

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

VOL. XCI

LEBANON, MISSOURI • SEPTEMBER 2019

NO. 9

“HANG IN THERE!”

By WAYNE FUSSELL

Twenty-three years ago, Billy Orten came to Shreveport for a heart transplant surgery. He had all kinds of complications before the surgery was performed, but the Lord was gracious and allowed it to happen. One day, he received a card from the folks at Conway, his home congregation. The card was about 3 feet long. It pictured a man hanging at the end of a long rope, and the caption read, “Hang in There!”

That was good advice to Billy at that time, and it is good advice to us today. Regardless of the circumstances in life, we should hang in there. When we consider the times we are living in, it is imperative that we remain steadfast in the Lord. That’s what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the folks at Phillipi: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved” (Philippians 3:20-21; 4:1).

Paul reasoned that since we are citizens of heaven, and since Jesus is coming again one day to resurrect the dead, transform the living, reward the righteous, and punish the wicked, we must stand fast in our position - we must “hang in there”.

Paul was deeply anxious about these Christians, and he trembled at the prospect of their drawing back. It is said that the British hero, Wolfe, received a mortal wound at Quebec just as the enemy was fleeing. He said to his aide, “Hold me up - don’t let my brave soldiers see me drop - the day is ours - oh, do keep it”. Paul was telling the Christians at Phillipi, “We’ve won the victory in Jesus - oh, do keep it!”

In this text, Paul declared that they were in the right place - they were “in the Lord”. It is absolutely essential to be “in the Lord”. We may do good works and be very religious, but if we are not in the Lord, we are lost. What is it to be “in the Lord?” It means we have been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), we are in the church (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23), and we are living for the Lord (Colossians 2:6). “In Christ” is the element in which we live, move, and have our being.

Secondly, Paul longed that they keep their place - that they stand fast. The beginning of religion is not the whole of it. In conversion, we just enter the race - we must run it all the way to the end. In conversion, we enter the vineyard - we must labor to the end (Matthew 10:22).

It is disturbing to note how many have not hung in there. I tell the folks in Shreveport if we could round up all the backsliders who are still alive, we would have to build another building. When I think of this wonderful brotherhood with which I have labored more than 60 years, I lament over so many who once were faithful to the Lord, but have fallen away. What’s wrong? They didn’t “stand fast”. They didn’t “hang in there”.

How should we stand fast? We should stand fast doctrinally. In these days, when so many ships are pulling up anchors, and being “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine”, we must put down our anchors deep into God’s word and stand for the truth. We must harken to no teaching but the Bible. We must find the truth, grasp it, and hold it tight. We must “prove all things and hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). If it becomes unpopular, hold it even tighter. If you are called a fool, or an old “mossback”, count it all joy. Be like the giant oak with its roots so deep in mother earth that when the storms come, it can’t be blown over. Put down your roots into God’s word and hold fast to “the faith once delivered.”

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Subscription One Year..... \$15.00
Also On The Internet

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

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

Editorial

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

Warning signs play an important role in our lives! As we travel in our automobiles to various locations, we see signs along our highways that point to potential dangers that lie ahead. Indeed, only the foolish deliberately ignore them and put themselves at risk to suffer injury or death. “Work zone,” for example, is one that stands out and grabs your attention, letting you know that you must be prepared to stop at any moment and avoid hitting a worker (or face serious consequences). Our bodies also give us warning signs from time to time-- pain, tenderness and fatigue are indications that something is wrong. Even our minds send out stress signals-- sadness, feelings of hopelessness and anxiety could be the result of severe depression that could lead to far worse mental issues if ignored.

However, the most important ones for us to heed are spiritual in nature because, after all, they deal with things that affect our relationship with God. Here is one of great importance: “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33/ASV). Do you know who Paul is specifically referring to in the context? He is warning against the evil influence of false teachers. As James Macknight writes in his commentary, “The company the apostle desired the Corinthians to shun, were those who reasoned against the immortality of the soul and a future state.” Yes, there were those at Corinth who were teaching “that there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:12), a damnable heresy that Paul refuted, and he warns the Corinthians about the corrupting influence of such men. Frankly, I worry about brethren who love to “buddy up” with false teachers, who are quick to come to their defense when they are exposed and they seem to have more of an affinity with them than those who stand up for the truth. Brethren, such an attitude and behavior goes against the grain of Paul’s warning in 1 Cor. 15:33.

How can we recognize false teachers and equip ourselves that we might not fall under their evil influence? The answer involves at least three factors: First, we must be well read in the Scriptures. The person whose knowledge of God’s word is shallow and immature, like it is with a new convert, is a ready prey for those who distort the truth on various Bible topics (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

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QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DEFRANCE

Question: Is there ever a circumstance in which a person should not be allowed to eat the Lord's Supper?

Answer: 1 Corinthians 5.11, seems to offer the conditions under which the Lord's Supper might be withheld from a certain person: "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner-not even to eat with such a person."

In the various texts dealing with church discipline against a brother or sister living in unrepentant sin, the language is consistent - the faithful should avoid social interaction "do not keep company" (1 Corinthians 5.11; 2 Thessalonians 3.14); "let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector" (Matthew 18.17)], to which Paul adds an emphatic statement to the Corinthians, "not even to eat with such a person." There are three possible kinds of meal to which Paul might refer: 1) the Lord's Supper; 2) the love feast - meals eaten by the early Christians in one another's homes as manifestations of Christian charity (1 Corinthians 11.33) - comparable to modern "church dinners"; 3) social meals, such as an individual having a friend into his or her home for dinner. The apostle's language seems best understood as including all three of these settings, rather than merely one or two.

The emphatic "not even" means that there is no safe setting for socializing with a withdrawn from person. After a disciplinary action has been taken, the church must limit their interaction with "such a one" to admonishing them to change their behavior - the joy of friendly association is gone. It seems unthinkable that Paul is saying that Christians cannot socialize with the withdrawn from brother, nor even welcome them to their own supper table, but that they might all come together at the Lord's Table for the most intimate expression of communion and fellowship available in this world (1 Corinthians 11.17)! Most Bible readers throughout history have understood that a person who the church "delivered to Satan" was not permitted to eat the Lord's Supper in such a condition, and that Paul

is saying, "neither should you invite such a person into your own home." Therefore, according to 1 Corinthians 5.11 there are certain circumstances when the church should not offer the Lord's Supper to a person.

To the case of a withdrawn from person, we might add those who are not believers (such as unimmersed people or little children). In 1 Corinthians 10.16-17, Paul describes the Lord's Supper as an act of Christian fellowship in which "joint participation" in the sacrifice of Jesus is proclaimed. How then can we explain a way in which it would be appropriate to offer this special fellowship, covenant meal to those who are not a part of the fellowship or the covenant? This writer does not know of any churches of Christ which make a practice of serving the Supper to little children or infants, and it seems only logical that if the innocent little one may not partake, how much more the sinner who has failed to actually participate in the body and blood of Jesus through obedience to the gospel!



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WHAT HAVE WE FOUND?

BY GREG GAY

In John 1:40-45 we read the accounts of Andrew and Philip sharing the good news of meeting Jesus with Peter and Nathanael. In each case, their reports begin with the words, "We have found." Andrew said to Peter, "'We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ)." Philip announced to Nathanael, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote-Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:41,45 NKJV). As we review our lives and our relationship with God, we would all do well to ponder the question, "What have we found?"

All of us can find the "Broad Way that leads to destruction." Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it" (Matthew 7:13).

The search for the Broad Way is easy, all we need to do is follow the evil desires of our hearts. Jesus said, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21-23).

It would be easy to blame God for these evil desires, but that would not be correct. James writes, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:13-15).

Our own desires entice us to sin. Louw and Nida comment that being "enticed," "may be translated as 'to make sinning look attractive' or 'to make sin taste good' or 'to wave sin in front of a person's nose.'" Thayer explains it means to "catch by a bait, to beguile by blandishments, allure, entice, deceive." Anyone who fishes knows exactly how this works. Perhaps we can imagine ourselves under water with Satan dangling a beautifully disguised hook in front of us.

Everyone of accountability can take the bait to follow the Broad Way of a sin-filled life. Sin is not forced upon us as an inheritance by virtue of Adam's fall, or because

God is cruel, or because of our family or friends. While we can all be influenced for good or bad, our sin happens when we personally succumb to the temptations of life that are all around us. John writes, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

For some on the Broad Way, their life is as shallow as seeking the next drunken party, the latest dirty joke, the next sexual conquest, the next way to cheat a neighbor, job, or government, all things that support a system of values that honor Satan and his desire to eat our souls. Peter tells us, "your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Others on the Broad Way reject the basest of practices but want nothing to do with values beyond their own preferences and personal standard of living. While they do not have the same values or practice the same things as those in the gutters of Satan's world, they are content with being somewhat morally better than others and want nothing more. They are usually described by all as "good people" who are wonderful neighbors and coworkers. Sadly though, they usually do not use this progress as a platform from which to seek God. Usually they are satisfied with their self-defined "goodness" and do not realize their complacency is insulting to God. Paul writes, "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

Paul, speaking of individuals who use their own wisdom as their basis for spiritual values, writes, "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Thankfully, some in this Broad Way are willing to make the great decision to lift their eyes from worldly values and self-defined goodness to seek a relationship with God on His terms. God honors that search and he is easy to find for all who will seek him.

As Paul said to the Athenians, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face

of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring'" (Acts 17:26-28).

If anyone will, they can be aware of the existence of God, at least in broad outline form, without opening a page of a Bible.

Several scriptures refer to Nature as one of God's teachers of all. One example is that the existence of God is proven by our observation of the universe, our planet, and all that exists on it. Paul writes, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..." (Romans 1:18-20). All visible things in our world point to an invisible creator who is clearly superior and all powerful!

Learning about God only in broad outline form from Nature is not where our quest for God's Narrow Way is satisfied. Nature's lessons are intended to motivate all to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" and to seek God in his Word, the Bible (Matthew 5:6).

There, in the scriptures, we learn about God and his wonderful plan for the salvation of mankind! Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:16-21).

We learn in the scriptures that no one is ever required to stay on the Broad Way! Remember, the same Bible verse

that reveals the Broad Way that leads to destruction also reveals the Narrow Way that leads to eternal life. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

The Narrow Way's reward is worth the difficulty of the search to find it and whatever effort is needed to stay on the correct path to gain eternal life. "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

The Narrow Way is found through a diligent study of God's word! In the New Testament we learn of the necessity of obedience to the Gospel through Faith that based on the word of God (Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:1-6), Repentance (Luke 13:3), Confession (Acts 8:37), and Baptism to receive forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21). Upon our obedience, we enter into a new relationship with God (1 Peter 3:21, Romans 6:3-5), God adds us to the church, The Church of Christ (Romans 16:16), the church Jesus said he would build (Matthew 16:18), which was purchased with His shed blood on the cross of Calvary. Paul writes, "He [the Father] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

In life, what we find is usually a reflection of where we are looking. If we want to sink deeper and deeper in the depths of sin, God will honor that choice. God will also honor and bless all those everywhere who diligently seek him. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount tells the whole world of every age, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33).

Notable Bible examples of individuals with good and honest hearts whose greatest priority was to learn God's truths for the salvation offered in Christ include Cornelius and his household (Acts 10) and the Ethiopian Treasurer (Acts 8). We trust from these examples; this concept is still true all over the world. Anyone who earnestly seeks God can find his Word and learn and obey his wonderful truths.

May we, like Andrew and Philip of old, be willing to share the good news that we too have found the Messiah, the Christ. And may those who hear us be like Peter and Nathanael, willing to listen, learn, obey, and

to follow Him the rest of their days, sharing with as many as possible that they too, have found Jesus (John 1:40-45).

O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM

By IRVIN BARNES

The statement “O wretched man that I am” is found in Romans 7:24. This describes a poor soul who is in a state of distress, misery and affliction.

Beginning in Rom.7:4 the writer gives a number of reasons why the wretched man has come to this horrible state of mental torture. Some of these factors are as follows. “I was alive, the commandment came and I died. Sin took occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me. I am carnal sold under sin. In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. How to perform good, I find not. When I do good, evil is present with me. Even though I delight in the law of God in the inward man, there is another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

Does this mental anguish in any way represent the mind of a Christian? Absolutely not! Rom. 6:3, asks, “How can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” He goes on to write how those who have been baptized into Christ, should walk in newness of life. He explains how Christians are crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Paul goes on to write, Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin. Let not sin reign in your mortal body. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Rom.6:18, describes a people made free from sin. Rom. 7:14, describes someone who is carnal, sold under sin.

It is easy to recognize the obedient, new born Christian of Romans 6. But who is the wretched man of Romans seven? The key to identifying the wretched man is found in two different expressions, one found in Romans 7:7, “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

In Romans 7 Paul casts himself, (and by personification, every other Jew, all Jews) back under the law of Moses and describes the frustration of trying to live under a

law that was difficult to keep and offered no permanent freedom from sin. In Romans 7:24, Paul cries out as one under the law, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

This great question is answered in Romans 8:1-2, “There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” This in a very personal way describes the difference between the two laws. The peace, freedom from sin, and its guilt, that Paul and every other Jew could receive is now available under the New Testament law of Jesus Christ. Christ frees all men who will obey him.

Romans 7:4, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye, also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.” Rom.7:6, “But now we are delivered from the law.” Since we are dead to the law of Moses, delivered and freed from that law, we are also free from the misery described by those who, when they lived under the law, lived in a state of fear, guilt, and wretchedness.

Rom. 8: 1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS?

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The question of what we will do with Jesus must be answered by each person for himself. In the Bible we have examples of individuals who answered the question in various ways. By their response we can see the answers to the question are not all the same. We can learn from their example, whether good or bad, but one has to make up his own mind what his answer should be. And we need to be aware that the answer will determine where we will live in eternity.

Judas was one of the chosen apostles of Jesus, but because of covetousness, when the time came for him to make his decision, either money or our Lord, his answer was, “Betray Him for money - thirty pieces of silver.” This paltry sum (less than \$20) cost him, not only his life, but his soul as well. He went out in disgrace and hanged himself, and was buried in a pauper’s grave. On the Judgment day he will be lost forever. “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while

some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10). The greed of many today is leading them to give a similar answer to the question.

The Bible tells us, Jesus “came unto his own, and his own received him not”(John 1: 12). It was the Jews of that day who demanded the crucifixion of Christ. When they were faced with the decision for Jesus to live or die, they cried out, “Let him be crucified”. That was their answer to the question, “What shall I do with Jesus?” When Pilate sought to release Him, they demanded His death, “Let him be crucified.” And nothing but the death of Jesus would satisfy this blood thirsty mob.

The disciples of Jesus who were to represent Him in the world were told by Him that they would all be offended at Him. They assured Him that that would not happen. But it did. Peter, who was the most outspoken of them, was the very one in the hall of Pilate who denied that he even knew Jesus? He cursed and swore that he was not with Christ, but repented in deep remorse, “and he went out, and wept bitterly” (Matt. 27:75). The Lord forgave him, and he spent the rest of his life proving himself to be a faithful follower of Christ, and finally suffered a martyr’s death by crucifixion.

Saul of Tarsus was an enemy of everything that pertained to Jesus, and was determined to destroy the church of Christ. “As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison” (Acts 8:3). Later he was converted and his name was changed to Paul, and he admitted, “I persecuted the church of God and wasted it” (Gal. 1:13). His answer at first was to destroy the church and all of its members, and he confessed, “and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them” (Acts 26: 10). Had he never been converted, he would have been lost forever. But by the will of God he became one of the most dedicated of the apostles and accomplished great good for the Cause of Christ.

The apostle Paul became a prisoner of the Roman government, having been falsely accused by the Jews. And he was allowed to plead his case before King Agrippa. He had first appeared before Felix, who had the opportunity of hearing a Christian who was willing to die if he had done anything worthy of death. Felix found no fault in him according to Roman law, and hoped by leaving him a prisoner, that he would get money for his release. He kept him captive until he left office. And

when King Aggipa came and heard Paul speak for himself as a faithful follower of Christ, the king said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). When he had the opportunity to accept Christ and become a child of God, his answer was “almost”. And as far as we know, he died unprepared to meet the Lord in Judgment.

After Jesus was crucified and was resurrected the third day, He met the apostles in Jerusalem and gave them their final orders before leaving for Heaven. On the day of Pentecost, AD 33, the Gospel was preached to a great multitude of people who had gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate this important annual event. And the apostles, with the power promised by Jesus, preached to them. It was made clear that they were guilty of having crucified the Son of God, and what they were witnessing was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. About three thousand precious souls were convinced that they were lost, and they accepted the Gospel invitation of Christ, and were baptized that same day for the remission of sins. When they were faced with the question, “What shall I do with Jesus,” their answer was to accept Jesus as the Son of God and be saved. The question is before us now. What are we going to do with Jesus?

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A Wise Christian - Upon rising from a peaceful night of slumber one should think about the new day. “This is the beginning of a new day God has given me to use it as I will. I can waste it, or use it for good. What I do today is important, because I’m exchanging it for a day of my life. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something I have traded for it. I want it to be gain, not loss; good, not evil; success, not failure - so that I shall not regret the price I paid for it.

-Author unknown

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HANG IN THERE....continued from page one

(Jude 3) “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). “Hold fast the faithful word” (Titus 1:9). Don’t deviate one jot or tittle.

Stand fast practically. Abide firm in that which is right, true, and holy. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2). In nothing be moved by laxity of the age - don’t be carried along by

the current trends of society. "Be ye holy, for I am holy".

Stand fast experientially. By that I am talking about your own private Christian life. Live in close communion with your Lord, always aware of His presence. You do that through a careful study of His word, being constant in prayer, and an awareness of and dependence on the Spirit of God to help you (1 Thessalonians 5:21; Ephesians 3:16).

Stand fast without wandering into sin. You are going to be tempted, the passions are going to rise, the lusts will rebel, the devil will hurl his suggestions - but you stand fast. We don't go off into sin all at once. The Bible says, "All we like sheep go astray". The lamb goes away from the fold gradually, one little turf at a time. And we go away from the fold one "little" sin at a time.

Stand fast without wearying. You're tired - never mind, take a rest, brush up, and go on. You say: "this work is so monotonous" - just do it better and it will change. Someone has said, "Successful people are people who do simple things exceptionally well" You cry: "Alas, I cannot see results" - never mind, wait for the results like the farmer waits for the harvest. (God doesn't judge us on results - He judges us on faithfulness in serving Him.) "But I plod along and make no progress" - never mind, you are a poor judge of success - work on. Friends, along with our "work of faith" and "labor of love", there must be "patience of hope" (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Remember "your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The famous pianist, Pederewski, came to a concert hall to perform before a very sophisticated audience. They were all dressed in their finery. One lady came with her nine year old boy, hoping that by seeing Pederewski play he would be inspired to practice his piano lessons. Well, he came against his will. He was wiggling and squirming in his seat. As she turned to talk with someone, he slipped out of his seat, went up on the stage, sat down at Pederewski's piano, and started playing - "chopsticks". Every eye was on the little boy. "Get that boy off that stage. Where's his mother? Why did she bring him anyway"? Pederewski was off stage preparing to come on. He heard the commotion and hurried to put on his coat and straightened his tie. He came out behind the boy, and instead of snatching him off his stool, he reached gently around him and began improvising counter melodies that would go with what the boy was playing. And as he did so, he whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit - don't stop - keep playing".

I would like to think that while all of us today are struggling to serve the Lord, though imperfectly it is being done, that the great Master is reaching around us and saying, "Don't quit - don't stop - keep serving". "Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved!" Hang in there! wfussell@comcast.net

THE DANGER...continued from page two

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica," Acts 17:11 says of the Bereans in the long ago, "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Unless this is our attitude and practice, we might find ourselves being led astray by smooth and fair speeches that deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting (Rom. 16:18). There is no substitute for a knowledge of the truth.

However, merely having a knowledge of God's word is not enough! That must be the case because there have been preachers among us who once stood for the truth, but where are they today? Well, Some are in digression, while others have embraced denominationalism, proving that there must be other factors involved. Indeed, a second factor is that we must always have a desire to follow Christ instead of men. Some become overwhelmed by a preacher's personality and charisma, so much so that they begin to follow that man instead of "The Book." Indeed, when we are overly concerned about who is right, instead of what is right, we have a problem that needs to be corrected. As Paul exhorted the Corinthians, we are "not to think of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). Placing too much confidence in a man, even to the point of automatically believing everything he says, will be the downfall of many.

Thirdly, we must possess a love for the truth. Paul wrote that this is a very real reason some will be lost in eternity: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess.2:10-12). To have a love of the truth means that we want to know what the Bible teaches in order to believe and obey it. Is that your attitude? If it is a Bible subject (regardless of what the topic might be), do you honestly want to know what God has revealed in

order to be in compliance with His will? If not, you are ready for a smooth-talking preacher to come along and convince you that the Bible really doesn't mean what you know it says.

As Paul implied in 1 Cor. 15:33, false teachers lead people into all kinds of error that violate the purity of doctrine and life demanded by the Lord (1 Tim. 4: 16). When brethren want to coddle such men, giving them free access to the unsuspecting (either publicly or privately), it demonstrates that Paul's warning is falling on deaf ears. Brethren, it's time to wake up!

Our Departed

FENIMORE - William H. (Bill) Fenimore passed from this life after a lengthy illness August 3, 2019. He was ninety-two at the time of his death. Bill was born in Covington, Kentucky to John and Sara Fenimore on March 4, 1927. Bill married Greta Cooper in St. Albans, West Virginia in 1952. They spent 67 wonderful years together and were blessed with two daughters, Linda and Nancy. Bill worked as an electrical engineer for Union Carbide Corp., retiring after 32 years. Bill was baptized by Brother Wayne Fussell in 1959 in St. Albans. He was member of the church for approximately 60 years. Following his retirement, he and Greta moved to Weatherford, Texas in 1987. He was a faithful member of the Bankhead Church of Christ in Weatherford, Texas at the time of his passing. Bill was one of our teachers and song leaders. He is survived by his wife, Greta, and daughters, Dr. Linda Fenimore of Fort Worth, TX, and Nancy Berry and her husband, Peter of Lawrenceville, GA; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and nephew, Patrick Fenimore. Brethren in Christ, friends, and family gathered at White's Funeral chapel in Weatherford to honor the memory of Brother Bill. Brother Gary Robinson led the beautiful congregational singing. Brother Weldon Couch led the prayer; and Brother Joe Hisle led the dismissal prayer. The writer endeavored to speak words of comfort and warning to those present. — Melvin Blalock

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, August 14, oldpaths@juno.com We closed an enjoyable meeting at New Salem congregation near Brookhaven, MS Sunday afternoon. There was a total of three confessions of wrong. Crowds were excellent all week with some outsiders as well as a number of

other congregations in attendance, some out of State. Our first meeting there was 45 years ago and we have been there and other nearby congregations a number of times since. We love those good folks in that area and Southern hospitality is alive and well there. We could not have been treated better and we thank one and all for everything done for the meeting and us personally. It was our pleasure to preach at the nearby Jericho congregation the last Sunday afternoon to a nice crowd. We are to begin at Ozark, MO a week from this coming Lord's Day for their Labor Day meeting. We look forward to that and ask your prayers for us and the meeting. Preachers, we need your reports and articles for the paper. Try to have them to us by the 15th of each month for publication in the next issue. Brethren are complimentary of your field reports, they enjoy them, so let's try to rebuild that part of the paper. In years gone by it was common to have 25 or more reports from all over the Brotherhood. Lord bless the faithful.

Paul O. Nichols, 14217 Rosehill, Overland Park, KS 66221, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, August 1. At Stony Point, Kansas City we recently had one confession of faults and one baptism. We had Bro. Bill Ferguson for our spring meeting, and last Lord's day the annual young speakers meeting closed. We had excellent attendance at both meetings, with members from other congregations and states helping to swell our crowds. The preaching of Brother Ferguson was scriptural and with conviction, preached without fear or favor, from heart full of love for the Lord and those in attendance. At the Young Speakers Meeting we had young men from various states and locations who aspire to become evangelists. They spoke with conviction and courage. We wish for them the Lord's blessings, and hope that they become strong preachers of the Gospel. It appears that the prophecy which tells us that the devil would be "loosed for a little season" (Rev 20:3) is being fulfilled, with laws being passed legalizing the murdering of innocent unborn infants, formerly outlawed liquor, and more recently, homosexuality, preparing multitudes for a devils hell for eternity. Let us do all we can to encourage our young men who want to preach. Time is growing short for the poor lost sinner who knows not the truth, and death is thinning our ranks of strong preachers of the past. At the age of ninety-six, I know that the time of my departure is growing nearer each day, and others will soon be "paying the debt to nature" too. So I am preparing. The Lord bless the faithful.

Frank Brancato, 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312, August 8, 2019, email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net. Since last reporting, I had the pleasure

of holding a meeting in Melba, Idaho. It had been 15 years since my last meeting there, and it was great to be with those brethren again. I enjoyed staying with the Brence family very much, and I am so thankful for their hospitality. The crowds were good during the meeting with visiting members from Oregon, Washington, Oklahoma and California. We had one baptism and one restoration and we give God all the glory. The work here in Bakersfield continues to move forward and we are at peace. We have enjoyed having visitors in attendance just about every Sunday, and we pray for some good and honest hearts. My summer meeting schedule is now complete, and I look forward to working here at home for a couple of months. If the Lord wills, my next meeting will be in Fair Oaks CA (November 1-3). May God bless His faithful everywhere!

Melvin Blalock, 214 Pearl St. Cleburne, TX 76033, melvinblalock@sbcglobal.net, August 14, 2019. We have had a busy summer locally. I continue to assist the churches at Cleburne, Weatherford, Mineral Wells, and Duncanville. I write articles for several local papers each week. The Weatherford paper has asked us to write a separate article for their Friday church page. In addition to this, we post articles on Facebook every week, and have begun boosting the posts to reach more people. The response has been good. Our services at the Cleburne church are recorded for Facebook every Sunday. Our Facebook page is under the South Walnut Church of Christ if you are interested in looking at our page. Our church webpage has generated some interest in our correspondence courses. We have request for our courses from distant places in this country, as well as foreign countries. We recently had a lady who lives in Washington D.C., request a visit and express interest in baptism. We are currently working on getting someone in that area to visit her. The church at Cleburne just finished a meeting with Brother Joe Hisle. Joe did an outstanding job as usual. We had overflowing crowds throughout the meeting. Brethren from neighboring congregations supported the meeting, and we had local community visitors as well. At the end of the meeting Alberta and I were thrilled that our twin granddaughters requested baptism. We had been talking to them about baptism prior to the meeting. We believe that Joe had a big influence on them with his sound preaching, and by conversing with them. The girls wanted granddad to baptize them and I was very happy to comply. We could not have had a better ending to a great meeting. We are thankful to be in the Lord's service and pray for the faithful everywhere.

Wayne Fussell, 6126 Land O' Trees, Shreveport, LA

71119. Wfusse111@comcast.net. My meeting at the Red Oak, TX congregation was well-attended by congregations and preachers in the area. Staying with my good friends, Gerald and Marjorie Hill, was a real treat. Gerald has done a good work with this church for many years. During the meeting, I was honored to preach on "Let the Bible Speak". My next meeting will be in West Plains, MO September 20-22. We look forward to having Jonathan Edwards to preach for us here September 13-15. "Hang in there", my faithful brethren

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net, July 5. Phyllis and I are presently in San Angelo, Texas. We began a gospel meeting here yesterday. We have known these folks a long time and we are thankful to have the opportunity to be here again. We were able to attend the Sulphur, Oklahoma Fourth of July meeting every night this year. Over 160 people attended the first service and nearly 400 were in attendance by the final night. We enjoyed the meeting immensely. The Healdton, Oklahoma congregation assumed the responsibilities of hosting the meeting and selected Glen and Aubrey Ballard to organize and conduct it. They did an exceptional job. We had beautiful singing, excellent preaching, and wonderful association. We left the meeting feeling inspired. Since my last report we have conducted meetings at the Hillcrest congregation near Brookhaven, MS and the Pleasant View congregation near Springfield, MO. We had excellent attendance at both meetings. Our schedule for the next few months includes: Napoleon, AL (Aug. 4-11), Shawnee, KS (Sept. 6-8), Blue Springs, KY (Sept.18-22), Kansas City, MO (Oct. 9-13), and Weatherford, TX (Oct. 25-27). We are also scheduled to be at the Texas Labor Day Meeting (Aug. 30-Sept 1). Please pray for us. May God continue to bless us all as we strive to glorify Him.

Greg Gay, 3816 Tambos Trl, Edmond, OK 73034, 916-804-3787, papagreg@aol.com, August 10, 2019. Since last report our travels have included July 4th meetings at Sulphur, Oklahoma and Springfield, Missouri. Although our time at each meeting was brief, we enjoyed seeing all who were there for the services we attended. I preached at Houston while we were in Missouri, plus we enjoyed an afternoon in Springfield with Kent and Phyllis May, dear friends since teenage years. In recent weeks we have been to Nassau and on a cruise with stops in Grand Cayman and Jamaica with our granddaughter, Livy Owen. The beauty of God's creation is amazing all over the world! We flew for worship to Longwood, Florida both weekends of our

trip where I preached both Sunday mornings. While it was our first time there, everyone welcomed us warmly and made us feel right at home. We are looking forward to being part of the Texas Labor Day meeting hosted by Fossil Creek and to preaching at Grapevine the Lord's Day of the meeting.

Rick Martin, teachermartin@gmail.com. The month of July was a busy one for the Martins. We were able to attend the 4th of July meeting in Springfield. The meeting was very enjoyable, and I appreciate the Mission Hills congregation for hosting this great meeting. Ron Courter and Frank Brancato did an excellent job conducting the meeting. After the meeting was over, we were able to take a few days and visit Branson with our good friends, Don and Patsy King. After this brief vacation we had our meeting here at home with Don. We enjoyed this meeting very much and Don did an outstanding job. I then went to Earlytown, AL and held a meeting. We had good support from the surrounding congregations. I first went to Earlytown fifty years ago while traveling with the late Barney Owens. It was on this trip that I met my future bride. It was good to have Kevin Presley at the meeting. I was also happy to see June and Larry Broxson. June was able to attend two services. She has been down now for two years and I pray that she is on the mend now. After this meeting it was on to Piedmont, AL for a meeting. The people at Piedmont are to be commended for their faithful attendance. Unlike some congregations, they made the meeting a priority and attended every night. We enjoyed the hospitality of our great friends, Terry and Angie Studdard. Terry and his son, Aaron Studdard are faithful Gospel preachers and it was good to be associated with them. By the time you read this report we will have had our annual singing with Kevin Presley. We always look forward to this singing and usually have great attendance. As of late, I have been able to hear gospel preachers, Cullen Smith and Carl Johnson. I enjoyed hearing these two men proclaim the Gospel. The congregation here at Marietta continues to support the Let the Bible Speak TV program with Kevin Presley. Please continue to remember us when you pray. May God bless the brotherhood.

Roger Owens, Northwest US, 1-417-766-8969, rowens700@yahoo.com (II Tim. 4:22), August 2019. Greeting to the faithful in Christ. It has been a very busy Spring and Summer. Two major endeavors across the Pacific Northwest are yielding good results. By the time this report reaches your hands I will have made yet another trip into that area of God's moral vineyard, Wyoming and Nebraska. We have spent time in Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Southern Oregon

and Northern California. While in Oregon I spent time with the brethren at Klamath Falls speaking for them on three services. These are folks who seek to do more for the Lord and have a zeal to do so. Brother Delmer Lee came while there and encouraged the work and the church in Klamath Falls. Delmer is doing a great work in Oregon. This area is where the Estrada's now live and call their home. They have been received with welcomed arms. Please pray for them and their family. I took a day to drive into Northern California, Etna to be precise. Here I spent the day and was invited to conduct a 2-hour study in the home of Roger and Michele Estrada. This was 07/25/2019. There were many good questions, ones I had heard and answered many times before. They enjoyed the time we had together and expressed another study in the future. I am sending them some of our brotherhood reading materials to think on. I also conducted a 2-hour study with Brendan and Danielle Estrada on Monday night 07/29/2019. They were very encouraged by my coming and spending time with them in their rental home. I also spent a day with David Peake from Grants Pass about 1/2 hour from Medford where I had gone Sunday night to stay until my flight home on Wednesday. We had a wonderful visit. He is a great worker for the Lord and was so excited to spend time together. He was encouraged by our visit to engage in the EDDM program (EVERY DOOR DIRECT MAILING). Brethren this is a simple and inexpensive method for contacting people in your town or village. We spoke of many issues that both help and some that hinder the Lord's work. A real big mountain in the road of Godly success is procrastination. It means we know but for some reason fail just to do good. (James 4:17). I need to report the work in Nebraska. Gering & Scottsbluff is doing very well. They have six members now and we have received new inquiry from the TV program just this week. Mark Whitaker is doing a great job serving the members of that congregations. Want to say thanks to the many visitors who took the time to come by and worship with them this summer and assisting as well. Three years and we grow about two members per year. (I Cor. 3:1-6). I move on to the work in Wyoming, Casper, Riverton, Lander and Cheyenne. Many more inquiries have come in and these are the areas I plan to devote 10 days of intense door knocking and study with. Brother Matt Usery has been working with the Casper congregation for about 2 months I believe. We have the potential to establish another congregation but it is going to take more work to get to that point. Pray for us and remember it's the Lord's work not mine or any other man's.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE. . .

HOWEVER, HIS HAIR BEGAN TO GROW AGAIN!

By JERRY DICKINSON

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

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

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

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

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

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