

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. 5

“WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?”

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

A pile of rocks is an unimpressive sight unless there is a significance attached to it that is not immediately apparent. It could, for example, indicate a burial site or a boundary line of some kind. Indeed, when Joshua set up twelve stones at Gilgal in the long ago (Josh. 4:19-24), it was a memorial to a great event that was erected. However, let us remember that memorials are not meant for one era alone, but they are meant to preserve the record of something that should not be forgotten.

Josh. 4:21-22 records, “And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.” Ah, here we can see the beauty and simplicity of memorials! The stones, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, were used to commemorate the long-awaited event when they finally crossed over into the land of Canaan. As they were standing on the threshold of fulfilling their destiny by possessing the Promised Land, this was something that they should never forget, and more important, it was something that God did not want them to forget!

There are some valuable lessons that we should learn from this incident. This memorial had a message to declare unto God’s people, as indicated by the question anticipated in Josh. 4:21- “What mean these stones?” In other words, if they would only seek the meaning of those stones, it would teach them some great truths about their past and God’s gracious dealings with them. Likewise, those stones are still speaking to us today:

FUTURE GENERATIONS

Those stones tell us that every succeeding generation must be taught about God. “Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until we were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God

forever’ (Josh. 4:22-24). Again, memorials are not meant for one era alone because the generation that actually experienced something is not the generation, for the most part, that is in danger of forgetting. On the other hand, younger generations need to appreciate how lessons can be learned from the past.

The story is told of a family who possessed an old antique vase, a real treasure that was handed down to them through several generations, and it was a special object of enjoyment. When the parents returned home one day, they were greeted at the door by their teenage daughter, who said the following, “Mom and dad, you know that antique vase that you told us has been passed down from generation to generation? Well, mom and dad, our generation just dropped it.” What a sad concept that must be avoided in the Lord’s church! Brethren, we need to make sure that future generations understand and appreciate those foundational truths that are vital to the identity and doctrinal purity of the body of Christ. If we fail to instruct our children and grandchildren as we should, apostasy will be the result and many will be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14).

Since most children are just naturally curious, we are going to be afforded with opportunities to teach them about Christ and His gospel if we’ll only seize the moment. The Lord’s supper, a memorial service in and of itself (1 Cor. 11:24), is something that arouses our children’s curiosity. Sometimes they will inquire, even when quite young, “What is this about? What are you eating? What are you drinking? Why can’t I have some?” What a great opportunity to tell them of Christ’s death, of His redeeming blood, and the importance of the new covenant! Paul wrote in I Cor. 11:26, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come” (ASV).

Also, when our children witness someone being immersed in water, an occurrence that certainly gets their attention, we can use this to teach them about how one responds to the gospel. Explain to them the significance of baptism- it is “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), to enter “into Christ” (Rom. 6:3), and to be added to the Lord’s church (1 Cor. 12:13).

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PUBLISHER

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

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
 P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240

EDITORIAL STAFF

Bennie Cryer	Greg Gay
Billy Dickinson	Carl Johnson
Jerry Dickinson	Barney Owens
Johnny Elmore	Kevin Presley

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

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

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Editorial

PAUL'S SPECIAL PRAYER

By: DON L. KING

The apostle Paul had suffered many things as he preached the gospel. He had been whipped, stoned and left for dead, put in prisons, persecuted in ways few could tolerate, and the Jews had become increasingly intolerant of him and what he preached. When they learned he really wanted to preach to the Gentiles that was the last straw. They wanted him dead if possible and if not dead, they wanted him gone. You might recall that the Lord had promised him while he was in the prison of Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem that he should "be of good cheer,"... "for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (Acts 23:11) Later, very soon after his great speech before Agrippa, (Acts 26) he found himself about to begin a long expected voyage to Rome. The answer to his prayers was about to be realized! He had prayed (Romans 15:30-32) that he would be sent away from those who would not believe in Judea. He wanted to be able to come to the brethren at Rome with joy and refresh them. The voyage would eventually end in the loss of the ship, but Paul eventually made it to Rome. (Acts 28:16)

Thank the Lord for preachers who are unwilling to remain among people where gospel preaching is ignored. Thank the Lord for preachers who are willing even to endure difficult and unpleasant situations in order to preach where they can see results. We certainly need men such as Paul today. It is too easy to remain comfortable and enjoy the comforts of luxuries while the world is lost in sin. I have seen our Filipino preaching brethren begin before daylight on Lord's Day as they go to preach and before the day is done, they have preached in perhaps five congregations and traveled many miles between stops. They may also have baptized several during the day and then wearily make their way home to a small home with perhaps a dirt floor, meager food, and a much needed bed for rest. Such men work hard for very little pay and sometimes little appreciation for their dedication. Thank God for such brethren. I think that must have been the kind of preacher Paul was. He wanted to preach and be instrumental in helping as many as possible be saved. When the Jews rejected his efforts, he prayed that he might be sent to the Gentiles where his preaching would be appreciated and obeyed.

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BUILDING A CHRISTIAN HOME

CHILD TRAINING

By Homer A. Gay

I think it is generally agreed upon by all that the parents are responsible for their children. The Law of our country says so, and God has always considered it so. In Deut. 4:10, He says "Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children." Notice that they, the parents, are to teach their children. Again we read: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:7).

But Solomon says "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). There is some difference in teaching and training. The teaching is good and is commanded; but the training is the important thing; this determines the future of the child's life here and hereafter. People differ over what age in the child's life to begin training. I have heard parents say of a child three or four years old that they would be glad when so and so gets old enough to correct and train. I have noticed other children only a few months old that had already learned many good lessons. You need not try to fool the baby; you will fool yourself. That little child is being trained from the beginning, and the parents are either training the child up in the way he should go or in the way he should not go.

I firmly believe what the Bible says about this, and if my own children go wrong, I will frankly admit that I, not the Lord, failed in the work - that I failed to train them as I should have done.

That baby in the home is either being trained to be kind, honest, truthful, good; or, it is being trained to be dishonest, hypocritical, cross, and so on. And the sooner we discover this truth and begin to train the child in the way it should go, the better it will be both for parents and the children.

Little girls can be trained up in the art of cooking, sewing, keeping house, etc., just as easily as they can be trained up to try to mimic some movie star. Mothers need to take the time and go to the trouble to train their little girls to be home builders. Regardless of how much book learning a girl may have, she must have the practical knowledge in order to be the kind of a home builder she should be. Shame on that mother who can spend two or three hours during the day reading a trashy novel and then doesn't have time to teach her little girl how to mix a cake or sew on a button.

The same must be said of fathers and the boys. Eph. 6:2 says for the fathers to bring their children up in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord. Fathers are duty bound to see to it that their children are nurtured in the teachings of the Lord. Furthermore, they must train them up in the way they should go. A boy can learn to sing and pray, and do good work just as easily as he can learn to smoke, swear, pack a toy pistol (later on a real one). Boys are going to learn something, and learn how to do something. I may be too old fashioned, but I would rather that my boy would learn to ride a horse by riding me around the house when he is little, than to learn to shoot and kill his fellowman, by practicing with a toy pistol, playing like he is shooting down his playmates.

When fathers have several hours during the day and evening to spend "down in town", but do not have time to show the little boy how to tie a knot in his rope, or how to fix his toys, he is losing the confidence of that boy. Fathers and mothers should do those things that they will be glad for the children to follow in their steps. They should take special delight in showing the children how to do anything that they do - they will soon learn to do it better than their parents.

Parents must see to it that they train their children to be honest, truthful, religious and God-fearing by being just that themselves daily before their children. Train them up to do honest and good work at whatever they do; train them up in the fear of the Lord; teach them how to pray, how to read and understand the Bible. Teach them how to sing and then train them by singing with them. Teach and show them how to go to every meeting of the church, and how to go in, sit down, and behave themselves.

Yes, fathers and mothers, live with your children - turn your attention to them. Where will their souls spend eternity? That depends on how you train them. Remember that those boys and girls of YOURS will either be the thugs, prostitutes, thieves and gamblers; or, the doctors, teachers, preachers and up-right citizens of tomorrow, and that YOU are determining that, by the way you bring them up. Then may God help us to "bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and to "train them up in the way that they should go."-OPA

Pages from the Past

CLIPPINGS AND COMMENTS

By H.C. HARPER

A few who are standing for "the Faith of the Gospel" have not yet "passed on." And to read the following from the pen of Brother C.M. Pullias in the G.A. of January 12, 1933, under the title "The Spirit of Christ," makes one think of the spirit of the early preachers of the "Restoration," when preachers "shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God." There is very little of "the spirit of Christ" in the pulpit or in the pew today. As one says, "The pastor, who is apparently in perfectly good humor with the devil, and the devil with him, virtually advises the young people to "put the love of God in your heart and sin all you want to." Again: "The church has just raised the white flag and surrendered to the devil, that's all.

"THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST"

"The Spirit of Christ is the most talked of and the least understood of almost any Bible subject. It is usually understood to mean to compromise with error and contend for nothing-either to agree with everybody and everything or be quiet and take no issue.

"Christ was the greatest controversialist that ever lived. He never allowed an error to pass unchallenged if it had anything to do with human life and destiny. He never waited to be unchallenged; he challenged. And yet there are those who think a man is not Christ-like who would challenge anybody in error today. But those who have the Spirit of Christ are never too timid to oppose error and condemn those

who teach it. The Spirit of Christ will tolerate no innovation and wink at no sin. The Spirit of Christ clings tenaciously to things that are written. When Christ was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, he met every temptation with "It is written."

To do anything in religion without Bible authority is not the Spirit of Christ. People are led by the Spirit only as they mind the things of the Spirit, and the things of the Spirit are those things the Spirit reveals in the Bible. To do anything the Spirit does not teach is not being led by the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ is mainly lacking in any case where the work and worship of the church is not according to the things written in the New Testament. It is not "progression" to deviate from the work and worship of the church as revealed in the New Testament."

COMMENTS

Brethren (and this includes preachers) who prate about "the spirit of Christ as a refuge to keep from meeting the errors of their "innovations" on the "work and worship of the church as revealed in the New Testament," or who are led by the influence of such innovators to talk "the spirit of Christ" to keep those who are standing for "the Faith of the Gospel" from bombarding the strongholds of Satan held by such innovators are, in fact, "enemies" to the cause they profess to champion. They make "peace" a refuge of lies and a boost for the devil. Satan will rage when his armor is pierced or his strongholds demolished, and we may expect him to resort to every means attainable to have the darts of truth and "the sword of the Spirit" parried or stopped; and he succeeds quite well in getting some "loyal" brother to let the brethren know that brother so-and-so has the truth and he does not fail to tell it-but-well-but-"He just hasn't got the spirit of Christ, and we better get Brother Blarney or Brother Compromise or Brother Sweetspirit to preach.

When we started the Apostolic Way twenty years ago, we realized, as Brother Trott expressed it, that we had "a Herculean task of cleaning the Augean Stables." But soon Brother Sweetspirit and Brother Compromise and Brother Hypocrite-yes, and Brother "Spirit-of-Christ," turned the truth right back into the stables while others were turning it out. -H.C. Harper Mar. 1, 1933

MY PEOPLE DOETH NOT CONSIDER

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider” (Isa. 1:3). This statement was made by an inspired prophet of God. This was not an accusation against outsiders. It was recognition of the true condition of those who should have been more concerned with their standing with God; they were the Lord’s chosen people. Could this be said of the members of the body of Christ today? “If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?” (Prov. 24:12).

Many Christians are naïve and they do not consider the facts of the situation. There are those who are part of the problem without their realizing it. But this is no different now from what it was when Jesus addressed the seven churches of Asia. The congregation at Laodicea received a scathing rebuke from the Lord because of their attitude of complacency. Listen, “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3:14-19). These Christians did not consider their true condition. They thought they were just fine like they were. They did not see any need to be too concerned; after all, in their minds they “had need of nothing.” How delusional some members are!! How many of us are like that in this day and time?! The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (I Cor. 10: 12).

Congregations are dying in various parts of the brotherhood. Churches have quit meeting in different places. Some are closing their doors, and places of worship which have been built with the Lord’s money are being sold, and denominations are now meeting in them. But “My people doth not consider.” Now, instead of an evangelistic attitude on the part of preachers and leaders of congregations, we have turned almost wholly to local events which have become more like social gatherings than ever. Food and fun and getting acquainted with new people are more important than

the spiritual aspects of these events. One man said, when he heard the word “fellowship”, he could “smell the coffee”. Sure there is some Gospel which is taught or preached, but that has become really more secondary. How many real “Gospel Meetings” are being held nowadays long enough to convert sinners? How many new congregations have been established in the United States recently? No, members of the church have lost their enthusiasm and fervor to win the lost. How many sinners can we expect to convert in a weekend meeting? We, who have been preaching for a long time, can remember the meetings we used to hold which would continue, night after night, for as long as the interest prevailed. In some of those meetings many would obey the Gospel, and members of the church would rededicate their lives to serve the Lord by correcting their wrongs through repentance, confession and prayer. Christians would drive long distances to be blessed by the preaching of the Gospel, and to lend their influence and presence to encourage the efforts of the man who had left home and loved ones to carry the Gospel to destitute places, knowing “that if our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost” (2 Cor. 3:4). But “my people doth not consider.”

We have members of the church now who don’t even attend as they should, or could, when a meeting is being held by their “home congregation”. Such feel no obligation, and perhaps show up as a visitor only. And we have others who are no more dedicated to their home church than any other congregation. We have gotten too affluent to stay at home and lend our efforts to build up and help strengthen the congregation where we claim to be members. Dedication and commitment are foreign words to some, it seems. Obligation means nothing to some Christians where they share the responsibility of the success or the blame for the failure of the congregation where they belong. If they have reason to leave town for a few days, they don’t make any effort to be back with their home church for the worship service on Lord’s day where they are obligated and needed, even if they could; lack of commitment! They worship elsewhere depriving the home church of the financial support needed to fulfill its responsibilities to accomplish its duties and work of the church they have helped to initiate. Fun and games is the order of the day -- “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:4). “My people doth not consider. It is no wonder that children of such parents don’t take religion seriously -and when it is too late, they wonder what went wrong, and refuse to take any of the blame.

Remember. “If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?” (Prov. 24:12). Think about it!

WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?continued from page one

REMEMBERING THE PAST

Those stones at Gilgal remind us that we must not forget our past. When the children of Israel forgot who they were and what God had done for them, that's when they forsook God and turned to idols. [Read Psalms 106 for an abridged history of Israel's iniquities because they were a forgetful people] Likewise, we must continually remind ourselves of the importance of Christ's death and how we have been saved from our past sins. 2 Pet. 1:9 talks about those who have forgotten that they were purged from their "old sins." What a shameful condition for a child of God to find himself in!

When we consider the spiritual blessings in Christ, as compared to what we have been delivered from, that's when we realize how great God's grace really is. Luke 14:21 talks about "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" being invited to the "great supper." All of these terms aptly describe the sinner outside of Christ. The poor would be those who could never pay back the kindness shown to them. The maimed are the deformed, the twisted, and those around whom the world feels uncomfortable. The halt are the crippled who are unable to get around on their own. The blind are people who are trapped in their own little world of darkness and in need of guidance. No wonder Heb. 2:3 calls our deliverance from sin a "great salvation!"

Let us never forget that we were purged from our old sins. While we can never repay the Lord for His unmerited favor, we must seek to bring glory to His name by obeying Him and putting Him first in our lives (Tit. 2:11-12).

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Those stones tell us that God's people also have a future. If that isn't true, there would have been no need for a memorial because that would have been the end of the story. We must believe that this life is not the end, but as Paul put it so eloquently in I Cor. 15:19, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are all men most miserable." Although Christ's kingdom has a glorious future to look forward to, we must not be content to rest upon the laurels of the past. The church came through a wonderful period of restoration, when men sought to go back to the Bible and restore the work and worship of the church according to the divine pattern. Faithful congregations exist today because of the labors of brethren who sacrificed to see that the gospel was kept pure.

While we give thanks for the faithful efforts of the past, it is up to us to ever go onward under the banner of truth. Let us remember that if time goes on, there are future generations that will seek to build upon what we are doing now. With that in mind, this should be our desire for the church, now and always: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to

build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).



PAUL'S SPECIAL PRAYER.....continued from page two

The answer to Paul's prayer was about to be realized. The way it came about is so interesting. God's answer was not by miraculous means really, but rather by a providential combination of circumstances. The customs of the Jews, the greed and avarice of Felix, the indecision of Festus, the prudence or wisdom of Paul, and finally, the Roman law providing for the protection of their citizens, had strangely, yet very naturally combined to fulfill the promise of God in answer to his prayer. God's ways are truly past finding out by human wisdom.

Brethren, we need to keep in mind that the God we serve today is the very same God who also blessed the ancient men of whom we read. Do you ever think of that when you pray? Isaiah said, "O Lord, Thou art my God..."(Isaiah 25:1) I love to think of that when I pray because I know the very same God hears my little prayers and answers them for my benefit even if I may not understand why. We belong to God and can call on Him in time of need. Paul wrote: "...as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." (2 Corinthians 6:16) Then, in verse 18 He said, "And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty." In 1 Peter 5:6, 7 Peter wrote, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." There are many more passages we might cite, but these are enough to help us see how very fortunate we are. We enjoy so many blessings because we are His children.

When I was just a boy the church often sang an old song written by G.W. Lyon titled "He Knows." The words are very meaningful. He wrote; "He knows the bitter, weary way, the endless strivings day by day: The souls that weep, the souls that pray; He knows, He knows. He knows how hard the fight has been, the clouds that come our lives between; The wounds the world has never seen, He knows, He knows. He knows, O tho so full of bliss, For tho our joys on earth we miss, We still can bear it, feeling this- He knows, He knows."

Perhaps we forget that we have a Father who knows all, sees all, and cares for us so much. We may forget, but He never does! Think on these things- DLK

Announcements

Second Annual Memorial Day Meeting

The Ardmore, Oklahoma brethren would like to invite you to join us for our second annual Memorial Day meeting, May 25-27th. Last year's meeting was a tremendous success! There were several speakers from near and far with Kevin Presley following up each service. The special singing was fantastic last year and we know it will be again with your voice added. Brother Kevin Presley has agreed to conduct the meeting again this year and share the pulpit with our guest preachers who may attend. We also plan to have a singing on Saturday before the service. Our service times will be: Friday May 25th 7:00pm Saturday May 26th Singing at 5:30-6:30: Service 7:00pm Sunday May 27th 10:30am and 2:00 pm (lunch between) Some refreshments will be provided after services. We recommend the Comfort Inn at exit 31-A just off I-35 for your stay. You may call (580) 490-9996 or go to www.comfortinn.com to book a room.

Likes the Paper

...Enjoy and appreciate the paper. Believe it is a very good work. We have received it since about 1930. We had joining farms with Brother Gay at that time. Love you all. Thanks, John Spradley

Anniversaries

50th Anniversary

Glynn and Sue Smith of the New Salem, MS congregation will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary May 26th from 2 to 4 P.M. at the Brookhaven Recreation Department located at 689 Highway 51 N, Brookhaven, MS 39601. For more information feel free to call Cecil Smith 601-754-0954. All are welcome to attend.

Our Departed

HOWARD- Bertha Howard, born January 22, 1914 in Roff, OK, passed away in Folsom, CA on February 13, 2012 at 98 years of age. She was preceded in death by her first husband Ira Barrow, and 2nd husband Theodore Howard, Bertha leaves to cherish her memory her sons Clyde Barrow (Ann) of Folsom, CA, and Frank Barrow (Isabell) of Palmdale, CA; grandchildren Larry Barrow of Kalispell, MT., Lynnette Wiggington (Cecil) of Casper, WY, Lisa Southern (Bob) of Sparks, NV, Laura Colombo (Dale) of Folsom, CA, Michael Barrow of Reno,

NV, and Steven Barrow of Palmdale, CA She is also survived by 10 great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren, and her younger sister Ida Fann of CA. Bertha had been in a care facility for the last few years. She was a faithful member of the Church at 64th. St. in Sacramento where a memorial was held on February 18, 2012 with interment at Sacramento Memorial Lawn. Bertha's relatives in the church today include a great-niece, Cathy Eubanks of Auburn, CA and a great-nephew, Ricky Frizzell, of Neosho, MO. I was honored to speak words of comfort. -Greg Gay

VANSTAVERN---Brother Glenn E. VanStavern 87, of Springfield, Missouri, passed away February 17, 2012. He was born December 22, 1924 in Redfork, OK to John and Lililie VanStavern. Glenn spent most of his childhood in the Lebanon area where he married his wife, Roberta Brandon. They were blessed with three children. He worked over twenty years for Quinn's Coffee Company, retiring in 1987. He was baptized into the Church of Christ at the age of 11 and helped establish the Benton Avenue Church of Christ in Springfield. He loved the church, his family, and will be missed by all who knew him. Glenn is preceded in death by his parents; five brothers, Bill, Oval, Mean, Earl, and John Jr. and two sisters, infant Freida, and Leida Selsman. He is survived by his loving wife of almost 65 years, Roberta, of the home; three children, David VanStavern (Debbie) of Willard Missouri, Jana Allie (Sam) of Springfield, Missouri, Lisa Leonard (Bart) of Kenova, West Virginia. We extend our sympathy to the family. This writer, assisted by Glenn's grandson Marc Allie conducted the service in the presence of a large crowd.----Dan Wissinger

LAMKINS - Donna Kay Lamkins- Donna was born June 17, 1944 in Laclede County, MO and departed this life On Dec. 10, 2011 as a result of an auto accident. Donna was the faithful wife of Wayne Lamkins until his death on March 23, 2007 and both were long time faithful members of the church at Niangua, Mo. After Wayne's death, she suffered through a heart attack and still would always be at church. She set a great example and was an inspiration to all of us. Donna is survived by one son Dwayne Lamkins of Phillipsburg, MO and one daughter, Ladonna Maddux of Marshfield, MO, and seven grandchildren. Donna is also survived two sisters, Linda Sue Whittaker and her husband Jerry of Fair Grove, MO and Dorothy Lou Brawley and husband Clifford of Nixa, MO, her mother-in-law, Maxine Lamkins of Lebanon, MO and her brother and sister-in-law, Don and Jeanne Lamkins

of Lebanon. She was also preceded in death by her parents and her father-in-law, Clyde Lamkins. Her nephew, David Brawley and I offered words of encouragement. -Ron Alexander

WRIGHT- Randy Wayne Wright- Randy was born June 6, 1964 in San Louis Obispo, CA and passed from this on Nov. 8, 2011. Randy obeyed the gospel while living in Seymour, MO while in High School or shortly thereafter. Randy also preached among us for a few years and worked with different congregations. Randy left the church for several years. He started using drugs and ended up in prison for a period of time. Dan Wissinger had maintained contact with Randy through the years. When he moved to Marshfield to take care of his father who was under hospice care, Dan would visit and took him to Don Pruitt's meeting in Lebanon last May. Don and Randy had maintained a relationship as well through the years. During the meeting Randy made confession and started coming to church with us at Niangua. Randy was diabetic and was losing his eye sight, so he couldn't drive or see well enough to lead singing at services, but he came. When the hospice nurse came to see Randy's father, she found Randy dead instead. None of Randy's family knew any of us at church. So we saw Randy's obituary in the Springfield paper. There was no funeral service, just a visitation. A neighbor to Randy made a short speech indicating they had never met, but when he and his family were ill Randy knocked on the door with a large pan of soup. Randy was a good chef and set a good example. We are thankful that Randy was back in the Lord's service before it was too late. How many others do we know that an act of kindness might help bring them back into the Lord's service before it's too late. Ron Alexander

WEEKS- Gracie Inez Weeks - Inez was born July 30, 1926 in Hanna, OK, the daughter of Dewey and Ollie (McGuire) Best and past from this life March 14, 2012 at Bella Vista, Arkansas. Inez was married to Charles E. Weeks on January 23, 1946 in Arvin, CA. She is survived by two daughters and their husbands, Gracie E. and Kenneth Kasl of Bella Vista, AR and Marilyn L. and Richard Sprague of The Woodlands, TX, six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Charles and Inez were long time members of the Lord's church and were married for over 61 years before his death. Charles, her parents, two brothers, Lorn and James Best, 3 sisters, Lillian Best, Ola Mae Groff and Reba Crandall preceded her in death. Carolyn and I first met Charles and Inez when we moved Lompoc, CA in 1966 and stayed with them until we found a place to live. Christians

were always welcome in their home. They moved to McAlester, OK some 30 years ago. Inez was a cosmetologist for over 50 years and loved to do the hair for christian sisters. Inez moved to Bella Vista some 5 months ago to be near Beth and her family. When she become ill, they found advanced cancer and indicated she might live 2 weeks, 2 months or 2 years. She chose not to have any treatment, indicating she had made preparation for death and was ready. Her faith was exemplary. Randy Tidmore, Don Pruitt and I officiated her funeral service. -Ron Alexander

HOGLAND- Virgil Wesley Hogland was born to George Lawrence and Minnie Ruth (Howard) Hogland on December 10, 1924, at Melrose, New Mexico. He died on March 4, 2012, at his home in Harrison, Arkansas, at the age of 87. His wife of 63 years, Frances Hogland, preceded him in death three years earlier. He was also preceded in death by daughter Tina Curley, granddaughter Caitlin Curley, and two sisters, Imogene and Jeannine. Survivors include one son and his wife, Jeffery and Dila Hogland; a daughter and her husband, Diana and Alfred Newberry; one brother and his wife, George and Louva Hogland; one sister, Helen Robertson; eight grandchildren, Chelsea, Rachel, Mary, Hannah, Misty, Jennifer, Christopher, and David; and seven great grandchildren. I knew Virgil for over 40 years and I can say without hesitation that he was one of the finest men I ever knew. While it was obvious he was a man of high intellect, he was a man of genuine humility, meekness, and integrity. Don Thomason, who drove from Kansas City, Missouri, for the visitation said, "Virgil was a great man." Dan Wissinger from Springfield added, "if you knew Virgil, you respected him." Virgil's younger brother George Hogland, from Lubbock, Texas, spoke briefly at the service and said that before Virgil left home to serve in the navy, he and Virgil shared the same bedroom for 11 years, and that Virgil never raised his voice or spoke an unkind word to George during that entire period, even though he described himself as Virgil's "brat kid brother." George praised Virgil as one of the greatest influences in his life. Virgil's life was not without its trials. He experienced trials in the navy, as an administrator of a large utility in Kansas City, as an elder in the church, and as head of a household. Two of his greatest trials were the tragic deaths of Tina and Caitlin in an auto accident, and Frances' being seized by Alzheimer's disease that hastened her death three years ago. In all of these trials, however, Virgil remained calm, well-reasoned, and totally devoted to the well-being of those involved. He was also hospitable, charitable,

and spiritually stable. Three of the grandchildren, George, and Jeff spoke beautiful words in tribute to Virgil, and I added a message based upon 2 Timothy 4:6-7. As he departed this life, Virgil could honestly say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Consequently, I have every confidence there is a crown of righteousness that shall be given him at that day.-- Carl M. Johnson

HOPKINS - Louis O. (Mike) Hopkins, of Sentinel, OK was born October 7, 1921 and passed away February 21, 2012 at the age of 90 years. He was born at Port, OK to Bunnie and Dessie Lee (McKillip) Hopkins, and he was married to Irene Young, at Altus, OK, April 4, 1942; a marriage which lasted nearly seventy years. To this union were born three daughters, Patsy Everett of Sentinel, Ok; Linda Harris of Tuttle, OK; and Gayle Hanson, Newcastle, OK. It was during a meeting at Sentinel in 1946 that I had the privilege to assist Louis and Irene to become members of the Lord's church, baptizing them into Christ. We became steadfast friends through the years. "Mike" was a Christian and had the respect of local citizens where he lived. He was in business for many years and was known for his honesty and moral integrity. He was a loving and dedicated husband and a devoted father. He was a leader in the Church of Christ, and was respected as a preacher of the Gospel. This good man was instrumental in seeing that the Gospel was being preached in a number of foreign countries and preachers were supported to do the work of the Lord. He was called on to conduct funerals by those who knew him. His name and his influence in his family, in the church and in his community will live on. His "works do follow him" (Rev. 14:13). Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Bunnie and Dessie Hopkins; three brothers, Marlin, Earnest, and Dean; two sisters, Eula Mae and Pauline; one son-in-law, Tom Everett. Survivors include his wife, Irene Hopkins; three daughters, Patsy Everett, Linda Harris and husband, Dean; Gayle Hanson and husband Phil; seven grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren, four sisters, Maurine Freeman of Hobart, OK; Veva Janes of Manchester WA; Ethel Cofield, of Altus; and Dorothy Janes of Port Orchard, WA. as well as a host of friends and brethren in Christ. Brother Jimmy Cating and I were honored to speak to the large crowd which assembled to honor the memory of this good man. His remains were laid to rest in the local cemetery where he and fellow members of the church await the resurrection at the glorious coming of Christ.-Paul O. Nichols

Field Reports

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953. The church in Olivehurst continues to thrive. It is good to work with a church that is in unity. I have preached in Escalon and Bakersfield (Brundage) lately. It was a blessing for the church on Planz Rd. to cancel their Sunday afternoon service and come to Brundage. This included Frank Brancato, one of our good preachers, who has overcome cancer in his throat and is now able to preach once again for which we thank God. I also attended and participated in the Mid-Missouri Study March 12-16. This was an interesting study series and I think very beneficial to the cause of Christ. I stayed over the week-end and participated in some of their other work and preached both services on Sunday. I thank them for their hospitality and also where I stayed with Gary and Shiree Davis. They were gracious hosts to me and the other preachers who stayed there.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, johnnyelmore@gmail.com April 8 Last month, we had the Ardmore singing on the 17th and Stan Elmore spoke for us on Sunday, the 18th. I was able to be at Council Hill, OK for a singing at the Senior Center on March 23rd, followed by preaching that evening at the church house and two services on Sunday. We were happy to have visitors including preachers Taylor Joyce, Bill Ferguson, Dennis Smith, George Bailey and their wives at one or more occasions. It was a great occasion for me and the crowds were good. I enjoyed visiting with Larry Combs and the members at Council Hill and I thank them for their hospitality and generous support. I have been asked to come back next year for this annual event and I have agreed if it is God's will. We look forward to hearing young Matthew Barnes here Wednesday night and the annual Memorial Day meeting here next month.

Rick Martin- 300 Clubview Terrace, Marietta, GA 30189. It has been some time since I have written a field report. The congregation here at Marietta recently closed a good meeting with Stan Owens. We look forward to our summer meeting with Don King, July 10-17 and our annual singing with Kevin Presley, August 18. We will have the new songbook by that time. We have recently had 2 baptisms here at Marietta. They were 2 teenagers whose mother and grandmother have been faithful in bringing them to the church services, for this they should be commended. It is extremely important that we teach our children and do everything we can to keep them in the church. I have just closed the 50th

anniversary of the Spring meeting at the Crescent Ridge congregation in Birmingham, AL. This meeting was started by the late Lynwood Smith and Brother Harlon Howell. The meeting was well attended and it was a joy for me to be able to hold it. My meeting schedule for this year is West Monroe, LA, June 10-17; Earlytown, AL, July 18-22; and Jacksonville, FL, September 19-23. Please pray for me in my endeavors.

P. Duane Permenter, 1705 Pecan Drive, Cleburne, TX, 76033, Telephone: (817) 2401944, Apr 1-It has been my privilege to preach at Cleburne, Mineral Wells, Weatherford, McGregor, Frisco, and Allen all in Texas since last reporting. We witnessed a response to the gospel recently for which we give the praise to God. We continue to labor in the community at Cleburne as we have opportunity and pray that God will bless our efforts. My schedule for the next few months is as follows: Stockton, CA April 29-May 1, Fremont, CA May 13-15, Planz Rd. in Bakersfield, CA June 5-12. We will be in Allen, TX, June 22-26, Houston, TX July 17-24 at the Fairbanks congregation. The church here at Cleburne plans a meeting with Jimmy Catting July 6-10 and we are looking forward to this as well. Please if you can be at any of these efforts. We encourage you to do so. God bless the brotherhood! Duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net Apr. 9th- I conducted a meeting at the Cedarhurst Congregation in Jacksonville, Florida, in February of this year. The nearest sister congregation in Florida is about a 3 1/2 hours drive away. Nevertheless, we had Florida visitors from Panama City, Tampa, Longwood, Oyster Bay, and visitors from Walterboro, South Carolina and Alabama. All of these brethren encouraged us during the meeting, and we appreciate the sacrifices they made to attend. Even more encouraging, however, were the folks from the community who attended the services. We had some good prospects who attended nearly every service, and I received word the week after the meeting that one of the ladies was baptized. I enjoyed my time with Phillip Prince during the meeting. Phillip is a longtime friend and a fellow-preacher. He is also one of the finest teachers of the rudiments of music around today, and we are fortunate to have him in our brotherhood. Our recent annual March Meeting was a good one. Our crowds were not the largest we have ever had, but we had a lot of folks attend-some for the first time. The young men who spoke brought their "best sermons," and did a good job presenting them. I recently preached

at Green Oaks congregation in Arlington, Texas, and I was privileged to preach the first Lord's Day at Moore, Oklahoma, after the Moore and Capitol Hill congregations merged. It was exciting to see the Moore building filled to capacity and not enough parking spaces outside! Lord willing, I shall begin a meeting at Mountain Home, Arkansas, Wednesday evening (Apr. 11-15), and we begin a meeting at home with Cullen Smith April 15. Pray for us, please.

Darrell Crawford 208 E. Baldwin Rd Unit 5, Panama City, Fl. 32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com We hope everyone is having a great spring and a great year so far. We just closed out a good meeting here at Panama City. Phillip Prince and I conducted the meeting. We had digressives at every service but one, this included three digressive preachers. We have been able to get one, possibly two studies from this. We had visitors from Dothan, AL. and from Tallahassee, FL. We want to thank these brethren for their support of the efforts here. We are still working on ways to try to stir interest in the work here. This month we are to start having a booth in the downtown area at a Friday Fest. This is the first Friday of each month, if it works well we will continue each month through November. They sometimes have over 1,000 people who attend from the area. We will offer free bible correspondence courses, and have a drawing for a free bible. We believe this will be a good way to spark interest in the church here, and to perhaps get more studies. Please continue to pray for the work here, there are so many lost in sin! Pray that the Lord will bless us with wisdom in knowing how to deal with the circumstances we face each day, helping to grow the church spiritually, as well as numerically. If any of you knows of someone in this area that we could contact, please send us the name and number of those people. I still am available one Sunday a month for speaking engagements, and for 4-5 meetings as well. May we all stand for the old paths, and may the Lord bless His church everywhere.

Roger L. Owens Freeman Road, Neosho, Missouri 64850: What a great year this has started out to be. I told you in February we had 2 baptisms and just this 1st Sunday in April yet another. How encouraged when you can listen to the word and then see its power turn lives around. I am so thankful for members who make the time and take the time to get involved within their own homes, with co-workers, with school friends, and wherever they are found letting their light shine for Christ. One thing I have found with our people I don't hear much about sports and other worldly activities. I am not saying these are wrong but I am saying our priorities must be in the right

order. I recently made sure all members that wanted had a copy of the Bible CD on their computers. My work has been a heavy load this year. I have a busy spring in place and a very busy summer ahead. The brethren here have worked hard in their studies. One Wednesday night each month we have chapter reading. This gives young men and older brethren opportunity to get before the brethren and exercise talents. One Wednesday we have singing and reading combined. We are reading through the Bible and now we are ready to start in Genesis. We have our Sunday evening through the Bible series and that is a major part of the congregations spiritual growth for women and men. So many questions come from this series of study. We hope to assist Brett Hickey in the local part of the TV work in this area. The fields are white unto harvest and it is just a matter of our getting involved to bring the lost to the Lord. Randy Blankenship has had some serious health issues we ask your prayers. Sister Terry Aldridge battles cancer and can't be with us much but what a blessing when she is able. Please pray for us and we will always pray for the work around the world. Let the Lord be your shepherd day and night. Amen My address for mail is still the same. P.O. Box 239 Neosho, MO. 64850. My phone number changed 1-417-451-0330. My e-mail has not changed for 25 years. (rowens700@yahoo.com)

Subject: Roy Deering March report. We continue our work with the Galey, Oklahoma congregation and have begun a series of individually targeted studies with several of the brethren in an attempt to help the congregation grow stronger. Response to those studies has been positive, but we are hoping for more studies in the coming months as we move toward completing our first year working with the Church at Galey. Last fall, we set up a table at the local electric cooperative's fall festival and handed out more than three hundred fliers with information about the Church. During that festival, we engaged in several discussions of religion and Bible topics, made many contacts with people who live in and around the Ada area, and are hopeful that we will be able to set up some studies as a result. Several brethren from the congregation assisted at this event. One week after that festival, we set up a similar table at an outdoor fair in Holdenville, Oklahoma, leading up to our five day meeting at that congregation. This is the fourth time we've attended this fall fair and we have always had positive interaction with people from the community. Again we handed out hundreds of fliers about the Church and invited many people to the meeting. The five-day meeting was a tremendous success, with more than 30

visitors from the community attending. We also have begun putting together ideas for a website to promote the Galey congregation and have joined several other brethren in an ongoing Old Testament chapter study on Sunday evenings to encourage our congregation's knowledge of the Old Testament. We have been so encouraged lately by several of the young men of the congregation who have given their first short lessons and chapter studies, three of them teaming up recently to deliver a chapter study from Genesis on a Sunday evening and another giving his first five-minute lesson several months ago. All have been encouraged by the brethren here and we are excited about the prospect of watching these young men grow and continue to develop their talents. During the past six months, we have preached our new series of sermons on Christian Relationships and received very encouraging responses from members and visitors at all the congregations where we presented these lessons. We have held meetings at Houston, Missouri and Houston, Texas (Deer Park), as well as Holdenville, Oklahoma, and also preached at the Tennessee and Texas Labor Day Meetings and the Alabama New Year Meeting. We also attended and very much enjoyed the Preacher's Study at Grapevine, Texas in December, and have attended meetings all across Oklahoma and Texas to help support the work in this area. The brethren at the Galey congregation have encouraged us to continue working closely with the Holdenville congregation because we have had such encouraging results the past two years. We are also still preaching at Wynnewood, Oklahoma once a month. We will soon cease our regular appointments at Davis, Oklahoma, so that we might be able to spend more time worshipping and working with our congregation at Galey. This was an emotional change for us, because I've preached at Davis at least two times a month for more than 25 years, but the change is necessary so that we might be more able to dedicate time to the Galey congregation work. So far, we have meetings scheduled at Holdenville, Oklahoma (March), Allen, Texas, (April) and Grapevine, Texas (August). I have had preliminary discussions with several other congregations about possible gospel meetings this year, but none of those are confirmed. We are also considering the possibility of traveling to the West Coast again this summer, having been asked by several congregations to hold weekend meetings once again this year. We appreciate so much the support of the Agnes Acres congregation of Broken Arrow, as well as the 21st Street congregation of Oklahoma City in our work. The love and confidence the brethren have shown us and our work is encouraging. Roy Deering, Galey, OK 580-320-3243 red1991@hotmail.com

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THE BACK PAGE...

NO LAUGHING MATTER

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

The late C.S. Lewis first published his novel *The Screwtape Letters* in 1942 and the book brought immediate fame to this little-known Oxford professor, including getting his picture on the cover of *Time Magazine*.

The book is a novel about spiritual warfare from a demon's point of view. The main character is a demon named "Screwtape," Satan's chief psychiatrist in hell. Screwtape writes a series of letters advising his nephew "Wormwood," a lesser demon on earth, on the best ways to entice human beings into hell. Screwtape refers to God as the "Enemy" and to the Devil as "Our Father below."

In addition to portraying hell as a place of pain and suffering, Lewis portrays it as a state where everyone wishes to discredit, demote, and ruin everyone else. Everyone is an expert in the pretended alliance, and the stab in the back. Envy, self-importance, and resentment reign supreme. It is a "dog-eat-dog" existence.

The book's success has probably been due to its piercing insight into human nature and the clear way Lewis makes his readers squirm in self-recognition.

Phyllis and I recently attended a stage adaptation of the novel at Rose State College. I read the book and was curious as to how it could be adapted to the stage. Max Mclean, an immensely talented, awardwinning performer, plays the role of Screwtape and his performance is amazing.

One part of his interpretation of Screwtape, however, leaves me puzzled. He portrays Screwtape as being civilized, sensible, and adaptable, which I am sure are qualities Satan and his angels have no problem assuming, but he also portrays him as being funny.

One brochure advertisement for the production says, "THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS is a smart, provocative and wickedly funny theatrical adaptation of the C.S. Lewis novel about spiritual warfare from a demon's point of view."

At one point in the performance, Screwtape explains in a letter to Wormwood that just because a human is humble, that does not mean he is a lost cause to Satan. Screwtape explains, "All you have to do is get him to cultivate pride in his humility." Screwtape pauses for dramatic effect, and then as though it just occurs to him how funny this premise really is, he roars, "Get him to be proud of his humility!" The audience explodes in laughter, as it did throughout the production.

I am not sure C.S. Lewis intended Screwtape to be portrayed as a funny character. In fact, he declares that while wholesome laughter and joy are graces that can promote charity, courage, and contentment, ridicule and flippancy are tools often used by Satan. He says, "A thousand vulgar or even blasphemous jokes do not help towards a man's damnation so much as his discovery that almost anything he wants to do can be done, not only without the disapproval but with the admiration of his fellows, if only it can get itself treated as a joke" (51-52).

Satan is the master of this technique. The Bible says he is "more subtle than any beast of the field" (Gen. 3:1), and his greatest deceit has been his ability to direct human affairs all these years without showing himself or being taken seriously. He has successfully passed himself off as a joke; a harmless, mythical, clown in a red suit whose most potent weapon is a pitchfork. The enormous degree to which we have believed him is both a comment upon our gullibility and a tribute to his power.

Scripture warns us that Satan is the wickedest and most relentless danger we face every day. He is a sinner "from the beginning" (1 Jn. 3:8). He is God's chief adversary and he and his armies of evil angels have declared war on God and mankind (Eph. 6:12). He is powerful, "walking about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). His main objective is to entice us to sin and cause us to be damned to hell with him at judgment. In testimony to his power Paul says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Paul gives a catalogue of some of the consequences of falling under the spell of Satan: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:29-32).

Unless they are redeemed through obedience to the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), at the final judgment the above-mentioned sinners will be cast into the unquenchable fires of hell, prepared for the devil and his angels (Mk. 9:43-46; Mt. 25:41). There will be tears shed on that occasion, but they will not be tears of laughter. They will be tears of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 18:12). cmjthebackpage@gmail.com