

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. 9

## BAPTISM AND EPHESIANS 2:8-9

By ANDREW RICHARDSON

Contrary to majority view, baptism is absolutely necessary for receiving salvation just as is faith and repentance (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Gal. 3:27). However, that which Paul penned in Ephesians 2:8-9, perhaps more than any other passage, is cited as proof that we are saved without baptism. It is said that baptism cannot be a necessity because Paul says salvation is not “of works” and “not of yourselves.” In reality, when rightly understood, Paul’s point has no relevance to the requirement of baptism for salvation.

### CONTEXT

Paul is speaking about what salvation is based upon - the grace of God through the blood of Christ. He is emphasizing God’s great love and mercy by reminding the Christians at Ephesus that though they were once lost in their sins, being “dead” (vv. 1, 5), they were saved by God’s grace (v. 8). Nothing is clearer in the Bible than that our redemption is rooted in the sacrifice of Christ. He shed His blood “for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). This is God’s magnificent grace, that while men in their unrighteousness are unworthy of His goodness, Jesus still yet “died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6).

So, when Paul tells the Ephesus church their salvation is “by grace” and “not of works,” he’s saying they did not earn their redemption by their works. They could not “boast” as if they, instead of God, made it possible to be saved. Earn is the key word here. God did not owe it to them. Neither does He owe it to us. But by no means is Paul talking about performing a work required as a condition for receiving forgiveness. Baptism is essential, but not because a man earns eternal life by it, but simply because God chose it to be a condition (as is faith and repentance) we must meet. Man’s adherence to baptism does not make the death of Christ

meaningless; neither does it somehow bypass His grace. Yes, the Lord’s death and the shedding of His blood is the basis for forgiveness, but baptism is a condition for receiving it. God has determined that baptism puts one “into [Christ’s] death” (Rom. 6:4) and “into Christ” (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27).

Let’s be clear: those who reject baptism as a necessary work for salvation reject it on the fact that salvation is not earned by works, but the Bible teaches that baptism is necessary as a condition of the gift of salvation -not as a means of earning it. By their “labor,” the Israelites did not earn the land given to them by God (Joshua 24:13), but God required certain labor as a condition for it, such as marching around the city walls of Jericho (Joshua 6) and engaging in warfare (Joshua 8:7). Performing works as a condition upon receiving something is a very different thing than having received it due to earning it by works. God provided the means for Noah to be saved from the destruction of the flood by telling him how to build the ark, but the actual building of it was a required condition on Noah’s part. Certainly the building of an ark was a “work” that did not earn Noah salvation from worldwide destruction, but was nevertheless something God required of him.

Turning over to James 2, we see a different context, in which baptism’s necessity actually does have relevance, unlike Ephesians 2. James speaks not on what salvation is based upon (the blood of Christ), but rather what salvation requires on the part of man - obedience. It should be no surprise, then, that here, James teaches that justification is “by works” and not “faith alone” (v. 14, 20, 24). It’s all about context!

### “NOT OF YOURSELVES”

As Paul states, salvation is “not of yourselves” (v. 8). It was God Who prepared the plan to send His beloved Son to die so that men, by believing and

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**Editorial**

**WE ARE STILL HERE**

*By: RICK MARTIN*

I have recently completed my third directory, Where the Saints Assemble. For the most-part people are very supportive and that is greatly appreciated. Over the years there have been some who have predicted the demise of the church and have made comments such as, "that book is getting smaller and smaller."

I think we all realize that we have lost some congregations due to apostasy, although we have added some too. There is no doubt the church is facing a crisis today. However it is not the first crisis, neither will it be the last, if the Lord sees fit to allow the world to continue. Some congregations have fallen, and perhaps more will fall. Some members of the church have done and are doing the same.

This is what Paul and others warned about in the first century when they pointed to the coming of a great apostasy. Paul spoke of the departures from the faith 1 Tim. 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. He also warned, that men would tire of sound doctrine and want to hear something else 2 Tim. 4:1-4 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. Peter spoke of false teachers who will bring in damnable heresies, and that "many shall follow their pernicious ways" 2 Peter 2: 1-2 But there were false prophets also among people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. The Lord had waning faith in mind in looking to His return and asking, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. Our Lord, and the apostles, were warning us that the church may be smaller than in an earlier time due to a falling away.

There cannot be great apostasy and the church still grow

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## QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

**Question:** Would you please explain what is meant in Mark 4:10-12, especially the part in verse 12 which seems to imply that the truth is hidden from certain people?

**Answer:** The incident recorded in these verses is also referenced in Matthew chapter 13 and Luke chapter 8. Mark is the only one specifying “who” asked the question. It was “they that were about him with the twelve.” This indicates that a wider circle of disciples were present at this time. We know according to Acts 1:21-22 that disciples beyond the twelve traveled with Jesus from the baptism of John until the ascension. The “mystery” of the kingdom did not refer to things difficult or hard to understand, but rather those things that had been hidden, that is not previously revealed. (See ICor. 2:6-13; Eph. 3:1-5; and Col. 1:25-25; 2:2-3) “To those who are outside all things come in parables.” Those outside is a reference to the ones who were idle, careless hearers whose interest wasn’t great enough to become followers of Jesus. These people remained aloof from Jesus and those who carefully followed Him. Such people were blind to His real mission in the world. Those who were without, those who refused to commit to Christ were left to their own confusion about the kingdom. The parables were designed to explain the mysteries of the kingdom. They heard the parable, but did not understand its implications or meaning. They saw but did not perceive the lesson intended. As a result they could not be converted, thus their sins could not be forgiven. The truth was hidden because they refused to see and hear. They themselves were responsible for their failure to know the truth. There is a tragic message here for all who fail to see and hear the meaning of the gospel. Many will be lost not because they couldn’t have known the truth, but because they refused to hear and obey it.

**Question:** What is the proper way to dispose of the unused portion of the communion?

**Answer:** The bible does not say. Before the giving of thanks the bread and fruit of the vine are not special. When, however, they are set apart by thanksgiving and prayer, they become representative of the body and blood of Christ. Once these elements have served the purpose to which they were set aside, they hold or retain no special significance. Some have implied that because the remains of the Passover lamb were to be burned, the same should be done with the bread of the communion. However, there is no such indication in the scripture. The order regarding the lamb was to prevent putrefaction, and in my opinion cannot be made to apply to the bread used in the Lord’s Supper. Disposal of what is left over is really a matter of discretion. I personally feel that whatever is done should be in “good taste” and in keeping with the solemnity of the purpose for which the emblems served. In the opinion of this writer it is in very poor taste when someone gives the remaining bread and fruit of the vine to children allowing them eat and drink what is left over. It seems to me that such a practice leaves the wrong impression on these little ones who will one day hopefully become Christians and at that time be able to partake of the communion, discerning the Lord’s body and blood. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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## **“THE COLLECTION” AS “WORSHIP”**

*By DOUG HAWKINS*

Paul wrote “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” (ICor.16: 1, 2 NKJV) Recently, a couple of brethren discussed the Church’s practice of taking up the collection as an act of Worship. This discussion queried the validity of the Church’s practice “as worship” while at the same time posing a subtle objection to it as “having” to be done as a divine ordinance. In light of this well-intended discussion and well-meant question, I sincerely hope to bring a bit of clarity about this practice back to us, while also lovingly encouraging your additional study. With this objective in mind, I offer you the following propositions - propositions that this article intends to explore and to establish.

1. Saints perform definite acts that are unmistakably identified as worship to God.
2. Paul ordered the churches of Galatia to take up a collection and said to those at Corinth, “so you must do also.”
3. Paul identified a specific day upon which the collection is to be taken.

The Holy Spirit used several terms to relay the thought and concept of Worship - terms mostly found in the Old Testament but terms, nonetheless, intimately associated with the Tabernacle and Hebrew worship - particularly the terms sacrifice and offering. By comparison, Paul designated the church as “an holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:21). Men of the Old Testament worshipped in the Temple. Christians of the New Testament worship in the Church. Peter refers to saints as “an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (IPeter 2:5). A careful reading of the Scripture leads us to identify five distinct acts that saints do “in the Church.” In the church, we: 1. Sing (Eph.5:19; Col.3:16; ICor.14:15; He 2:12) 2. Pray (ICor.14:15) 3. Teach (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; ICor.14:3) 4. Commune (Acts 20:7; ICor.11:23-34) 5. Contribute or lay by in store (ICor.16:1, 2). If Paul’s “order” to

the Galatians and Corinthians concerning the “Collection” is not an act of worship and if Paul did not intend to establish a recurring practice, why did Paul “order” the collection instead of simply encouraging it and secondly, why did Paul specify the collection be taken on “the first day of the week?” Why specify the very day that the Scripture says the Saints came together to break bread - “upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread?” (Acts 20:7). When the Philippian congregation supplied Paul’s need with their support, Paul referred to that support as “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18). The writer of Hebrews commands us “to communicate” (a reference to sharing or providing financial means) and describes such as a “sacrifice” with which God is well pleased (Hebrews 13:16). Coincidental references? No, unmistakable and purposeful references. References inspired of God that “are profitable for doctrine...” (2Tim.3:16). When a saint takes of his living “as God has prospered him” and he “purposes” (2Cor.9:6,7) a part of that in “giving,” that saint makes an “offering” and a “sacrifice” which in turn becomes used to fund and finance the work of the Lord. Who wars at his own charge? Paul asked (1 Corinthians 9:7). How does the Lord raise the funds for this war? Through the collection.” John said, “...they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth” (2 John 7, 8). We have our part in the Lord’s work when we make our contributions by giving “upon the first day of the week.” The Lord provides us an opportunity to “reap bountifully” by being able to “sow bountifully.” Let us give generously and bountifully to the Lord and to his cause that the Lord may be well-pleased with such sacrifices. David asked, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all of his benefits toward me?” (Psalms 116:12).

## **SUBSTITUTE**

*By BARNEY OWENS*

There are few that do not have a clear definition of substitute ever before their mind. It is a replacement, stand in, or something or someone that takes the place of another. The most notable example I suppose is a substitute schoolteacher. However, it is commonly used in other ways. Rather than a factory part for an automobile “after-market” parts are substituted. In speaking, we often use one word to substitute for another. If one should apply himself, the list would nearly

be endless. Sometimes substitutes are better than the original. For instance, while having my car repaired the one given me to drive, as a substitute was newer and much better. These things granted being true, while serving a good and needed purpose, when we come to the realm of religion, service and worship to God substitution creates a grave problem. Scriptures testify that God has not and does not allow substitution for the things He has commanded. There is no allowance for us to replace or choose a stand in for anything He has set before man as a requirement. Those who have chosen and those who choose to do so commit sacrilege. Allow me to begin by pointing to some examples from the past.

### The First Man Born Into The World

Religious substitution is almost as old as religious worship itself. After the first pair committed sin in the Garden God cast them out. Children were born and altars of worship were erected. The firstborn of Adam and Eve placed a substitute sacrifice upon his altar of worship. We are told of the occurrence in these words, 'Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.' (Gen. 4:3-5). Respect means, "to look with favor." The expression allows us to know that God accepted "looked with favor" on Abel's offering and did not "look with favor" upon the offering of Cain. Commentators go in every direction to explain why the sacrifice of Abel was accepted while Cain's was rejected. Most of these deal with the "attitude" of Cain. To travel that road will lead any astray. There are two things that reveal the meaning to us. One is used of Cain by which we can understand why God rejected him and his offering; the other is said of Abel. Either of these reveals the truth which is, it had nothing to do with the attitude of Cain but with the material he offered.

From the vantage point of Cain God said to him, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." (Gen. 4:7). Sin was at the door of Cain which means God had spoken His will and Cain failed to respect His voice and disobeyed. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." "For where no law is, there is no transgression." (I Jn. 3:4, Rom. 4:15). If God had not told these brothers what to offer, there

could have been no sin. Therefore telling them Cain did not respond in obedience resulting in his having sinned. In addition, when Jude wrote of the ungodly men who turned God's grace into lasciviousness showing examples of their conduct as seen in days of old included Cain. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core." (Jude 4, 11). By the way, there seems to be the implication that Cain did not obey God because in offering an animal as did Abel, there would have been more cost than what he did offer. Nevertheless, Cain knew what God wanted and offered something else. Cain offered a substitute and by doing so completely failed. He lost all in the end. Substitution is rebellion against God.

Viewing the situation from Abel's side, we are told by inspiration, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Heb. 11:4). The thing that made Abel's sacrifice "more excellent" than offered by Cain was "faith." We are informed, 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Rom. 10:17). Therefore, Abel's sacrifice was founded upon the word of God. To add credence to this interpretation, we see by his sacrifice he "obtained witness that he was righteous." The Psalmist declared, "all thy commandments are righteousness." (Ps. 119:172). Men become righteous by heeding or submitting to the word of God. Although Abel died centuries ago, he bids us to follow his example of obeying the word of God. Abel did not substitute. He worshiped precisely-exactly as God said. To worship God substituting our will for His will is sin. It was not Abel's attitude that justified him; it was his action-what he did.

### The First King Of Israel

God recalled how the people of Amalek had lain in wait upon Israel when they had escaped Egypt to render havoc in many ways. He therefore, declared that He wished them destroyed. Through Samuel the prophet, He chose King Saul to ring the death knell upon them. "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (I Sam. 15:3). Saul accordingly gathered the people together and marched toward Amalek. When the battle was over he returned and met Samuel in the

way declaring, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (V. 13). To this Samuel replied, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" V. 14). Obviously, the bleating sheep and lowing oxen were a denial of Saul's affirmation. Dead sheep do not bleat and dead oxen don't low. Had he "performed the commandment of the Lord" these would be dead. Samuel continued saying, "the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didist thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didist fly upon the spoil, and didist evil in the sight of the Lord?" (V. 18-19). Saul attempting to justify himself retorted, "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the ...sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed. To sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal." (V. 20-21). The king's grievous act is then put in perspective by the prophet, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (V. 22). Saul's attempt to appease God by substituting sacrifices was to no avail. The commandment was plain enough. Saul understood what was to be done. Yet, he had the gall to decide there was a better way--a way he chose for God. His act of disobedience was the cause of his being banished from the throne. And more, his seed likewise was dishonored by his action. It is no little thing to substitute our will, our thinking, and our actions for the decisive commandments of God. In fact, when we do we have thereby declared ourselves God. Substitution is to do evil in God's sight.

#### Modern Substitutions

The common saying, "he that refuses to learn from history is doomed to repeat it," is as true in religion as any other activity. Bible students ought to think about the lessons of olden times. The Apostle reminds all of this truth. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4). Ignoring the principle of this passage has caused many problems some ending in the division of the Body of Christ. Considering these: Like Cain there are those who ignore what God plainly stipulates

and decide what He should receive in worship. Since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," as Christians it behooves us to "walk by faith and not by sight," (Rom. 10:17, 11 Cor. 5:7). Plainly put, this means that we are to conduct ourselves in worship by what God has said. For example, when God said, "in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee," (Heb. 2:12), He meant exactly that. He does not desire or expect us to substitute something else. Take time to read the many passages that have to do with the music in worship of Christians and you will see that it is always-without exception, vocal music. Man comes along and substitutes playing mechanical instruments of music, something that God said nothing about. In fact he said just as much to Cain about "offering the fruit of the ground" as He has about mechanical instruments. We should learn from Cain's case as revealed in the Old Scriptures.

When we read of Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper to walk by faith we must follow the manner He used. As I did with singing, I mention one passage. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying Drink ye all of it," (Mt. 26:27). It is clear that only one cup is referred to. Therefore, Jesus took one cup, He gave thanks for one cup, He gave one cup to the disciples, and commanded them to drink from one cup. Every passage that has to do with the Lord's Supper teaches the use of one cup to distribute the fruit of the vine. Take the time to follow the references regarding the Lord's Supper where this fact will jump out at you. However, some have decided that they will substitute individual cups for one cup. Like Cain, these have determined that God will accept worship as they wish it to be without regard to clear statements of scriptural facts. Failing to learn from Cain in the Old Testament will bring greater consequence to those of us who will be judged by the New Testament. May I add, is it strange logic to condemn one substituting the instrument and then accept a substitute for the cup?

Inspiration instructs us regarding the manner of life we are to live as Christians. We have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The result is that we are to conduct ourselves as children of light (Co. 1:13, Eph. 5:8). Happily we have cast off the old man of sin and are continually clothing ourselves with the garments of righteousness (Eph. 4:21-32). When the Lord speaks to us through His chosen representatives, we acknowledge Him as Lord of our life by implementing His will. Our faithfulness to Christ

should be seen in our conduct. Our profession is not empty, vain, or dead. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea; a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only... For as the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith without works is dead also. (Js. 2:17,18, 24, 26). There is nothing wrong with a person speaking of his faith to other people, but that faith must be demonstrated by action on his part. Unlike King Saul, we must possess the spirit of obedience. We cannot substitute talk for action. To speak of one's great faith without following through with the fruit of obedience makes faith null and void. Some Christians seem to think that showing up to worship each Lord's Day is the sum total of Christianity. Their thinking is: if one puts on his "Sunday best" for a couple of hours then takes it off until the next day of worship then the Lord should be pleased. Forget about attending other services of edification, don't bother to read God's word, turn a deaf ear to the hurting and needs of a neighbor and let others concern themselves with leading sinners to Christ. Our Lord was not like-minded. He issued these orders to us, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden underfoot of men." (Mt. 5:13). Jesus speaks of a savour which each of us has, meaning a purpose. If Christians lose the purpose given us, then where is the "salt" the preserving of the world going to come from? If we fail in that purpose, we fail to attach proper value to the kingdom of our Lord. We are like the people of the world and are beneficial only to be walked upon. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (V. 14-16). Following the teaching of the Master our light must go out to others allowing them to see the goodness of His will in us. We cannot hide it-it must come out. The only way it can be hidden is by our intentionally ceasing to do His bidding. Our "heavenly Father" fails to receive due glory because we have covered our light, hidden our goodness and failed to dispel iniquity, as we should. We (like King Saul) have substituted for the requirements of Christ. There is no substitute for faithfulness to the Gospel. -OPA

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*BAPTISM & EPHESIANS. . . . .continued from page one*

obeying Him, could be saved (Heb. 5:9). Salvation didn't come from men. This is exactly what Paul affirms to the Ephesians. It wasn't they who created the way of salvation; they didn't derive a way to clean their own sins or construct their own path to God out of their own ideas - it was through God's grace. Nevertheless, despite the understanding of most of the denominational world, this has nothing to do with whether or not baptism is necessary for salvation as a condition. Men did not dream up baptism; it didn't come from them (thus they cannot boast in it). God thought of it, and it was He Who laid it down as a provision: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The forgiveness of sin is what saves a man (when a man's sins are gone, he is no longer condemned), and this forgiveness is possible by Jesus' death (Matt. 26:28), not baptism, but God chose baptism, when performed out of faith and a repentant heart, to be when this absolution takes place. In this respect, baptism "saves us" (1 Pet. 3:21).

**"SAVED THROUGH FAITH"**

Furthermore, Paul writes that salvation is "through faith" (v. 8). Absolutely! Through faith a man obeys the gospel by repenting and being baptized. The Israelites believed God would bring down the walls of Jericho (as He said He would) if they adhered to His conditions -marching around the city, blowing their trumpets, and shouting (Joshua 6). Their faith led them to obey God's requirements and "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30). The construction of the ark was a necessary condition for escaping the watery demise of the flood, which Noah's faith "moved" him to do, so "by faith" Noah "prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Heb. 11:7). It's the same concept with baptism: we are saved "through faith" when that faith moves us to repent, confess Christ (Rom. 10:10; 1 John 4:15) and be baptized.

Multitudes of preachers blindly lead the blind with a false gospel saying baptism comes after salvation rather than before it. They are wrong. Men cannot earn their pardon, but they can look to Christ, obey the Gospel, and be saved. It is in baptism, that Christ forgives the sins of the man who has believed and has repented. So all in all, Christ is still doing the saving, not the water, and not the man. Baptism is certainly required, but this doesn't

nullify the fact, the absolute fact, that without the unobligated, unearned, undeserved grace of Jesus Christ in sacrificing Himself as a payment for our transgressions, no redemption could be possible anyhow. Thanks to God for His love and grace through Jesus Christ!

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*WE ARE STILL HERE . . . . . continued from page two*

in number. There cannot be all the weakness associated with departures from the faith, and great spiritual or numerical strength at the same time. Perhaps we must prepare for a smaller brotherhood. When the apostasy has run its course, that's what we'll have. But, it will be a more faithful brotherhood, loving God and loving truth, and still holding onto and preaching exactly what we believed and preached since Pentecost, 33 A.D. It will still be the body of the Christ Eph. 1:22-23, And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. It will still be charged with making known to lost men the manifold wisdom of God. Eph. 3:10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. It will be the body maintaining the New Testament's marks for the church, in name, in organization, in work, in the plan of salvation taught, and in the form of New Testament worship

Have some congregations left us? Yes. Have some members left us? Yes. We are saddened by their departure. Will those who are traveling have to do more careful advanced planning as to where they will stop for worship? Yes. But still, if worship is important- and it is- the planning is worth it. Just remember all is not gloom and doom. We are still the Church of Christ! We are still here!

"Tho the clouds are gathering dark on either side, many hearts are shivering from the stormy gale, but one blessed promise, keeps me satisfied, for the church of Jesus shall never fail. Men in power may try to crush her to the ground, Christians may be murdered, others cast in jail. Still her light shall shine no power can keep her bound, for the Church of Jesus shall never fail."  
300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189

**Pages From the Past**

**May 1968**

**THE INCONSISTENCY OF LIBERALISM**  
By Ellis Lindsey

I use the word liberalism here to denote the philosophy of some church members who maintain that all religious groups within the "Restoration Movement" should worship and associate together despite differences over such things as cups, classes, instrumental music, orphan homes, indirect missionary support, wine, and other things over which the church is divided.

The time is here for pointing out some of the inconsistencies of this false doctrine. Scriptural studies of the various errors have already been ably given by the editors of this journal; my treatment, therefore, shall be from the standpoint of liberalism's inconsistency. "For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself," said the apostle Paul. "For thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1). That I am justified in pointing out such conduct is plain when it is known that Carl Ketcherside, chief liberal spokesman, has written against the truth on the cup and class questions in his monthly paper, Mission Messenger. (See, for example, the March, 1963, and the Sept., 1967, issues.) Here are some of the areas in which liberals commit the same errors they find in others:

1. Liberals are inconsistent in the use of language. The only real argument I have heard from them goes something like this: The church in Corinth contained division and factions, yet Paul addressed the members as "saints" (I Cor. 1:2) and said to them, "Ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 9); therefore, the Corinthian members, although creating much division, were in fellowship with God and in full association with those members who caused no division. The whole argument is based upon the fact that the plural pronoun "ye" is used to include causers of division. Let me point out, however, that the same language is used in reference to a fornicator, of whom Paul said, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:13). The fornicator was even "called a brother" (verse 11). That the fornicator and other trouble-causers were referred to in this manner does- not mean we should associate with them, nor that such people will be saved (Gal. 5:19-21). In fact, Paul later wrote, "But I warn you, brothers, to keep an eye on those who cause splits and obstacles, quite out of harmony with the doctrine you have been taught, and to keep away from them" (Rom. 16:17, Berkeley Version). Liberals admit that the fornicator must be put out of the church and avoided, yet they claim that

the causer of division must be tolerated. But the same Bible language is used of both.

2. Liberals cry “peace, peace,” but will not lay down their divisive practices. Paul taught that on matters of opinion, the one holding questionable practices should give them up. He wrote, “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” (Rom. 14:21). Paul said give up questioned practices; liberals say keep them and overlook them. Will those liberals who claim they work for peace come forward and give up their individual cups, Bible classes, instrumental music, etc? Or, will they continue to trample under foot that command of God. Liberals are asking faithful Christians to make all the concessions while they make none. They expect us to tolerate any false doctrine any brother may bring in.

Such a factionist actually violates the moral and ethical principles of love, for he cares more for his own instruments of music, or cups, or classes than he does the peace that could exist should he lay these things aside and worship without them as he admits he could. This is why factionists were described by Paul as those who “served not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18). Yes, liberal preachers can make some nice speeches and make everybody feel good and at ease. But they are the real factionists - “clouds they are without water” (Jude 12).

One of the favorite liberal “arguments” is that with 25 different factions in the church, who knows the right one; thus, we should accept them all. But that there are 25 warring factions in the church claiming they are the only true church does not mean that all 25 are wrong, no more than the fact that there are 300 religious bodies in America means that not a single one is right. Naturally, when a group of men tear the church apart by putting in instruments of music, cups, Sunday School, etc., they are going to defend themselves and claim they are right.

3. Liberals will not debate, yet they conduct “open forums,” at which the most unorganized and uncontrolled debate takes place. Formal debating at least has some rules and guidelines to follow, and each disputant has an equal amount of time in which to reply to his respondent; whereas, open forums allow any and all persons present to inject whatever pet whims they please, and the one who is the louder and more aggressive takes the floor. I have attended some of these open forums, and can attest to the fact that all the bad features often present in formal debates are present here in greater quantities. The reason the liberals will

not conduct an organized, formal debate with a worthy opponent is simple: They know they will lose, and their doctrine will suffer. They will debate in an open forum where little real order or fairness is possible, and where they can get away with not replying to a qualified respondent, and where they can get the last word on any question by simply being long-winded. I must make it clear at this point that I do not defend all debates nor debaters. The liberals can retreat to the pages of the Mission Messenger and snipe at us, but they will not be out in the open like real Christians and men and face a qualified disputant. And for those who condemn all debating, let them start with the open-forum ones.

For the benefit of those who call for a Biblical example of a debate between brethren, allow me to cite the case of Peter against Paul (Gal. 2:11-14). At Antioch Peter had been eating with Gentile converts until certain persons of the circumcision party, who thought it wrong to eat with the converts, arrived from James. Peter, fearing this party, thus stopped eating with his gentile brethren to appease the party. Barnabas followed Peter’s poor example. When Paul came, he withstood him (Peter) to the face” (verse 11) and “bear them all” (verse 14).

The phrase “withstood him to the face” (Greek, kata prosopon, for “to the face”) is used in Acts 25:16 of the Roman custom of placing the accused and the accuser “face to face” so that each could charge and reply. Paul “withstood” (Greek, anhistemi, set himself against, resisted, opposed) Peter; that is, he publicly opposed Peter’s conduct and speech. Even assuming that Peter said nothing in reply, we must not infer that Paul would not have answered. Yes, this was a debate. Paul did not debate at the drop of a hat, but he did contend for the faith when the need arose.

Had some of the liberal preachers been there, they probably would have said, “Now, now, Paul, remember that Peter has a right to conduct himself in this way; and, after all, we all are in fellowship and should not, therefore, debate with him or scold him.” They may have suggested an open forum to involve everyone.

On another occasion, Paul and Barnabas had such sharp contention (debate) about John Mark that they parted asunder for awhile (Acts 15:39). Whether public or not, this debate very well could have been, since it was recorded and since Paul had nothing to hide in matters affecting the public good.

Liberalism, then, is so at variance with itself that it cannot be the true spirit of Christianity as it claims. We can appreciate the fact that there are honest people in the various factions of the church; yet we know that if

they really search for the truth, they shall find it Matt. 7:7, 8). We cannot accept the errors they practice; to do so would be unfair to them, who deserve the truth. But preachers and others who will not give up things they admit they can do without for the sake of peace are without excuse. All those who have divided the church over such things as sanitation (to avoid drinking from a common cup) are the real factionists.

## Announcements

### A Preacher Still Needed

In the June issue of the Old Paths Advocate, Southside Church of Christ, in Andrews, TX. announced that we desperately needed a Gospel preacher to come and work with us for a year or two. One prospect answered our plea, but later decided that he could not come, due to the fact, the brethren where he was then laboring, persuaded him to stay with them. Therefore, we want to make our plea again, for we believe that out there, somewhere, there is a conservative preacher who is willing to go out into the highways and the byways, to help us seek and find those that are lost in sin and those who have left the fold, to return to their first love, as well as strengthen the remaining one's in the faith. We are willing to pay a substantial salary, help with the work in other ways, financially, physically, morally, and spiritually. If you as a preacher, think that you might be interested, and willing like the apostle Peter, when he answered the Macedonian call, please get in touch with us by writing to me: C. A. Smith, 7 Old Lampasas Trail, Odessa, TX., or call me @ (432) 653-1337 at your convenience, and we will arrange for you to come out, look things over, and determine if you want to follow through, doing the work of the Lord, with we here in Andrews, Texas. Time is of the essence! Brotherly, C. A. Smith



### Where The Saints Assemble

Please correct phone number for George Battey: 405-589-4184



The Casper Wyoming congregation would like to find an evangelist willing to come and work with them. We need boots on the ground year round to meet our goals as a working congregation for the Lord. If you are of a mind to work hard helping to grow a congregation then here is your opportunity to step out. Casper is a growing city one of the largest in Wyoming. It has great schools, lots of educational opportunity, strong work base, all kinds of sporting activity hunting and fishing etc.. I have made 4 trips over the last year. I have presented the church over the last two years via newspaper and radio programs. We have the TV

program "Let the Bible Speak" in place with a very strong newspaper presence as well. I have had very good response from the newspaper articles, "Back to the Bible." We have some support all ready in place to get moving forward. If you are interested please contact me or Leland Moore. Leland Moore @ 1307-333-2467; Roger Owens 1-417-451-0330; Church address is Church of Christ P. O. Box 51722 Casper, WY. 82605-1722

## Field Reports

Richard DeGough 1809 Flora Vista Dr. Hughson, Calif. 95326 Ph. (209) 883-4168, email: rdegough@gmail.com We had a good meeting recently at Stoney Point church in Kansas City. I really enjoyed being there with the brethren. It was reported that 10 congregations came to support the meeting. I was invited to stay with Paul Nichols and family, which was a joy to me. Paul and I had a good opportunity to visit after a long separation from each other. He is a "rock in the church" and loved by many. The brethren were hospitable in every way. I hope good was done and no harm. This congregation is strong for the truth, and, a working church. We enjoyed the services I could attend in Springfield. The flu bug hit me after the meeting in Kansas City. The preaching and singing was edifying for all of us. I was privileged to preach at Green Oaks church in Arlington. My thanks to all the brethren who helped me in every way . Paul and my son-in-law James along with my daughter Robin brought me medication to ease my discomfort. I realize the good in our brethren more each day. I appreciate the gospel preachers that supported the meeting and in Green Oaks too. God bless our brotherhood with peace and love.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820, August 2--Jimmie Smith conducted our spring meeting. The meeting was well-attended and we enjoyed Jimmie and Cindy. I conducted a weekend meeting at Yuba City, CA in May. We had great crowds and I believe we accomplished some good. I got a chance to visit with Bennie and Joann Cryer in their home. We had a great time and it is good to see Bennie able to preach again as he battles health problems. In June, I conducted a meeting at Hillcrest, MS. We had a wonderful meeting with large crowds each service. One young lady was baptized during the meeting. It was a pleasure to meet Michael Conley and his family. Michael works with the Hillcrest congregation. He seems to be a tireless worker and is a real asset to the area. We went next to Shenango, PA We have learned to love these folks and we experienced a great week together. The highlight of the week was witnessing the brethren in the area repair a breach that occurred in the

congregation 7 years ago. We left on a spiritual high after the week. Our last meeting was with the Chapel Grove, TN congregation. 144 people were present for the first service and we had consistently large crowds for the rest of the week. Duane Permenter is working with the congregation and the church looks to be doing very well with great potential for the future. We had an excellent meeting. We are to begin a meeting this coming Lord's Day at Napoleon, AL. We are also scheduled at Shawnee, KS (Sept. 13-15); Neosho, MO (Sept. 22-29) and Jamesville, MO (Oct. 4-6) Phyllis' mother Bernice Smith died Sunday, July 28th, and we had her funeral in Healdton yesterday before a huge crowd. She would have been 98 years old on August 3rd. Bernice was a very rare person; among the very finest women I have ever known. I could not have had a better mother-in-law. May God continue to bless us all as we serve Him.

Greg Gay, August 12, 2013. I attended two nights of the Sulphur, OK Fourth of July meeting which was ably conducted by Cullen Smith and Kevin Presley. I was honored to preach a Sunday and Wednesday at Ada and enjoyed seeing the brethren there and being with family. I was in a meeting at McGregor, TX July 21-28. I enjoyed the hospitality of the brethren with many meals and visits. I stayed one night with Billie and Pam Wilson and the balance of the meeting with Ronnie and Sandi Wallace. I could not have been treated better. I treasure the moments I was able to spend with Wayne McKamie who has labored there for many years. I appreciate the time and sacrifices of all who came from near and far to attend the meeting including preachers Melvin Blalock and Johnny Herrera. We had some outside interest and two confessions of fault. My work continues here in Sacramento with the 64th congregation and preaching at area congregations as time allows. 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, August 15, old\_paths@juno.com Pat and I recently were able to attend a few nights of Allen Bailey's meeting in Manteca, CA and appreciated his subject matter and delivery. He preached on things we all need to hear more often. I fear some subjects have gone begging in recent years because we believed, perhaps mistakenly, the battles were won. Perhaps they were years ago, when the battle took place, but new battles are confronting us now. We have forgotten that our young people were not present when those old battles were fought and won and they need to hear it now. We were able to preach twice at the Yuba City congregation last Lord's Day to good crowds. We pray good was done. The church at home is at peace and looking forward to the future. It was my pleasure to speak recently at

home and we look forward to preaching again this Lord's Day. Allow me to express my appreciation to those who have purchased the books containing our editorials published by Rick Martin. You can get more from him by contacting him at 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189. The price is \$15 if purchased from him personally; \$20 if by mail and the extra is to cover shipping and postage. Don't forget to keep your OPA subscription current and when you renew please consider subscribing for a friend or family member. The price is currently \$13 yearly whether on line or hard copy. Contact Matt Martin for subscriptions. We will soon be forced to raise the price of the paper to \$15 a year but if you subscribe now you can have it at the old price of \$13. Let us hear from you right away, please. Lord bless the church everywhere.

Roger L. Owens- Freeman Road, Neosho, Missouri. Wed., Aug. 07, 2013. Our labors continue to yield fruit for the Master. We baptized Carla Pero about 2 months back. She is so excited and joyful until she now wants to make sure her grown daughters and families are introduced to the Lord's church as well. Carla is in California to find places of worship for her daughters and their families who live there. I have addresses, names, and numbers of these individuals if you're interested in contacting them. Earlier this year we baptized Brent who learned of Christ through his brother Tim who was baptized three years ago here. The work moves forward with zeal and true motivation to honor and glorify the God of heaven. We continue to strengthen the members by a weekly study of the book and subjects as needed to encourage and edify all. Our meetings with Joe Hisle and William St. John were some of the best preaching ever. These men know how to tell about Jesus and his love for humanity with grace and pureness of heart. We labor to set in order the congregation at Freeman Road, Neosho so that one day we will have strong working elders and deacons. Also the work in Casper Wyoming moves forward. We are seeking an evangelist to go and work with them. If you want to work in this area please contact me, Roger L. Owens. When all attend there are 8 souls who gather. We are attempting to find a building to bring about a needed stability to the congregation. We continue to help and support a number of small congregations as we have opportunity. The fourth meeting in Springfield Missouri was wonderful with good preaching and singing that seemed the best ever. The congregation and men overseeing the meeting were flawless in their efforts to make sure the meeting was conducted properly. My address is P.O. Box 239 Neosho Missouri 64850, my email is (rowens700@yahoo.com) My phone number is 1-417-451-0330 Please pray for us and visit anytime you are in the area.

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## THE BACK PAGE...

### LIKE A HAIR IN THE THROAT

By *CARL M. JOHNSON*

The late Jack Burkett of Earlytown, Alabama once told me that if there was a hair to be found in a bite of food at a church dinner, he is the one who would find it. He said that if he had not found the hair by the time he got to the last bite of food on his plate, he would eye the bite suspiciously and say to himself, "Well, there it is. I know it's in there!"

I am not quite as fatalistic about the matter as Jack was, but there are few things that make me gag as much as taking a bite of food and finding a hair in my throat. Apparently, Solomon felt the same way about the matter and makes reference to it in his discussion of phony hospitality (Prov. 23:6-8).

Solomon says, "Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor desire his delicacies" (ver. 6 NKJV). He warns of a host who puts on a nice front, pretending to be a generous friend while urging us to "eat and drink," but in reality is a greedy man who begrudges every bite we eat. Solomon says, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (ver. 7).

While the statement in verse 7 has become a well-known proverb in the English language, it is translated somewhat differently in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT Hebrew) which renders the phrase, "Eating and drinking (with him) is as if one should swallow a hair." The New Revised Standard Version follows the approach of the Septuagint and translates the phrase, "for like a hair in the throat, so are they."

Thus, Solomon's warning is that regardless of how varied and delicious the food may be, if you suddenly realize the host's generosity is phony and he actually resents your presence at his table, you will gag on his food as though you have found a hair in your throat.

No self-respecting person wants to accept a crust of bread from a phony who offers it begrudgingly. Such food would choke us as we eat it. Not only should we have the independence to refuse such phony hospitality, but we should refuse anything else given in the same spirit, including money, position, and friendship. It is better to go entirely without than to have abundance at the cost of our own self-respect. It is better to work hard and wait long than to accept such offers as these. It is better to turn to Him "who gives to all men liberally and without reproach" (Jas. 1:7 NKJV).

If such phony behavior is repulsive to us, how do you suppose God feels toward those who treat Him the same way? Referring to the contribution Paul says, "Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

A grandmother took her little grandson to church one Lord's Day and gave him a quarter to put into the collection plate. When the plate arrived the little guy clutched the quarter in his fist with no intention of releasing it. His grandmother nudged him and whispered to him to put it into the plate. He was reluctant, but finally, grudgingly, he dropped it in. Grandmother thought it might be good to take him outside for a moment and explain matters to him. As they were quietly stepping toward the back door they passed the man with the collection plate and the boy stopped and asked, "Can I have my quarter back, we are not staying."

Some folks ostensibly sing with great zeal the words of the hymn: "Were the whole realm of nature mine! That were a present far too small! Love so amazing, so divine! Demands my love, my life, my ALL."

Yet, after singing those beautiful words these same people are just as begrudging as the little boy mentioned above when it comes to the weekly collection, or the giving of themselves to God and their fellowman on a daily basis.

Such worship is phony, and God has always detested phony religion. One OT prophet after another blasted Israel for its bogus religious games. Jesus Himself came into the world to put a halt to such artificial religion and He challenges all men to worship Him in spirit and in truth (in. 4:24).

God commands us to be givers (Lk 6:38; Mt. 5:42; Rom. 12:8, 13), but we must give with the proper heart (2 Cor. 9:7). To give cheerfully of our time, thought, sympathy, strength, and money to God and our fellowman is the source of the purest and most elevating joy. Jesus says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts: 20:35).

Giving also develops a character within us that delights our Lord (2 Cor. 9:7). Such divine delight becomes tainted only if we begin to begrudge our gift. In which case, it is as though the Lord has found a hair in His throat. [cmjthebackpage@gmail.com](mailto:cmjthebackpage@gmail.com)