

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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NO. 1

TREASURE NEW AND OLD

By GREG GAY

Starting with this issue, January 2023, the Old Paths Advocate will only be online as it begins its 91st year of publication. Some faithful subscribers to the paper, like my dear mother, have never entered the age of the internet and will need someone (likely me) to print each issue for her to continue to read the paper as she has since she was a little girl.

My mother, Maxine Deems Gay Gum was born in 1930, and moved near the old Lee’s Summit church building, just down the road from Homer King’s house when she was four years old. She grew up around those who published, edited, and wrote articles for the paper. She remembers helping to write names and addresses on the paper for the monthly mailing. She knew most of the preachers who shared their lives in their monthly field reports. She recalls at one time there were seven preachers who made the Lee’s Summit congregation their home. All of those and many more were “household names” in my growing up years.

Online, all but four years of the Old Paths Advocate are available for anyone to read. There is a link from the Old Paths Advocate website to George Battey’s site, WilloftheLord.com where he has scanned every issue of the paper from its beginning through 2005. Another link on the Old Paths Advocate website contains the paper from 2010 to current. All can be downloaded as pdfs and searched by key words.

In the 90 years of the Old Paths Advocate, we can see the publication as a storehouse of information to be shared with all who are interested.

This is also the way we view the Bible, as a great storehouse. Of course, the Bible is far greater than any publication. When Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven as it was going to be fulfilled in the coming church, he

said: “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Matthew 13:52 ESV). The word “treasure” is rendered storeroom or storehouse in other translations and lets us know more about the intention of using that word.

A storehouse is simply where possessions are kept. Jesus though, is not referring to possessions, but to God’s truths inspired for the coming kingdom. Some would be old, well known by all. Others would be brand new, never heard or thought of before. In all cases, these precious truths of God’s kingdom today are to be accepted in faith (Romans 10:17), studied diligently for our spiritual growth (2 Peter 1:5), and carefully obeyed (2 Corinthians 10:5-6).

Looking back at the beginning years of the Old Paths Advocate is fascinating to me, and I trust can be to others as well. For example, J.D. Phillips announced in the first issue, January 1932, “I am preparing a tract, or booklet, on The Cup of Blessing. I expect to make this the most exhaustive of any work ever written on The Cup Question. It will do for several generations...”

That tract, The Cup of the Lord, was announced as completed a few months later and continues to be very helpful to anyone studying the Lord’s Supper in depth today. That reprinted tract can be obtained today through Nathan Battey’s site, ChristianResearcher.com.

In the beginning years of the Old Paths Advocate, the country was in the midst of the Great Depression. Still, there was a hunger and thirst for the gospel we can only imagine in our day.

In the November 1932 issue of the paper, Homer King reported 27 baptisms from a two-week meeting he held at his home congregation of Lee’s Summit near Lebanon, MO.

In the December 1932 issue, my grandfather, Homer

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Gay reported of his travels: "...That will make us about seven thousand miles of driving this summer, over seven states. We have seen lots of new country and people. Since the first of June I have preached 156 sermons and have had 141 baptisms and restorations."

Homer Gay also reported in August 1934 of a gospel meeting at the Bit Shop, 8 miles north of Healdton, OK that began July 20 and continued until August 5, "with twenty three additions. The meeting was well attended; the crowds reached the one thousand mark a lot of the time and one or two nights it was estimated at fifteen hundred."

It is difficult to imagine gospel meetings in the United States today with such results and crowds. Today, if we must set out extra chairs at our buildings and have even one baptism we are thrilled.

With any publication, we can always be reminded the only completely reliable author is God. Only the Bible contains the truths inspired by the Holy Spirit (John 17:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Nothing else written by anyone should ever be considered in the same category as the word of God.

As a result, perusal through 90 years of Old Paths Advocate articles means we will read articles by individuals both well-known and little-known where we will say to ourselves, "I do not know that I agree with this or that conclusion." Many issues have come and gone among us through the decades, and some remain. The articles in the paper reflect various views on those issues, to this day.

Such is the nature of this publication's storehouse, brethren. We know the Lord's church is perfect, glorious, without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27), but no publication can or should ever make such a claim. Mistakes do happen. Individuals do grow in knowledge and sometimes what we think we understand we eventually realize we did not understand at all. And sadly, individuals can digress and decide to abandon the very truths they once defended and understood well.

Hopefully we can agree we are a brotherhood, united in standing firm against innovations in salvation and worship and seeking to understand all of the rest of the perfect will of God the same (James 1:25, Philippians 3:16) to achieve the unity for which Christ prayed for his apostles and for us: "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their

word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21).

May the storehouse of the Old Paths Advocate, new and old, now easily accessed online, be considered a treasure by all. 3816 Tambos Trl. Edmond, OK, papagreg@aol.com 916-804-3787.

Editorial

THE WRITING ON THE HEART: PART ONE

2 Corinthians 3:3

By DON L. KING

This topic, one my father preached many years ago and personally recalled by me, is profound. It is worthy of our consideration. Notice: Paul was a man of absolute integrity. Integrity is an ingredient called for within every man who sets out to preach the gospel of Christ, and thus abundantly found within the great apostle Paul. He had labored diligently at Corinth, but rather than those brethren respecting him for the man he was, they instead mistreated him in a very unfair manner. Some questioned his integrity as an apostle; others alleged that he vacillated because of cowardice due to his changing of plans in travels to Corinth; it was even hinted, reportedly by some, that he may not have been entirely honest in his handling of the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. Others charged him with inferiority feelings, claiming that that was a reason he did not preach for pay; They, according to scholars, made fun of his personal appearance and sermons, etc. This slanderous talk likely began with the Jewish hierarchy in Jerusalem. They never missed an opportunity to harm Paul when it presented itself. Personally, we can understand Paul being hurt. When such a man was subjected to these vindictive and absurd attacks, his very soul was outraged. The pouring out of his defense in this letter is, as usual, eloquent. In fact, Burton Coffman asserts that it is “as moving a dissertation as was ever penned upon earth.” Another such eloquent defense is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 where a seldom seen look into Paul’s personal feelings is to be found. He was tough, but capable of having his feelings hurt; and when that happened, he spoke out. We mention these things to illustrate the reason for the figurative language used in describing the writing on the heart seen in 2 Corinthians 3:3. The reasoning is seen beginning in verse 1.

“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?” (2 Corinthians 3:1) Paul is vexed that such might be expected of such a man as they knew he was. He knew his record was plain and transparent for all to see. It is unfortunate that unthinking brethren, even today, can sometimes charge someone with foolish and untrue behavior. We need to keep in mind that untrue speculation will almost never be withdrawn in the minds of many. That is unfortunate, but very true! As the old saying goes: “You can’t un-ring a bell.” You may ring it by mistake, or even unintentionally; but the sound goes out just the same. However, in the case before us, it was not unthinking brethren, but jealous and vindictive men in authority who were seeking to destroy this great man! They knew that their words would have a harmful effect, and the damage would be done! That is what they wanted. Great men may often become targets of wicked and jealous men who seek only to besmirch and destroy.

As Paul moves on to verse 2, He reminds the Corinthians that they themselves are the very commendation some were apparently calling for, but they had not considered that! The fact that they now had knowledge and were believers, was proof positive to all who cared to see, that Paul’s inspired preaching had, in fact, created an epistle, or letter of commendation for him. Where did they think Paul got all he had taught them? Did they really believe he was not an inspired apostle? Could they have forgotten that? Such an apostle needed no commendation from anyone. God had provided it. As we consider this matter, it is amazing to me that a fellow may work a lifetime teaching people the Bible; and those who have learned from him fail to realize where they heard, and learned, what they now know. They never consider that they learned it from old brother so and so, who has always been there and faithfully taught them the Bible. There are several old preachers, now deceased, who did a world of good in their communities and brought many to a knowledge of the truth, who were never recognized for their good works and that is sad. They traveled and perhaps held meetings without pay to help develop the church in their areas, and were happy to do so! We don’t wish to be misunderstood: no faithful preacher preaches for commendation or praise from anyone. He likely never thinks of any such thing. He just does his duty and moves on. However, keep in mind that our Lord once said: “...a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.” Matthew 13:57)

We'll consider the actual teaching of the writing on the heart in the next issue, Lord willing. Meanwhile, Think on these things. DLK

**THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
One Must Have Faith in Christ to be Saved**

By DAVID GRIFFIN

We may think the idea that a person must have faith in Christ to be saved is so self-evident that it hardly needs to be stated or explained. After all, everyone knows what faith is, and everyone knows the New Testament says that people who want to be saved (or go to heaven) must have faith in Jesus. The fact is, however, that this truth is not so self-evident to a lot of people. Some do not even know what faith is. Some think that faith is a feeling, or it's just "something you know in your heart." Others believe that you cannot have faith without a direct act of God—you only get faith when God "gives it to you." In this day of increasing Bible illiteracy, we cannot assume that everyone understands Biblical faith and how it relates to Jesus Christ. Sadly, this is true also for some Christians.

So What is Faith?

What exactly is meant by the term "Biblical faith"? Well, a google search of the word "faith" brings up The Century Dictionary, which defines faith like this. "1. The assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition or statement for which there is not complete evidence..." Now, this is a legitimate use of the word faith in some situations. For example, I may say something like this: "I have faith that my mother will recover from this illness" (even if the official prognosis gives no hope). Unfortunately, however, the modern world places "Biblical faith" in the same category. Biblical faith, many say, is not only "not based on complete evidence," but rather is "without any evidence at all." It's a "leap in the dark."

The Century Dictionary also says in definition #3, "In a more restricted sense: In theology, [faith is] spiritual perception of the invisible objects of religious veneration; or a belief founded on such spiritual perception." Here faith in the so-called "theological sense" is founded on what the dictionary authors call "spiritual perception." I suppose one will have to look elsewhere to find out what "spiritual perception" means. My first impression is, however, that this "spiritual perception" seems rather subjective, making this theological definition

smack of the "mystical," which usually deals more in contemplation and irrational thought. And while it may be true that in some sense higher expressions of Biblical faith may rise beyond "the thinking of this world," nevertheless, to found Biblical faith in mere vague notions of "spiritual perception" would seem to make it something other than that which the Bible itself describes.

When defining faith, Bible students often point to Hebrews 11:1. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (NASB95). However, the Hebrew writer does not seem to be giving us a definition as such, but instead, as Robert Milligan says, the Hebrew writer gives us "a plain statement with regard to [faith's] nature and province as an affection of the human mind" (Commentary on Hebrews, p 297-98). Without diving deep into Milligan's comments, the point is that behind the Hebrew writer's affirmation that faith is "assurance" and "conviction" is the more fundamental question of what the basis of this "assurance" and "conviction" is. Why is it that people with Biblical faith have "assurance" and "conviction" about the thing(s) they have faith in?

The answer to this question lies in the nature of the testimony that is believed. The testimony we refer to is that of the New Testament scriptures. Without that testimony, there is no basis for a "saving," "Biblical" faith. In short, the testimony of the New Testament is the written report of key historical events pertaining to Jesus, recorded by competent and credible eyewitnesses, and passed down to us via the faithful transmission of their writings through the centuries. Biblical faith, therefore, is based on this foundation!

The Century Dictionary's definition #2 comes much closer to the above idea: "Firm belief based upon confidence in the authority and veracity of another... [such] as, to have faith in the testimony of a witness." Therefore, our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the fit sacrifice for our sins is based upon the testimony and veracity of the New Testament authors as eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ and the key events of his life, death, burial, and resurrection. Hence, by "Biblical faith" we mean "the assurance and conviction that is founded on the Biblical testimony about Jesus and his redemptive work."

While there is not space in this short article to go into a full-scale defense of the Bible's reliable testimony, we will simply affirm here that the New Testament is

a collection of documents that were composed either by first-hand eyewitnesses to Jesus and his bodily resurrection or by those who were close companions to such witnesses. These eyewitnesses report to us the most incredible events of history—namely, the incarnation, life, miracles, death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, all rooted in a specific time in history. All these features of his earthly existence are portrayed in the New Testament as the crowning work in God's scheme of human redemption, spanning both the Old and New Testaments. That is, the New Testament not only reports these events in the life of Christ, but also shows us how the Old Testament, hundreds of years in advance of the life of Christ, foreshadowed and prophesied of these same historical events.

The Claims of Jesus and the Apostles

Given the amazing nature of the New Testament's claims about Jesus, it should be no surprise that Jesus himself made such statements as these: "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He [the Savior], you will die in your sins" (John 8:24); "Jesus said... 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me'" (John 14:6); "And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die" (John 11:26); and "...he who does not believe will be condemned (i.e. "damned" or "go to hell")" (Mark 16:16). These are strong claims, indeed!

Just before Jesus' ascension from this earth, he met with his apostles and instructed them as Luke, the companion of Paul the Apostle, records: "And you [apostles] are witnesses of these things" [my death, burial, and resurrection, Luke 24:48]; "[i]t is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8). Luke goes on to record the testimony of the apostles throughout the book of the Acts of the Apostles. "This Jesus God raised up again" (Acts 8:32); "[t]herefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36); "but [you] put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15). And Peter is even so bold as to say, "...for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11).

Again and again, this is the testimony which the

apostles give of Jesus. And they repeatedly appeal to these facts as the basis for people to believe in Him. Hence, based on the apostolic testimony, no person can be saved who does not believe in Jesus Christ as the incarnate, crucified, risen, Son of God. Thus, as part of the Lord's commission to the church of Christ through the apostles, we must proclaim that people believe the apostles' testimony to be saved from sin. But as we'll see in future articles, contrary to popular preaching today, "faith alone" is not the apostolic message! Faith in Jesus Christ? Yes! Faith alone? No!

RACE, RACISM AND THE BIBLE

By BOB CUNNINGHAM

Unless you have not been paying much attention to the political, social, and religious climate over the past few years, (which was next to impossible to do) you may not be aware that our country is undergoing a significant social and political revolution, referred to by some as culture wars. It is not news that the church is at war with the culture, because that has and will always be the case. (Romans 12:2, 1 John 2:15-16, John 15:19) But what is news is that we, the church is gradually being pulled into these discussions reluctantly. This is unfamiliar territory because historically, we have been able to steer clear of secular politics and the various social agendas that have arisen from time to time in this country. We have been supported in our efforts by the mandates given in scripture. (Romans 13:1, Phil 3:20) The current discussion that has risen to the forefront of these agendas and various groups is race and racism. There could not be a more emotionally charged and potentially divisive topic to engage in given the horrendous history this country has in its treatment of blacks, Indians, and other marginalized groups throughout its history. Although efforts have been made in this country to remedy the horrors of slavery and discrimination through legislation, these laws could never erase or make amends for the things that happened during this era of our country's history. However, for those of us who are Christians, we know that to make any real progress in overcoming the sin of racism or any sin for that matter, we know that we must first confess it and not be in denial. (1 John 1:9, Psalms 32:5, Pro 28:13) When we do that, we acknowledge being wrong and only that act can start the healing process. Confession of racist tendencies or thoughts admits that it is real and allows one to take personal responsibility for it. Racism has had some devastating emotional effects on the collective history of marginalized groups that continues to resonate with many people today. For some that is a difficult thing to move on from, but for

Christians, it is not only possible, it is commanded. (Phil 3:13, Isaiah 43:18-19, 2 Cor 5:17)

This most recent phase of these culture wars began when an unknown but soon to be well known black man named George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis in May of 2020. His death affected more than just the political and social arenas but has brought discussions of these cultural issues of race and racism, into the church. The safe distance we attempted to keep from these types of issues has been breached, and we need to respond. Paul was no stranger to engaging different social groups with a message designed to unify all people under the gospel, regardless of their racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds. (1 Cor 9:19-23) Our young people, who are being exposed to these new ideas and ideologies in the workplace, schools, social media, etc., are asking questions and wanting to know how to respond biblically to these issues. The Body of Christ should not have to defend itself when it comes to charges of racism, because it should have never been found among us in the first place, but in the current environment, it has become necessary. The truth is, we haven't done a very good job within the church to make sure that racism was identified, called out and addressed. We need to first acknowledge that before we can change it. These are very difficult conversations to have even on a good day, but they are necessary if we are to move past something that God never intended to be an issue at all. In reality, we are 2000 years too late in dealing with this issue. The focus should be on saving souls, not the skin color of the ones we are trying to save.

What feels strange is that the church has been thrust into this discussion when we know that as far as the Bible is concerned, race was never something that was the focus of Jesus or the Apostles. God made it clear that the only race he recognized was, the human race. (Acts 17:26) Race was a social construct that came about when leaders among European-Americans fabricated the cultural/behavioral characteristics associated with each race by linking superior traits with Europeans and negative and fictitious ones to blacks and Indians, according to the American Anthropological Association in a statement on their website. Although there are instances in the bible where racism can be shown to have existed between groups, most notably between the Jews and the Gentiles (John 4:9), color had nothing to do with it. Different ethnic groups are identified throughout the bible, especially in the Old Testament and there were hostilities between many of those groups, but it was

never because of color or intellectual inferiority. The Jews thought themselves to be superior to the Gentiles because of the many advantages and gifts God had given them. (Romans 9:4-5) What has happened is that the God of this world has blinded and continues to blind the minds of people so that they cannot see that truth. (2 Cor 4:4) The truth that all people are made in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and come from two parents (Gen 3:20) is something that in this postmodern culture is just not acceptable and even believable. Although the church should have been the beacon of light for the world in this area, the truth is we have had our issues with race and racism and have not lived up to those truths in the bible that we are well familiar with. To be clear, the church has had issues with racism in this country and the reality is it is not going to go away quietly, or in some cases maybe not at all.

The kingdom that we seek is not of this world (John 18:36) and we work hard not to entangle ourselves in the affairs of the one we currently reside in. (2 Tim 2:4) The motivation behind these current social justice initiatives center around the noble mission to change the world (including eliminating racism) and make it a fairer and just place for all people especially marginalized groups. I understand and even admire that goal, but as Christians, we know that whatever the efforts and resources put toward that effort, is not going to change the direction this world is headed in. (2 Tim 3:13, 1 Cor 7:31) The problem with this world from a spiritual perspective is clearly sin, and racism is just one on an extremely long list man is plagued with. We behave as if the horrible things associated with racism, bigotry and prejudice is only found in America, but these things have been around for over 5000 years of recorded history. Racial discrimination, bigotry and even slavery have existed and continue to exist all over the world in various cultures, societies, and civilizations.

The reason there is racism within the hearts of people is because of sin and sin alone. This is a spiritual problem and not a problem for the government, social activists, or legislation to solve. It is not even a black and white problem. It is much deeper than that. Racism, discrimination, marginalization, prejudice, or partiality as the bible calls it, (Rom 2:11, James 2:9) all fall in the same category-sin. Legislation can never change the heart, only the gospel can. When a person's heart and mind have truly been cleansed and renewed, it will be difficult for that person to continue in any sin, including

racism. “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:9) “The only solution to racism is the cleansing power of the gospel. The gospel creates a new person in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) and the love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5) compels them to love all people regardless of their social or economic background. They see all people as being created in the image of God and accept them on those terms alone. (Gen 1:27,9:6)) The love of God will not allow anything else.

There is no doubt that racism is one of the worst sins that the human heart can engage in because it devalues and demeans the image of God which we refuse to see in the person next to us regardless of the melanin in their skin.

So, as Christians what are our responsibilities in fighting racism in the church and by extension the world. (Gal 6:1)

1. First, if you have been harboring racist tendencies, thoughts, or feelings for whatever reason, just simply acknowledge it and repent of it. Don’t let the shame involved keep you from confessing it. Confession precedes forgiveness. (1 John 1:9) Then pray that the love of God that has been shed in your hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5) will fill you with that love and the other fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). They will strengthen you in that area so that you can begin looking at all people as being made in the image of God. (Gen 1:27, 9:26)

2. Secondly, we must model Jesus’ attitude of acceptance and forgiveness. Jesus said if any person comes to him, he will never cast them out. (John 6:37) We cannot let the sin of racism prevent us from accepting all of our brothers and sisters regardless of the color of their skin. Paul wrote of welcoming Epaphroditus, (Phil 2:29), Mark, (Col 4:10), and Onesimus, (Philemon 10) to the church when they came. The most welcoming place on the face of the earth, should be the church. Conversely those who have encountered bigotry, prejudice, and discrimination must be forgiving and accepting of those brothers and sisters who truly repent, as difficult as that may be for some. Forgiveness is immediate, but it may be a slow process for some who have engaged in racist attitudes and those who were the recipient of those attitudes, to rid themselves of the residue from harboring those respective feelings. Jesus modeled forgiveness in the most unlikely of places, on a cross when he said, “Father forgive them for they know

not what they do.” (Luke 23:34”) As difficult as it may be for some, we must forgive because our forgiveness for our own sins is tied to us forgiving others. (Matt 6:15)

3. Lastly, loving and forgiving are both passive activities that we do internally, but there is a more active element to fighting racism that challenges us to be more proactive. We must call it out and confront it as Paul did with Peter in Galatians. Paul had to confront Peter because he refused to eat with the Gentiles (which he had obviously been routinely doing) when some important leaders came to Antioch. Clearly Peter was harboring some racist tendencies. (Gal 2:11-14). Paul used strong language in this situation by saying he was condemned, and acted hypocritically and probably worse than that, his behavior caused others to follow him.

In closing, despite all the press and media coverage that we are hearing about race and racism, we should not lose sight of the fact that the truth is that racism is just another sin in the eyes of God. Whether it is lying, adultery, fornication, murder, idolatry, etc., to God all of it is sin. Hearing all this discussion about it doesn’t change that one bit and the only way to get rid of it is to repent of it. As Christians, we must not shy away from exposing this evil that has divided people and the church for too long. We must seek to have those difficult conversations about race and racism with friends, relatives, spouses, co-workers and anyone who is open to discussing these difficult, complicated and sometimes awkward issues, always with love and compassion. (Eph 4:15)

BE YE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

By BENNIE CRYER

Pages from the Past - The following article, by Brother Bennie Cryer, is from the June 1956 issue of the Old Paths Advocate. In this article Benny writes about the necessity of Christians being filled with the Spirit. He emphasizes the idea that Christians should be thankful and how we should be merciful, kind, and longsuffering toward each other. - Rick Martin

It is a necessity for Christians to be filled with the Spirit. This is taught effectively by Paul in Eph. 5:18. This is something we obviously obey and not something for which we wait. It is not a mysterious influence sent into our bodies in an inexplicable way, for then it would be impossible to obey it. This is something we can and must do. Paul said: “but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns

and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:18-21). And in the parallel verses: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:16-17).

The apostle uses the imperative mood and he does not leave any doubt as to how to carry out the command. He describes how they are to carry out the command by the use of different participles. Let us study them carefully so that we, too, may be “filled with the Spirit.”

1. “Teaching and Admonishing One Another.”

This is mutually edifying one another and is not necessarily confined to the Lord’s Day assemblies. Christians of today have neglected this until in many places saints do little teaching and admonishing out of the regular church assemblies. Yet, this is one of the things we must do in order to be filled with the Spirit.

What does the apostle mean by the words “teach” and “admonish”? W. E. Vine in his “Expository Dictionary of N. T. Words,” p. 31, says: “The difference between “admonish” and “teach” seems to be that, whereas the former has mainly in view the things that are wrong and call for warning, the latter has to do with the impartation of positive truth, cp. Col. 3:16; they were to let the word of Christ dwell richly in them, so that they might be able (1) to ‘teach and admonish one another and (2) to abound in the praises of God.

Admonition differs from remonstrance in that the former is warning based on instruction; the latter may be little more than expostulation. For example, though Eli remonstrated with his sons, 1 Sam. 2:24, he failed to admonish them, 3:13. Pastors and teachers in the church are thus themselves admonished, i.e., instructed and warned, by the scriptures, 1 Cor. 10:11, so to minister the Word of God to the saints, that, naming the Name of the Lord, they shall depart from unrighteousness, 2 Tim. 2:19.”

In carrying out this we must not only expose sin and error with scriptural warnings, but we must also point out the positive side of Christianity. When we learn to do this our hands will be filled, and the church will

grow.

2. “Singing and Making Melody in Your Hearts to the Lord.”

This is to be done in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” “Psalms and hymns” evidently have reference to those songs which praise God, or divinity, and His attributes. The original word that is used for “song” by Paul is a general term and may denote any song. So, he places the adjective “spiritual” before it to show that the songs we sing must be based on the things revealed by the Spirit and in harmony with the Scriptures.

3. “Giving Thanks Always for All Things.”

I want to emphasize “all things.” When we receive the blessings of life from God we should give thanks for them. Too often in the homes of those who profess to be Christians the members of the family set down to their daily meals and never thank God for their “daily bread.” If we are “filled with the Spirit” we will give thanks for all things, whether it be for the necessities of life or for those things we obtain above life’s essentials. Paul describes those who are not thankful in the first chapter of Romans. Those people were without excuse because of nature’s revelation. God gave them up. Why? “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful” (Rom. 1:21). If one is truly “thankful”, he is thankful. And only those who thank God are filled with the Spirit.

4. “Submitting Yourselves One to Another in the Fear of God.”

Jesus was “heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7). This does not mean that Jesus was afraid of God or that we are afraid of our Father as a child is afraid of the dark. This is a reverential fear. Jesus was afraid he would do something that would wound the affection of God. If we are filled with the spirit this will be our attitude toward our brethren. We do not want to wound the affection of our brethren and cause a severance of the tie of fellowship. According to Paul we should be afraid that we might do something to our brother or sister that would cause disfellowshipping, and we should continually be on the watch. This part demands longsuffering. How many divisions could be avoided if brethren really had the “fear of God” and would submit themselves one to another. It seems when one of our brethren makes a mistake we want him to make a confession immediately or we will withdraw from him. And if the confession doesn’t suit us, we will not accept

him. The Lord was longsuffering with us even before we obeyed the gospel while we were in sin. If the Lord had dealt with us as some of us do with each other, I fear none of us would be living today. He would have taken our life immediately when we sinned. The Lord was and is merciful and longsuffering toward us. Let us be merciful, kind, and longsuffering toward each other. Let us be filled with the Spirit.

Announcement

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Our Departed

COCKRUM, Ralph David; age 79, son of Oren and Desdamona (Graham) Cockrum was born October 17th, 1943 in Mexico, MO. He passed away on November 5th, 2022 at Mercy Hospital, in Springfield, MO. Ralph was a long-time, faithful member of the Houston Church of Christ in Houston, MO. Brother Ralph was a “giant of a man” – who embodied a warm, gentle, and loving spirit. He loved God, his family, and farming, in that order. Ralph lived his life in a “Christ-like way”, following God, spreading his faith and the gospel to everyone that he met. Always putting God first. When Ralph was a younger Christian man, he, his parents, and his younger brother Ray Cockrum, were instrumental in the establishment of what is known today as the Rice Road Church of Christ, in Columbia, MO. As a result of their labor of love, many souls have been eternally influenced for good. Ralph truly lived his life in a way that honored His Father in heaven, faithful, kind, compassionate, humble, giving and loving. Ralph saw the good in everyone he met, even when they didn’t see it in themselves. Ralph had a strong work ethic. He taught so many of us not only to work hard, but to work cheerfully, honestly and with a smile. Every job and task that Ralph completed was done to his

absolute best, with fairness and joy. Ralph is survived by his loving wife, Kaye of Houston; five children his faithful son, Wesley and wife, Debbie Cockrum of Fort Worth, TX, his loving daughters, Janice and husband, Kirk Kettelkamp of Taylorville, IL, Carla and husband, Tom Hack of Cabool, Stacey and husband, Brad Rees of Houston, and Keri Edwards of Marshall, MO. Ralph has 13 grandchildren: Tim, Cori, Melissa, Kate, Ben, Madison, Paul, Megan, Abigail, Hannah, Will, Madison and Michael. Ralph has 13 great-grandchildren and one great, great grandchild. Ralph Cockrum’s legacy of “quiet strength” will be felt by many for years to come. All of us who knew and loved him were blessed beyond human expression.

Field Reports

Greg Gay 3816 Tambos Trl., Edmond, OK 73034 916-807-3787 papagreg@aol.com November 26, 2022 I was in Kenya and South Africa from October 30 – November 18, 2022. Originally this trip was to accompany others to visit multiple congregations in South Africa where I have been before. I added some days to the beginning of the trip to be in Kenya where I have over 300 members of my Facebook Group, God’s Good News from Greg, with many of those from the Nairobi area. I wanted to see if any of the Facebook members would attend if I rented a meeting room and invited them to studies. Before going, I learned Keith Thomson from Australia has an on-going work in Kenya and was getting ready to visit there. I coordinated with Keith, and he graciously extended his stay to overlap most of the time I was in Kenya. Before I arrived in Nairobi, Keith, and his team of several traveled to many places in Kenya for studies and preaching with great results of baptisms and conversions of multi-cup preachers and congregations to correctly observe the Lord’s Supper. Also, before going, Keith introduced me to brother Dominic from Nairobi who attends his online studies. Dominic was converted from multi-cup brethren through the good online work of brother Chad Cochennic, of Louisiana. Dominic was great to coordinate everything I needed in Nairobi, including the schedule for studies and preaching appointments. The response from my group members to attend studies was amazing. They came from various areas of Kenya and from multiple religions to attend studies. One baptism during my time in Nairobi was of brother Elijah, a motorcycle taxi driver, and an assistant pastor in a denominational church. He knew he would be fired from the denomination when he made the decision to obey the gospel. He was correct. He immediately set up studies for us to conduct in his hometown.

Previously, brother Dominic had been traveling some distance to a faithful congregation each Lord's Day. With our encouragement, he and his wife began a new congregation in Nairobi with its first service while Keith and I were there. I am very thankful to be able to be in Kenya, to work with Keith, to meet brethren from there, and to be part of helping others leave error and embrace truth. From Nairobi, I flew to Margate, South Africa to spend time with brother Justin, a recent convert from a multi-cup congregation. Justin has watched many YouTube videos including those by Kevin Presley and Brett Hickey. Brett studied with Justin, and he made the commitment to observe the Lord's Supper correctly. Once he made that commitment, he is no longer able to worship in his hometown. While I was there, the hope was that Justin's friends and coworkers would be willing to meet and study. Justin worked hard before my arrival to invite many, but we did not have success this time. Justin and I spent many hours together around his work schedule discussing the scriptures. Justin will coordinate online studies for me to meet those he knows with the goal of conversions so a faithful congregation can be established where he lives. Justin and I traveled to Durban on Saturday to be there for worship on the Lord's Day. The congregation's leaders there have been great to welcome Justin.



Kenya - the Great Rift Valley



Kenya study - Greg Gay November 2022

I was very glad to be there again and was honored to be asked to preach. My home congregation of West View, Piedmont, Oklahoma paid all my expenses for this trip. I am thankful for them, their generosity, and their encouragement for my work at home and around the world.



Kenya study - Greg Gay November 2022



Margate, South Africa

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, December 10, 2022 - Since several have inquired about the status of my health, I'll simply say it is improving now and we are thankful for that. It was my privilege to preach at the Orange congregation recently in Southern California, and we are scheduled to speak at home this coming Lord's Day. We hope and pray all of you will appreciate the new on-line service of Old Paths Advocate and take advantage of it. We realize there may be some "kinks" to work out as we go along, but we will be working to get that done as quickly as possible. We have a new year upon us and our prayer is that the Lord will bless the church and Brotherhood everywhere in 2023.

Irvin Barnes, 3218 East Farm Road 88, Springfield, Mo.65803--Nov.19, 2022 I suffered a serious fall on the ice last February. I broke my left hip in 3 places and damaged the nerves in my right hand and arm. I was in the hospital 5 weeks and in home therapy for several months. Barbara has undergone surgery to close a hole in her right eye retina. Drs believe the surgery is successful. She is slowly regaining her sight in the operated eye. She has several more weeks to recover. While the summer seems a time of pain and recovery,

we are very thankful that both of us are much better, I would like to say a special “thank you” to all who have written, called, and sent cards. Most of all, thank you, for your prayers. Kevin Presley held a weeks meeting here in Oct. The preaching and singing were superb. We sponsor Kevin’s TV program locally. We had several visitors from the community as a result of the program and a mass mailing we sent out ahead of the meeting. God bless the faithful everywhere!

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N.Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Nov. 29: At this writing December is just about here and the countdown to 2023 has begun. However, before I completely put 2022 to rest and turn my attention to a new year, I would like to express heartfelt thanks to the brethren at Sharonville, OH. My meeting with them in October was a delight on several different levels, a walk down memory lane in regard to past experiences I’ve shared with brethren in that area, and they went out of their way to make me feel welcomed and comfortable. Stan Owens, of course, worships there and labors among them, giving us the opportunity to visit and get to know each other better, and I left their midst more determined than ever to preach the gospel. Since a preacher always wants his meeting schedule to end on a high note each year, I feel I accomplished that with them and I’m ready now to look ahead to what 2023 will bring. Lord willing, my new schedule is shaping up like this: March 22-26 at Dothan, AL; April 19-23 at Council Hill, OK (along with my brother, Jerry); June 11-18 at West Monroe, LA; Sept. 17-24 at Hamilton, OH & Oct. 15-22 at Birmingham, AL. It will be a few months before my first meeting takes place, but this will enable brethren to make sure these dates are correct. I will close by saying that our recent meeting here at Jamesville with Walter Hunter left us all on a spiritual high. The preaching was outstanding with carefully chosen sermons, each one designed to point the sinner to Christ and to strengthen the saved, and Walter’s sincerity and love for the souls of men came through loud and clear. We had wonderful cooperation from surrounding congregations and visitors from the community. Judy and I have known Walter and Cindy for more years than we want to think about and we enjoyed spending time with them. Incidentally, I officiated at their wedding ceremony in 1973, the first one for me to perform, and Judy and I were married later that year in September. That means both of us couples are looking forward to celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary, Lord willing, in the upcoming year. Let’s pray fervently that the gospel will continue to have free course in this country and

throughout the world.

David Griffin, Lebanon, MO 65536 – December 2022 – The Lee’s Summit congregation near Lebanon, MO is at peace and carrying on the Lord’s work in this part of the world. Since last reporting, we had a meeting here with Greg Gay October 19-23. The church here enjoyed the preaching, and we were thrilled to have outsiders for a couple of night services. It was also a pleasure for us that Cassie came with Greg, and Lynn and I were blessed to have them in our home. The months of November and December so far have been somewhat hampered by sickness on my part (doing better now!) and an auto accident (no one hurt!), but God continues to bless us! May God bless all in his service!

Larry Combs lcombs1950@yahoo.com P.O. Box 44, Council Hill, OK 74428. 918-781-2812. It has been quite some time since I have written a field report to the paper, and, because of that, much has transpired since my last report. First of all, let me state that I retired in December 2020 and after about 3-4 months my wife and I decided to move back to Council Hill. It was sad indeed to leave our home congregation at Moore, and we love the dear brothers and sisters there so much and we miss being there. However, since Council Hill has always been home to us, we moved back in May 2021. We have made the church here our home congregation and though somewhat smaller than Moore, we have settled in quite well as this is where we started out. As stated earlier, we continue to stay busy here at home. Since last reporting, we have done some traveling as well as church work in Nebraska and Wyoming. We are saddened to say that the work was ended in May due to lack of growth in those areas, as well as Covid 19 contributing to interest. Since last reporting, I have had the privilege to preach one or more times at: Riverton, WY; Gering, NE; Imperial, NE; Moore, OK; Edmond, OK; and McAlester, OK in addition to few regular appointments. We have about 7 male members that take part in services, with 4 of these men teaching on a regular basis. We recently had another couple start attending services with us here and it is so good to have them make this their home congregation. The church here is very close, strong, and faithful and we love them very much. In closing, it is our hope that we can help the church here grow not only in number, but also in faith and service to God in this community. It is also our prayer that the church at Moore will continue to carry on and that our God will bless each and every one in their journey to glory land. If you are ever in our part of Oklahoma, we invite you to stop in and worship with us.

WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

DENYING THE UNDENIABLE!

By JERRY DICKINSON

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, ‘What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But, so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.’ So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.’” (Acts 4:13-20)

Here is a case of denying the undeniable! Peter and John had healed a man who was born crippled, and was now over 40 years old. For years he was stationed at the Beautiful Gate just outside the Temple compound where he begged for alms. He was a well-known figure to all those who daily went up into the Temple to pray at the hours of prayer. Hence, when he came walking and even leaping into the Temple, praising God and clinging to Peter and John, there was no doubt that an amazing miracle had occurred. Peter explains to the crowd as they gather around, staring wonderingly at the man and the two apostles, that this miracle was done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead.

“Repent, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,” implores Peter. The word converted is an active word, not passive. Many translations render the Greek word, “turn”, and it is something a person does, not something done to you. Really, Peter’s statement is a parallel to his command on the day of Pentecost. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” Repent and be baptized is parallel to repent and turn. The turning act is baptism. Many of those who heard Peter’s command “believed” and that means they repented and turned. They believed and accepted Peter’s sermon about Jesus, repented and were baptized. Acts 4:4 declares that many believed the word, a synecdoche for obeying the gospel.

The apostles are arrested and held overnight and then the scene above plays out the next day when they are set before the Sanhedrin and asked by what authority they had done their deed. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified this man stands before you whole is the bold answer of Peter and John. The chief priests and elders are shocked by the boldness of these two common men. Then, they realized they were disciples of Jesus. What will they do? They have a private conference and decide to deny the undeniable. The healed man is standing right there next to Peter and John, and everyone in Jerusalem knows the man was born crippled. “We cannot deny that a notable miracle has been done!” But, that is exactly what they decide to do. Without any rationale or explanation they deny the truth right before their eyes and command the apostles to cease and desist saying anything at all in the name of Jesus.

It is incomprehensible that people will deny what is undeniable, but they still do. After reading verbatim a passage of scripture I have had people just deny it. They do not seem to realize that they have just denied the truth. Really? Many years ago I was in a meeting in Midland, Texas and brother H. O. Allen told me about a debate held in Midland in the 1950’s between E. H. Miller and a cups preacher named F. I. Stanley. The debate, however, only lasted one session. Brother Miller spoke first and starting quoting scripture the minute he left his chair to climb into the pulpit and continued quoting scripture and proving we must use one cup in the Lord’s Supper. When it was time for Stanley to get up he walked slowly to the pulpit and stood haltingly for a few moments before beginning.

“I’ve never seen a man quote so much scripture,” Stanley stammered. “I really don’t know what to say. I just don’t know what to say.” He stood there dazed for a few more moments, and finally a man from the audience called out, “Why don’t you make a confession and take a stand for the truth!” Stanley looked up and replied, “No, I can’t do that!” According to brother Allen’s account, Stanley struggled through a reply to brother Miller’s speech and finished well short of his time. Brother Miller gave another speech and the debate was over! Why not just accept the truth? Why deny the undeniable? The Sanhedrin denied the truth, but the people glorified God and many obeyed the gospel. Like the apostles, we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard from God’s word. What a great cannot!