grandparents, Noah and Una Langley. Lord willing, I will be at London, KY, October 8-12 and at Temple, GA, October 19th. In the month of October we are looking forward to hearing Ronny Wade at LaGrange, GA, Stan Owens at Birmingham, AL, and Kevin Presley, at Temple, GA. Please continue to pray for me and our efforts here at home.

Ronny Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 Sept. 12-In July we were privileged to conduct a meeting in Sentinel, OK. This small group of Christians labor tirelessly in an effort to make a difference in the community. Brother Mark Bailey works among them and is tireless in his efforts to carry the gospel to the lost. Mark is a serious student of the scriptures as well as a dedicated servant of the church. We were next at Cleburne, Texas where Melvin Blalock has worked for years. This congregation is filled with young couples who have small children. The future looks bright and we anticipate that under Melvin's capable leadership they will prosper. During August we were privileged to take part in a study on Leadership in Moore, OK. Large crowds attended. Brother John Strain has been instrumental in arranging these studies and is to be commended for his diligent work. The Texas Labor Day meeting in Ft. Worth, under the direction of the Fossil Creek church, was a great success this year. Over five hundred people from various places gathered to sing and study the word of God. Several preachers participated making the gatherings both enjoyable and uplifting. We have just completed a meeting in Greenville, PA. Good crowds and eager listeners were present at each service. Some wonderful Christians live and work here and it is always my privilege to be among them. Our next, Lord willing will be in Walnut Grove, KY followed by LaGrange, GA Oct. 1-5, Eighty fifth and Euclid in Kansas City Oct. 17-19, Neosho, MO Oct. 22-26, Hartwell, AR Nov. 2-5 and Longwood FL Nov. 13-16.

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THE BACK PAGE...

COMMUNION EVERY LORD'S DAY?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

John H. Armstrong writes that when he was a child, "My church celebrated the Lord's Supper four times a year. I remember asking why we celebrated it so infrequently. The answer I got never satisfied, and it still doesn't. I was told, 'if we do this very often, it will lose its meaning.' Precociously I thought, It doesn't seem to mean much to us anyway, so why worry about it losing any more meaning?" Armstrong says that as he grew to understand better the significance of the Lord's Supper he switched to a church that observes it every week (Christianity Today Sept. 2014, pp. 51-53).

I have had people from the denominational world tell me the same thing Armstrong was told about why they observe the Lord's Supper so infrequently, but at the other extreme I have encountered brethren who wonder why the communion must be observed ONLY on Lord's Day, and why it must be observed EVERY Lord's Day. They argue Luke's narrative in Acts 20:7 ("Upon the first day of the week the disciples met together to break bread") is not a commandment and is, therefore, insufficient to make the Lord's Supper an imperative on the first day of every week.

The biblical pattern for when to partake of the Lord's Supper is not based upon Acts 20:7 alone, but it also includes the contexts of Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; and 1 Corinthians 11:20-26.

Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

The expression "Not forsaking" means this requirement is a command, and is, therefore, binding. The command to assemble is not to one individual or one congregation only, but to everyone addressed in the Hebrews letter, which means the entire brotherhood.

The details about when the assembly is to occur and what is to be done during the assembly are not mentioned by the writer of Hebrews, but obviously the early Christians were well-acquainted with those details.

Some of the details are revealed to us as Paul gives instructions to the church at Corinth concerning the collection: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Paul's words are an "order," or command. The expression "in store" (thesaurizoon) means "put into the treasury," and necessarily implies the assembly of the church. If each man laid by in store in his own house, all these scattered collections would have to be gathered by Paul after his arrival and that is the very thing Paul wants to avoid. Paul's words reveal, therefore, that the church assembly took place upon the first day of the week. The Revised Standard Version says, "On the first day of EVERY (kata) week" (1 Cor. 16:2).

Notice now the instructions of Paul concerning the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11:20-26. He explains that after Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper Jesus said, "This do," (ver. 24, 25) which makes the Lord's Supper a requirement, not an option. Paul says it is to be observed in the assembly (ver. 20, 33), and is to be repeated until the second coming of Christ (ver. 26).

Hebrews 10:25 and I Corinthians 16:1-2 have already established authority for an assembly upon the first day of each week. I Corinthians 11:20-26 establishes a requirement for partaking of the Lord's Supper in the assembly and repeating the practice until the Lord returns. What we lack to get the complete pattern for when to observe the Lord's Supper at this point is a Scripture that ties the above three passages together, and Acts 20:7 is the passage. Luke says, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..."

These four passages form a complete, authorized pattern for the time to observe the Lord's Supper. We are commanded to assemble upon the first day of every week and during that assembly we are to observe the Lord's Supper. It is a practice we must not forsake, but on the contrary, Christians must continue the practice until the Lord comes again.

What is there about the Lord's Supper that is so important that He places such strict requirements upon it?

As we commune with Christ and with one another we are reminded tangibly of what Christ has done for us through His crucifixion. He has reconciled us to God and to one another, and has made us heirs to an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven. Surely, such spiritual blessings as these are worth feasting over at the Lord's Table upon the first day of every week. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com