

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 ordinances 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 for your souls’ (Jer. 6:16). ‘And they that shall 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’ (Isaiah 58:12).

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NO. 2

COMMANDING RESPECT

By Carl M. Johnson

After Paul is released from his first imprisonment in Rome he and Timothy visit the church in Ephesus and find them in desperate need of instruction. Since Paul feels compelled to continue his travels toward Macedonia he leaves Timothy in Ephesus to set the church in order. Timothy was still a boy living with his parents when Paul first takes him as his companion. After a lapse of perhaps 15 years he is still regarded as a young man when Paul writes him a letter from Macedonia.

Paul has at least two reasons for writing Timothy at this time and both of them are related to Timothy’s youth. He says, “These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God” (1 Timothy 3:14-15). Then Paul adds, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

Paul tells Timothy to teach “these things,” which includes instructions on proper prayer (2:8); modesty (2:9-10); proper roles based upon the Creation for men and women (men are to teach publicly and women are not to teach publicly) (2:11-15); qualifications of elders and deacons (chapter 3); and heresies that will further challenge the Ephesian church (4:1-5).

It is possible Timothy knows already these basic doctrines of the church, but the Ephesian church does not know them. So, another reason Paul writes this letter is to give Timothy apostolic

authority for all that he teaches. He is not just another “young gun” coming in to “line everybody out,” but he has a letter from an apostle that gives him the authority to instruct all of them—including older men and women whose experience goes far beyond his.

There have always been folks who are reluctant to receive teaching from young preachers. Years ago a young preacher visited our congregation and gave a sermon on the family. After he left, an elderly sister objected by saying, “We don’t need some young punk coming in here and telling us how to raise a family!” I have noticed in my own experience that since my hair has turned white I do not have nearly as many folks jump me at the back door of the building and take me to task for something I said in my sermon.

The late Clovis Chappell once wrote:

“It came as a shock to me as a young preacher to discover that there were certain strange folk in my congregation who did not approve of everything I did. It was even more shocking to learn there were those who were not greatly impressed by my preaching. I could hardly believe it at first! Possibly, I still think such are a bit lopsided. But this no longer fills me with grieved amazement. I can now be fairly happy in spite of this disapproval. Why is this the case? It is not that their disapproval is sweet in itself. It is rather that I have learned to console myself with the consideration that nobody has a universal appeal. However good one may be as a church teacher, however excellent as an official, however gifted as a preacher, there are those whose bell one

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does not ring.”

“Now, if I see a man who is asleep, I will wake him if I can. If I cannot, I will stop looking at him. If I do not, my interest in him might allow those who are yet awake to go to sleep. Hence, I focus my attention on the listeners. Even so, I win those who do not approve, if I can. If I cannot, I give my attention to those who do. In any case, I no longer break my heart because I cannot win everybody’s approval.”

Paul is well aware of the fact that Timothy is not going to be able to win everyone’s approval. Nor is he going to win everyone’s love. Jesus was the friendliest man who ever lived, but He was unable to win everyone’s friendship. As He went about doing good, some loved Him with a passionate devotion while others hated Him to the point of nailing Him to a cross.

Jesus was convinced that those who live His kind of life would meet with that same kind of antagonism. He says, “Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.” He is not saying, “Hatred is better than Love.” He is saying that if His followers stir up no opposition whatsoever, then something is wrong. Paul is aware that there are certain responses we would like to have from our fellows that we cannot always command. He wants Timothy to win people to his way of thinking so far as possible; to win their approval and love if he can, but above all else, win and hold their respect! He says, “Let no man despise thy youth!” In other words, “Conduct yourself in such a way that no one will despise you because you are young!” Paul then lists six areas in which Timothy is to be the proper example (pattern) for other believers to follow.

He is to be an example in Word. His preaching must be according to God’s Word; uncorrupt, sincere, sound speech which cannot be condemned (2 Timothy 1:13). He tells Timothy to devote himself to reading the Word and to preaching the Word (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2). He adds later that “all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine (what is right), reproof (what is not right), for correction (how to get right), and instruction in righteousness (how to stay right)” (2 Timothy 3:16). Being an example of the believers in Word

also includes Timothy's social conversation. His speech is not to be corrupt, vain, or foolish, but always with grace and seasoned with salt. Any preacher's ability to command the respect of others is greatly compromised if he is a practitioner of gossip, slander, filthy, and indecent talking. Timothy is also to be an example of the believers in "conversation." The word conversation here means "behavior." He is to practice what he preaches. Whether in the church, family, or the world his behavior is to be characterized by godliness, honesty, sincerity, and purity—as mentioned in this verse. He is to be an example in charity (love). Our love for our unseen Savior and our love for the other souls purchased by Him, will determine our speech to and about others, and our behavior toward them.

Timothy is also to be an example of the believers in faith. It is important for Timothy, as a young man, to be the proper example for other young people in the church. Solomon says, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). If you begin to cultivate your faith during your youth, you can become a Christian more easily when you reach the age of accountability. You can also become a more effective Christian—just as a violinist, golfer, or tennis player can become more effective in their respective roles if they begin to cultivate their talent during their youth.

Unfortunately, if you do not cultivate your faith beginning with your youth, chances are you never will. I'm not forgetting the brother who says the reason he is not attending church services today is because he had to go too much when he was a boy. When I hear folks slander their pious parents like that, I realize they may be telling the truth, but I doubt it. I guarantee, however, that for every one of those who do not attend worship today because they had to go to church too much as a child, there are 10,000 who do not attend church today because they didn't have to go when they were young.

Paul tells Timothy that if he is going to be of any service in the difficult field in which he finds himself he is going to have to command the respect of those he seeks to serve. He can do that only by being an example of the believers in Word, behavior, love, and faith. The wonder of this advice is that it is within the reach of all of

us. There are many prizes you and I cannot win, but this one that can surely be ours.
—carlmj33@gmail.com

Editorial

WRITING ON THE HEART, PART 2

2 CORINTHIANS 3:3

By Don L. King

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3).

In this passage the apostle has summarized the work as well as the result of the writing on the heart, under the new covenant, in making Christians. The figure of ordinary handwriting was used as an illustration which we all understand.

My father always used an old-style ink pen which had to be filled with ink periodically. When he wrote a personal letter it was often in his own handwriting using a pen and paper. He never wrote with his bare fingers, nor did he simply pour the ink on the paper and smear it around. Rather, he took his pen, filled with ink, and began the letter. Little by little the message would take place. This is the figure Paul utilized in this passage before us.

The purpose of writing was, of course, to produce a letter or epistle. In 2 Corinthians 3:3 the Christians being addressed are the letter, or epistle, and Christ was the writer. "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ..." he said. How was this writing done? It was done on their hearts, or minds. The record says: "...not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." Paul tells us the ink used in this letter was the Holy Spirit. How did Christ write with the Spirit on their hearts? Was it abstractly, by direct impact of the Spirit, without any instrument at all? Could that have been the way they were made Christians or disciples of Christ? If that happened then Paul's figure is not accurate because the writer did not write that way. He used a pen. That shows that the figure would be incomplete without a pen. Notice, Paul said: "Ministered by us" (verse 3). Now, we understand that it was

ministered by the apostles. That's the way the writing was done. They were His medium. The apostles were the tools (mediums) used to write with the Holy Spirit and make Christians from men.

Christ was the writer through the apostles as pens, filled with the Holy Spirit, as ink; and when this was put in the hearts of the Corinthians, they became the epistle, or letter, of Christ. They were then the church at Corinth. This was the figure Paul used when speaking of the Corinthians and their conversion after hearing him preach by inspiration.

Our Lord chose twelve pens (apostles) with which to do His writing. He trained, or prepared those twelve for about three years and a half. He taught them how to write, what to write (preach) and when to do so. Just before his departure back to Heaven, He promised to send the Spirit after He was gone so they would not be left alone. He told them they had to wait for power to come from on high (pens cannot write without ink). When the Spirit (ink) came on Pentecost, the Bible tells us they were "...filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4) Now filled with the Spirit, the pens began to write upon the hearts of men and the rest is history. The gospel of Christ began the marvelous work in converting men and women.

This is still continuing today around the world. In the Philippines, Africa, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the USA and on and on, the gospel message is working and creating Christians with the truth of God's Holy Word. Even today, we preach the truths delivered by the apostles (pens) in the first century. The gospel is still powerful because it is still the inspired Word of Almighty God. I personally have seen hundreds baptized after being converted by the preaching of God's inspired Word.

Brethren, the problem is not the gospel. It will still change men and women and cause them to follow Christ if we can get it into their hearts. However, we often become stale and content ourselves with just staying at home rather than reaching out with the gospel. Sometimes, brethren complain about the cost of travel to other lands or places in our own land. Yes, it is expen-

sive, especially so today, but what is even one soul worth? (See Matthew 16:26). Our purpose at home is not to save the money of the church for the Lord when He comes again. Our purpose is to gain as many souls as we possibly can before He comes back! I'm convinced the Lord will not be interested in how large our treasury is upon His return. However, He is likely to want answers as to why we haven't done more to convert a lost and dying world with the resources we have at hand. The whole world is fertile soil right now.

No, we are not wise to be like a "jack in the box" and pop in here and there and then rush off with no time spent in grounding those who were converted. That is a waste of time, money, and energy. It may require many trips, money, and much time spent before maturity shows among those converted at the beginning. Hear Paul in Galatians 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth *again* (emphasis mine DLK) until Christ be formed in you." We must preach and keep on preaching to remind them of where they need to be. If we preach, and then simply leave them we may be pretty certain that they will wander away after a period of time. Like sheep, they must be watched, guarded and continually taught if maturity is ever to be expected. However, we may be sure it is worth it all to stay the course.

Brethren, let us never grow weary in preaching the gospel to a lost and dying world. Yes, we sometimes encounter difficulties and disappointments. In fact, you may count on it happening! The apostles did also but they continued to preach. In Acts 4:19 we learn that the High Priest and his cohorts had commanded that the gospel be stopped and that no one was allowed to speak in the name of Christ, etc. Hear Peter's and John's answer: "...Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). Dare we do any less? Think on these things.

—DLK

JESUS IS THE ANSWER

By Rick Martin

The years come and go, and man becomes wiser in worldly things, but he still has the same old problems and questions which confronted him from earlier times. Man looks for the answers to

many different problems.

No person who lives on earth has ever affected man like Jesus of Nazareth. He has so affected man that we even count the years by his birth. In John 6:66-69, we see that Jesus had become very popular, and people of all kinds were following Him. Many were following Him because of the miracles He had performed. They were not following Him for the right reasons. Jesus knew this and when He told them what it would really take to follow Him many left. Jesus then turns to the twelve and says, "Will ye go away also?" Peter speaks up and says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Peter grasped the situation at once. He knew Jesus had the answer. He may have possibly thought of other great masters, like Moses, John the Baptist, or some political leader of the day, but because he knew Jesus, there was no other place to go.

When will men learn that Jesus is the only answer? He has been the only answer for man, and He remains that answer today regardless of all the great advances in many fields. Since Jesus walked on earth, man has seen advances that have enhanced his life, but Jesus remains the answer to the difficult problems of life.

Jesus is the answer because He is the only one endowed with authority from God to be our answer. He is the only one sent by God for this purpose. On the Mount of transfiguration, the Father put his stamp of approval on Jesus by announcing, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye Him." Jesus then is God's answer to man's questions: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).

Jesus' Authority

Jesus is the answer for authority in Christianity. The world today is much like it was in Old Testament times when "every man became a law unto himself." In other words, there is no accepted authority in spiritual things.

Many people don't like being told what to do. On occasions, as a former teacher, I instructed a student on what to do only to hear him/her respond, "You can't tell me what to do."

People want Jesus to be their Savior, but they don't necessarily want him to be their Lord. He can't be our Savior without being our Lord. We cannot expect to receive his promises without meeting the conditions He requires.

Through instructions and commands God requires obedience from man. Faith alone is not enough (John 3:36). Jesus is truly above all. Paul tells us in Colossians 1:15-16 that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." He says, "by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or rulers, or authorities, all things were created through Him and for Him."

Fixed standards keep order in life and are necessary to prevent chaos. We have a standard on weights. That might be a bad thing for some of us. We have a standard in our money system. Confusion exists where there is no authority. The religious world lives in confusion because people have different standards for their faith and morals. The current culture rejects the one true God and confuses faith and morals. Some people believe God has opened His throne and allowed men to make the rules, but they have deceived themselves. God still rules and there is still one faith (Ephesians 4:5).

The confession of Christianity is that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9). Making the claim should always include sanctifying him as Lord in our hearts (1 Peter 3:15). Saying Jesus is Lord means more than admitting He created the universe; it means we totally and unconditionally belong to Him. The church is not a democracy; it is a kingdom. Jesus is the head of the church that he purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

The Bible places all authority in God. The Father gave all authority to the Son, Jesus Christ. There is no evidence that Jesus has given up any of His authority. He expects people to hear and do what He instructs them to do. In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus says that the person who listens to His instructions and follows Him is like a wise man who builds his house on a stable and solid foundation, and it does not collapse, though beaten with the storms. He then says, those who hear my instructions and ignore them are foolish, and like a man who builds on an unstable foundation and the storms come, his house is blown "to and fro"

and great is the fall of it. Jesus still has the power given to Him by God.

Some people practice selective obedience, choosing to obey only when they agree with the authority. They think they are obedient, but when one obeys only when he agrees with his superior, he has not really obeyed at all. Every person, whether he believes or not is accountable to God and is required to do what is found in His written word. We are under the authority of God through His Son, as revealed in the Bible. We have no authority of our own.

Amazingly, some people read God's will in the Bible yet still do and believe what they want. Some say it makes no difference what you believe if you love Jesus, but how can one claim to love Jesus and not listen to Him? Love always listens.

If I should be given an examination, I would want to be guided in my studies by the one who is to examine me. Jesus will judge the world (John 12:48). Jesus is the answer for authority in religion.

Friendship

Jesus is the answer when you need a friend. As we reflect upon some past friendships, we feel no great amount of sadness. Earthly friendships come and go; people change and leave with no regard for other's feelings. New friendships are forged and continue the cycle. Young children and teenagers grow up and best friends forever go away. These children grow into adults and if life's purpose is truly realized, they come to knowledge of true friendship.

In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." These are the words of a true friend. One who knows our deeds, the one who loves us (Revelation 3:19). Jesus stands at the door and knocks.

Every person who has worked for and obtained human friends may have found a true honest friend, but without exception human friends are fallible and will disappoint us. I have some people that I consider to be true friends, but there have been times when they have disappointed

me, and I am sure there have been times when I have disappointed them.

How it must have thrilled the hearts of the apostles when Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends" (John 15:15). He said, "you are my friends if you do the things I command you." What a great thought! Those who obey the commands of Jesus are His friends. In Jesus we have a friend who is perfect and does not change (Hebrews 13:8). In Jesus we have a friend who can give us eternal life.

Jesus left the splendor and glories of heaven, humbled himself by becoming man, lived a perfect life, and died a horrible, excruciating death so that His friends could live eternally. What does he ask in return? What great price must we pay for the privilege of being part of Christ's everlasting existence? Who would not give every earthly thing for a chance to be called the friend of the Son of God? Surprisingly, all he asks for is our obedience. He does not ask for more than we are able to give. His "yoke is easy; His burden is light." Truly, He is a great friend.

Man longs for someone he can confide in and in whom he can trust completely. Man wants someone who will care for him, love him, and protect him. Man yearns for one who can be counted on to never leave or forsake him. Jesus is the answer!

Death

Jesus is the answer when we face death. When we come to the mysterious hour of death it is Jesus only who can give us the answer and an outlook that is encouraging. The infidel's answer cannot explain things.

People want someone who can raise them above death, and Jesus is the only one who can meet that need (Hebrews 2:15). Those who obey the Lord have no reason to fear death. For those who are disobedient and unfaithful, there remains the horrors and torments of the second death (Revelation 20:14-15).

Only a strong faith in Jesus can deliver us from the fear of death. For those who don't know Jesus, death is certainly something to fear. They will surely reap their just reward. If we have faith in Jesus and obey him, we can be saved from all

fear and torments.

The apostle Paul writes about death being conquered. He says, "Death, where then is your victory? Where then is your sting? For sin that causes death will all be gone. How we thank God for all of this! So, since future victory is sure, be strong and steady, always abounding in the Lord's work, for you know that nothing you ever do for the Lord is wasted and it would be as if there were no resurrection." The victory over sin and death has been given to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul was able to face death with great anticipation and it was because of Jesus he could do this. Paul was used to departures, and he looked upon death as being a departure from this world on to a better one; a departure to be with Christ. He said, in Philippians 1:23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Paul had no fear of death. He looked to Jesus, and he received the answer. If we have faith in Jesus, He will answer the questions we have about death.

The only way we can get to heaven is through Jesus. We read in John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Most people in this world are looking to others for answers, but it won't be old Buddha on the throne, it won't be Mohammed calling us home; it won't be Hare Krishna who plays that trumpet tune; because we are going to see the Son, not Reverend Moon. No one can enter heaven except by Jesus Christ. All must hold to Him to be saved. When the hour of death comes, Jesus is the answer!

Conclusion

Only Jesus can satisfy. Everybody and everything else have been tried and found wanting. Peter said, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." That meant Jesus and Jesus alone. It is useless for men to look elsewhere because nothing or no one else can answer the questions of life. Jesus guides men through the perplexities of life. He can lead men out of spiritual darkness. Jesus appeals to men as no other person ever has.

The grounds of Christian faith in the divine person of Jesus are His words and his character; what He did; what He said, and what He was; but the main thing is the words.

Ah yes, the words! Peter had seen the miracles

and they were something to behold. It was not because Jesus could perform miracles that Peter had faith in Him, but rather it was the words of eternal life. Today you and I have those words and it is there we find the answer. Jesus is the answer! —teacherrmartin@gmail.com

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Pages from the Past

A BEAUTIFUL LIFE

By Paul O. Nichols

The following article by Paul Nichols is from the January 1946 issue of the Old Paths Advocate. Brother Paul is now 100 years old. He has traveled the country and gone into foreign lands preaching the Gospel. I think we can safely say he has painted a beautiful picture on his canvas of life.

The Beauties of The Creator

As man views the lofty mountains with their magnificent grandeur or the beautiful forest with its towering majestic monarchs, or as he looks upon the vast expanse of the ocean with its ceaseless surging motion, whose waters beat endlessly upon shifting sands, he sees the handiwork of an omnipotent God. And as he gazes into the heavens and there sees the bright sun blessing the world with its radiant splendor, the glittering diamond-like stars shimmering above, and the glorious harvest moon with a beauty all its own, and all of the planetary system working in perfect unison and harmony, he sees a declaration of the glory of "the Father of lights, with whom is no

variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17; Psalm 19:1). Who could look into the face of the beautiful crimson rose, or smell the fragrant scent of the lilac, and then have the unashamed ignorance or unmitigated effrontery to say that there is no supreme being? Who after noting the greatness of the creation, could believe the foolishness of the theory of evolution, which is unfounded and unpredicated upon any truth? The Creator has splashed all of the bright hues of nature in the so often unappreciated things about us—all in harmony with each other. The rainbow during a refreshing shower, the sunset at the end of day with its gold and crimson and purple colors, the green fields and valleys, the dainty little multiple-colored wildflowers, and all of the glowing festival robes that clothe nature in the autumn season should remind us of our God.

The Artists

The art galleries of the world are furnished with the works of some great and noted painters. I am sure that all these artists were careful in their selection of colors and the way in which they applied their paints. They did not haphazardly paint their pictures, but with an aim in mind they worked toward an end. Their efforts were rewarded with the placing of their works in honorable galleries of art at the price of a great sum. All artists have not been honored with such a reward, for all have not been worthy.

The Master Painter

We may view with awe the paintings of great men and stand amazed at the ability that they have shown, but the picture that challenges our attention above all others is the picture painted by the Son of God—the picture of His own life. It will never claim a place in the galleries of earth, but it will always have a prominent place in the hearts of true Christians. Ever careful was He that each stroke of the brush was applied with the pleasure of the Father (John 8:29).

Every Man A Painter

When a man comes into the world the canvass upon which he is to paint the picture of his life is clean. Everyone applies the paints himself. Repulsive and shameful pictures have been the products of many because they have used the dull and ugly colors of the “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19-21). But thanks be unto God, for He has made provision by which we may completely erase all our mistakes and re-

pugnant errors and begin to paint anew the picture of life (Romans 6:3-4). In the place of using the dull colors of the works of the flesh, we can then use the bright hues of the “fruit of the spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23). And each time we make an honest mistake the Lord has provided a way by which we may erase it (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9). The last stroke of paint is applied when we take our last breath. The picture of our life can be as beautiful as anything in nature if we are careful to make each stroke count, and only apply the paint that is the most beautiful. What kind of a picture are you painting? Will it be worthwhile to look upon in the day of judgment?

PSALLO AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

By Barney Owens

July 1943—February 2019

A note by Billy D. Dickinson:

[Barney Owens, a well-known preacher in our brotherhood, died on Feb. 20, 2019 at the age of 76. His distinctive style enabled him to preach the gospel with power and persuasiveness. Ronny Wade once told me that he always learned something new when attending one of Barney’s meetings. Coming from a scholarly man like Ronny Wade, that was a great compliment! Stan Owens, Barney’s son, has published a book of his dad’s studies in Ephesians, *The Church at Ephesus: A Series of Sermons*. While in a recent meeting with the Sharonville congregation in Ohio (where Barney labored over 48 years), I purchased a copy of the book and have been perusing its contents. Under the title which I am using for this article, I would like everyone to have the opportunity to read Barney’s explanation of the Greek word *psallo* in Eph. 5:19. As Barney deals with one of the main arguments used to justify instrumental music in the New Testament church, he meticulously demonstrates that there is no Biblical authority for this unscriptural innovation that has caused division in the Lord’s church. Before you begin to read the article, three more points... (1) The book involves “sermon notes” and sometimes scriptures are cited to complete a point, (2) if you would like a copy of the book, all you need to do is contact Stan Owens and he’ll be glad to help you, and (3) consider the words of Ephesians 5:18-19 —“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spir-

itual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” — Billy D. Dickinson]

Barney’s Article

Instead of becoming drunken in heathen festivities, the Christian is to sing God’s praises in the assembly of the church. Psalms are the sacred songs of the scripture. Hymns are songs of praise to Deity. Spiritual songs are songs with Biblical subjects that build up the spiritual man. These, of course, are interrelated and overlapping. These are to be offered to Heaven by singing and making melody in the heart to God. What a wonderful place to have revealed to us the necessity or the need of a mechanical instrument of music. The Holy Spirit could have revealed “singing and making melody on an instrument.” But that is not the case; instead the revelation is “singing and making melody *in your heart* to the Lord.” The heart is the only instrument approved by God on which we are to make melody.

Instrumental music advocates insist that since “making melody” comes from a form of the Greek word *psallo*, therefore the instrument is included in the term and should be (must be) used in worship. Let me say as clearly as I know how: if a mechanical instrument is included in the word, then we *must* use one and if we fail to do that we are not obeying God and are therefore wrong. *Psallo* occurs in the New Testament in various forms: (Ephesians 5:19) (*psallontes*) “Singing and making melody.” (Romans 15:9) (*psallo*) “sing unto thy name,” (1 Corinthians 14:15) (*psallo*) “sing with the spirit and with the understanding,” (James 5:13) (*psalleteo*) “sing praises.” These are usages of the verb in the New Testament.

Whatever *psallo* commands, that is what we are to do. So, what does it mean? When we use the *King James Version*, remember there were 47 of the world’s ripest scholars translating the Greek into pure English. They worked under the pain of death if they deliberately mistranslated a word. When the *American Standard Version* was translated, there were 101 of America’s ripest scholars translating Greek into English. Thus, we have 148 scholars translating the word into English, and they with one accord say it means, “sing, make melody, and sing praises” (Ephesians 5:19; Romans 15:9; and James 5:13). This alone should settle the argument.

But when men want their own way, the word of

God seldom settles anything. The music advocates are not satisfied—they insist that the word *psallo* includes a mechanical instrument of music. Since it is insisted upon, we have no reluctance to go to the definition of the word and allow the issue to turn on what the word means in its New Testament usage. The lexicons give the meaning of *psallo* as “to pull, rub, strike or cause to vibrate” (according to my nine lexicons and two grammars). According to these lexicons, the carpenter “psallos” his line when he pulls it and lets it go to strike a chalk line. The archer “psallos” the bow string when he pulls it back and lets it go to make the arrow fly. Also, pulling the hair or stroking the beard is “psalloing” according to the lexicons. In like manner, the musician takes an instrument, strikes its strings or cords—that is “psalloing” all right, on the instrument named. But it is *not* the instrument that makes the “psalloing”; it is the act performed on the instrument. The same act performed on anything else would be “psalloing”—if it were the act of striking or plucking something.

It is ridiculous to make the object of a verb part of its own definition. Consider the verb “lick,” for example. If I lick ice cream, is ice cream part of the definition of lick? Can a person lick something without licking ice cream? Of course! How about licking a stamp, or pudding, or your own hand. All right, “psallo” what? The hair, beard, a harp etc. can all be objects of the verb *psallo*, but they are not part of its definition. Paul said we are “to psallo” the heart—that is, the thing “psalloed” in worship is not a mechanical instrument but the “heart” in Ephesians 5:19. In the New Testament, the Greek word *psallo* (and the corresponding Hebrew word *zamar* in the Old Testament) the particular instrument was named in addition to the word *psallo* itself. Whenever a harp was intended, the harp was named in addition to the word. Thus in the New Testament, the heart, *not* the harp, was the instrument on which the action expressed by *psallo* was performed. He therefore specified the instrument—the heart—in addition to *psallo*.

Then what about singing in the church? Do the passages alluded to above teach congregational singing? If this singing is not done in the congregation, it must be done somewhere else if the commandment is to be obeyed. Where shall it be done? Shall we stop a brother or sister on the street and start singing to teach and admonish them? Or, shall we do all this in our homes and

not in the church? Such whims are admissions of frustration in the main argument. However, to answer even the whimsical person on every point, see 1 Corinthians 14:15 for precept and example for congregational singing. If more proof is demanded, consider Hebrews 2:12: “In the midst of the church, I will sing praise unto thee.” When Jesus exemplified the Lord’s supper to his disciples they were assembled together (Matthew 26:30). One might as well argue that the Lord’s supper was not observed in the assembly as to contend that singing was not congregational...

Final note from Billy D. Dickinson:

[I will now include comments by Guy N. Woods on what he considered to be “the best and most informative published discussion on instrumental music in worship.” It occurred in 1923 between N.B. Hardeman (representing the churches of Christ) and Ira M. Boswell (representing the Christian Church). Wood’s description of the arguments made by both sides on the usage of *psal-lo* compliments what you have just read from the pen of Brother Barney

Woods explains that Dr. Boswell, who attempted to defend the use of such instruments in Christian worship, represented the highest type of scholarship available to those whom he defended. He came to Nashville with a great array of scholarly evidence, the design of which was to show that the Greek word *psallo*, translated “make melody” in Ephesians 5:19, includes the idea of an instrument. Brother Hardeman gave a brief resumé of the word, traced its history through the centuries, and showed that it once signified the twanging of a bowstring, then the twitching of a carpenter’s line, later the touching of the strings of an instrument, and, finally in the New Testament, to sing. He conceded that, metaphorically, the instrument is in the word. Then said he, “But the question tonight, and the only one for consideration is: What, under the New Testament, is the instrument that accompanies the singing? The apostle Paul, in his peerless announcement, settles that once and for all. He says we are to sing unto the Lord and *psallo* with the heart—not with the fingers, not with the plectron, but with the heart; and therefore, the heart is the instrument that accompanies the singing.”

Brother Woods went on to say that “in the Boswell camp, it was nothing short of cata-

strophic. Rendered utterly useless was the vast array of lexicographical evidence designed to prove what no one questioned—that *psallo* had, in ages past, embodied a number of meanings, one of which included the plucking of the strings of an instrument...But in the New Testament, when you refer to singing, God said the heart is the instrument; and that is the instrument; and that is the position, if you please, that the word demands tonight.”]

Conscientious Objectors

Date: 12-21-2022

To whom it may concern:

I cannot take part in military service in any form, directly or indirectly, in combatant or noncombatant service; nor the police force (or any type of law enforcement); nor can I practice self-defense. Below are listed some of the reasons:

1. My duty and obligation to God is superior to all other obligations (Acts 5:29; Matthew 22:37).
2. My God in the Bible forbids that I engage in carnal warfare, law enforcement, or self-defense, in the following references: “put up again thy sword...for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” (Matthew 26:52); “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4); “Turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39); “Recompense to no man evil for evil” (Romans 12:17); “Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:43-44); and “when He (Jesus) was reviled, did not revile in return” (1 Peter 2:21-23).
3. To enter any military service, combatant or noncombatant, or law enforcement, I would be compelled to “swear” (take an oath), but the Bible forbids that I do so. “Swear not at all” (Matthew 5:34)
4. To enter any military service or law enforcement. I would be compelled to be yoked with unbelievers, which is forbidden: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14).
5. To be in any branch of the military service in any way, or law enforcement, I would be part of an organization and would therefore have fellowship in the service, but such is prohibited, “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather re-

prove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

6. To serve in the military service or law enforcement in any way, I would be deprived of obeying the command to assemble on the Lord’s Day to worship God in the Bible way, at least part of the time, hence would disobey God. (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Therefore, I cannot conscientiously engage in carnal warfare, law enforcement, nor self-defense in any form or branch, and for the above reasons, I ask that my name be listed in support of the above principles.

Respectfully,

Grace Thrash
653 CR3549
Atlanta, TX 75551

Nelson Thrash
653 CR 3549
Atlanta, TX 75551

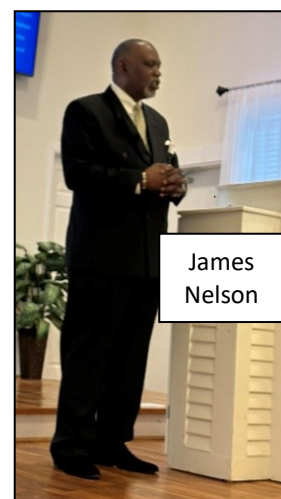
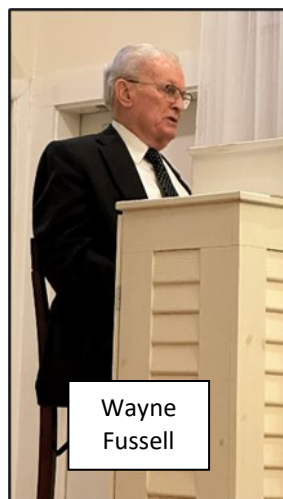
Our Departed

CULBERTSON – Sister Shirley Culbertson of the Opp, AL congregation went to be with the Lord on December 31, 2022 at the age of 83. She was born in 1939 to her late parents, Audrey Yarber Kornegay and Lloyd George Kornegay. She was joined in marriage to George Culbertson in 1962 celebrating 60 years together a few weeks before her passing. Shirley was a faithful wife and devoted mother and grandmother. She was known for her wonderful southern cooking, especially her cakes. She baked hundreds of wedding cakes over the years, including many for couples in the church. Above all, however, Shirley was known for her kind and gracious spirit and her strong faith in Christ. She was a faithful Christian for most of her 83 years. She and George built a Christian home together that has created a legacy of faith. All three of their children and six grandchildren are faithful to Christ. That does not happen accidentally. The church at Opp and throughout the south will sorely miss Shirley. She leaves wonderful memories with anyone who knew her. She is survived by her husband, George; daughters, Georgianna Culbertson Hughes and husband, Jeff, and Wendy Culbertson Johnson and husband, Clarke; son, Jay Culbertson and wife, Deanna; sisters, Mary Lou Weeks and Lena Eubanks and husband, Lawrence; grandchildren, Hannah Branch and Cole, Colby Culbertson and Caroline, Jacob Johnson, Landon Hughes and Emma, Carter Culbertson and Alex and Morgan Johnson; great-grandchildren, Georgia Ann

Branch and Claire Culbertson; and numerous nieces and nephews. Along with her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, Billy Kornegay; and brother-in-law, Wallace Weeks. It was this writer’s honor, along with her son-in-law, Jeff Hughes, to conduct the service before an overflowing crowd. The beautiful congregational singing was led by Bro. Dwayne Snow. May God bless her memory and may her influence continue to be a shining light for Christ for generations to come. – Kevin W. Presley

Field Reports

Greg Gay January 9, 2023—Brother Art Lynch from Glendale, AZ and I facilitated the Preachers’ Study at Grapevine, TX, December 23, 24, 26, 27. I appreciate the elders for entrusting us with the responsibility and the cooperation of all involved. The families of the congregation were great hosts providing places to stay and meals during the study. There were 17 speakers of varying ages and experience from all over the country who spent many hours in preparation to give us their thoughts on the assigned topics. Brother Austin Maddox from Columbia, MO recorded videos of the presentations and the follow-up question and answer sessions. They are being shared online on ChristianLandmark.com for anyone to watch at their convenience. Brothers Wayne Fussell and James Nelson (below) were two of the speakers among several others at the study.



The Oklahoma City New Year’s meeting was hosted by the 21st Street congregation in Oklahoma City this year, December 28-31, with crowds that reached over 900. The singing was wonderful, as is always expected. The theme song by

Ivan Costa was beautiful and thought provoking. The song book was compiled by Hayden Ayers with the assistance of Jason Coon, Michael Howard, Noah Howard, and Scott Parker. Many of the songs in the book are by our brethren and have amazing messages and beautiful harmonies. Four speakers were used per service plus eighteen young men gave presentations the last night of the meeting. The great theme of the meeting was from John 4:35, *Lift Up Your Eyes*. It was a positive meeting, encouraging all of us to do our best to fulfill Jesus' great words in sharing the gospel at home and abroad.

Our work continues with the West View congregation, Piedmont, OK. We are in the middle of our winter study, this year on the topics of worship and leadership. My Facebook Group, *God's Good News from Greg*, continues to grow with good interest in each video sermon posted. I am adding more online studies soon for where I have traveled previously and am planning additional trips to places in the world where I have significant group members. I am in the last stages of preparation to return to India, leaving January 16 to visit congregations in Southern and Northern India. I appreciate the generosity of Fieldstone, MO, Springfield-Pleasant View, MO, and Crescent, Ok for my expenses for this trip. 3816 Tambos Trl., Edmond, OK 73034 916-804-3787 papagreg@aol.com

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Court, Dothan, AL 36303 – January 12, 2023 The new year began in an encouraging way by attending the annual southern New Year's Meeting in Brookhaven, MS. The meeting was under the direction of the Hillcrest congregation and Bro. Jerry Dickenson who all did a commendable job. The preaching was consistently good, and the singing was stirring and inspiring. The young men, in particular, did an outstanding job with their talks. Consider attending this great meeting next year, if God is willing. Our meeting schedule began early this year. I am presently in Apache Junction, AZ with the congregation in a short effort. Bro. Bob Orear has preached here for several years, and it has been good to be with him again. He recently lost his dear wife, Betty. She is certainly missed in their home and in the congregation. Next week, I am scheduled to be in Jonesboro, GA and in March, I plan to hold meetings in Manteca, CA and West Monroe, LA. Our monthly work in Hillcrest, MS enters its fourth

year this month. We are in the beginning phase of a year-long study of the eldership. The brethren here continue to grow in their faith and in number. It is a joy to help them in their work. Our television work continues to prosper, as well. Recently, a woman from Las Vegas was converted after finding the program online. She is in the process of moving to Bakersfield, CA so that she can be part of the congregation there. Bro. Frank Brancato has been helping her get established in the faith. Other good results are happening, and promising contacts are being made regularly. Pray for the work and for other gospel efforts, that God will be glorified, and the kingdom of Christ will continue to spread. May God bless all of the faithful in this new year.

David Griffin, Lee's Summit, Lebanon, MO January 25, 2023. All is going well here at Lee's Summit except for the snow as of this writing. We were able to participate in the Preachers' Study in Texas in December (see Greg Gay's field report, above). My presentation was the first morning, so I was able to sit back and enjoy the remainder of the study. There were many good topics and lots of good questions and discussions. We also attended the New Year's Meeting in Oklahoma City. As always, the singing is wonderful and the preaching good. After the OPA ceased being printed and mailed and is now available only online, we have ceased using the services of Page Printing in Lebanon, MO. Page Printing has done a marvelous job over the many years of their work for the paper. As part of their work, Wendy at Page Printing did all the page set up every month for several years. Since Page no longer does that work, the task of page setup has fallen to me. This February issue is the first month that I have done page set up the paper. I do not have the sophisticated software that Wendy has at Page, and I confess that I am no expert in this department. I have adapted Microsoft Publisher for the task and I have been climbing a steep "learning curve" this month while getting the February issue set up. I ask that all be patient with any glaring mistakes or blunders. I have tried to mimic the overall layout and appearance of the paper that you are accustomed to seeing. If you see anything that can be corrected or improved, please let me know.

—davidgriffin75@gmail.com

WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

THE ROSE OF SHARON

by Jerry Dickinson

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
 He brought me to the banqueting house, And his banner over me was love.
 Behold, he comes Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills.
 “Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely.”
 My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies.
 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.
 Who is she who looks forth as the morning,
 Fair as the moon, Clear as the sun, Awesome as an army with banners?
 O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, Lovely as Jerusalem, Awesome as
 an army with banners!
 Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love All the
 wealth of his house, It would be utterly despised.”
 (Song of Solomon 2:1, 4, 8, 14, 16; 6:4, 10; 8:7).

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

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

Solomon is quite the song writer and poet. We are told that he wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. It is interesting that the number of songs is so specific—1005. Some scholars believe that actually *The Song of Solomon* can be divided into five songs. The difficulty with the songs is understanding who is speaking when. The bridegroom speaks and the bride speaks and many times it is hard to know who is speaking. For instance, who is speaking the wonderful words, “I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys,” the groom or the bride? Interestingly, most of the older scholars believe it was the groom, while many of the moderns believe it is the bride. Sharon was a very fruitful plain where David’s cattle were fed (1 Chronicles 27:29) and mentioned as a place of excellence (Isaiah 35:2). The rose is considered the “king of flowers” and is certainly a fitting representation of the King of Kings, our Lord and Savior, the Bridegroom who loves his bride—the Church of Christ. Latter day poets and song writers have so thought, and we still sing about Jesus and His love for the church, and our love in return for The Rose of Sharon.

Jesus, Rose of Sharon, bloom within my heart; Beauties of Thy truth and holiness impart,
 That where'er I go my life may shed abroad fragrance of the knowledge of the love of God.
 Jesus, Rose of Sharon, sweeter far to see than the fairests of earth could ever be,
 Fill my life completely, adding more each day of Thy grace divine and purity I pray.
 Jesus, Rose of Sharon, balm for every ill, may Thy tender mercy's healing pow'r distil.
 For afflicted souls of weary, burdened men giving needy mortals health and hope again.
 Jesus, Rose of Sharon, bloom for evermore; be Thy glory seen on earth from shore to shore.
 Till the nations own Thy sov'ignty complete, lay their honors down and worship at Thy feet.
 Jesus, Rose of Sharon, Bloom in radiance and in love within my heart.