

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 in 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. 9

RECEIVE HIM NOT

By RONNY F. WADE

The basis for our study is 2 John, verse 10: “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:” Such is the divine admonition regarding the false teacher.

Presently, many are engaged in an effort to unite divided brethren. Their task is a great one, and no less commendable. However, the methods being used by many are not so commendable. Fellowship and its allied subjects are of current interest to many. The idea is being advanced that we should forget our differences, love one another, and, most of all **have fellowship**. We should, they say, forget our opinions and all get along in peace and harmony. Of course, any thing that does not suit them is “your opinion,” and according to them should be forgotten; to me, however, it is not all that easy.

The Bible plan for unity is a simple one. Christ is head of the Church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). We are all members of that Church (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:12). Since Christ is head, He possesses supreme authority in matters of doctrine. Whatever He commands, we, His subjects, must believe and practice. The only way for the members of the body to be united is for them all to be united with the head (Christ). When we all unite with Christ and His doctrine, we will automatically be united with each other.

But, the question now arises: “What happens to one who goes beyond the doctrine of Christ, or teaches things contrary to the truth which tend to strife and division?” Many will answer, “We are all brothers regardless of what we teach and practice, so do not get alarmed.” Others say, “We must be spiritually minded about this, and be careful lest we hurt someone’s feelings. **But**, now we ask, “What does the Bible say?” There are three facts that are evident from 2 John 10; they are:

1. Any teacher or preacher who comes into the presence of true disciples with a foreign doctrine is to be
2. Rejected,

3. And greetings withheld.

Before anyone ‘jumps the gun,’ I am well aware that contextually the doctrine under consideration is “that Jesus is come in the flesh,” and I am also aware that the statement “doctrine of Christ” includes much more than this one principle of it. Most commentators will bear me out when I say that a person who taught any false doctrine (i.e., something not a part of the doctrine of Christ) was to be reprovved and rejected.

Notice, brethren, the Bible says “receive him not.” Someone is to be refused. Many would have you believe today that no one is to be refused, regardless of what he teaches or believes. As long as he is a member of the Body of Christ (and many are not even this strict), they say he should be received and heard. But, the Word of God is to be guarded, and those who teach it watched. Those with local congregational authority are responsible for seeing that the truth is propounded from the pulpit. Anyone who comes by or in and teaches a false doctrine is to be warned, and unless he repents, rejected. If you want trouble, brethren, invite the digressives in. Have fellowship with them. Let me warn you; you are playing with fire. When the enemy has sowed his seed, and the church is divided, then you will see the fruits of such liberalism.

Brethren, I want unity as much as any man alive. I sincerely wish there was not one division in the Church. However, I am not willing to go beyond that which is written in order to achieve a false unity. I have never believed that brethren had to agree one hundred per cent on every subject in order to get along. Sure, there are differences of opinion along many lines, but this does not mean we should divide or fall out with each other. However, when **divine principles** are involved coupled with our obedience to them, we cannot cast them aside and say, “It makes no difference,” because it does.

In a feeble effort to justify “the fellowship-every-thing-everybody craze” many go to the church at Corinth as

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Editorial

WISDOM FROM LONG AGO

By DON L. KING

In September of 1981 while in a gospel meeting at McGregor, Texas, I enjoyed a good visit with James R. Stewart, one of our old time preachers. Brother Stewart was born in March 1898 and would have been about 83 at the time of our visit. He began preaching in 1920, and it was enjoyable to hear him tell of some of the events during the early years of his preaching. One of the stories he told was so interesting I have never forgotten it and what a lesson he taught!

He related an event, which took place not long after their first child was born. Times were hard because of the depression. He said no one had any money and; of course, the brethren didn't either. He had been invited to preach at a congregation in a near by town; and since he either did not have a car or couldn't afford to drive it, he decided to hitchhike over that Sunday morning. He had two quarters, and that amounted to all the money the family had. He wanted to be able to put one quarter in the contribution that Lord's Day and he assumed the brethren would pay him something for his preaching. He caught a ride with a denominational man who was driving to the same city and agreed to drop him by the church building. They discussed the Bible on the way over, and he told the fellow that he was a preacher for the church of Christ.

After the services that morning, the brethren called an emergency business meeting. It seemed one of the brethren had a suit of clothes in the cleaners and couldn't afford to pay the bill. The brethren decided in the business meeting to give him the collection that Lord's Day, which was two dollars. That meant Brother Stewart would get no support for his preaching, and he had already put a quarter in the collection. He had only twenty- five cents left and wondered how they could afford to feed the baby that week, to say nothing of his wife and himself. He had no choice but to try to catch a ride back home, so he began holding his thumb out along the highway. As good fortune would have it, the same denominational man picked him up that had given him the ride earlier that morning. Without thinking, Brother Stewart related the incident at church and how he had not received any support for his preaching, hence was catching another ride home, etc. To his amazement, the fellow began berating the church and saying how terrible it was that any church would allow a man to come a distance to preach for

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is dancing wrong for a Christian? Are there certain types of dancing that may not be wrong?

Answer: By definition “dancing consists in the rhythmical movement of any or all parts of the body in accordance with some scheme of individual or concerted action which is expressive of emotions or ideas.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica VII, 20.*) In the Bible we have recorded a number of dances that were an expression of religious enthusiasm or rejoicing. “Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances” Exodus 15:20. Jephthah, returning from his victory over the Ammonites, beheld his daughter coming out to meet him “with timbrels and with dances” Judges 11:34. When David brought the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David, he “danced before Jehovah with all his might” 2Samuel 6:14. Since the dance is capable of expressing a variety of human emotions and thoughts, in addition to expressing joy it can also be used to express that which is lewd and suggestive. We have an example of that recorded in Exodus 32:19 when Moses returned from receiving the law. He found the people dancing and his anger waxed hot. This dance was one of unrestrained abandon, more than likely, characterized by the obscenity associated with the heathen practices of the day. In the modern dances of our times, all trace of religious significance is lost. Ballroom dancing is usually between a man and a woman. Some refer to it as a “walking embrace.” Since it is not religious, the question that begs an answer is “what is the secret of its appeal?” Since boys don’t usually dance with boys and girls don’t dance with girls, it becomes obvious that the appeal of the modern dance is human passion. Ananda Coomaraswamy in writing about the dance in India said “Nothing in India corresponds to the ballroom dancing of Europe and America; the mixed dancing of this kind is shocking to Indian ideas of Propriety” (*Encyclopedia Britannica VII, 20*). The modern dance of today, though not mentioned by name in

the Bible, is nevertheless condemned. Christians must not engage in revellings Galatians 5:19. *The American College Dictionary* defines the word to mean “boisterous merrymaking or festivity; revelry. An occasion of merry making or noisy festivity with dancing, masking, etc.” Christians are also warned against lasciviousness in the same passage. This is defined as “inclined to lust; wanton or lewd, inciting to lust or wantonness.” Since the basic appeal of the modern dance is to fleshly passion or desires it is clear that it falls in the realm of the works of the flesh. The first concern of any Christian with reference to the dance ought to be himself. A individual who can’t see anything wrong with the modern dance, really needs to re-evaluate his/her ability to appreciate the purity of the Christian life. The people of God avoid those things that tend to the “lust of the flesh.” To participate in an activity that is basically designed to arouse such lust, is playing with fire. The average worldly person will readily admit the basic appeal of the dance. What then must he think when he sees a Christian engaging in that practice and who claims he sees no harm in it? The answer is obvious, he sees a gross inconsistency. Not only is the modern dance harmful to the individual, it also tends to destroy his/her influence as a Christian. Young people should beware. At graduation time the “prom” is highly touted as a “must” for all students. Young Christians will see its dangers, however, and avoid participation in such events. In recent times such television programs as “Dancing With The Stars” highlight and demonstrate the depravity of the modern dance. I know of no one who would want to take the Lord with them to a place where such dancing is taking place, and for good cause. The latter part of the question is difficult to answer, since the writer is unfamiliar with exactly the type of dance the querist has in mind. My answer would be that any dance that creates a situation where ones morals, thoughts or influence is compromised is obviously wrong. On the other hand I couldn’t say that there is anything wrong with those types of dances involving individuals such as the one by Miriam and David. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade at P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240 or rfwade@charter.net)

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

By CLOVIS T. COOK

Apparently, we all know the church started in Jerusalem on the first pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is where it all began. Surely we all know where we are now, or do we? The question is: are we headed in the right direction when we seek through experimentation, a newer and fresher approach to the work and worship of the church? Like Caleb of old, we claimed the mountain of truth a long time ago where we now stand on many important issues which troubled the church no small amount in years gone by. Will we keep this mountain? Or will we give it up and go down into the valley of uncertainty where new programs and ideas have become the order of the day in so many places.

IS HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF?

Judges 2:6-14 though penned with reference to matters in the long ago, nonetheless speaks to our day with a relevancy with which we ought to be aware. In these passages we have a profile of apostasy. It was not something that happened overnight; It was not until the third generation that we see the complete picture. (Joshua and those contemporary with him) "And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua..." (verse 7). This generation was very faithful to the Lord. They also taught their children to be the same (Deut. 6:7). The second generation (the children of the first) neglected to diligently teach their children, and so by the time of the third generation, the apostasy was in full-sway. "... and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord..." (verse 10). If history is repeating itself; we could be but a few years short of apostasy. If we neglect to teach our children the whole truth about religion, we will surely lose them! When the Israelites came into the land of promise, Joshua said: "And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land..." (Verse 2). But they did.

If we fail to teach our children the dangers of sanctioning false doctrines and unauthorized practices, the results will be the same to us as to those mentioned in Judges the second chapter. If our children are not properly taught to .."make no league" with unbelievers (such as marriage, and in most cases business contracts as well (2 Cor. 6:14)) we could be seeing, step by step and little by little, history repeating itself. Inhibitions, resulting from a knowledge of, and a dedication to the truth, eventually wear down through association with, and tolerance of those who have no intention of renouncing their unscriptural actions, and eventually disappear. We

are at last seeing this happen in our own day.

**"Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace!"**

How many times have we seen the words of this poem become reality?

TRANSMITTING THE TRUTH

The word "transmit" means: "To send or cause to go from one person or place to another; transfer, convey, to pass along, to hand down to others" Webster. On whom, then, has this responsibility fallen? Surely it falls on each succeeding generation. Our children do not **biologically** inherit true religion. **The truth is learned and received through Bible teaching.** It therefore, becomes our responsibility to teach each succeeding generation the basic truths of the Bible. The great commission of Matt. 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16 was not fulfilled once and for all when it was **first preached** in all the world (Col. 1:5-6), but their children and their children's children had to be taught to observe "all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). We must not underestimate the value of teaching our children to walk in truth (2 Jno. 4). There are far too many of our children who are out of covenant relationship with the Lord. Why? 1. It may be they love this present world, and the things of the world (2 Tim. 4:10; 1 Jno. 2:15). 2. It may be that we of the second generation have not transmitted to them of the third generation how important it is for them to not forget the Lord (Deut. 6:12), or even worse to have never known the Lord (Judges 2:10-13; 2. Thes. 1:8).

THE FINAL ANALYSIS

The last point I wish to discuss is one we should consider very seriously. I have been quoted as saying it is wrong to have the Lord's Supper before the public teaching. So, to keep the record straight- No, I haven't said that but I would be less than honest to say I have no concern about it. Personally, my preference is to follow what I can **read** in the Bible. So, what do we read?

Does anyone doubt that the early church had the Lord's Supper after, the apostles teaching? Luke said they **continued** in doing it that way. The same writer said in Acts 20:11, "And when he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread" etc. It is strongly argued by McGarvey in his commentary, that this verse has reference to the Lord's Supper which took place after Paul's sermon. Hence, it was "...after the apostles teaching." During the course of the night there was an accident. It was after this that they went back up to the upper chamber, where the lights were still burning, and the elements of the Lord's supper were yet undistributed, and broke bread.

Does it strike you as strange that the early Fathers, many of whom undoubtedly worshipped with churches established by the apostles, when mentioning the order of their worship, always mentioned the Lord's supper after the teaching? Where did they learn this? Why did they continue that way if there was a better way?

If you brethren who practice having the Lord's supper before the teaching on Lord's day, were asked for a scripture to justify it, what scripture could you give? I am not talking about such incidentals as the number of songs, how you take up the collection, etc., I am talking about serious business-the Lord's business. To make changes in the Lord's arrangement for convenience or just for the sake of change is to tread on dangerous ground.-- Springfield, MO

THE ROAD HOME

BY SEAN S. MCCALLISTER

One day, not long ago, I drove my ailing grandfather to his dialysis center. He was very ill with leukemia and did not desire to have any more of those painful, sickening procedures. He was weak and so tenderly sore that he could barely make it from his home to his car. "Are you ready?" I asked. "Yeah, let's get this over with," he answered. "But, let's drive on the old turnpike road," he said. "Papaw, it will be quicker to go on the interstate and get off right at the road to the center," I said. "No, I want to go on the old road!" he demanded. I was a little angry at going this slow way, but I did what he wanted. A few hours later he was finished with his treatment. I used a wheel chair to bring him back to the car. By now, he was so weak he could hardly lift his feet from the stirrup of the chair, in a voice nearly a whisper he said, "You can take us home on whatever road you want, just take me home." I drove him back his favorite way.

The Kanawha Turnpike of South Charleston, WV is an old road. It has been in existence since the famous James River Turnpike wagon trail that had guided travelers from settlement to settlement for many generations. No doubt, this path was familiar to my grandfather who had traveled the road as a boy with his grandfather. This road brought comfort to him as he journeyed to a place that he knew would cause him great pain and suffering. This was the last trip he made to the center. The road home was all that mattered now.

Our Lord has made a way home for us all. The prophet Isaiah tells us of a highway in Isaiah 35:8, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called

The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

The highway or High-Way is certainly that which leads one to Christ. To hear and believe (Rom 10:17) produces the credibility, persuasion and moral conviction that we call faith. This faith, if genuine, produces a great result, namely repentance (Acts 2:38). Repentance is a change of mind, purpose and intention. Wonderful things can happen when a person repents toward God (2 Cor 7:10). The next great event that leads to Christ is the confession of belief in his authority as the Son of God (Rom 10:10). The final step that puts a person on the highway to Christ is the humble act of baptism (Acts 2:38, 1 Pet 3:21, Mark 16:16). Now a person is on the King's high way!

Notice our text says, "And an highway shall be there, and a way..." This second word, "way" indicates the path that one has taken after having come to Christ. This is the road that leads home. The text verse says, "...it shall be called the way of holiness." Having been converted to Christ, each person must travel on this road, for it is the only road that reaches the desired home-heaven. Jesus told the disciples that he would give rest to all who would "take my yoke upon you and learn of me..." (Matt 11:28-30). The kind of rest he was revealing was an assurance of salvation to those who remain faithful, even to the point of dying for that faith (Heb 10:23, Heb 3:12-19). When something or someone is holy, that thing or person is reserved for a specific use. Since the text says, "way of holiness," then we can surely know that either the way itself is holy or those who travel it become holy. I believe that both are views are correct when applied together. The pathway cannot be treated as any common street, but it is kept pure by the commands of God, and since this way is preserved by God, then every person traveling it becomes holy as he or she is led away from the common worldly avenues (Col 1:10).

The text also says, "The unclean shall not pass over it." The unclean, or those not washed in the regeneration of baptism (Tit 3:5) are not in Christ or his church and have no right to the highway of the saints, thus the saints are protected from evil influences as they travel home.

"The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." A wayfarer is simply a traveler or a sojourner. Thus, a wayfarer is someone who has the determination of reaching a chosen destination but realizes he is not yet home and does not entangle himself in his current location (Luke 9:62). We learn of Abraham and his

descendants going as sojourners not yet having reached the goal in Heb 11:8-16. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Heb 11:16). The text speaks of "fools." These fools may be better understood as people who have given up worldly philosophy to accept the wisdom of God. When men and women choose the wisdom of the ages, they are often ridiculed and counted as fools. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." (Col 3:18). Our text also points out that even though the traveler may be counted a fool, he "shall not err therein," that is, as long as he stays on the road without transgressing (crossing the boundary) or digressing (straying from the path but trying to run parallel). In context, consider these three passages: 1 John 1:6-7; Romans 8:1 and Jude v 18.

The next verse from Isaiah 35 is verse 9 and it tells us about the safety of this highway. "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."

Lions and ravenous beasts? We read of the very thing in the New Testament scriptures! Examine this passage: 1 Pet 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." As long as a soul stays on the gospel road, he is safe from Satan's fierce attack. One may hear his monstrous roar and feel the heat of his breath, but the lion cannot devour the traveler unless he departs from the safety of the highway (James 4:7). Ravenous beasts, or false teachers, will travel on roads of deception, walking near the wayfarer and appearing to be guides along the way (Matt 7:15). They too can do no harm as long as the traveler follows the signposts and landmarks placed by God. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." (Matt 10:16). Only the redeemed can walk on this gospel highway. "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Col 1:10-12.

Finally, our last verse of Isaiah 35 is verse 10: "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Who are the ransomed? The ransomed are they for whom the Lord paid the price with his very life's blood. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim 2:6). Only those who gladly receive this news and comply with the conditions salvation are considered to be "ransomed," (Acts 2:41). "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." (1 Cor 7:23). The church is the body of Christ, or the assembly of the souls redeemed in Christ-it was purchased with his own blood according to Acts 20:28. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:" 1 John 3:1.

The ransomed ones are on this road to "return." Many of the ravenous beasts will say that religion is dead and non-essential to Christianity, or that it shouldn't be organized, just felt. These beasts would devour the traveler given the opportunity. The word religion is defined as worship. Certainly those who worship God according to his will (1 Pet 2:5) have truly "returned" to him from the worldly byways.

Zion of old was the name for Jerusalem, the oasis city of God among men. In the New Testament and in the context here of Isaiah 35, Zion stands for home, the paradise of God (Rev 2:7). When the traveler in Christ reaches home, there he will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev 15:3), the new song of redemption and praise to the Father. There the meek traveler (focused, without distraction) will be crowned with an incorruptible crown of victory (1 Cor 9:25), truly joy shall be on his head! "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:3-4.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it. for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Revelation 21:21-27)

Let us all turn and go back to God through the highway of Christ’s gospel. Seek this old path and set course to home. The road home is the only thing that matters now.

LESSONS FROM HEBREWS THREE

By MICHAEL BOLTON

In Hebrews 3:13 we read the following: “But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” This verse has chilled the hearts of the earnest and devout for many years. What incredible danger there is for the child of God to fall away and become hardened?! It is indeed a horrible thought.

Sin in all of its awfulness is to be shunned by the believer. And the man or woman who would be God’s alone cannot afford to play with sin at all. One doesn’t have to look hard in the Bible to find the high cost of sin. Just let it fall open nearly anywhere and you will find warning and pleas to turn from sin, and it is replete with examples of men whose end was awful because of sin.

Sin is the most awful thing in the world. From sin comes all the worlds troubles. Many sicknesses come from a direct result of sin. Sin is the one thing the Christian should hate. It is the one thing that we should all be afraid of and run with all our might away from. Sin is the curse that has laid many a good person low. I heard recently of a beauty pageant queen in a nearby state whose picture in the paper as she was being crowned was beautiful and full of hope. A talented girl with a bright future, there was much ado about her and the expectations laid on her were great. But two years later she again graced the front page this time being arrested for prostitution and the picture was one of a spent woman who looked 50 years old and a wasted, ruined, wrecked life.

Having come to an understanding of the horror of sin a man only has a vague understanding of it. To say it should be avoided at any cost, and to describe the awfulness of sin and then to stop leaves the sincere groping in the fields of ambiguity. Surely a student

must wonder what is sin exactly and how do I avoid it? But mostly is there a remedy for sin?

A RESOUNDING YES! There is a remedy. We can know what sin is and there are ways to avoid sin. There is only one source in the entire world that tells us about this. That is the Bible; the precious word of God.

Let us look now to the Book and find its description and definition of sin. In the Bible is found many descriptions of sin which paint the reader a picture of the hideous nature of sin.

- Grievous - Genesis 18.20
- Reproachful -Proverbs 14.34
- Enslaving - John 8.34
- Death -Rom 6.23, I Cor 15.56
- Of the devil - I John 3.8

The list above is incomplete but sufficient to exemplify the awfulness of sin. Surely reasonable people would want to avoid something this terrible. However, wanting to avoid it an knowing what it is are clearly different. Let us consider three verses to better understand what sin is according to the word of God.

Rom 14:23 “And he that doubteth is damned if he eat because he eateth not of faith for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Paul here was speaking of partaking in something that the believer believes to be wrong, regardless of whether or not it actually is. This is the man who questions the legitimacy of a thing and goes ahead without making sure it is right for him as a Christian to do so. Illustrations abound for this point but Paul’s works well. There were in those days newly converted people who were not assured that eating meat that had been offered in sacrifice to the idols which they had previously worshipped was acceptable. The “jury was still out” if you will. Paul is simply saying to abstain until you are sure. For he said in the preceding verses that “For meat destroy not the work of God.” ... It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God” Frankly, it is not necessary to take advantage of liberties if doing so causes another to stumble. And further it is better to deny oneself a supposed liberty than to partake and destroy ones conscience.

1 John 3:4 “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law for sin is the transgression of the law.” One can presume that here is the definition of sin in a nutshell. While there exists many arguments against the heretical doctrine of imputed sin here is a very easy argument that attacks the very core of its foundation. The scripture here says very plainly that for one to sin he/she must transgress the law. One cannot by definition transgress without action. So it can be concluded that one does not in any way inherit sin. Sin is rebellion against the laws of God. A man who insists on his own way like King Saul in the Old Testament is rebellious and does those things because he chooses his will against the will of God.

1 John 5:17 “All unrighteousness is sin and there is a sin not unto death.” Let us use this verse positively. One can with little study determine that unrighteousness is the opposite of righteousness which is God-likeness. One is like God or has the favor of God when he or she does His will. Therefore **un** - righteousness is that which is contrary to the will of God.” 2 Peter 1:1-3. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” Ps 84:11 “For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: “no good thing-will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Rom 8:32 “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” 2 Tim 3:16-17. 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 perfect throughly furnished unto all good works. The apostles and prophets aforementioned here expressed that we have at our disposal everything we need to live Godly or righteous lives. We do not need a mystical experience or a great degree of learning to know what is right. All we need has been given to us already, in the word of God. Let us apply ourselves thereunto. - Michael W. Bolton, P.O. Box 446, Blossom TX 75416, mwbo1ton2001@yahoo.com, 9034916802

RECEIVE HIM NOT continued from page one

an example. If I were looking for such an example, I certainly would not go there, for if ever a congregation received divine disapproval this one did. The division that existed there was condemned. They were advised to withdraw from the fornicator. The false doctrine of the resurrection was refuted by Paul. You can be sure that if false teaching regarding any subject mentioned by Paul continued, something would have been done. “What?” you ask. Read 2 John, verse 10. Remember, too, brethren, this same Paul advised in Rom. 16:17: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” Somebody is to be marked and avoided, and Paul tells who.

This statement caught my eye recently, “But the most sickening thing of all is to hear some fanatical “hobby-rider” blaring out over the ether about the factional warfare in the church, while pretending to be pleading for the unity of all Christians.” I suppose, according to this writer, I would be a “hobby rider” because I oppose cups in the communion and in the teaching. Furthermore, because I refuse to drop my “hobby,” he says that I foster the “party spirit” The strange thing to me is that when he contends for his belief, he is neither a “hobby rider” nor guilty of the “party spirit.” This business of fellowship with many is a one way street and they who walk the devious way expect the conscientious to make all the concessions. Beware! RFW

Fellowship—I hope that all will read and ponder seriously Bro. Ronny Wade’s observations in his article “Receive Him Not.” This writer does not profess to know all about this important subject, but there is enough truth revealed that we can understand that there is no valid reason for us to fellowship men in their unscriptural practices. We all believe in the fatherhood of God, and therefore, we believe in the brotherhood of His children; it is true that we are brethren, but this does not mean that we are justified in winking at divisive, unscriptural, devastating practices of our brethren. Too, it is true we need to be positive in our approach—we need to see how close we can get to each other, instead of how far apart we can get. How true that this is a reciprocal affair—opposing forces come closer only so long as both do the coming, and in spiritual matters using the same standard—the Word of God. The only way that the unity of all believers can ever be achieved is for believers to come to the same Standard—the Word—and there measure all points of view and respect the measurement. God help us all to have the humility and wisdom and concern to do just this. (From This and That by Don McCord) *May 1963, OPA*

WISDOM FROM LONG AGO continued from page two

them and then not pay him. This went on for quite a long time.

Brother Stewart looked at me and said, “My brother, I have never forgotten that. I was so sorry that I had said anything because that fellow had spoken badly of my Lord’s church!” He told how he had prayed for forgiveness and had promised never to complain about the church to anyone again.

Since hearing that story, I have remembered it many times. What a lesson! Wouldn’t it be wonderful if all members everywhere would be that careful now? How much better off would the church be if every member, every preacher, every elder or leader, would be that careful not to give an outsider ammunition to speak badly of the Lord’s church. How much better off would we all be if no one spoke badly of each other or to each other. Our disagreements could, and should be, resolved without such behavior. As Paul wrote to the Romans, he mentioned this behavior and placed it in a very bad light. In verse 29 of Chapter 1 he wrote: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventers of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

The above passage is no surprise to most of us. Indeed, we have heard it over and over. Still, when we are hurt, frustrated, at our wit’s end, it is so tempting to resort to saying bad things or repeating rumors that are perhaps no more than common gossip. Brethren, we must always remember that we must try not to do anything, say anything, or act in such a way as to give anyone cause to speak badly of the church or of us. We are God’s people; and even when we disagree, we need to remember that we are still brethren and need to work together for the benefit of the church and everyone involved. Yes, these are troubling times; and it is obvious that the devil is working hard to ruin the church. We must always keep in mind that any time the church is hurting it is the devil who is behind it. We must beware that we do not allow ourselves to become his servants and aid in hurting the church Jesus died for. Think on these things. **DLK**

Announcements

AN APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE

Brethren, please read this and help if you can. Brother Phillip Prince, who works with the church in Jacksonville, Florida needs help with his support. The brethren are looking for about \$2,000 a month to keep him there. If you can be of help, please contact Davey Sessions, (904) 509-1164. This need is urgent so please do not delay.

Also, a need exists in the Philippines. Brother Conrado Libertino has lost \$100 monthly from his support. Brother Libertino is of great value in Mindanao where he has labored for several years now. I have known him personally for 20 years or more. His faithfulness is unquestioned and his value is huge to the work. If you can send to him, contact me and I will give you his address.

Another gospel preacher in the Philippines is also of desperate need of support. Brother Cabanza needs support in the amount of at least \$150 per month. His need is also urgent and we ask that you please act immediately. I will be happy to furnish the mailing addresses of both of these good brethren. -Don L. King

Notice - Tracts and booklets of fifty two articles on various Bible subjects which have appeared in our Stony Point, Kansas City church bulletin, “The Beacon” are available for tract racks and personal work handouts. This is one way to spread the gospel and advertise the church. These may be ordered from John Catron, 7538 Mackey, Overland Park. KS 66204. His e-mail address is webloafer@gmail.com. Tracts are ten cents each, and the booklets of 52 articles are five dollars plus postage. -Paul O. Nichols



DIRECTORY

Western Directory of the Churches of Christ is available. It contains a listing of members by congregation of all of the states West of the Rockie Mountains. Depending on how it sells, the publisher, is planning on publishing it every two years. It is not complete because we could not get a response from every congregation.

To order send a check for \$5.00 to Donald French at 7117 8th Street, Rio Linda, CA 95673

Field Reports

Paul O. Nichols, 14217 Rosehill, Overland Park, KS 66221, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Aug. 6. - Things are going well at Stony Point, Kansas City, Kansas. Our congregational teachers are doing good teaching. Their lessons are scriptural, with book, chapter and verse. Our newer members are doing what they can according to their talents and ability, and we are trying to encourage and help them in their spiritual development. At the present time, after the last service on Lord's day afternoon I am teaching the rudiments of music for the benefit of those who are interested. Several are attending and we are making progress. Recently we have gained a couple from the digressives who have taken their stand with us. We have welcomed them and we are working with them. **Please take notice of my correct address.** It is wrong in the two most recent church directories and many cards and letters have been misdirected and consequently have been returned to the senders. We are sorry for the mix up. But we have received many cards and letters of encouragement, and we are grateful for everyone of them. Please take notice elsewhere in the paper for the information concerning the many tracts and articles which are available for tract racks and personal work distribution. I was able to attend the Springfield annual meeting. We heard some good teaching and worthwhile admonition. It was good to see so many people I had not seen for a long time. May the Lord bless the brotherhood everywhere.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, johnnyelmore@att.net, August 8--We were able to attend two nights of the 4th of July meeting at Sulphur and three nights of the meeting at Springfield. Both occasions were enjoyable but the meeting at Springfield was outstanding because of the great singing and preaching. On July 4, we were able to visit the Church of Christ at Joplin where I spoke two times. I was impressed with this new congregation's meeting facilities, their attendance, and their enthusiasm for evangelism. Our son, Stan Elmore, speaks regularly there and has baptized several lately. On July 5, I began my part of the meeting with the Highway 53 congregation near Healdton, OK. It was my good pleasure to share preaching responsibilities with C.A. Smith in this meeting. C.A. and Iva Jo have been friends of mine since childhood and we are native to the area around Healdton so conducting the first meeting together in the new building was a happy occasion. On July 31, the Highway 53 building was the site of a singing that we hope will continue the tradition that began over 60 years ago. We look forward to the singing here in Ardmore on the 28th of this month. We are doing our best to carry on here and we pray for the best for our brethren everywhere.

Don L. King 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, August 11, old_paths@juno.com We have been happy to preach at home and Yuba City, CA recently. We enjoyed our work in Kentucky and Ohio and we surely enjoyed the 4th of July meeting at Springfield, MO. We came home tired but refreshed. It will soon be time for the CA Labor Day meeting at Oakdale and we hope to see many friends and brethren there. We are already thinking about the annual trip into the Philippines this coming January and a trip into Zambia in October. In November, we are to hold a meeting at Wichita Falls, Texas and, of course, we look forward to that. The church at Fremont is at peace and we have had some baptisms recently, for which we give the Lord praise and thanksgiving. Let us never forget that the devil is about us and great care must be taken. Preachers, we need your reports and articles, please. Too, we are grateful for the increase in *Old Paths Advocate* subscriptions in recent months. Let us keep up the good work and trust the Lord for the increase.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 73073, Lusaka, Zambia, Aug 1-It has been a privilege to have Mike Criswell and his son here for a few weeks. The church where Mike is, 85th and Euclid is helping with my support and has been very generous in other ways as well, and we praise God for the opportunity for them to send Mike to assist us in this work of Zambia. He will be here for a couple of bush studies where we will be camping and several other studies around the country. Brother Richard Bunner is to join him during our August preachers study to assist us in teaching the biblical position between the Christian and civil government. We have started a new work here at my place and it is doing well. We are meeting in the tabernacle that I built to conduct the annual studies. Several years ago we started a Wednesday night service and this is where we have met as well. We just had a tarp over the top for several years; however, this year we were able to put a tin roof on and it is much better. The Lord has been good to me and I thank the Lord for His grace and mercy. Thanks to all the brethren who help us in prayers, money, kind words. Without this help it would be much more difficult to do the work we are doing. God bless the faithful! Duane_and_Laurie@yahoo.com

Greg Gay, August 12, 2010. I was in a meeting at Tyler, Texas July 4- 11. The congregation had excellent results from word of mouth and area advertising and good cooperation from nearby congregations. As memory serves, about 20 outsiders attended one or more services. I stayed with Glenn and Rebecca Ballard and enjoyed my time with them very much. I visited in the homes of many in the congregation and am very encouraged

with the growth in the congregation, both spiritually and numerically, since my last visit there some years ago. My work continues here in Sacramento with the 64th St. congregation and preaching at area congregations. We look forward to having Sean McCallister here for a meeting in September. 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com.

Niles S. Stein II, Aug. 1-- My home congregation is the Church of Christ in Tucson, Arizona. I am a young man age 19 aspiring to one day be a preacher and do work for the Lord. Currently, I am learning and training under Brother Duane Permenter in Lusaka Zambia. I thank God for the ability and Duane for the opportunity to be a part of the work in Zambia, Africa. This past month we visited many congregations and held many studies both in town and in the bush. Some of our studies were designed to reach the community and others were designed to aid in congregational growth. All of the studies we held were sponsored by local congregations. The congregations we visited are as follows: Dimuna Church of Christ, Itezi Itezi Church of Christ, and Chilibali Church of Christ. Many topics were discussed including the authority of the New Testament, the autonomy of the local congregation with Christ as the only head, and the fact that the Lord's church has no central man-made headquarters. I also had the opportunity to teach at the Zambian fourth of July meeting, held by the Chiyokoma Church of Christ. There was an array of sermons preached by many brethren from all parts of Zambia, and Southern Africa. The brotherhood is strong in Zambia, and has been such an encouragement for me to experience. Please continue to pray for the work here, and support it. Nilesgmc@gmail.com

August 4th 2010, Darrell Crawford 208 E. Baldwin Rd. Unit S, Panama City, FL 32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com Greetings to the faithful everywhere. We are experiencing a very busy, hot summer here in Panama City. We were able to attend the meeting at Earlytown, Ala. with Kevin Presley; he did a great job of preaching the gospel. We are eagerly awaiting his move back to the Dothan, AL. area. Hopefully we can work together some in spreading the gospel in this area. The work here at home is moving right along, slowly but surely. We are continuing to run the newspaper article each week, We are also subscribing to the "New Movers" program where we receive a list of new movers into the area. The first month we had over 300 new names and sent a letter to each of them. We had at least one response to that mailing, the man said he would return, we are making contact with him again. We have had several visitors from the community, this is encouraging to us too. We just returned from a trip to Oklahoma

where we were able to see many family and friends as well as preaching at the Capitol Hill and the NW 21St congregations. We thank the brethren there for their continued support and their prayers. We had one response to the gospel for which we give God all the praise. It is so wonderful how the gospel message still touches the hearts of men. We are looking forward to our gospel meeting here August 12-15th. We have had many outsiders say they plan to attend. If at anytime you plan to be in the area please stop by, we would love for you to visit us here at Panama City. May we always hold to the old paths and may the Lord bless His church everywhere.

The gospel meeting conducted by brother Johnny Elmore and myself for the Hwy-53 Church of Christ located just north of Healdton, Oklahoma is now history. There were no visible results. However, it was a genuine pleasure and a blessing to work with the group that worships there. They advertised the meeting extensively in several newspapers, sent out attractive flyers, and by word of mouth, but alas, only three outsiders came. Yet, we did have splendid cooperation from neighboring congregations and this gave us good crowds during the meeting. The brethren and sisters who worship at this congregation are exciting people to work with, for they have an infectious desire to work for the Lord, in furthering the cause of Christ in the area where they live and elsewhere. Their new building is attractive, accommodative, and located in a conspicuous place for all who pass by. We were delighted to have fellow preachers to attend. Brethren Paul Melton, Sean McCalister, and Matt Trent. The theme for the meeting was "Lift Him Up", and brother Johnny and I preached a variety of sermons that exemplified this theme. I thoroughly enjoyed being with him and hearing him preach forcefully the saving gospel of Christ. The wife and I stayed with my nephew Mark Teal and his wife Shirley, who treated us as well as one would expect to be treated. Prior to this meeting, the wife and I were able to attend several services of the annual meeting in Sulphur, Oklahoma, where I was privileged to speak one night. Now, we are back at home with the faithful few, where we will continue, to the best of our ability, with God's help, to encourage the members, to spread the good news of Christ and the salvation He brings to those who are willing to obey His will. Please remember us, when you pray and our prayers will be for all of God's family throughout the world. - C. A. Smith casmith810@suddenlink.net

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THE REVIVAL OF CALVINISM?

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

There is startling evidence that John Calvin is making a comeback in the world today. Last summer members of Presbyterian and Reformed denominations around the world commemorated the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth (July 10, 1509). This past year has seen numerous conferences, lectures, and publications evaluating Calvin and his role as one of the most influential thinkers of the last millennium. A few months ago, *Time* magazine published a story of the top ten forces that are currently changing the world. In addition to the expected trends like the increasing role of the Internet and the global financial crisis, the revival of Calvinism in America came in as number three on the list.

After Calvin's death in 1564, some of his followers put together a five-point outline of his primary teachings at the Synod of Dort of 1618. They arranged these five points in the acrostic "TULIP," and it has become the classic statement of the Calvinist system.

- **Total Depravity**, is the belief that each person is born carrying the guilt of Adam's sin and is unable to do even the slightest good thing.
- **Unconditional Election**, teaches that God selects certain people to be saved and others to be lost.
- **Limited Atonement** implies that God never intends to save anyone except those He arbitrarily selects. This point makes a lot of people who boldly proclaim the other four points of Calvinism a little squeamish and few still hold onto it.
- **Irresistible Grace** teaches that if God has sovereignly chosen you to be saved, it is impossible for you to reject God's choice.
- **Perseverance of the saints**, the final point, teaches "once saved, always saved." While the first four points are dark, unpleasant, and fill believers with anxiety about whether God has chosen them to be saved, the last point provides a "Pollyanna outlook." It ignores the many warnings in Scripture against falling away and removes any fear of God's judgment.

By the 17th Century Calvin's teaching had spread throughout Europe and even to the American colonies. In the 1800's, however, ordained Presbyterian ministers Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, and Alexander Campbell began to see the insidiousness of this doctrine and began to combat it, beginning a massive movement to restore pure New Testament Christianity in America.

Stone and the Campbells were eventually joined in their fight against Calvinism by Baptist preacher Raccoon John Smith. One night while Smith was away from home on a preaching trip he received word his house had burned and two of his four children had been killed in the fire. Smith was devastated by the news, and as a Calvinist he also tried to prepare himself to answer the question he knew would be foremost in his wife's mind—"Are our children among the elect of God?"

Sooner or later the obvious question of every true Calvinist has to be, "How can I be certain I am among the elect God has chosen to save?" While Calvin was confident in his own election, he offers little comfort to others who are trying to make the same determination. Calvin says there is no objective evidence to determine who is saved or lost—that you cannot distinguish the elect from the damned by their conduct, subjective experiences, or any other external criteria. You just sort of have to conclude intuitively that you are among the elect and then believe it.

Smith knew of no tangible, objective way for determining whom God has saved. Therefore, he knew nothing he might say to his wife that would console her. If he told her, "Our babies are glorified," then just the thought of the possibility they might not be among the elect would only increase her anguish. Upon arriving home Smith did his best to console his wife Anna, but she could not be consoled. Days passed and soon Anna passed away too, grieving herself to death. Smith buried her beside the buried ashes of their two children.

This horrible tragedy caused Smith to rethink his beliefs. He began studying the writings and debates of Alexander Campbell and became convinced that contrary to the pure teachings of Calvinism, simple obedience to the gospel can save anyone (2 Thes. 1:7). He came to see that in one sense we save ourselves when we make the choice to obey the gospel (1 Tim. 4:16; Acts 2:40). He learned further that the Bible provides objective criteria for determining whether we are the children of God or the children of the devil (Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Jn. 3:10), and therefore, whether we are saved or lost (1 Jn. 5:11-13).

When you consider the heart-wrenching anxieties foisted upon our American forefathers by Calvinism and the difficulties they experienced in leaving that system, I shudder to think some of our own may prefer to return to it. In our case such a phenomenon would not be so much a revival of Calvinism as it would be the dog turning to its own vomit again (2 Pet. 2:22). carlmj@cableone.net