

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

SAYINGS ALONG THE BROAD WAY

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

After graduating from high school in 1970, I headed for Oklahoma to connect up with Miles King and travel with him all that summer long. He had a full schedule awaiting us, one that involved five meetings in four different states, and this article bears the same title of a sermon I heard him preach several times. Obviously taking his text from Matt. 7:13-14, I was impressed with how he made an effective contrast between the way that is “broad” (leading to destruction) and the way that is “narrow” (leading unto life). Please observe that the destructive path is described as a spacious one, indicating it is wide open, it accommodates the masses, it’s where anything goes and the people get what they want without restraint. No wonder Jesus declared that “many there be which go in thereat!”

Being the liar that he is (John 8:44), the devil makes the broad way appealing by misleading people in regard to its destructive nature and final destination. While it actually involves a life of sin, recklessness, love of the world and a desire to please self, Satan presents it in a different light. Indeed, that is what these - “Sayings Along The Broad Way” - are all about! In other words, they are based upon false premises, faulty reasoning and show a total disregard for Biblical principles and sound judgment. It would be impossible, of course, to expose all such “sayings” in one article, but the following examples are a good beginning place. Why? because they give us the opportunity to emphasize the need for both doctrinal and moral purity (the very things the broad way leads souls away from).

“WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS, STAYS IN VEGAS” Surely most every reader is familiar with this saying, but did you know that it was actually part of an advertising campaign in 2003 to entice people to visit Las Vegas? In fact, the clever little saying is credited with helping to bring in a record 37.4 million visitors in

2004. Incidentally, before someone criticizes the use of the word “clever,” let me hasten to add that “cunning” is a synonym and defined this way-- “Shrewd or crafty in manipulation or deception” [The American Heritage Dictionary] Yes, in that diabolical sense it is a clever little saying, but it represents one of the most dangerous lies that millions have swallowed and lived by! Do people really believe they can go to “Sin City” and engage in all kinds of sinful behavior and debauchery, but there will be little or no consequences?

Dearly beloved, there is no “free zone” where one is sheltered from the consequences of sin-- not in Las Vegas or any other city! It has been said that sin is that “great detective” which will track you down, dog you through every turn of life until it pulls you down and compels you to understand the devastating nature of sin. Num. 32:23 sets forth a principle that we need to take to heart today-- “Be sure your sin will find you out.” Undoubtedly thousands could tell personal stories of how innocence was lost, money wasted, good reputations destroyed and homes torn apart because someone thought they would get a free pass in “Sin City.” Don’t let Satan deceive you about the damaging effects of sin (Gal. 6:7-8)! Such carelessness will lead you down that broad way and take you farther away from God than you ever thought possible.

“ONE FAITH IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER”

Although the scriptures affirm that there is “one body” and “one faith” (Eph. 4:4-5), the above statement has helped to deceive people in regard to denominationalism. Likewise, there are other sayings intended to give comfort to people who are not abiding in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). {Examples: “One church is as good as another”/ “Join the church of your choice”/ “There are many roads to heaven”/ “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere”} The truth is that religious folks are actually being discouraged from seeking and maintaining doctrinal purity. Some are arguing, for example, that the only thing required

continued on page 8

CONTENTS

Vol. XCIII No. 9



ADVOCATE

Saying Along the Broad Way 1
 Editorial 2
 The True Vine 3
 Things to Consider About the Church of God..... 4
 Unspotted From the World 6

Announcement 9
 Field Reports 9
 WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE..... 12

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Editorial

CHURCH OF CHRIST, OR DENOMINATIONS?

By DON L. KING

In John chapter 15, our Lord saw a responsibility toward His disciples that he must have found troubling. He was about to be crucified, and He could see the defeat and resignation among the disciples. They were at a loss as to what the future held. The things Christ had told them were difficult to accept. The last verses of chapter 14 are sorrowful to read even today. The "last supper" was finished; and the remarks of our Lord, apparently intended to be comforting to them, appear in the last several verses of chapter 14. As they were making ready to depart the location of the last supper, Jesus said, "Arise, let us go hence." (Verse 31) The opening verses of chapter 15 are, in our opinion, a continuation of His farewell remarks. The remarks of Marcus Dodds, in his commentary, are interesting. He wrote: "He saw their reluctance to move, and the alarmed and bewildered expression that hung upon their faces; and He could not but renew His efforts to banish their forebodings and impart to them intelligent courage to face separation from Him."

The teaching of Christ regarding Himself as the true vine follow this; and it is sad that what He taught therein has been misconstrued by false teachers to indicate the existence of denominations. Obviously, He could not have had such in mind since it would be hundreds of years before any came into existence. (We suppose Satan hoped we would not realize that.) Rather, His point was that each of them would be as a branch attached to Him as the true vine and therein produce fruit as a result. It is all very logical and beautiful when seen within the context intended. Just as a fruit tree produces fruit upon its branches, so Christians shall produce fruit because we are attached to Christ as the true vine.

Look closely at some related verses: First of all, He could not have intended anyone to suppose other churches were the subject since in chapter 17:20,21, He said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be ONE as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." You see, if there were only one church from the beginning the world

continued on page 9

THE TRUE VINE

By G.A. CANFIELD

PUBLISHER’S NOTE: After writing the editorial for this month’s OPA I came across this excellent article by Brother Canfield written many years ago. Lynwood had sent it to us in 1988 for the PAGES FROM THE PAST column. I remember well Brother Canfield. He was a good preacher and always interesting to hear. We always looked forward to seeing him at the Sulphur, OK meeting. I thought it would be a great companion to the editorial. —DLK

By M. Lynwood Smith

Brother Canfield gave me this article to be printed in a work on his life. It must have been in the year 1949-50. I have the typed copy that was made from his manuscript. I suppose I was the one who sent this in for publication originally and it appeared in 1951, November 1, in Old Paths Advocate. I’m sure you will enjoy seeing it again, and those who have not seen it will appreciate it from this great old preacher of the gospel. —MLS

Jesus said (John 15:1), “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Some people try to get relief out of this passage, claiming that when Christ said, “Ye are the branches,” He meant all these denominational churches that are in the world. They say that true vine means the church of Christ, and the various denominations are the branches, but this verse of Scripture does not teach that. Verses of the same chapter says, “I am the vine and ye are the branches.” Below is a diagram of what we mean. Here is the vine, which Christ said was Himself, here are also the apostles on the vine, which Christ said were the branches. So, the apostles being the branches, there can be no room left for the denominations on the vine, also. (See Matt. 10:2-7).

Christ The Vine-(Verse 5)

Simon (Peter).....C	-Andrew
James (son) of Zebedee.....H	-John
Phillip.....R	-Bartholomew
Thomas.....I	-Matthew
James.....S	-Lebaeus
Simon.....T	-Judias - Matthias

Now, if this doctrine were true, It would prove that the church of Christ was the only true one, because they admit that it is the church of Christ which fits the picture of the one true vine. So, that reasoning does not help them at all. The way I see it, is, as Jesus said to the Apostles in John 15:4: ”Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.” Jesus said to the Apostles, just before He went away, (John 16:7), “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” Some folks seem to think that this applies to all the preachers today. Does it? Let us see from another Scripture (John 14:26), which tells us, that Jesus said, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring .all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Now how could that apply to anyone living today, since He said the Holy Ghost would bring all the things that Jesus said to their remembrance? NO one has been so instructed by the Holy Ghost today, so we must deny they are the ones of whom Christ was speaking.

Jesus prayed (John, 17:6), “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy Word.” (Verse 8) “For I have given them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.”

Now, we notice, in verse 20, 21, Jesus said, I pray not

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for them alone, but for all of them also which shall believe on Me through their words. God gave the word to Jesus Christ. Then Christ gave the Word to the disciples to teach unto all nations. In Matt. 28:18,19,20, He appeared unto them and told them to “go teach all nations.” But, first, we read in Acts 1:2, “Until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen: To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs.” Here He is sending the Apostles out, after He had given them that word by the Holy Ghost or Comforter. But in verse 4, He tells them “not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father,” ‘This is the promise of John 6:7 and 14:26, which was the sending of the Comforter. So, we see that it could not apply to any man today.

We know that Judas was one of the twelve, but let us notice in John 15:6, “If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” We know from our study of God’s Word: that Judas did not abide in “the vine” (Christ), therefore he was cast forth and another one took his place (See Acts 1:22-26) ,’Beginning from the baptism of John unto the same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men show whether of these two Thou hast chosen,’ that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lots fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

Now, again note John 15:6, He said, “If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth (broken off) as a branch.” Thus, we see, that Judas was. Also, verse 5, “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

The Gospel was to begin at Jerusalem to all nations, and the apostles were to be witnesses (Lk. 24:46,47), “Thus it is written and thus it behoove Christ to suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Now, we come to Acts 2:1, “And when the day of

Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord on one place; and suddenly from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.” Then we learn later on in the chapter that some accused them of being “full of new wine,” but in verse 14, that Peter stood up with the eleven (that made the twelve apostles) and corrected this mistaken idea, and preached the first great sermon in the church. Peter told them they had taken and crucified the Lord of Glory. Then they broke right out into his sermon and wanted to know what to do to be saved from this awful thing they had done. He told them (verse 38) to “repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” We are told that those who gladly received the word were baptized and that same day there was added unto them about 3000 souls. Jesus had told them if they would abide in the true vine they would bring forth much fruit. They were abiding in Him, and they were bearing fruit unto the Lord. Their first crop was 3000 souls, which were added unto them, for the apostles were first (See 1 Cor. 12:27,28).

I hope this may be of some help throughout eternity. This is my prayer. —G.A. Canfield

THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD

The Beginning of the Church - Acts 2

By DAVID GRIFFIN

This article concerns the time and place when the church of Christ began.

The Prophecies and Promises

The origin of this great institution called the church of Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament. Isaiah 2:2-3 say, “Now it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people will come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

This passage affirms the following points about the coming of a great event.

1. What the event will be - The Lord's house will be established
2. When the event will happen - the last days
3. Who will be involved - all nations
4. Where the event will take place - Jerusalem

At the time Isaiah penned these words, the "Lord's house," known as the Jerusalem temple, already existed and was already the place of worship for the people of God. Thus, the prophet's words clearly refer to some future event involving the establishment of "the Lord's house." To understand what this house is, we must notice 1 Timothy 3:15. Paul says: "...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church..." Here Paul identifies the "house of God" as the "church." We may thus understand Isaiah's words as a prophecy about the beginning of the church.

Similar language occurs in Luke 24:46-49. "Then [Jesus] said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but remain in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.'"

This passage affirms the following:

1. The apostles are to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father
2. Repentance and remission of sins will be preached
3. Among all nations
4. Beginning in Jerusalem

This passage promises that power will come upon the apostles from heaven, and this coming power will be associated with remission of sins for "all nations." In connection with this fact, Mark 9:1 reports Jesus telling the people, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." Again, a great power will come within the lifetime of people living in Jesus' day that will be associated with the coming of "the kingdom" (or the church). This passage harkens back to an even earlier statement of John the Baptizer: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2).

After His resurrection, Jesus also told the apostles that while they are waiting at Jerusalem they will "receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

In summary, all these prophecies and promises anticipate the coming of a great event in which God will bless all nations at Jerusalem with the coming of the power of the Holy Spirit and the establishment of the Lord's house-the Lord's kingdom, the church.

The Fulfillment

It now remains for us to find the fulfillment of this greatly anticipated great event.

First, we look for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-4 describe this event. "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Clearly, the apostles receive the Holy Spirit on this occasion.

Second, we consider the place where this happened. When the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, they were waiting in Jerusalem just as Jesus had told them to do. Also Acts 2:5 says that as the Holy Spirit came upon them, "...there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven." Therefore, according to Acts 2:5, we are in the right place Jerusalem.

Third, verse 5 also says "devout men from every nation under heaven" were present on that notable occasion. Thus, the right people are present for the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:2.

Fourth, according to the Isaiah prophecy these events must take place "in the last days." Well, it is no coincidence that Peter began his preaching by saying that the events of Acts 2 take place "in the last days." In verse 16, Peter refers to a prophecy in the Old Testament book of Joel and declares, "...this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." In verse 17, he then quotes Joel as follows: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says

God, that I will pour out My Spirit...” (quoting from Joel 2:28-29). Thus, Peter says “this [the pouring out of the Holy Spirit] is what Joel was talking about when he said, ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit...’” Clearly, Peter is saying that the events of Acts 2 are taking place “in the last days.” Thus, it is the right time for the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Fifth, when the apostle Peter neared the conclusion of his sermon, he told the people, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38). Here, “repentance and remission of sins” was preached in fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in Luke 24 (above).

Sixth and last, after 3000 people responded to Peter’s preaching, the Bible says that “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (v. 47). Here “the church” is described for the first time in the New Testament as an existing entity. Prior to Acts 2, it is spoken of only in prospect, something of the future. Now, in Acts 2, it is an existing, present institution. Therefore, the church (“the house of God”) was established on the Lord’s Day, in Jerusalem, in the year A. D. 33 in accordance with Old Testament prophecies and many promises by Jesus himself. If you are not a member of that church, you can do so today by obeying the same gospel that the people in Acts 2 obeyed.

The Objection

A common response to the above discussion is that the church of Christ in the world today was established by Alexander Campbell in the 19th century—that there is no connection between the events of Acts 2 and the 19th century Restoration Movement. The argument goes on to say that the church of Christ today is just another denomination like all the others.

This objection, however, makes a mistaken assumption. It assumes that for a church to be the same church as that established in Acts 2, it must demonstrate an unbroken line of historical succession from the present century back to the year A. D. 33. And since the religious movement associated with Alexander Campbell in the 19th century cannot do that (and has never attempted to do so), then the church of Christ today cannot be the church that was established in Acts 2. But this assumption is mistaken. The intervening time from the 1st to the 21st century is so fraught with

error, digression, and apostasy, that any such kind of succession, even if it could be found, would be buried and obscured by departures in that organization from the word of God. This is the problem that the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches have when they attempt to claim such historical succession.

However, the truth is that anywhere and at any time the seed of the kingdom germinates in the hearts of people who obey it, there the church exists, the one established in Acts 2. This is true, even if there is no long historical connection between those people and the distant past. This is all that Alexander Campbell, his father Thomas, Walter Scott, and many others did in the 19th century. That is all they ever claimed. Thus, today, we must preach the same pure, unadulterated word, urge people to obey the same gospel and to worship and serve God as the first century church did, and when they do, the resulting church will be the church of the Lord Jesus Christ as established in Acts 2!

UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD

By JAMES D. ORTEN

The inspired writer said, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas: 1:27). For many years the church, through its teachers and preachers, has persistently reminded Christians of their obligation to stay separate from the world. In my judgment, those reminders were appropriate and needed. We have been well taught about the detrimental effects of worldly speech, dress, and behavior. That type of teaching is still needed and probably always will be. Christians forget that they are “not of this world” to their personal peril and the detriment of the kingdom.

But such matters as those just mentioned are not the only ways Christians can be worldly. I believe there is a spot from the world currently on the Christian garment among us, one that is fully as harmful as those we are so alert to condemn. Specifically, I refer to the spirit of anger and vindictiveness that is truly characteristic of our age.

Within the last two decades the world has elevated anger from an emotion to be condemned and feared to one that is praised and promoted. Our society now runs on fury. Black confronts white, women confront men, students angrily demonstrate against teachers, political

conventions turn into riots, and “peace lovers” make war with militants. Husbands and wives are encouraged to “let it all hang out” in angry confrontations as a means of getting closer together. Surely the irony of some of these situations is clear.

In contrast to the world’s view of anger as good and beneficial, Bible writers taught that it is dangerous, to be watched when it occurs and resolved as quickly as possible, Paul said. “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26). Jesus taught the same lesson in Matthew Five when he said, “Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.” (The phrase “without a cause” which the King James inserts in this verse is not in the original.) The basic lesson in both passages is that while anger itself is not sin, it loosens one’s control over himself, gives vent to impulses from the flesh and thus makes it harder to keep from sinning. As the other phrases in Jesus’ statement show, the more intense the anger and the longer it is harbored, the greater the danger.

Inspired writers also knew that anger is contagious. The wise man said, “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go” (Prov. 22:24). We tell our young people not to associate with those who have worldly habits. That is good advice because, as Paul said, ‘Bad company corrupts good morals’ (I Cor. 15:33). But how often do we warn each other about associating with angry individuals, including angry brethren?

There seems little doubt that Christians have been infected with some of the world’s anger. We see it, for example, in the vindictiveness with which we attempt to correct each other’s faults and in how quick we are to withdraw fellowship. I know churches that regularly cut people off from participating in the services, then later get the facts of what they think the individuals did wrong. Frequently, when they get the full story, they find there really was nothing wrong. Can you believe that two brothers once disfellowshipped someone they heard was going to do something they disagreed with? Oddly, they never seem to question the scripturalness of such habits.

We see the worldly attitude of anger too in the tone with which we discuss our differences. Subjects that our spiritual ancestors discussed for decades in reason and love lately have been pushed to the point of alienation or outright division. Two such topics are the marriage question and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Brothers

King and Gay differed all of their adult lives over whether Christians could divorce and remarry for the cause of fornication. But they never once maligned each other or contributed to the division of a single church over that subject. Would that we, as Elisha asked of his mentor, had a double portion of their spirit.

The question of how the Holy Spirit indwells Christians was discussed and differed upon by the restorers a hundred years ago (although some appear to think the issue arose with the new charismatic movement). The fact that the church never divided over the question is a credit to the way they handled the disagreement. Lately, we have heard that issue debated in such an angry, personally attacking way that it was embarrassing to Christians in the audience.

These statements should not be taken to mean that these and other subjects on which Christians disagree should not be studied. Nor do they mean that Christians can agree with any doctrine that comes along. Further, we should not be “soft” on wrong things. But if the archangel behaved in a Christ-like manner even when contending with the devil (Jude 9), surely Christians should differ with other Christians in the same spirit. The force of scripture, applied with clear logic, is always sufficient to demonstrate the truth. If one has to use strong language to prove his point, it is probably because his point is weak.

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss three characteristics of anger that make it dangerous for Christians and harmful for the church.

First, anger is a distancing device, Christians are taught to receive one another, greet one another affectionately, and to support each other. The early disciples were close enough that they were said to have one heart and one soul” between them (Acts 4:32). But anger creates the opposite of these conditions. Instead of receipt of one another, it promotes rejection. One mental health authority describes it as the “get away from me” emotion. Instead of support, it encourages backbiting and cutting down. And instead of creating “one heart”, it promotes division and strife. “An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression” (Prov. 29:22).

Second, anger is by nature selfish and egotistical. It focuses on my wants and my demands. A well-known psychologist argues that an angry person is nearly always over estimating himself. (The depressed person

under estimates himself.) His statement is hardly novel, but it is true. Underneath most anger is the arrogant statement "...that you should do this to me, of all people, to me!"

Paul taught every Christian "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3), If we think realistically about ourselves, we won't be easily discouraged nor quick to get angry. Both characteristics are blessings. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools" (Eccl. 7:9),

Third, anger blinds one to the truth. "Blind rage" is not just a catch phrase; it is a true description. It blinds one to his own faults. Angry individuals can behave in the most outrageous manner and never notice the impropriety that others recognize at once. One wonders how anyone could be so blind as the man Jesus pictured who attempted to pick a splinter out of his brother's eye when he had a beam in his own (Matt, 7:3-5), Anger may not be the only condition that can create that type of blindness, but it is sufficient to do so.

Anger also blinds one to objective truth. When subjects are debated in anger, the truth will gain few converts. No doubt one reason Paul taught that the truth should be spoken in love (Eph. 4:15), is that its presentation in that manner would encourage a similar reception. And received in love it would have power to change the heart.

Recent research has demonstrated that frequent expressions of anger within families play a major role in serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenic relapse. Can something that harmful to sinners be beneficial to Christians? Inspired writers say "no", They taught a long time ago that angry words and behaviors were harmful to individual Christians and damaging to the church, Paul's advice to the Ephesian church (4:31) is needed as much today as it was then: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." — 1984

SAYINGS ALONG THEcontinued from page one

of us under the new covenant is to love God and love our fellow-man. That means, according to them, that all these doctrinal issues we spend our time discussing are unessential and unimportant to maintaining fellowship

with God and one another.

In other words, we shouldn't be overly concerned with how to observe the Lord's supper, the purpose and mode of baptism, the organization of the church, how to be in compliance with Biblical instructions concerning the church assembly (1 Cor. 14) or any other doctrinal issue. Instead, they say we should merely concentrate on loving God and one another. Sadly, what they fail to realize is that true Biblical love involves obedience to God's commands (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3). In fact, that's not only how we show our love for God, but it's also how we show our love for the brethren--"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments" (1 John 5:2). Surely we can all agree that true Biblical love does not lead someone to push an unscriptural practice into a congregation, causing strife and division, and forcing conscientious brethren to either violate their consciences or go elsewhere. People may come up with clever (there's that word again) ways to make an argument, but the importance of following "in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) cannot be negated.

"IT WON'T MATTER A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW"

This is what the atheist and secularist would lead us to believe, so we might as well go on and do as we please, because a hundred years from now we'll all be dead and gone anyway. However, the Bible affirms the reality of both eternity and a coming day of judgment. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at," Paul declared in Acts 17:30- 31, "But now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." There are several facts contained in Paul's statement here that we need to take to heart: (1) God has set aside a "day"--a real event that will be universal in scope (where all men will give an account of themselves for the way they lived), (2) Jesus Christ will be the judge--He is the one that God has "marked out" for this task, (3) We will be judged by His standard of righteousness--"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48) and (4) God has given credible evidence as proof of these facts--In that He raised Jesus from the dead.

Yes, the judgment day is as real an event as the

resurrection of Christ was, confirming to every believer that with authority He will mete out rewards and punishment in that day, and that’s why the wise choice is to travel the narrow way that leads to heaven. Will it really matter a hundred years from now? Indeed, it will! In fact one million years from now you will be somewhere in eternity--either in heaven with your Lord or that awful place called hell (Matt. 25:46).

CHURCH OF CHRIST...continued from page two

would have had no confusion as to which church was right because there would be no other choice. Jesus also realized that if all the disciples PREACHED THE SAME HARMONIOUS DOCTRINE, everyone who believed on Him “THROUGH THEIR WORD,” (or because of their preaching, Verse 20) would certainly believe the same thing and be one, or in complete agreement! (Verse 21) No chance for denominations with their widely differing doctrines to have been in the mind of Christ is there? Now we can understand the reasoning of the Master.

In Verse 4 the Lord said: “Abide in me, and I in you.” If we abide, or remain in Him by following His teaching completely, how could we possibly be in widely differing organizations which teach opposing doctrines? Christ promised to build only one church in Matthew 16:18, so where did the denominations come from? The answer is simple: they originated from men on earth rather than from Heaven. They came about hundreds of years after the Lord established His church in Jerusalem at 9:00 A.M. on the first day of the week in AD 33. Also, in verse 4 Jesus said the “branch” cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine. The inescapable conclusion is this: since there is no possibility of anyone abiding in Christ and at the same time abiding in a manmade organization which is not attached to the “true vine,” it simply isn’t feasible to suppose salvation may be attained within that man-made organization. Can it be possible that we might accept that an apple grew on a stalk of corn, or that a blueberry was produced by a water melon vine? It would seem that one is as feasible as the other.

In Verse 5 Jesus said: “I am the vine, ye are the branches...” He obviously has in mind individuals rather than an organization built by man. Speaking to His disciples he said “YE” (individuals) are the branches. In Verse 6 he said: “If a man (individual) abide not in me, he is cast forth “as a branch.” There you have it! A man

is a branch, not a denomination. It is quite obvious that Jesus had in mind individuals rather than organizations made by men as He spoke this beautiful parable. He promised that branches not abiding in Him would be cast into the fire and burned. This was a warning to His disciples, and to us, to be faithful rather than to denominations.

He promised in Verse 8 that those who continued to abide in Him would result in the Father being glorified and they would thus bear much fruit. Then He said, “so shall ye be my disciples.” Who can see denominations in such language? As Bro. Homer A. Gay used to say: “If you were twins you couldn’t read that.” All of His language is obviously directed to His disciples as individuals. Later, when the church was established none of them went out and established his own church. Paul said, “...The churches of Christ salute you.” (Romans 16:16) Paul could say that truthfully because he knew they were all members of the same church, the church of Christ. There was no other for hundreds of years.

We realize this brief article uses plainness of speech. Let us remember that the Jews once said: “...If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. (John 10:24) As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:12 he said: “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.” As one old time preacher said: “Put the hay down where the calves can get it and the cows will take care of themselves.” We believe that is a good idea. Think on these things. —DLK

Announcement

BOOKS FOR SALE

We have been asked to mention that Brother Richard DeGough has religious books for sale. He has decided to sell his personal library. I know he has some good ones so if you are in need of some give him a call: 209-883-4168. —DLK

Field Reports

NOTE: Somehow, this was omitted. Our apologies. -DLK
 Rick Martin, July 27, 2021, teachermartin@gmail.com.
 Jane and I were able to attend the 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO this year. This was a welcome relief

from the bleakness of 2020. Smith and Nate Bibens did an excellent job conducting the meeting. I also appreciate the Mission Hills congregation for taking on the tremendous task of hosting the meeting each year and the invitation to speak at their Sunday services. We were able to spend some time with our good friends Don and Patsy King after the meeting was over. Doug Hawkins held our meeting in Marietta, July 11-18. Despite some recent health concerns, Doug was his old self, and his preaching was as good as ever. There were 2 baptisms. We have lots of meetings in the area during the summer. I was able to hear good preaching from Cullen Smith at Piedmont, AL and am looking forward to attending the meeting at Temple, GA with Jerry Dickinson and one at Napoleon, AL with Doug Hawkins. Our annual singing is scheduled for August 14. We are looking forward to using the new book and having Kevin Presley with us. I appreciate the support I received in publishing *Where the Saints Assemble*. It was quite an ordeal this year due to Covid. Sales have been tremendous, and I owe a special debt of gratitude to Terry and Angie Studdard for taking care of the sales at the Sulphur meeting. Lord willing, I am to hold a meeting at Broken Arrow, OK, September 15-19. I recently preached in LaGrange, GA. Pray for the brotherhood.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, August 15. Since last report we have enjoyed preaching at Stockton and at home. Things are doing well at both places it seems. Duane Permenter is now working with Stockton and should be a great help there, Lord willing. Their crowds have improved and a good attitude seems to prevail. We pray that the Hawaii work will continue in peace and that the church will progress in the Lord. We hope to visit them as we can. At home, we are dealing with the usual political changes, wearing masks when in restaurants, etc. However, we are much better off than the brethren in the Philippines who are locked down severely. Yet, they press on. Lord bless them. Brethren, the world is in turmoil in many places. Let us work to see that the church continues in peace and harmony. Wise leadership will be of great value in the coming months. Preachers, we need your articles and reports as always. Try to have them to us by the 12th of the month so we may include them in the next issue of *Old Paths Advocate*. Lord bless us all.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74820, carlmj33@gmail.com, August 13. We have been at home for a couple of weeks, I preached both services on Sunday last week and two folks who have been out

of the church for awhile were restored. We continue to have two new families from the community visiting our services on a regular basis. One family of three is close to taking their stand with us on a permanent basis. I taught our chapter study of Acts 2 on Wednesday night. I am scheduled to preach Saturday night (Sept. 4) at the Texas Labor Day Meeting and the Lord's Day service (Sept. 5) at the Grapevine congregation. My next meeting is at the Odom congregation near Dora, Missouri (Sept. 15-19). I am tentatively scheduled later at Mill Creek Congregation in Shawnee, Kansas, and at Lodi, California (Nov. 4-7). Our meeting with Cullen Smith is scheduled for October 10-17. Phyllis and I are both in our 70s now, but God has blessed us with good health and safe travels. Please continue to pray for us.

Greg Gay, 3816 Tambos Tri, Edmond, OK 73034, papagreg@aol.com, 916-804-3787, August 14, 2021. My meeting at Pleasant View (North Side-Springfield, MO) was the first week of August, after being postponed twice due to Covid concerns. We enjoyed daily hospitality and had great visits renewing old friendships and getting to know the families who are new to us. Visitors from area congregations were good to attend including many of the preachers who live and work in the area. Pleasant View is served by Irvin Barnes and Kent May as elders. Irvin performed the ceremony when Cassie and I married in 1973 and Kent and I have been friends since teenage years. He and Phyllis treated us like royalty when we stayed with them for the week. Our work continues at the growing West View congregation in Piedmont, OK. We are thankful for the families who are moving to the area and make us their home congregation. Studies with members are beginning again. Our emphasis is to begin including their friends in new studies to introduce them to the church. My Facebook group, *God's Good News from Greg*, continues to have good interest with each video reaching 500-1,000 of the 2,800 members of the group in 63 nations around the world. When my son-in-law, Justin Owen, and Geary Trent were on their way to Malawi in recent weeks, we attempted to arrange some studies in Kenya where there are 200 members of the group. While schedule changes prevented that from happening, my Facebook post to offer the studies generated immediate interest. I plan to pursue more there both online and in person as travel becomes possible. Recent leads have also come from the Philippines and India. In those cases, we have faithful brethren who will see these individuals as soon as travel is allowed in their part of the world. I appreciate the calls I am getting for meetings. Lord willing, our next travels will

be to Fieldstone, MO, then on to the Texas Labor Day meeting. We are looking forward to seeing all who can attend.

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Court, Dothan AL, 36303, July 25, 2021. It has been a busy and blessed summer in the Lord's work. The annual May Homecoming meeting at Napoleon, AL was an even more special time since we were unable to have the meeting last year due to the pandemic. These kind and gentle people are a joy to know and work with each year. It is always good to see friends and family from afar who come home for the "second Sunday in May." It was also a joy to be with the church in Piedmont, OK for a short meeting. Bro. Greg Gay labors with the congregation there and his presence and association made the meeting all the better. In June, I was privileged to work with the church at Burkhardt, MO in a series of meetings. The week had the feeling of an 'old-fashioned summer meeting' with large crowds filling the old, historic building. The singing was terrific and the fellowship of these brethren in the gospel was a great encouragement to me. It is the longtime home church of Bro. John Anderson and Bro. Dennis Smith also makes his home here. I esteem both men highly and it was good to be with them again. One was baptized during the week and for this we rejoice and give glory to God. In July, it was good to be at Little Rock, AR and Cable Ridge, MO. The Little Rock congregation has aired our television program for several years and receives a good amount of response. It was good to have several visitors from the program and others from the community attend the meeting. Bro. Doug Edwards does a good work with the church here. It was a pleasure to stay with him and Debbie. Doug is a great student and teacher of the bible and I always benefit from spending time with him. It was good to have Jerry and Judy Dickenson with us one night as well. In Cable Ridge the brethren remain faithful and true and though small in number they are big in spirit. My thanks to them for a wonderful week. It was a joy to once again make my abode with Tim and Tammy Thomas. Crowds were good and I left encouraged by all who attended. My thanks to preaching brethren David Griffin, Brad Shockley, and Jim Franklin for visiting the meeting. I am presently in a meeting with New Salem, MS. So far, crowds have been excellent, and I look forward to a profitable week. Bro. Carter Stephens is with me for part of the meeting. He is a fine young man who desires to preach the gospel and I expect good things from him in the years to come. Our monthly work with the Hillcrest church continues to yield fruit. The brethren there are growing in their zeal,

knowledge, and ability. They have several wonderful young people who are busy working to convert their friends. There have been several baptisms over the last year or so. The television work continues to grow and attract much interest from around the world. Our YouTube channel has almost 10,000 subscribers now and the program is soon to be airing in some seventeen markets around the nation. In June, an entire 'cups and classes' congregation in central Florida took their stand for true worship after viewing the program online. Bro. George Hogland and Bro. Carter Culbertson had made prior contact with these brethren and their work helped bring about the conversion of these brethren to the truth. The story is too long to relate in this report but suffice it to say that the Lord's word does not return unto Him void. Never underestimate the harvest that may one day come because of a seed you plant even years before. To God be the glory for the increase in Christ's kingdom. May God bless the brotherhood and the preaching of His word the world over.

P.Duane Permenter, 6600 8th St., Riverbank, CA 95367, Aug 14. Please note my new address. Cell: (209) 552-5516. The work in Stockton has progressed since we moved here a few months back. We have around 60 on Lord's Day and 30 on Wednesday night. I am studying with Adam and Andrew Cozby through the book of Timothy. They have been studying together to learn better how to study and present a lesson in the service. Landon Baker is going to join us another young man of the congregation. Laurie and I have visited many people in the surrounding area. We are hoping that some will come back in the future. The attitude of the church is also much more positive for which we praise God. Brother Lloyd Sartane recently came back to the church after being away for over 40 years. We plan on visiting our children in November in Kentucky and Texas. It is a pleasure to be in California once again and thanks to all the congregations who support us in the work. Come meet with us at Stockton we would love to have you. We meet at 10 AM and 2 PM on the Lord's day. Wednesday evening we meet at 7 PM. I am studying with the leadership in Hawaii as well and we have almost completed the book of Romans. The church in Hawaii has started receiving visitors again from the mainland and that is a help. I believe the church in Hawaii is doing ok. Frank Bedford, Melvyn Ventura, and Edimar Daguio take turns teaching. God bless the faithful! pdpermenter@outlook.com

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

THE ROSE OF SHARON

By JERRY DICKINSON

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

Let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as army with banners?

O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!

Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised."

The preceding words constitute some of the most beautifully poetic words about love ever written. They were composed by Solomon and entitled The Song of Solomon or The Song of Songs. It is a type of song known as an "epithalamium" which is a song or poem celebrating marriage. In the poem Solomon and his bride speak to each other about their love in poignant and passionate language. The poem extolls the glory of married love! God said it is not good for man to be alone and performed the first marriage ceremony in a garden. Paul declares marriage is honorable and the marriage bed undefiled. This ancient and wonderful poem celebrates the passion and love of a man and his wife.

The poem, however, has always been considered by Bible students to be a parabolic poem. The language is figurative of the love of God for his bride. The Jews believed it pictured God's love for Israel. In fact, the celebrated Rabbi Akiba called the Song of Solomon "the holy of holies" in the Scriptures. Early Christian writers believed the poem illustrated the love that exists between Jesus and the church. The church is, after all, called the bride of Christ and Paul wrote that Jesus loves and cherishes the church, and gave His life for her. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Solomon is quite the song writer and poet. We are told that he wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. It is interesting that the number of songs is so specific -1005. Some scholars believe that actually The Song of Solomon can be divided into 5 songs. The difficulty with the songs is understanding who is speaking when. The bridegroom speaks and the bride speaks and many times it is hard to know who is speaking. For instance, who is speaking the wonderful words, "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys," the groom or the bride? Interestingly, most of the older scholars believe it was the groom while many of the moderns believe it is the bride. Sharon was a very fruitful plain where David's cattle were fed (I Chron. 27 :29) and mentioned as a place of excellence. (Isaiah 35 :2) The rose is considered the "king of flowers" and is certainly a fitting representation of the King of Kings, our Lord and Savior, the Bridegroom who loves his bride -the Church of Christ. Latter day poets and song writers have so thought and we still sing about Jesus and His love for the church, and our love in return for The Rose of Sharon.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, bloom within my heart; Beauties of Thy truth and holiness impart,

That where'er I go my life may shed abroad fragrance of the knowledge of the love of God.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, sweeter far to see than the fairest flow'rs of earth could ever be,

Fill my life completely, adding more each day of Thy grace divine and purity I pray.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, balm for every ill, may Thy tender mercy's healing pow'r distil.

For afflicted souls of weary, burdened men giving needy mortals health and hope again.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, bloom for evermore; be Thy glory seen on earth from shore to shore.

Till the nations own Thy sov'reignty complete, lay their honors down and worship at Thy feet.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, Bloom in radiance and in love within my heart.