

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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NINETY YEARS AND COUNTING

By CARL M. JOHNSON

The Old Paths Advocate began officially in January of 1932, with Homer L. King as publisher, H.E. Robertson as assistant publisher, and an editorial staff consisting of brethren King, Homer A. Gay, J.D. Phillips, and H.C. Harper. Brother Harper actually began publishing the journal four years earlier under the name, The Truth. He eventually brought on board Brother Phillips as an editor in 1930, and added brother King to the staff a little later. Near the end of 1931, however, Harper decided to turn the publisher’s job over to a younger man because of his own failing health. After a great deal of contemplation, Harper and Phillips decided the thirty-nine year old King was the best choice to assume the task. It was a wise choice. As Clovis Cook said, Brother King was the right person in the right place at the right time, much like Esther of the OT (Esther 4:14).

The men decided to choose a different name for the journal to accompany the reorganization of its staff. While there is nothing wrong with The Truth, they wanted a name that expressed more accurately the mission of the journal-which is to call all people back to the Bible’s ancient order. They found the perfect name in the words of Jeremiah, “Stand ye in the ways and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (6:16). As Brother King was preparing to send the first copy of Old Paths to the printer, Brother Phillips advised him he had just received word there was already a journal in existence by that name. The men, therefore, added the name Advocate to the title as a matter of distinction. The staff offered the following eight statements in the first issue declaring the journal’s policy:

1. To judge no man’s loyalty to God by his loyalty to the paper.
2. To “earnestly contend for the faith which was once

delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). And thus complete the restoration started by the Campbells and others a century ago.

3. To oppose every departure from the Word of God in faith and practice; avoiding at the same time undue stress on any one sin, to the exclusion of others. We expect to wage war of uncompromising hostility against every sin both in and out of the church.
4. To make the paper an open forum, insofar as the issues being discussed are considered vital to the welfare of the church and the salvation of the soul.
5. To give readers a balanced periodical, thus making it beneficial to both saint and sinner.
6. To manifest the spirit of Christ in dealing with all issues and controversies, thus avoiding personal thrust and abusive language. We ask all our writers to say nothing in the column of the paper they would be ashamed of or afraid to say in the Day of Judgment.
7. To make field reports a special feature. Therefore, we insist all preachers and leaders of the loyal congregations send in reports and announcements regularly; thereby encouraging others in the work.
8. Finally, to be true to the charge God has given us; to glorify Him in all we do or say; to urge upon all a closer walk with God; realizing we have never-dying souls to save, and to fit them for mansions in the sky.

Brother King successfully published the paper for 30 years. In 1962, however, he suffered a severe stroke and found it necessary to relinquish his publishing duties. Brother Don McCord, who had been serving as the only other editor of the paper with Brother King at the time stepped into the breach and devoted 14 years of his life to publishing the journal. Brother McCord made the observation, “I learned somewhat of the demands placed upon Brother King the preceding thirty years. Until one has passed this way, one cannot know the demands placed on a man, his wife, and his children.”

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Editorial

NINETY GOOD YEARS

By WAYNE FUSSELL

When Don asked that I write a few words for this special issue of the Old Paths Advocate, I thought to myself, “Ninety years-the OPA has been a part of my life most of those years.” (I am 87 years old.) I was fifteen years old when I became a member of the church that worships the Lord scripturally. I grew up in a church that did not worship scripturally. When I was a teenager, I began to question things, as most teenagers do. I asked my mother what was the difference between us and the church on “B” street. She said, “They use one cup in communion.” I asked, “Why?” That sweet honest lady said, “Because that is what the Bible says”. What an eye-opener that was! I asked the preacher where we attended about the cup, and he side-stepped me by saying, “Oh, the cup is the fruit of the vine”. That didn’t stop my inquiry.

Then one night, while attending a basketball game, I saw the lights on at that little church. I went to investigate, and to my delight, heard some of the best singing I had ever heard. (The house was filled with Elmores, and Elmores are born to sing!) A young, twenty-five-year-old preacher by the name of Lynwood Smith preached a gripping sermon on “The Face of Jesus”. My mother then went with me to the meeting, and by the end of that meeting, my mother repented of unscriptural worship and I was baptized. Thus began my life in the church which is faithful to the Bible pattern and my experience with the OPA.

It had always been my desire to be a preacher of the gospel. Lynwood knew that, and one day as I was leaving him, he said in his characteristic way, “Boy, preach the word!” Those words still linger in my heart and ring in my ears. We never know what effect we have on others by the words we say to them. With that encouragement, I did begin to preach in my teenage years. Brethren were gracious and allowed me the privilege. When I graduated from High School, I began preaching full-time. It wasn’t easy, but it was rewarding. There were about forty young men who began to preach about the same time. (Most of those men continued to preach - and most are with the Lord today. I am one of the few left alive to tell the story.)

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HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE OPA

By IRVIN BARNES

I began preaching in 1962. I knew very little about the OPA. I never met Bro. Homer Gay. I had the privilege of visiting with Bro. Homer King, very briefly on 2 or 3 occasions. I never heard either of them preach.

As time passed, I learned a lot from my father, Roy Barnes, and other older members about the history of the congregation at Hale, AR, where I grew up. Clovis Cook and Joe Howard shared information about the congregation. Both of them preached at Hale when my father was still in the Baptist Church. I learned from these and others that had it not been for the OPA, I might never have known about the Church of Christ. Even if my family had been taught about the church, it is very likely that we would never have known about digression, i.e., individual cups, Sunday school and women teachers. I will always be grateful for the work that Bro. Harper, Bro. Gay, Bro. King and others did in publishing the paper and fighting the digression that swept the country in their time. These brethren also labored vigorously, helping the conscientious objectors obtain their 1-O classifications during World War II and the Korean conflict. The following narrative gives a brief account of how the OPA, influenced my family in learning the truth.

My grandfather, Wesley Barnes, was born in 1875, near Oakgrove, Arkansas, 7 miles south of Blue Eye, MO. He married, my grandmother, Annis Jones, a member of the Missionary Baptist church at Oakgrove. Grandpa Wesley worshipped at the Christian Church in Oakgrove. Grandma took my father, Roy Barnes and his 2 sisters to the Baptist church.

The Christian church building had a large assembly room with the pews divided by a rail down the center of the room. The women sat on one side and the men folks sat on the other.

During communion the bread or loaf was blessed whole and then divided near the middle. One half was passed to the women and the other half was passed to the men. Two cups (drinking vessels) were placed on the table. The grape juice was blessed in one cup and half of the juice was poured into the other cup. One cup was passed to the men and the other cup was passed to the women. The congregation was known as The Christian Church.

Concurrently, a congregation of the Church of Christ, was meeting south of Oakgrove, in the Fanning community. A young man, Rudolph Porter was baptized at this congregation and soon became an influential gospel preacher in north Arkansas. He and Grandpa Wesley Barnes became good friends.

Meanwhile the Christian church building at Oakgrove was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. It is believed that perhaps with Grandpa Wesley's influence, Bro. Porter preached in a new building that was erected and that through his influence the name was changed to the Church of Christ and the worship was set in order with one cup, one loaf and no Sunday school.

In time, Bro. Porter introduced cups and classes. Grandpa went along, with great confidence that Bro. Porter would not lead the church astray. Someone sent Grandpa a piece written by Bro. Harper in opposition to cups and classes. He also got his hands on the OPA and studied the issues carefully. He called the church at Oakgrove together and told them that they had followed Bro. Porter into digression and pled with the congregation to return to the ancient order. The congregation asked him to leave. Sometime leading up to this event, Bro. Clem Rice from Mtn. Home, Arkansas held a meeting at Oakgrove. He and his wife stayed with Wesley and Annis Barnes. The last Sunday of that meeting Grandma Annis Barnes obeyed the gospel.



Lynwood Smith and Sonny Gay

A while after Grandpa and Grandma Barnes were “turned out” of the church at Oakgrove, Bro Joe Clayton moved his family from Chapel Grove, TN., to a farm in the Hale community west of Oakgrove. He inquired at Oakgrove about a Church of Christ that used one cup and did not believe in classes. He was directed to Grandpa Wesley’s house. The two families built a brush arbor near the Clayton home. They wrote Bro. King in Lebanon and asked him to come and hold a meeting. He was completely booked up so he recommended Bro. Joe Howard who had just left a Christian church near Dora, MO, and had started a faithful church in that area.

Grandpa Wesley owned an old Model-T Ford car. The brakes were bad and the head lights barely put out enough light to drive by. He asked my Dad, who was a devout Baptist by this time, to drive him to the brush arbor meeting each night. Dad drove Grandpa to the meeting every night but was so prejudiced against the Church of Christ he leaned against the old car and refused to sit under the arbor. When the singing started 3 snakes started towards the crowd. Dad found a club and killed 2 Copperheads and a Black snake. The second night he killed 2 more snakes. The Baptists told around the community that Roy Barnes had to go to the arbor and protect the Campbellites from the Copperheads.

Dad heard enough truth to become interested. He convinced Mother to attend the rest of the meeting. Both my parents and several others obeyed the gospel. This was the beginning of a congregation that lasted about 87 years in the Hale, community. Without the influence of the OPA I doubt that any of this would have happened.

My plea for the OPA is this:

When the paper arrives, take time to sit down and read every word in every issue. I have never read the OPA without gaining helpful brotherhood news or good Bible instruction.

Keep your subscription current. Fifteen dollars a year is nothing compared to money people spend now days for entertainment, hobbies, and other non-essentials. Encourage others in the congregation where you are to subscribe and keep their sub current. See that your children keep taking the paper after they grow up and leave home.

Save your copies in a special file and leave them for others to read and study after you are gone. One of my

great aunts left a large stack of OPA’s to be given to me after her passing. Here I read about my family at different times in the history of the congregation where I grew up.

To all our preaching brethren, especially to the young who are getting started preaching: write a report, every month or two. Others want to hear what is going on in your part of the brotherhood. Lastly, send in an article for publication. The publishers may not use it, then again it may be the very thing that is needed for a certain issue. Don’t be angry at the editors if your article is not used. It is no small thing to get an issue together and out on time.

The influence of the OPA in my family is negligible compared to the good that has come as a result of the paper being sent to the Philippines, to Africa and other places around the world. I trust what I have written will illustrate that much good has come from the paper and if time continues, we trust the paper will go for another 90 years or more.

It is incredible that the paper has not wavered in its 90 year history against all innovations in worship, immodest dress, unscriptural church government, women cutting their hair, false teachers, carnal warfare and many other things.

**THE “WAY,” THE “ADVOCATE,”
AND TWO HOMERS**

By DAVID GRIFFIN

Readers of the Old Paths Advocate this month are enjoying some of the history surrounding the paper and other matters of brotherhood origins. My humble contribution to these articles concerns a few tidbits of information about the pre-history of the paper and those involved in its founding. Thirty-five years ago, Ronny Wade published his little book on the history of the brotherhood-The Sun Will Shine Again Someday (1986). I recall that as a young man I told him how much I appreciated his making such history known because, to my young mind at the time, there would have been no way I could have ever known this information. At the time, I did not know much about historical research and did not realize that his book was largely a product of his combined reading of old issues of religious journals, including this paper, interviews with surviving members of the older generation, and to some extent, his own recollections of past events and personalities.

At that time, I had a subscription to Old Paths Advocate, having been a member of the church only a couple of years. Reading the book was an exciting journey of learning about the brotherhood's past and events surrounding the origins of the paper. One thing I found most interesting about Ronny's book was that, before Old Paths Advocate, another paper was serving a similar purpose-The Apostolic Way.

The Apostolic Way was founded in May 1913 by N. L. Rice, G. A. Trott, and H. C. Harper. This was nearly twenty years before the publication of The Truth/Old Paths Advocate. The initial thrust of The Apostolic Way was to oppose the innovation of Sunday Schools, and Trott and Harper wrote frequently on the "cups question," especially throughout the 1920s.

A few years after Ronny published his book, I learned that one of our preachers had a couple of microfilm copies of partial sets of the Apostolic Way for anyone interested in purchasing one. I promptly obtained my copy in anticipation of taking it to the local library and perusing its pages (Yes, that's the way you had to do it back then!). It is now over a century since the first issues of The Apostolic Way were published, and for today's reader its columns bring to life the world of the early 20th century and issues facing the church in those years. One finds every kind of issue imaginable addressed. Among articles on the church, the plan of salvation, and cups and Sunday school are discussions on the ravages of World War I, "carnal warfare," and conscientious objection; analyses of polemic debates on Biblical topics, reports from preachers around the county, and even a series on "Bolshevism"-a critic of the



Homer L. King, c. 1917

Bolshevik (Communist) Revolution

then developing in Russia-what would later become the Soviet Union. It is also full of reports like the following from Sam H. Champie, a preacher who relates the details of financial help he received from the brethren in 1916: "Up to Dec 27, I have received the following contributions: Mrs Laura V. Odom, Tex. \$1.00, Bertie Kelly, Miss. \$1.00; J. L. Broad, Tex. \$2.00; church at Shep, Tex. by J. E. Allen \$6.80. Brethren here send wood, syrup, potatoes, and some meat. Many thanks to all. Sam H. Champie, Bogue Chitto, Miss" (The Apostolic Way, page 8, February 1917).

Reading through these articles, however, one eventually

comes across little snippets like the following. "Brother Homer L. King has changed his address from Phillipsburg, Mo to Lebanon, Mo. Route 2" (The Apostolic Way, page 7, February 1919). Phillipsburg, MO is a tiny little town on I-44, just west of Lebanon, MO. In those days, Phillipsburg (without I-44, of course) would have been the Post Office location nearest the church that is now known as the Lee's Summit congregation ten miles west of Lebanon. Homer King became a part of this congregation in the early years of the twentieth century. The Lee's Summit congregation still meets in the same general vicinity where it has met since at least the turn of the 20th century, if not before. Later that year, in the June 1919 issue, there appears this little note from Brother King on page seven: "Dear Brother Teurman [who was at that time the managing editor of The Apostolic Way]: I have forgotten when our time for the [Apostolic] "Way" expires, and some



Homer A. Gay, c. 1919

of the brethren have been inquiring about it, so I thought I would write you and be certain about it, as we don't want to miss an issue. I shall do my best to get all the brethren here to subscribe for the "Way," for I can see that it is having a good effect on those who read it. When we renew for the "Way," I am going to propose to the brethren that each of us send the paper to at least one

friend. This would double the list here.-Homer L. King (Missouri)." Brother Teurman then adds this note: "We appreciate brother King's interest in the circulation of the Way. We need someone like brother King in every congregation, who will interest brethren in subscribing for the paper and having it sent to others" (The Apostolic Way, p 7, June 1919). Then in the November 1919 issue, on page eight, the following appears: "Homer L. King, Lebanon, Mo., sends us sixteen subscribers." The photo of Brother King is from Ronny's book.

Later that same year, in the December 15, 1919, issue, the front page featured the following short introduction along with the photograph: "Homer A. Gay of Port McKavett, Texas is one of our best and soundest young preachers. He stands strictly for what 'is written,' and has no patience with innovations. He is quiet, humble, and Christlike. Like Paul, he works with his own hands for a living, and preaches the gospel as he has the opportunity. Brother Gay was born in Marion County, Arkansas November 19, 1894. While a small child, his people moved to Texas, where he has resided ever since. His people were Baptists and brother Gay grew

up with the idea that there were good and bad in all churches, and that it made little difference as to what church one joined, just so it was not the ‘Campbellite’ (?) church. He was taught to regard the ‘Campbellites’ (?) as being a dangerous people. At an early age, he ‘got religion’ and joined the Methodist church. But after listening to several different kinds of doctrines, all represented as coming from the same Bible, he came to the conclusion that none of them was right and that the Bible was untrue. He remained in this skeptical condition until Brother D. L. Petty happened his way and preached the first gospel sermon that young Gay ever heard. He obeyed the gospel under Brother Petty’s preaching about seven years ago, and for about six years he has faithfully preached the word himself. He has attended school some at Abilene Christian College and the Gunter Bible College. Brother Gay is also a good singer. He has taught vocal music some. Knowing him as I do, I take great pleasure in commending him to the churches as being a faithful and able preacher of the word. W. G. Ashely.”

There are other references to Brothers King and Gay in later issues of the Apostolic Way, but these are the earliest that I was able to find. It was these two Homers, of course, first introduced, as far as I know, in “the Way,” who later became a driving force in the brotherhood through the pages of the Old Paths Advocate. (If you are interested in reading issues of the Apostolic Way, you may download PDFs here: <https://willofthelord.com/2011/09/21/the-apostolic-way-claranceturman-r-f-duckworth-editors/>).



Homer King, Helen King, Susie Gay, Homer Gay

A FINAL WORD

By DON L. KING

We hope all enjoyed last month’s special issue concerning our 90th year. This month will continue that theme.

We have received inquiries about the front page of the January issue. It is photocopied from the original January 1 front page from my own collection which includes all of the papers from January 1932 to the present time. Some inquired about the handwriting at the top of the 1st page. It is my father’s handwriting and he is answering a letter he had received from Brother Pinegar who had written and also sent several subscriptions for the new paper. Dad would sometimes write personal notes to brethren he knew well, and he saved a penny postage and card by doing so at the top of the front page of the subscriber’s personal paper, figuring no one but that person would be likely to see it. The note he wrote is as follows, “Thanks, Bro Pinegar, for the subs. Hope you can send in others. Here is Jan. issue. Brotherly, Homer L. King.” He never dreamed that 90 years later that note would be seen and read by our subscriber’s today

In this issue, we plan to present several good articles from Brethren, written especially for the 90th year special issues of January and February. If space permits, we will also include a few more pictures, Lord willing. Many of you seem to enjoy the old pictures.

Briefly, we wish to mention one more thing. Today the gospel is preached in several ways and we thank God for that. It is preached in gospel meetings across the land and in foreign places as well. It is still preached on radio and also television. Several of our preachers have preached on television, radio, newspapers, tracts, books, etc. including myself through the past years. One thing needs to be remembered about the printed page such as Old Paths Advocate and other papers: Something in print can be read over and over as many times as desired. It can also be photocopied as many times as desired, and sent to as many destinations as needed. In my personal collection of the OPA there are almost 90 years of writings by hundreds of our brethren from all over the land. What a wealth of great material! One reason the printed page is still so effective is that it is often copied and sent internationally around the world. In March of 1981 Jerry Cutter and I went to the Philippines to preach. Several years earlier we had received letters

from Bro Virgilio O. Danao Sr. regarding the issues of Instrumental music, Bible classes, and more than one cup in the communion. They had read articles from the OPA dealing with those matters and wanted to study them further. When we finally went there, (Jim Franklin and Paul Nichols had also been there shortly before) we noticed photocopied OPA's in almost every house we visited. For virtually nothing those papers had been reproduced and found their way into most of the homes we saw. This is one huge benefit of the printed page. We thank God for the good accomplished by the printed page around the world. Your subscriptions make it possible for us to continue our work with Old Paths Advocate. From the bottom of our heart, we thank you one and all for your participation. —Don L. King



Homer and Helen King

**TAKING A STAND, THE OLD PATHS
ADVOCATE'S 90TH YEAR**

By GREG GAY

Today, for anyone to take a stand in religion that all must believe and carefully follow what the scriptures authorize the New Testament church to practice is among the least popular decisions anyone can make.

Ninety years ago, as most of the religious world chose to ignore the scriptures to pursue their own paths, the individuals involved in the Old Paths Advocate were willing to take a stand against the innovations of their day.

Those who came together to publish and lead the Old Paths Advocate, and those who contributed to the paper, were a united and fearless voice amid the thunderous roar of liberalism that was then sweeping through congregations of the Church of Christ.

By the 1930's, Sunday School, also called Bible Classes, had swept through the Restoration Movement's Christian Church and Disciples of Christ, and was dividing congregations in the Church of Christ. Ninety years later, while not gone, the popularity of Sunday School has greatly diminished. Still, even if it totally disappears, accepting such a change then was a gateway to similar destructive changes.

Embracing Sunday School means those doing so accept the unscriptural concept of dividing the assembly. That easily led to today's practice of many Churches of Christ having multiple Lord's Day assemblies where communion is offered several times during the day. God's word, however, has not changed. The Bible still teaches that a congregation is to come together and stay together in one undivided assembly each Lord's Day: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7).

In the 1930's, many in the Restoration Movement had already chosen to violate the Bible's pattern for the Lord's Supper of one undivided loaf of unleavened bread and one cup containing grape juice for all to share in turn. Today, the pattern for the Lord's Supper continues to be ignored among many. Instead of the Lord's Supper being a "joint participation," as communion means, it has become a matter of individual worship, each eating a pre-broken piece of unleavened bread, a "Celestial Chicklet," as one of their own has called it, and sipping from an individual thimble sized cup. Amid this travesty, the Bible still teaches that the Lord's supper was instituted with and must be conducted today with one undivided loaf of unleavened bread representing Christ's body from which each partakes and with one cup, a drinking vessel that represents the New Testament, containing grape juice, the "fruit of the vine," representing Christ's blood. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

Most today can easily see the church of the first century came together in one undivided assembly and observed

the Lord's Supper with one loaf of unleavened bread and one cup containing grape juice. However, many think observing those patterns are only an option and anyone who insists on doing exactly what the Bible teaches are certainly out of step in today's religious world despite Jesus commanding "this do" when instituting the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23- 25).

In the last 90 years our fellowship of the Church of Christ has continued to "walk by the same rule" (Philippians 3:16), sharing these basic truths all over the world. In the meantime, those who went astray from the patterns in the scriptures in the years before the beginning of the OPA are no closer to the truth today than they were when the OPA began. In fact, they are hardly recognizable as any part of the Restoration Movement today with their decades of drifting away from the truth one step at a time.

Through all of this, the staff of the OPA, then and now, have been willing to "Take a Stand," to insist all who would be faithful members of the Lord's church "must" offer worship according to the ancient pattern given so long ago. Just like 90 years ago, these things are not "a way" to serve God, these are still the "only way" to acceptably serve God "in truth" (John 4:24).

May we have the courage to live by, share, and defend God's wonderful truths! As Paul wrote to Philippi, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents" (Philippians 1:27- 28 ESV).

90 YEARS: STILL ALIVE AND FIGHTING

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

1932 involved some interesting and important events: Franklin D. Roosevelt won in a landslide and became President of the United States...The San Francisco Opera House opened up...Amelia Earhart completed the first non-stop solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean by a woman...The kingdom of Iraq became independent from Great Britain...And, the first issue of OLD PATHS ADVOCATE was mailed out to subscribers. Think about it! During a long 90 year period, this religious paper has been pleading with people to heed the admonition of Jer. 6:16 - "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 for your souls."

In the first issue J.D. Phillips explained that the mission of the paper is the restoration of primitive Christianity, in an attempt "to heal the torn and bleeding body of the Crucified One," by pointing brethren back to the Bible in all points of doctrine. As Ronny Wade declared 75 years later (in a special issue of January 2007): "Who at the time could have believed that seventy-nine years later the paper would still be alive and fighting for the same principles that gave it life in the beginning." [Note: The 79 years referred to by Ronny included the paper started in 1928 by H. C. Harper and was known as THE TRUTH. When Homer King and J. D. Phillips assumed duties of publication, that's when it was mailed out on Jan. 1, 1932 under its new name.) Indeed, not many religious papers have lasted as long as this one has, with even fewer actually opposing all unscriptural innovations, but OLD PATHS ADVOCATE has been true to its name and mission in an uncompromising way!

As I think about my life and evangelistic efforts, I owe a debt of gratitude to the OPA. In large measure I was introduced to the brotherhood through its pages, enabling brethren to know of my desire to be an evangelist, and for that I am extremely grateful. I believe that my first field report appeared in the April 1, 1970 issue, being only 18 years old, and I wrote of holding "my first meeting" with the San Antonio, TX congregation that met on Catalina Street at the time. A year later in the April 1, 1971 issue, the "Meet Brother Billy D. Dickinson" feature informed brethren that I was "now entering the field full-time." Indeed, the OPA has blessed my life in various ways, opening doors for brethren to know me and use me for meetings, and it has been my privilege to be a part of its editorial staff. Yes, as we enter the 90th year of publication, the OLD PATHS ADVOCATE is still alive and contending for the faith!

90TH ANNIVERSARY

By RICK MARTIN

With the January issue the Old Paths Advocate celebrated its 90th Anniversary. That is quite an accomplishment! Over these many years the paper has sought to follow its motto of Jeremiah 6:16 - "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 for your souls.”

“Stand ye in the ways” means that we are to seek the ways of God. Jeremiah 29:13 says, “You shall seek Me, and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart.” The Word of God must be read and studied. Over these 90 years of publication the OPA has sought to be an aid in helping people with in studying God’s Word.

“And See” means diligently looking for that which belongs to God. It doesn’t matter how popular the preacher is or how big the church is. What matters is that what is preached and written agrees with the Bible.

“Ask for the Old Paths.” The old paths are the great tried and true doctrines of the Bible. They may not be popular. The OPA has not always been popular, but it has stood the test of time. Many people may say the old paths are outdated. But the results of following the old paths will be “rest for your souls.”

On a personal note, the Old Paths Advocate has always been a part of my life. My parents and grandparents subscribed to the paper, and I followed their example by making it a part of my children’s life. Through it’s

pages we have been able to read the writings of some of the greatest men found in our brotherhood. Their wisdom has been invaluable to our Christian walk.

I am thankful for the OPA and pray for its success in the years to come.

NINETY YEARS AND....continued from page one

In 1976, Brother King resumed his role as publisher and added his son Don to the staff as assistant publisher. Don subsequently succeeded his father as owner and publisher and remains with the journal in that capacity until this present day.

Don asked me to join the editorial staff in October of 1994, and in 2003 I began writing a monthly column titled, “The Back Page.” After 15 years I stepped down from the monthly column and published all of its 180 essays in a hardback book titled, For Such A Time As This. The book sold-out pretty quickly, which is an indication that people are still interested in reading materials from the Old Paths Advocate.



Preachers from left: RB Rowden, Billy Jack Ivey, Bill Harman, Homer Gay, Paul Nichols. Early 1940's.

NINETY GOOD YEARS....continued from page two

The Old Paths Advocate was a welcome visitor to the home of my parents, and I eagerly perused its writings each month. So many great truths were taught by godly men. I had come out of digression, and I was eager to learn the truth. I learned much of that truth from its pages. After I began preaching full-time, and brethren began to call me for gospel meetings, I was always faithful to take subscriptions for it wherever I went. So did all the preachers. We wanted it in every home in the brotherhood.

It has been my honor and great privilege to know most of the great men who were responsible for the beginning of this gospel journal. The two men I knew best were the two Homers -Homer King and Homer Gay. Those two men were a source of great encouragement to me as a fledgling preacher. What a privilege it was to visit in the home of Homer and Helen King back in the woods behind the Lee's Summit church near Lebanon, MO. They attended my meetings in that area and always encouraged me. Once, Brother King asked if I would be interested in being on the staff of the OPA. I declined because I thought I was too immature for that responsibility, but I was honored that he asked. In later years, Ronny Wade was invited to be an editor, and he did the job much better than I ever would have. I also visited in the home of Homer and Susie Gay in Lebanon, and I was honored to be with him in opening the new church building there. He preached the first sermon, and I preached the first meeting in that building. Later Brother Gay worked with the church in Dallas. I was in a meeting there when he passed away. His widow, Susie, later married Brother Perser and moved to Shreveport. She was a great mentor to me as a young preacher and guided me through some difficult times.

I constantly thank the Lord that I lived in the time of these great men, and others like them. I feel sorry for young preachers who did not have the privilege of knowing them and being influenced by them. I remember well my first Fourth of July Meeting in Sulphur, OK, when I was fifteen. I attended with my uncle Fred Kirbo, who was one of those great preachers. It was there I saw Homer King, Homer Gay, Ervin Waters, Paul Nichols, Don McCord, B. F. Leonard, Barney Welch, Clovis Cook, E. H. Miller, Tom Smith, Jim Stewart, Lynwood Smith, and others. These were some of the men who were leading in a fight against the error in the religious world and pleading for the return to the New Testament

church.

As young preachers, we were encouraged to send in a short report to the OPA each month of what we were doing in the field. Recently, I went back and read some of the issues published in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. In every issue there were many reports. One thing that stood out was the brevity of each report, yet each one contained much information about what the preachers were doing. In those days, we were having results. We were holding two weeks meetings and baptizing people. We didn't consider a meeting successful unless we had baptisms. Someone said recently, "Peter preached one sermon and baptized 3000; we preach 3000 sermons and baptize one." There is more truth to that than we want to admit. Those were truly "the good old days".

I entitled this article "Ninety Good Years" for a reason. The reason is that so much "good" has been done by this periodical that maybe people don't realize. The OPA has gone all over the world and has had a great influence for good. One good thing that I think about has to do with the work in Africa. If my memory serves me right, the paper was being sent to folks in Africa back in the 50s. Some folks read the truths that were taught and wanted those same truths taught there. So, a "Macedonia Call" came to the editors. That call was answered by a brave preacher and his wife, Paul and Wilma Nichols. In 1952, they boarded an ocean liner and went to the other side of the world to preach the gospel in Africa. They lived a deprived existence there, but the gospel was preached. Today, there are hundreds of congregations in that country because of that initial contact through the OPA and the work of men and women who were willing to leave the comforts of this country and "go preach". Never underestimate the power of the printed word.

As I look back over the years of my experience with the church and the OPA, I have many precious memories. What sweet memories strike responsive chords in my heart as I think about all the great men of God who have contributed to the work of getting out the word of God to the world. I commend Don King for keeping his father's dream alive by faithfully publishing this periodical each month. It is no easy task, but it is a rewarding work. May he and his faithful co-workers never grow weary in this "good" work.



A POEM BY LYNWOOD SMITH

October 1941, OPA

The Old Paths is the good old way
 The way that our Savior trod: And unless we walk this
 highway straight,
 We disobey the commands of God.
 So, let us walk in this good way, Finding rest to our
 weary soul. Its valleys descend, its hill we'll climb,
 Until we reach that city of gold.

Lo! Many are turning from the good "Old Paths,"
 Following the ways of man."
 His examples are incidentals," they say, And they mock
 at His command;
 They sneer and jeer at the "Old Paths"; "It is old
 fashioned," they say;
 But no matter how "narrow minded" they brand us,
 We'll continue the narrow way.

The Scriptures say, "Jesus took the cup," And I believe
 it is true;
 And if we would follow the Savior's way, This also we
 must do.
 "What meaneth the cup?," some may say, "Can it have
 a meaning at all?"
 "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," Are
 words recorded by Paul.

Now, let us ever live for Jesus, And His righteous will
 obey;
 "And see, and ask for the Old Paths," And walk wherein
 is the good way.
 For how happy we'll be in the end, Who did "stand ye
 in the way";
 And did not heed nor follow men,
 Nor would any of their doctrines obey.

M. Lynwood Smith

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Our Departed

HOWELL - Bro. James Harlan Howell of Springville, AL was born April 27, 1928 in Randolph County, AL. He passed away on December 13, 2021, at 93 years of age. Bro. Howell and his late wife Annie Pearl were charter members and pillars in the Birmingham church for more than sixty years. Harlan and Annie Pearl married in 1955 and through her influence, he was converted to Christ. After living in Marietta, GA for a few years, they moved to Birmingham and in 1960, with the help of Bro. E.H. Miller, a congregation was established in their home which would later move to the present location at Crescent Ridge. Harlan was a steadfast leader in the church and had one of the greatest hearts for evangelism and the souls of men. He worked tirelessly to promote the message of Christ and hardly met a person whom he did not invite to church and encourage them to watch their local television program with Bro. Brett Hickey. Even in his final hours, he was telling his hospital nurses about Let the Bible Speak and encouraging them to listen to the gospel being preached. He and Annie Pearl drove countless miles throughout the South and the nation supporting gospel meetings. To this union were born five wonderful children, all of whom obeyed the gospel and have remained faithful to Christ. The love and closeness of this large family is a testament to the kind of father and grandfather he was. He and Annie Pearl were married 66 years and were a shining example of a Christ-centered marriage and home. We gathered for Annie Pearl's funeral four weeks to the day before we laid Harlan to rest alongside her. At her funeral, Harlan tearfully told me that they began their life together holding hands and ended their life together the same way, holding her hand as she slipped into eternity. It was a difficult service for the family so soon after losing Annie Pearl, but the sun broke through the gray clouds just as we laid him to rest. He was preceded in death not only by his parents, and his beloved wife, but also by his only son, Ryan just one year ago. He leaves to mourn his passing, his four daughters: Melody Snider, Angela Wallace (Steve), Donna Bryan (Mike), and Janet Benson (Craig). He also is survived by his daughter-in-law, Sandy Howell. He also leaves 14 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, his nephew Jerry Albright, and a host of other nieces, nephews, and cousins. May the Lord raise up many more wonderful men like Harlan Howell in His kingdom on earth. It was this writers honor to conduct the service along with grandson, Blake Wallace, and also Terry Studdard.

— Kevin W. Presley

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE. . .

GETTING WHAT YOU WANT, BUT LOSING WHAT YOU HAVE!

By JERRY DICKINSON

“And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, ‘Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.’ But his mother said to him, ‘Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.’” (Genesis 27:11-13) “So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, ‘The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.’ And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, ‘Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. And stay with him a few days, until your brother’s fury turns away...then I will send and bring you from there.’” (Genesis 27:41-45)

Rebekah got what she wanted (the Patriarchal blessing for Jacob) but in doing so she lost what she had. It seems to me her motive was in sync with God’s will. When Esau and Jacob were born, the Lord declared that Jacob would be the Patriarch through whom the blessing and promise to Abraham and Isaac would be fulfilled. Isaac favored Esau and sought to circumvent God’s declared will, but Rebekah was determined that her favorite, Jacob, would be the one to receive the coveted blessing and birthright. She was right and Isaac was wrong. The problem, however, was that instead of waiting and relying on the Lord to fulfill His will, Rebekah (like so many others) decided God needed her help so she came up with a plan to get what she wanted the blessing for Jacob.

It was a devious plan, really, and she counseled Jacob to lie to his aged father. When Jacob whined to his mother that his duplicity might be discovered and instead of a blessing he would be cursed Rebekah exclaimed, “Let your curse be on me, my son!” Wow! She is so single mindedly set on her devious course that she is willing to receive a curse from her own husband, an inspired Patriarch no less. Does she understand the consequences of her impetuous outburst? Be that as it may, Jacob obeyed her counsel and deceived his father and received the blessing. When Esau found out he determined to kill Jacob, so Rebekah sprang into action again and sent Jacob away to stay with her brother Laban until the danger was past. Please note that she tells Jacob it will only be for a few days, and then I will send for you. Everything will be as it was before when you get back home!

But, Jacob will not come back home for 20 years, or more. When he does finally return there is no mention of Rebekah. Apparently, she has died. So Rebekah got what she wanted, but she lost what she had! She never saw her beloved Jacob again, never met her daughter-in-laws whom Jacob married in exile, and never met her grandchildren by all of Jacob’s wives. More than that, she lost the affection and trust of her other son Esau and of her husband Isaac because of her duplicity. Was it worth it? Yes, she got the blessing for Jacob which was rightly his but she lost what she had. If only she had trusted the Lord to fulfill His promise in His own good time she could have enjoyed what she already had and Gods’ blessing as well.

What a cautionary tale is this -but it is a tale repeated again and again. Lot got the wealth and prestige in Sodom, but lost his wife and ruined his daughters. Achan got the forbidden treasure after the battle of Jericho and hid it in his tent, but lost his life and family by execution when his sin was found out. Samson got Delilah (a woman he lustfully wanted), but lost his strength, his eyes, his freedom, and finally his life. Gehazi got the reward that Elisha refused from Naaman, but lost everything when the leprosy from which Naaman had been cleansed was transferred to him -and to his descendants. Was it worth it?

David got Bathsheba, but lost the peace and prosperity he had been granted by God during his reign. But more, he lost 4 sons to the sword -the sword he unleashed on himself. The prodigal son got the inheritance he demanded from his father, but spent it all in the far country and lost the fellowship of his father and sense of his worth as a son. When he told his father, “I am no more worthy to be called your son,” he told the sad truth that he got what he wanted but he lost what he had.

Adam and Eve listened to the voice of the Devil and wanted to be like God, knowing good and evil. They wanted the knowledge of good and evil, and sure enough they got what they wanted by transgressing God’s command and eating the forbidden fruit. Afterwards they knew experientially the difference between good and evil, and conscience-stricken they tried to hide from God. They got what they wanted, but they lost what they had. They lost forever their innocence and perfect communion with their Creator. Was it worth it? Be careful what you ask for. Consider well what you think you really want. Be content with the joy and peace that comes from being “in Christ”. “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” Amen.