

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. 12

HOMESICK FOR HEAVEN

By WAYNE FUSSELL

I have just preached a sermon here in Shreveport by the above title. It’s on my mind, and I have to write about it. I have just read Paul’s quotation of David when he said, “I believe and therefore speak” - I’ve got this on my mind, and therefore write. A song has been on my mind that we sing so well in our brotherhood, “Beulah Land” It begins, “I’m kind of homesick for a country, to which I’ve never been before” I’ve heard that song sung beautifully, and I’ve heard it sung not so beautifully, but the sentiment grabs the heart. Beulah land was Isaiah’s way of referring to the “Promised Land” of Canaan (Isaiah 62:4). Our “Promised Land”, of course, is heaven. The songwriter says that one can be homesick for a place he’s never been. We have heard so much about heaven, and we want so much to go there, that a homesickness sets in.

The older I become, the more I think about heaven, and the more I want to go there. There was a time when I agreed somewhat with the assessment of Brother George Canfield, a great old preacher from Marion, LA, who would say, “Heaven is my home, but I’m not homesick yet” As the years have gone on, and the struggles of life have seemed more difficult, I no longer agree with that assessment. And I’m sure Brother Canfield changed his attitude toward it as he came closer to the end of his life.

The fact is that everyone is homesick for heaven, but they don’t always know it. God has instilled in every heart a longing for heaven. Solomon said about God, “He has put eternity in their hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). There is an inherent desire for immortality that has been placed by the Lord in every person’s heart. Most folks don’t know it, and many never awaken it, but it is there. You see, God created us to live in a perfect fellowship with Him. That’s why we exist. Adam and Eve enjoyed

that communion with God in Eden’s Garden, and what a beautiful relationship it was. But they sinned and lost it. They were cast out of that paradise and were never allowed to re-enter it. Since that time, man has longed to regain that fellowship with the Lord. There is a longing for a “paradise lost”, a homesickness for heaven.

God said in Isaiah 43:7 that He created us “for His glory” That’s the reason for our existence in this world. We don’t have two reasons we have only one reason for being. We are here to magnify, worship, and bring glory to God. When folks finally realize this truth, internalize it, and live by it, things fall into place, and life runs more smoothly The sad thing is, that most people never realize it. Augustine said of God, and to God, “You have created us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.” Pascal said (and I am paraphrasing), “There is a God-shaped vacuum in every human heart that can be filled with no created thing; it can be filled only with God” No one is truly happy without God. True happiness, peace, and lasting joy is found in only one place, and that is in fellowship with the God Who made us and established us. The ultimate of that fellowship will be experienced when we get to heaven. That’s why we are homesick for heaven.

Evidently, Abraham realized these truths. I think he began to know it when “he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance” (Hebrews 11:8). I’m sure he was well settled in the prosperous city of Ur of the Chaldees when he received the call from God. From that time on, he came to realize that there was something beyond this life that was far better than what he had enjoyed in his native country From that time forward he set his sights on “higher ground” He lived in this world like a “stranger and a pilgrim” for “he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). The KJV says “he looked

continued on page 8

CONTENTS

Vol. XCIV No. 12



ADVOCATE

Homesick for Heaven 1

Editorial 2

Things to Consider 3

How to Lead Right Now 4

Godly Mothers and Wives 6

I Just Can't Get Him Off My Mind 9

How Will I Get the January 2023 OPA? 10

Field Report 11

WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE 12

PUBLISHER

Don L. King
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550
Fax 925-454-8995

EDITORIAL STAFF

Billy Dickinson	Carl Johnson
Jerry Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Greg Gay	David Griffin

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

www.oldpathsadvocate.org
Rick Martin, Website Publisher
Terry Studdard, Website Asst. Publisher
Brandon Steward, Webmaster

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Editorial

By DON L. KING

With this December issue of Old Paths Advocate, we have completed 90 years of publication under this name. Few indeed can match that. We want to express our profound appreciation to all who labored ceaselessly during the years to see the paper published on time each month, and to contribute material so that it remained relevant through changing times. We are convinced that the OPA helped bring our brotherhood together in the early years, and keep it together during the years of constant threats from digression and innovations. Brethren everywhere eagerly awaited its arrival in their mail boxes about the first of each month. It was truly a Brotherhood paper.

With this issue, we are ceasing the printed copy of the paper. The times in which we live along with the costs of printing and postal service make this necessary. The January issue will be online, Lord willing. Our plans are to continue our service in that manner, Lord willing. All subscriptions will be discontinued. The online paper will be free to all who want it. This may inconvenience some who have no computer, but we trust friends, children, etc., can print off copies from the online issues and we welcome that procedure. Our prayer is that this will eventually be suitable to all. Copies from the Internet can be printed in any number with our congratulations. Lord willing, where the paper was once read by thousands, in several Countries, it will now be read world-wide and we pray the Lord will give the increase. The apostle wrote: "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." (I Corinthians 3:6,7) We need that those who plant, (begin a work) and those who water, (preach and work to strengthen and keep it alive) are "nothing". It is God who gives it life and growth. That passage helps keep me right down where I need to be, as one of our older preachers always said. We are just His servants and we should be thankful to be used by the Almighty in His service. I remember another old preacher, now deceased, once told me: "When I get on an airplane to go preach, I see many obviously important men get on with expensive suits and briefcases. I look at them and wonder who they are

continued on page 9

**THINGS TO CONSIDER
ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
Character of the Members of the Church**

By DAVID GRIFFIN

“What is the true church today?” In one sense, this whole series of articles beginning in July 2021 addresses this question. For example, this series has discussed the foundation of the church (Aug 2021), the name of the church (Nov 2021), the undenominational character of the church (May 2022), etc. In the August 2022 issue, we also considered the fallacy of the “visible” and “invisible” church as commonly applied to denominationalism.

In this article, we consider another important feature of the true church—the character of its members. This feature is not just “important”; it is indispensable! Sometimes it seems like members of the churches of Christ think that the true church is identified only and entirely by the name, the work, and the worship of the church and other such things. While it is true that the New Testament church must possess these Biblical characteristics, it is also true that the character of the members cannot be ignored in answer to the question—“What is the true church?”

First, the true church is a converted people. Jesus says, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3). The Lord Jesus is emphatic here. Become converted or miss heaven! It’s that simple! By “converted,” the Lord means converted to Him, not to the church. The church is nothing but members of the body that Jesus saves (Eph 5:23). He is the savior, not the church! Indeed, the church is the saved, but Jesus is the savior. Thus, our trust must be in Him! We must be converted to Him. If not, we cannot be saved, no matter what we call ourselves or how we worship (scripturally or otherwise).

People who are truly converted to Christ are people who live holy lives, consecrated to the Lord. They are not an immoral people; they are not profane people who use bad language and similar things. They are not people who cheat in business or “run over people” to get ahead in the world. The true church can never be characterized by those who live like unconverted people.

Second, the true church has a faithful membership. Paul says that Jesus presents “you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—if indeed you continue in the faith, firmly grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” (Col. 1:23). Here Paul says the true church is made up of those who “continue in the faith”—they do not waver. They are “not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” If a congregation(s) is made up of people who are “in again, out again” and who do not make the Lord and his will the guiding force of their lives, they are not being true to the Lord. They cannot be the true church. When people are not faithful, they are not only weak themselves, but they weaken the church. And people who weaken the church are not faithful people. Hence, the true church cannot be true when its members are unfaithful people.

Third, the true church loves the word of God. The evangelist Luke describes the noble Berean congregation like this: “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Some members of the church seem to think that as long as they have the right name and the right worship, then the word of God can otherwise be of no importance in their lives. If I am a member of the church of Christ that worships according to the New Testament pattern, but I have no zeal for the word of God in my heart, then it is hard to see how I am truly converted to the Lord. It is hard to see how I can please the Lord. It’s just that simple! The true church is a people who love the word. Their love for the word is evident by the fact that they read it often, and they adopt its teachings in every aspect of life—not just in matters of public worship and practice.

Due to the Lord’s blessings, we live in an amazing time. Today, there are more Bibles in the land than ever before. There are more translations of the Bible and more helpful resources for understanding the Bible than ever before. There’s no excuse for not reading the Bible. We can even drive down the road, work in the garden, jog our daily trek, or do almost anything else while listening to a recording of someone read the Bible to us! How amazing is that! No generation before us could do that. What an easy time for the people of God to live and learn His word. The true church will certainly take advantage of these benefits!

Fourth, the true church is made up of a united membership. This point was addressed at length in the last article (August 2022). Paul writes to the Corinthians, “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). The true church is not a divided church. It seems the height of folly to attempt to justify denominationalism in the light of such passages as this and others like it in the New Testament. And for a church of Christ to be what it ought to be, its members must be in unity. If they fight and bicker; if they can’t get along, they are not being true to the Lord, and can’t be a true church. That is why Paul warned the Galatians that “if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” (Galatians 5:15).

Fifth, and last but certainly not least—the true New Testament church is made up of a loving membership. This principle is so pervasive in the New Testament that it seems almost unnecessary to emphasize. But it needs to be emphasized. Jesus says, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). The “disciple whom Jesus loved” wrote extensively on this principle: “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers” (1 John 3:14); “love one another, just as He gave us a commandment” (1 John 3:23), and John is even so bold as to say, “we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (1 John 3:16). Laying down our lives for the brothers is such a radical idea that many never consider this to be a characteristic of true Christians—those who make up “the true church.”

However, if the church of Christ in our local town is known as a group of people who are constantly at odds with each other, then it will be hard to convince anyone of the truth for which they claim to stand. If they are known as a people who can barely stand one another, they cannot be much of a force for truth in the community. That is why it is absolutely vital that brothers and sisters in Christ love one another and work together for the good of the Lord’s cause. A church that cannot do that because its members can’t stand each other, cannot be a true church in the Lord’s eyes.

HOW TO LEAD RIGHT NOW

By NOAH MARTIN

“The future of the church rests in our youth.”

How many times have we heard this said from the pulpit? While true, I don’t know that it always penetrates the hearts of the audience with the intended intensity. In our culture’s mantra of having for the moment and freeing ourselves from the worries of what may lie ahead, it can be difficult to find balance in our perspective of life’s plans. We should note, first of all, that worry can be healthy. It keeps us continually engaged in assessing the choices we make and the paths we take. As the adage goes, “Failing to plan is planning to fail.” We can’t just throw Jer 29:11 up on a wall in our home and hope things will turn out alright. No, our plans must be committed to the Lord (Prov 16:3), and at the end of the day, His purpose for our lives is what will ultimately prevail (Prov 19:21).

As young men, we often think of the eldership as some far-off dream, resting somewhere beyond the horizon of adult life. My peers and I have at times wondered why we should even be concerned about the eldership right now; but the fact is -- the qualifications of the office as given in scripture require life-spanning growth and careful planning. This article is written to address our youth, the future of the church. More specifically, we want to make application for our young men who will one day comprise the entirety of the candidate pool for the shepherd leaders of the brotherhood. Young men, this is a time of golden opportunity for us to set our sights on becoming future leaders in the Lord’s church, a role we will not find ourselves in by accident. Right now, we have the freedom and mobility to become hospitable, to seek godly wives, to hone our talents for the Lord’s work, etc.—and all during a malleable stage where our many mistakes are generally met with mercy by those who’ve already been in our shoes.

Paul told the young evangelist Timothy in I Tim 4:12-15,

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you ... meditate on these things, give yourself entirely to

them, that your progress may be evident to all.”

There is much to glean in Paul’s letters to Timothy as far as youthful training is concerned. Let’s examine three important teachings found in these verses.

First, Paul writes in v 12 that we are to be an example to fellow Christians “in word, in love, in spirit, in faith, [and] in purity” Any Christian who strives to meet the bar that’s been set for faithful living must learn the value of submission to Bible authority We learn of this in II Tim 3:16; that the Word is inspired. the very breath of God! As such, it is the golden standard to which we must adhere if we aspire to one day become elders in the Lord’s church. Our relationship with the Father only functions properly when we place Him first. Jesus must be King on the throne of our hearts. Learning to submit to Christ will, in turn, help us learn to submit to our elders whose purpose is to shepherd the flock. The Hebrew writer comments in Heb. 13:17 that we are to “be submissive, for they watch out for [our] souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief ... “ No one enjoys discipline in the moment, but it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb 12.11). Our lives must be an open book before our brethren If we are to exemplify Paul’s instruction to Timothy; the same is expected of the men who are ordained into the office of an elder.

We might also pause here to note that godly submission ought to be something we find an attractive quality in a potential mate. The man who puts God first in all things will hold his lady’s hand all along the way to Heaven, and, if the Lord wills, he’ll help raise their children with the same spiritual fervor. The woman who puts God first in all things has worth far above rubies (Prov 31:10). She’ll keep her man grounded in the faith and hold him accountable for growth and leadership within the home and the congregation. The rebellious fronts often seen in today’s youth are shallow and will not lead to a lasting love clothed in righteousness. Paul said we must be an example both in love and in purity, which is harshly contrasted with rebelliousness.

Secondly, we are to give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine (I Tim 4.13). When we contemplate our youthful years, we are met with the realization that we will have no more free time in our lives than we do at this very moment. What are we

doing to study up so that our faith can stand long term? An elder must be able to guard the flock from wolves who seek to integrate false teaching and destructive doctrines. The only way he can do so is by training himself to study the scriptures in his youth. We cannot let life pass us by while the sacred pages of God’s Holy Word sit idly before us. A grave warning is issued against this in Heb 5:12-14. There the writer says,

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

What an embarrassment it would be to grow old on the gift of God’s borrowed time yet still be sucking on a bottle. It’s a mistake we can’t afford to make if we desire to be elders.

So, we ought to be proactive. Commit to accountable Bible study with others. Have someone check in to see how your weekly reading’s going. If no one has shown interest or taken initiative in starting a Bible study with the youth in your home congregation, be the change. Ask a trusted older brother to help you get started. If questions cloud your mind, ask. We’re told we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2.12). Not our parents, siblings, friends, nor fellow believers will stand next to us at the judgment to justify our faith. It must be our own. If my family were to leave the church today, would I have the strength and knowledge to stand upon my own beliefs?

Paul also mentions exhortation, this is encouragement or faithful urging. Though we may not be anywhere close to being qualified for the eldership just yet, there are likely men in the congregation who are nearly there. Who might be a good fit for the role? Encourage that man! Even if he has growth still to come, planting and watering the seed never hurt anybody. This is something that anyone can do. We live in a culture of polarized people. There is so much dissension in congregations today over often trivial matters. Backbiting, slander, and gossip are the norm in some congregations. As a young person, what can you do to change that environment

in your spheres of influence? Believe there is good, and then be that good. If you see something awesome happening, call it out! We all need to be the people who have a good word for others. Prov 16:24 says that “pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”

Finally, amidst all this encouragement of others’ talents, we must be careful not to neglect our own (I Tim 4:14-15). Just as God gave Timothy spiritual gifts in his time, so he has given each of us talents to work with and develop in this present time. Of all the talents an elder must possess, being “apt to teach” leaves many men feeling unfit for the job. We do ourselves and our congregations a disservice when we tap-out at the idea of teaching. Fear of public teaching or lack of self-efficacy do not disqualify a man automatically, as there are many ways a man can teach.

As young men, it’s imperative that we don’t knock it .. even after we’ve tried it. In fact, try it and fail several times over, having the humility to pick yourself up and seek feedback from brethren who are seasoned teachers. I’ve seen it happen that a young man gives a few short talks at his home congregation and then decides teaching just isn’t for him. This always saddens me, as the art of teaching publicly does not come naturally for many. It could be that God needs you to keep working at it before your growth becomes evident and the potential of your talent is reached. Seek opportunities to study with strong brothers and sisters in your congregation. Go sit-in on a home study with someone. Ask your parents how they study the Bible. The meat of the work will occur while you’re at home, not while you’re preparing a short talk for a young speaker’s service. If it should happen that you don’t feel there are believers at home who can help you get started in this, then you will see the true importance of embracing these study habits in your youth. We see time and time again in the Old Testament when God’s people fell away with only a lapse in one generation, we can’t let that be ours. Prov 11:14 warns that “where there is no guidance, the people fall” (NASB). As Paul tells Timothy, we must give ourselves entirely to these things if we wish to be successful in the work of the LORD.

A congregation is either growing or dying. To be lukewarm or stagnant is to be dead in God’s eyes (Rev 3:1). The leadership of a congregation is the skeletal

backbone of the church in that area, and the body needs structure in order to grow with intention. We’ve all been made aware of the great absence of ordained elders in many congregations today; in some places, this absence has sustained since the birth of the congregation. What are we going to do about this?

Though positions of leadership may appear far-off for many of us, we all have the ability to lead, in some capacity, right now-even at this very moment. If we keep our spiritual goals in the category of “someday,” that’s all they’ll ever be - unachieved goals. We must reach out for those things and set them ever before our eyes, so that when the time comes, we’ll not only have the desire to be the leaders the Lord needs, but we’ll also be qualified.

GODLY MOTHERS AND WIVES

By ERIC BULLOCK

Before a man can become a leader in any capacity, he must first be a follower. One cannot be a follower without the presence of a leader. In order for a follower to have potential to become a leader in the church, he must have spiritually minded and spiritually focused leaders in his life on a daily basis. There are few people that have a more impactful influence on a child than their mother. From the time a child is born, they absorb. As a child’s mind is in rapid development, their brains are like a sponge. So, Christian mothers, when is the best time to begin training your children in the way they should go? Day 1 When they are young!

In 2 Timothy 1:5 (NKJV) The Apostle Paul wrote, “When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I am persuaded in you also ...” Paul recalls the “genuine faith” that Timothy possesses. He said that it dwelt first in his grandmother, then in his mother. Do you think that because his grandmother and his mother had that genuine faith, that Timothy was born with it? Of course not! Mothers, your children will not be born with the spiritual mind and focus that you possess. That must be taught!

What are some important things that mothers teach us that are of importance to men qualifying for eldership? Perhaps most importantly, mothers teach obedience. It is important that, as potential leaders, children are taught to be obedient to the commands of God, the orders of

their parents, and the law of the land. We read in Titus 3:1 (NKJV), “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.”

My mother did a fantastic job of this. I was raised a Southern Baptist, and my mother was always sure to keep my sister and I in that church any time the doors were open. My grandmother tells of her carrying my sister and I on Sunday morning, one of us on each hip. She was dedicated to that, and that instilled the importance of spiritual things in me. A secular example of my mother teaching me to be obedient to the laws of the land was her insistence on us having our seatbelts on anytime we traveled in the car. By the time I was old enough to ride without a car seat, the first thing I would do was fasten my seatbelt. My mother always said, “that’s the law,” and my sister and I knew that was a serious thing. One afternoon as we were traveling home from Wal-Mart, my sister and I became aware that we were traveling without our seatbelts fastened. We had simply forgotten, but when we realized our mistake, we were filled with fear because we had broken the law. My mother tells me that we were nearly inconsolable. She told us, “its okay, it was just a mistake, but I hope you know that it’s not just about following the law, it’s about being safe too.” My grandmother taught me these things too. She always made sure that I was in church and that I knew how important it was to do everything possible in service to the Lord. Although we now have differences in our beliefs, without that foundation, I would have never been receptive to the Truth that is found in a more thorough study of God’s word.

My grandmother also taught me practical life lessons. When I was four years old, I exited the McDonald’s Playplace with my grandparents (a weekly ritual), and I got loose from my grandmother and took off across the parking lot right in front of a car. My grandmother grabbed me up, swatted my tail and told me to never do that again. At the time, my little four year old heart was broken. My grandmother had just given me a spanking and scolded me. At the time I didn’t understand, but as I have grown older I understand that my grandmother was just trying to teach me that running into oncoming traffic is counterproductive.

Mothers also teach behavior Titus 3:2 (NKJV) says, “To speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. “ Melissa Miller, a dedicated

member at the Blue Springs congregation in Kentucky where I attend, is the most humble woman that I know. I have never heard her say a bad word about anyone. Anytime one of her children would begin to say something negative about another person, she would stop them and say two of the most profound words anyone could abide by, “Be Kind.” That is her theme. She is teaching that to her children, and she has taught that to me as well.

Mothers also teach us that we are human. We have all witnessed our mothers make mistakes. When you make a mistake, how do you handle it? Do you try to push it off and hope your children will soon forget about it? Trust me, they will not forget. Use that mistake as a teachable moment. Show your children that, yes, people do make mistakes, but that’s not an acceptable excuse. Teach them that mistakes should be dealt with immediately. Show them that you are serious enough about your example and the state of your soul to deal with your mistakes promptly, according to their need.

Mothers have potential to pave the way. In the Old Testament book of Exodus 2:3 (NKJV) we read, “But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river’s bank. “ Moses’ mother, Jochabed, paved the way for him. She scoped out the situation, made preparation, and did all she could. Because of her actions and her bravery, Moses led the Jews out of slavery This reminds me of a story brother Zac Evans told me about his grandmother. As a young woman she made the decision to obey the gospel and because of her obedience, influence, and character, most of her family has been obedient to the gospel as well. Brother Zac has preached all over the world, as has his uncle, and has proclaimed the truth to thousands. Young women, this should be your attitude. Know that the decisions you make now could lead to hundreds of souls being saved. You can have that influence and impact. Mothers have such an amazing influence; Please use it! The future of the church and its leadership depends on it. Hopefully, based on your diligent spiritual guidance, your sons will marry spiritually-focused women and your daughters will marry men with the same mindset.

Wives, you have a great responsibility as well. As Christian spouses of leaders in the church, you need to

be supportive. Without unwavering support from one's wife, it would be difficult to adequately do the work of the church to one's full potential. Offer constructive criticism, be nurturing, and be on board, always ready to help. This will help your husband in his efforts as a leader and, hopefully, eventually an elder and shepherd of God's flock. A great example of a Christian couple on the same spiritual wavelength is Aquila and Pricilla. In Acts 18:26 (NKJV) we read, "So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Pricilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. "They worked together to help this man learn the truth. Paul also speaks highly of their Christian character in Romans 16:3-5.

Mothers, wives, you have a direct and powerful influence on your children and your husbands. You need to be spiritually equipped to wield that influence confidently and effectively, and of course that comes through continued study and obedience. Be spiritually focused. Be spiritually minded. Let that be seen through your words and actions. Pave the way for the leaders and eldership of the church.

HOMESICK ...

continued from page one

for a city ... "Wait" and "look" are words that speak of anticipation and expectation (the Bible calls it hope). He longed for heaven. Abraham realized that this world was not his home - he was "just a'passing through".

This was not only true of Abraham, it was true of all of those heroes of faith that we read about in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, sometimes called Inspiration's Hall of Fame. It is said of them, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Verse 13). These great men and women saw something that the world could not see - they saw the "promises" of God about something far better than what this old world has to offer - they saw heaven. How did they see it? They saw it "by faith" They were homesick for a place they had only seen by faith. It is said of Moses' faith that, "he looked to the reward" (Verse 26). What reward? Not Midian, and certainly not Egypt. It had to be heaven. This is what motivated him and all of these Old Testament worthies to live right and accomplish so

many victories in life - they were homesick for heaven.

My Christian friends, there is a homing instinct in everyone of us placed there by our God. Don't allow anything or anyone or any circumstance to drown it out. Nurture your homesickness for heaven. Think about it. Dream about it. Think about that city built by God where there will be "No sad goodbyes" -where death will never steal away our loved ones, leaving our heads bowed in sorrow, and our hearts filled with grief. In heaven, as the song says, "time won't matter anymore" - time will be no more, eternity will be forever, and we will live forever in presence of the eternal God. In heaven, the struggles of this life will all have ended, and tears will never dim our eyes. There will be no sadness, no sorrows, no disappointments. In heaven, fears, doubts, and worries will never fill our hearts. There will be just one day, an eternal day, and there is no night there. In heaven, we will have a glorious body that will never know pain, or sickness, or death - a body perfectly adapted to eternity and right standing with God. There we will look into the face of the God Who made us, and Whom we have worshiped and served all these years. We will live in a perfect association with Jesus Who died for us, and Whose life we have sought to imitate. And we will be with the Holy Spirit Who has strengthened us to live a heavenly life. We will be with the angels who have ministered to us in our Christian lives. There all of our questions will be answered, and the puzzles of life will be solved.

Ah, my friends, we must be there. We must be there to bask in the forgiving smiles of our God to Whom we have been reconciled, and Who has proved His love for us in unspeakable ways. We must be there to share with all the saints of ages past, and with our Christian loved ones who have gone on before us. We must be there to gather about the throne of God and worship the One Who loved us when we were unlovable and sent His Son to redeem us. We must be there to walk the street of gold, eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the life-giving water that flows from the throne of God as clear as crystal. We must be there! Yes, I'm homesick for heaven! Aren't you?



EDITORIAL ...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

and what their business might be? Then, I remember that I am on very important business as well. I'm on the king's business and it doesn't get any more important than that." Very true indeed. The King's business is the most important of all. Yet, much of it is done with little or no money. Please keep in mind that for 90 years no person, including publishers, ever received payment in any form for writing, etc., done in Old Paths Advocate. Only the printers, and the US Postal service were paid by your subscriptions.

Elsewhere in this issue David Griffin will provide helpful instructions intended to be helpful to those who want to get the online Old Paths Advocate. May the Lord bless our efforts in His righteous Cause - DLK

DON'T YOU CARE?

We knock on doors, we beg and we plead.
Doesn't anyone out there see the need?
To study the Bible and learn the way
Christ left before us to travel today?

They give no thought to His death on the cross
They live as though their lives would never be lost.
Live for today have fun before you're old
There's still lots of time to worry about your grave.

There are things to do, steps to obey
Yet what we hear is maybe another day
We'll just keep knocking and planting the seed
Someday, sometime, someone will see the need.

-Velma Lackey

I JUST CAN'T GET HIM OFF MY MIND

By RICK MARTIN

Several years ago, Brother Ronny Wade was asked to visit the home of a young mother. It was apparent that she had many problems, but the biggest problem was her lack of knowledge about spiritual things. Ronny talked to her about these things and told her about the matchless Savior Jesus Christ. After their discussion Ronny promised to come back later and tell her more about Jesus.

Ronny returned a few days later and asked her if she had thought anymore about their discussion and Jesus. The young mother replied, "oh yes and I just can't get him off my mind". As a result of this discussion Lynwood Smith wrote:

" I Just Can't Get Him Off My Mind"

I've heard so much about the Savior from above, and that He was loving and kind. He would lift the down and out and show them his love, And I can't get Him off my mind.

He died upon a cross that should have been for me, And there he so humbly resigned; I'll gladly suffer loss and His ever be, for I can't get Him off my mind.

There are so many things about Him, the more I think of Him I find, I have been so drawn unto my Lord, I just can't get Him off my mind.

As you go through your day will you not think more about Jesus.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

We are required by law to publish each year a statement of ownership of OLD PATHS ADVOCATE. Don L. King, who also serves as Publisher, owns the paper. It is a private endeavor, not a work of the church, hence not intended to be supported or subsidized by church treasuries, but by the paid subscriptions of our readers.

HOW WILL I GET THE JANUARY 2023 OPA?

By DAVID GRIFFIN

As Don states elsewhere in this issue of the paper, starting with the January 2023 issue, the Old Paths Advocate will no longer be published in print form. That is, there will no longer be a “physical” copy of the paper arrive in your mailbox each month. However, the paper will continue to be published and made available for free via the Old Paths Advocate website. We know this transition to an online OPA will inevitably have some glitches; therefore, we ask that you please be patient as we work the bugs out of the process.

A. For those without a computer or the internet

We are aware that many of you may not have access to the internet. If that is the case, perhaps you have a friend, family member, or church member who has access to the internet. If so, they will be able to access the paper and print it for you. Ask them to follow the instructions provided in the following paragraphs.

B. For those with access to a computer and the internet

Here is a short-list of steps to access the OPA Online Edition. A more detailed description appears below.

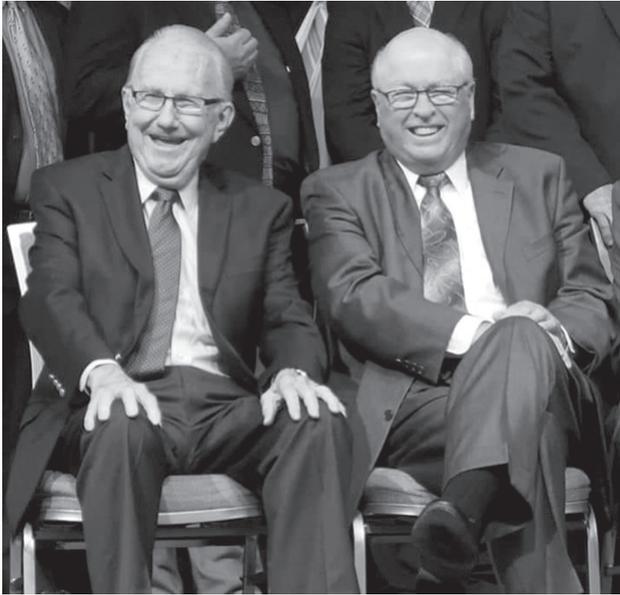
1. Go to www.oldpathsadvocate.org
2. Click on “Subscribe to OPA Online Edition” (there is no subscription price)
3. Provide your name and email address
4. Click on “OPA Online Edition”
5. Click on “2022 Issues”
6. Click on “December 2022”
7. When the paper comes up, you can read it online or print it if desired
8. Next month, the January 2023 issue will appear under “2023 Issues”
9. If you subscribe to the OPA Online Edition, you will receive email alerts each month starting with the January 2023 edition and for all subsequent issues.

As of December 1, you may access new (and older) issues of the paper by going to www.oldpathsadvocate.org. On the left side of the home page are two gold-colored

buttons, one labeled “OPA Online Edition” and another labeled “Subscribe to OPA Online Edition.” When you click on “OPA Online Edition” you can go straight to the issues of the paper, including the December 2022 issue. However, we strongly recommend that you first click on “Subscribe to OPA Online Edition.” There is no subscription price; the OPA Online Edition is a free resource. When you click on this button, you will be prompted to enter your name and email address. By providing this information, you will be added to a “subscription list” and you will receive an automatic email notification each month when the paper is posted to the website throughout the year (and following years). This email alert will contain a direct link to the latest issue of the paper. Providing your email address is strictly in order to receive an email notification of the posting of future issues. After subscribing, click on “OPA Online Edition.” This will take you to links accessing various issues of the paper. If you do provide your email address, you will not have to do so again when you access the online paper for future issues. Once you have subscribed with your name and email address, then anytime you go to the website you can access the paper by just clicking on “OPA Online Edition.” If your email address changes in the future, just resubscribe with your new email address. For those wishing to subscribe we recommend that you go to the website right away and provide your name and email address so that you will not miss the email alert when the January 2023 issue is posted next month.

When you click on “OPA Online Edition,” you will see a list of links not only for the December 2022 issue of the paper but past issues as well all the way back to 2010. This means if you have missed any issues by mail since 2010, you will be able to obtain them here. The first link on this page is labeled “2022 Issues.” Click on this link, and you will see additional links to every issue of the paper in 2022. Click on “December 2022” to open this month’s paper or other months for previous months’ papers. The paper will have the same look and layout you are accustomed to seeing. You may then print the paper if you wish. For now, of course, the latest issue posted is December 2022. Come January, the January issue will be published under “2023 Issues.”

We hope you will take advantage of this new way to receive the paper, so you may continue to enjoy the Old Paths Advocate in years to come as you have in years past.



*Ronny F. Wade and Don L. King
Springfield, Missouri
July, 2019*

Field Report

Greg Gay, 3816 Tambos Tri, Edmond, OK 73034, papagreg@aol.com, 916-804-3787 November 6, 2022
I was at Lee's Summit outside of Lebanon, MO October 19-23. That was going home for me to the congregation where I was raised. We enjoyed sharing time and meals with dear friends. It was wonderful to see so many who came from area congregations including preachers Austin Maddox, Jim Franklin, and Brad Shockley. David Griffin, who works with the congregation, and his wife Lynn were our wonderful hosts for the meeting. David and I spent an enjoyable morning with Kevin Presley who was in a meeting at Pleasant View in Springfield at the same time. We had a confession of fault and one baptism during the meeting which made it special

indeed! As I write, I am in Nairobi, Kenya to meet and study with members of my Facebook Group, God's Good News from Greg, and to introduce them to local brethren. Preacher Dominic who lives here has worked tirelessly to communicate with everyone interested and also to arrange preaching appointments with anyone who would let us in their doors. Prior to my arrival, Keith Thomson from Australia has been in the country for a month visiting congregations all over the country and following up on leads from his good work online and from being here in the past. He and the team he traveled with have been blessed with wonderful results of baptisms and multiple congregations taking their stand for the correct observance of the Lord's Supper. Keith graciously extended his trip to include most of the days I am in Kenya. Inviting my group members to meet Keith in one of his stops and also to come to a rented meeting room where we presented studies in Nairobi has been an amazing experience. I have been thrilled to be here for the baptism of a denominational pastor and two multi-cup preachers talking their stand for the truth. There have been many who wanted to attend our studies, but could not. Many who did attend want to hear more and are eager for Keith's scheduled return. A new congregation is now established in the city of Nairobi beginning with brother Dominic and his wife. There are multiple cities in the world where I have significant group members. Lord willing I will have similar trips in the future to introduce my group members to faithful members of the Lord's church in other places-. I appreciate my home congregation at Piedmont, OK paying all of my expenses for this trip. My next stop on this trip is to be South Africa. I am looking forward to renewing friendships and meeting individuals I have only communicated with online. My online studies with brethren in India continue to go well. Lord willing, I intend to return to India next year with stops in the south and the north. There are many who are working diligently in India to preach the gospel. Reports are frequent of individuals obeying the gospel and congregations converted from error. Brother Art Lynch and I continue our communication with speakers who have agreed to present topics for the study at Grapevine, TX December 23, 24, 26, and 27 We are looking forward to a great study! Our work continues with the Piedmont, OK congregation with preaching and studies. We have started our annual winter study where the men of the congregation participate in studying a topic and engaging in weekly online discussions.

WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

“GREAT THINGS!”

By JERRY DICKINSON

“Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’ And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.’ And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.” (Mark 5 1-7, 18-20)

When Jesus asked this tormented man his name he replied, “My name is Legion for we are many” Please note the use of both a singular and plural pronoun. My name is Legion for We are many Talk about a personality disorder! The man’s spirit was in his body, but there were many unclean spirits in him as well. What a strange and curious phenomenon. A Roman Legion was made up of two to six thousand men, so apparently this poor man had that many demons inside him. When Jesus cast them out, they went into the 2000 swine grazing on the hillside and the swine plunged into the sea and drowned.

The spirits had pleaded with Jesus to not send them back to the abyss from which they had apparently been released. I say released because they could not have escaped unless God allowed it. Why were they released? It is a difficult question with no definitive answer from the Bible. It seems that God allowed these spirits to possess certain individuals during the ministry of Jesus on earth so that Jesus could demonstrate His power, not just over all kinds of diseases, over nature by stopping storms on Galilee, and even over death itself by raising the dead, but also over the power of the devil and the spirit world by casting out evil spirits. When the townsfolk came out to see for themselves, the Bible says the man was clothed and in his right mind. Instead of thanking Jesus for ridding them of a wild man who had terrorized the whole country they asked the Lord to leave their coasts. They were more concerned with the loss of their hogs than a precious soul who had been helped by Jesus.

Jesus is a gentlemen, as someone has well said, and he won’t stay where he is not welcome. He forces himself on no one against their will. If you do not want the Lord in your life he will leave. Jesus and the disciples get in the boat and launch out from shore. “Let me go and be with you!” calls a voice from the shore. It is Legion (or whatever his name really was) pleading to not be left behind. Let me be with you is his plaintive request. Jesus had another commission for this man however He often does. Sometimes we have big plans about what we want to do for Jesus and for the cause of our Lord, but His commission for us is totally different. We want to travel to a distant place and do some great work but the greatest work we can do is at home. Right? Go home, Jesus says, and tell your friends what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you. That is what he did and all marveled! You want evangelize? Tell what great things God has done for you!

“Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His Holy name. Remember his marvelous works which He has done, His wonders and the judgments of His mouth.” (Psalm 105) That great psalm was the inspiration for one of Fanny Crosby’s greatest hymns.

To God be the glory, great things he hath done; So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, and opened the life-gate that all may come in.
Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done, Great our rejoicing in Jesus the son;
But purer and higher, and greater will be, Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! come to the Father, through
Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.

Has the Lord done great things in your life? Tell it! Proclaim it! Sing it! Before this day is over go and tell your friends and loved ones, and anyone who will listen, what great things God has done for you!