

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. 9

“LET US”

By WAYNE FUSSELL

When I was a boy, my uncle Fred Kirbo announced that he was going to preach on “Let Us”. In my young mind, I heard “lettuce”. I thought he was talking about the vegetable! He, of course, was going to talk about some of the instances in the Bible where a command is introduced with the words, “Let us”. One old man once said, “I do wish the preacher would stop saying, ‘Let Us’. Anyone would think we are a bunch of salad Christians”.

Recently, I began thinking about my uncle’s sermon and decided to look up all the passages that use the expression “let us”. I was amazed to find that it is used 66 times in the New Testament. The New Testament is choc-full of “lettuce”! Of course, it is not always used as a command - sometimes it is merely a suggestion. I’m afraid too many folks today think that God’s commands are just suggestions. As one old preacher once said about the ten commandments, “It’s not ten suggestions!”

The Book of Hebrews alone has the expression a number of times. We will confine this writing to those instances in the Book of Hebrews.

Let us fear. “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it (Hebrews 4:1). The “rest” is heaven. That is the place of eternal rest and blessedness. These Christians were told to fear lest they miss heaven. We are told in these times that we are not to be characterized by a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7), but here Paul says to fear. The kind of “fear” which is recommended here is a fear that leads to caution and care. A man who is in danger of losing his life or health should be careful. We who have the offer of heaven, know that there is the

danger of losing it, (we can fall from grace) so we take all possible precautions lest we fall short of it.

Let us be diligent. “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:11). First, he tells us to be very careful that we do not miss heaven, and then he tells us how to assure ourselves of making it. “Be diligent.” The KJV says, “Let us labor...” Diligence requires work. Paul calls it a “work of faith” and a “labor of love”. That simply means that we obey the commands of our Lord- and that’s what “let us” is all about. The lazy Christian is in danger of losing his reward. We must “work out our own salvation”.

Let us hold fast. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession” (Hebrews 4:14). The good confession we offered when we became Christians was: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”. In that confession we profess His divinity, His messiahship, and His Lordship. He is God, and we humbly worship Him. He is the Christ, and we praise Him for our salvation. He is Lord, and we bow humbly and reverently to His authority. Hold that commitment tight - hold it “fast”.

Let us pray boldly. “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Paul’s argument in this context is that since Jesus is our High Priest Who appears constantly before the Father on our behalf, we can speak boldly to our Father with our petitions. Like the child who has no reluctance in asking his parents for anything, we come before the Lord with full confidence that He will hear us - especially when we have our Elder Brother pleading our case (Romans 8:34, and the Holy Spirit interceding on our behalf (Romans 8:26-27).

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Editorial

SABBATH KEEPING A SIN

By H.C. HARPER

The following article is from the pen of the late H. C. Harper. Brother Harper was the founding member of The Old Paths Advocate. It is from the February 1928 issue of The Truth. The Truth was the predecessor of The Old Paths Advocate. —Rick Martin

The Sabbath fell upon the seventh day of the week. (Ex. 20:10). It was an institution of Judaism, being given to Israel at Mount Sinai when “the law was given to Moses.” (Ex. chapters 19 and 30). (also see John 1:17).

On the other hand, the first day of the week is an institution of Christianity. It is the resurrection-day of Christ. (Mark 16:9). Of the first fruits, the type, it is said, “On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.” (Lev. 3:11). And Christ, in his resurrection on the first day of the week, was the anti-type, being “the first fruits of them that slept.” (1 Cor. 15:20). And since Christ is “Lord” (Phil. 2:11 and Rom 10: 9), having all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), it is evident that the first day of the week is the “Lord’s Day.” (Rev. 1:10.) The “Lord’s day” and “Lord’s Supper” are peculiar to New Testament Greek. They are New Testament institutions.

It was on the Lord’s day, the resurrection day, that Jesus met in the assembly with his disciples after his resurrection (John 20:19-26), and it was there that he poured forth his blessing upon them. And it was on the “Lord’s day,” the resurrection-day, that the disciples ever afterwards met to worship their Lord. (Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 16:1-2.) Hence any Bible reader should see how sinful it is to set aside the first day of the week, the “Lord’s Day,” for the seventh, the “Sabbath” of the law of Moses (John 1:17) or any other day.

It is Paul, who said in protecting the brethren against Judaizing perverters of the gospel, let no man judge you in respect of “the Sabbath” (Col. 2:16). To submit to such false teachings is to reject Christ as Lord. —OPA

QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DEFRANCE

Question: May a Christian woman wear pants?

Answer: Before answering this question, it is important to realize that I was brought up with a different conviction than the one I now hold. My mother and father taught me that there was nothing objectionable about women wearing pants. My mother and sisters wore them, as did most of the women in my congregation. The teachers, including the elders, of the congregation would publicly argue that women violated no teaching of scripture by wearing pants. I accepted that position and argued the same until my mid-teens. It is important to understand that those early influences were not wicked or godless people. They were devout and loving Christians who planted the Christian faith in my heart. They were not thoughtless about the issue, in fact it was discussed quite often. I love and respect all of those people still. But I no longer hold the position they taught me to hold. Today, I believe that Christian women, at least in modern America, should not wear pants - at least most pants. Some people will be angry and emotional about that statement, but I hope that all will consider the reasons for it.

I think differently about the issue than I did as a young boy, and I am convinced that the way I think now is superior and right. First, I believe that the Bible teaches that God wills for men and women to dress with gender distinction. Deuteronomy 22.5 says "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God." Or as in the NIV, "A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this." Although the New Testament does not contain such an explicit statement, I believe the same principle is certainly present. The prohibitions against perversion of gender distinction (1 Corinthians 6.9-10), the commandment for men and women to honor the distinct roles God has assigned to them (1 Corinthians 11.2-16), and the general Biblical teaching that the nature of God reflected in the moral order of creation is unchanging echo the prohibition against cross dressing in a way that is significantly loud for my ears.

Although culture certainly has a bearing on how clothing reflects gender distinction, this does not justify modern American women wearing pants - as I see it. Instead, it actually constitutes the main reasons why they should not wear them. 1) Modern American culture has experienced a devastating assault against gender norms, roles, and distinction in the last 100 years, culminating in the current transgender phenomenon. This cultural

rebellion against God's created order has had tremendous influence on the fashion world and popular forms of dress. However, every part of Christian reasoning tells us that we should not embrace this cultural rebellion, we should stand as firmly against it as we possibly can! In spite of a century of effort to normalize women wearing pants in western culture, it is still considered feminine for women to wear dresses. In the chaos of the present age, why would Christian women not wish to make the clearest statement possible about their acceptance of God's created order? In western culture - In modern America - if a woman wears a dress, she does this! Who can deny that? 2) The vast majority of the pants made for and marketed to women - and those worn by women in the church - are lewd and lascivious, obscenely tight, generally intentionally torn to expose their thighs, and therefore would be just as unacceptable for a man to wear as for a woman. In this case, I believe these women are being thoughtless or perhaps even rebellious against the authority of Christ. I believe these women are being worldly and buying in fully to a sexually promiscuous, immodest, and provocative system of living that is governed by the flesh and not by the Spirit of God. I am deeply concerned for the souls of women who choose to dress this way and for the souls of fathers and husbands who allow and encourage such dress in their homes.

As a young man, it occurred to me that the pants that are made for women are too tight, and the looser styles are generally too masculine. The ones that seem half way defensible are not fashionable and therefore not worn by most ladies in the church - although there may be some exceptions. This led me to conclude that in our society and age, Christian women may not wear (at least most) pants and at the same time live by the teachings of Jesus Christ. If women wear modest, long, loose dresses and skirts then they are able to clearly and profoundly match their profession of godliness with their wardrobe (1 Timothy 2.9-10). I found a wife who lived by these convictions and we raise our daughter this way. I hope more people will come to think about the issue this way. I believe all the reasons women give for wearing pants are a poor response to these which are based on virtue, a desire to please God, and to show charity to the confused and lost society in which we live. I am unimpressed by appeals to personal comfort, stylistic preference, and an argumentative spirit that seems incapable of offering an alternative to the position it rejects - these are weeds in which even the sincerest disciples can become tangled if they are not careful, and I think it has happened many times. I encourage all my sisters in Christ to examine how they think about this issue. If your reasons for choosing to dress as you do are not spiritual, then I challenge you that there is a better way.

Send all replies or questions to Clint DeFrance, 2121 S. Columbia Ave., Suite LL2, Tulsa, OK 74114.



IDENTIFICATION OF PREACHERS IN PICTURE, 1948 or 49

In the top row from left to right is Paul Nichols, Joe Caselman, John Staley, Jesse Waters, Clovis T. Cook, Ervin Waters, Clayton Fancher, Tom Smith, Jack Smith, James R. Stewart, Jack Bledsoe, Brother Reynolds, Jesse Brush, and H.C. Welch. Bottom row: Homer L. King, Barney Welch, B.F. Leonard (standing behind Bro Leonard is Bil Harmon), Homer A. Gay, Fred Kirbow, Clarence Kessinger, M.J. Buffington, and M. Lynwood Smith.

JESUS PREACHED THE GOSPEL

By PAUL NICHOLS

Brethren NT Commentary

“The Kingdom of Heaven. This phrase is used in several different senses; but here it should be understood in its simplest meaning, viz. as the assembly of God’s children on the earth. The ‘kingdom of heaven’ on earth is without territorial limits. It began with John the Baptist, who was sent from God. Mal 4:5; Jno 1:6. Through his preaching many repented, were baptized by him, and became his disciples. This he continued until he had baptized Christ, who should increase while himself should decrease. John 3:30. After Christ was baptized by John, he went out and called unto himself his twelve disciples, and began to teach them the laws of heaven John 12:40, by which they should be governed in this earthly kingdom. Thus was his kingdom established on the earth. In this sense the phrase, “Kingdom of Heaven,” should be understood here.” (Brethren NT Commentary)

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14, 15).

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17).

“And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent” (Luke 4:43).

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities” (Luke 11:1).

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” (Luke 4:18).

“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him,

and that he might send them forth to preach...” (Mark 3:14).

“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Matt. 10:27).

“And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God...” (Luke 9:2).

At one place the heathens would pay them homage, “Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.” (Acts 14:14-15).

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42).

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and did preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4).

“And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins...” (Luke 3:3).

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:15).

Evidently these 12 had been baptized with John’s baptism after Jesus had died, and they had not believed on Jesus. But Jesus said, “...for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” So even if they had been

baptized for the remission of sins, they still had those sins. The baptism that Jesus told the apostles to preach after He was crucified and rose again, was, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” In order for one to receive remission of sins he is to confess that he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, otherwise the baptism does no good. So all the preaching that Jesus and the apostles did concerning the kingdom of God, as well as John’s baptism was in anticipation of the death of the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” John, the baptist, recognized this. Notice what we read in John 1:29, “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Again, “John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. So these twelve had to be rebaptized for the remission of sins after they had learned about Jesus who had died for their sins. John’s baptism was valid before Jesus died on the cross, but that same baptism was not valid for the forgiveness of sin if done after the crucifixion.

After Jesus died on the cross, the message of the Gospel is what Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 15. The Corinthians were heathens before they learned that they were lost and undone and without hope in the world, and they had to hear that Jesus had died on the cross for the forgiveness of lost sinners (paid the price for sin), that He was buried, but that He rose from the grave by the power of God and is now our Savior and is alive in Heaven. Remember the Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (John 4:1). This was in anticipation of the crucifixion. But Jesus did not preach to them the death burial and resurrection as if it had already taken place like Paul and other apostles did to sinners after the fact, and as we do today. Yes, Jesus preached the Gospel, but not the death burial and resurrection as past, but in anticipation and was preparing citizens for the coming kingdom.

During the personal ministry of Christ, He would remind the Jews of the teaching of the Old Testament because it was still in force until it was “nailed to the cross.” They were still under the law. However, that was not primarily what He came to do. The Bible says, He came “to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). He informed those who believed on Him, “If ye continue in my word, then

are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:32,36). Again, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45, 46).

When Jesus was teaching people, there were times when He would refer to some teaching of the Old Testament and then say, “But I say unto you” and tell them something that would be a part of the New Testament and apply after His death. “But” is a disjunctive conjunction; a word or thought that suggests something opposite or different. I understand that this is the reason He told them before returning to Heaven that after His departure that He would send them the Holy Ghost and He would remind them of His teaching and guide them into all truth. Notice, “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:25, 26). He had been preparing them for the coming kingdom. In John 16:12, 13, He says, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: (what they heard Christ teach publicly and privately) for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” With this thought in mind, it reminds me of what Paul wrote to Timothy, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”

WHEN SHEPHERDS DON’T SHOW

By AUSTIN SMITH

It’s very important that we as men desire the office of an elder, but along with desiring the office, we need to understand why we need Godly men in this role. In this short article, I will attempt to show you what happens when shepherds do not show. The first passage of scripture that we will take a look at for this topic is 1 Peter 5:1-4. Starting in verse 1 the Bible reads,

“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

The first thing to take note of in this passage is the mention of the Chief Shepherd in verse four. We have one Chief Shepherd, who is Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of the Church; furthermore, He is the one and only head. It is important to note that a Chief Shepherd in Jesus does not negate the responsibility of Christian men to shepherd the flock. Let’s focus our attention on the command that Peter gives and the people that Peter addresses. Peter is specifically writing to elders at the beginning of verse one. In verse two, a commandment given to the elders. This command is to “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you.” The responsibility of an elder is to shepherd the flock of God. In other words, elders are to take care of and guide their congregation. Though this might sound simple, it brings us to two questions that we are going to now attempt to answer. The first question is, “Why do congregations need elders?” The second is, “What happens when there are shepherds that do not fulfill their responsibilities?”

We must begin by realizing that this idea is not a recently developed concept for the new covenant. We can see a pattern in scripture where God intended for certain people to be shepherds of His flock long before Peter ever wrote this letter. There are many different figures in the Bible that have served as shepherds for God’s people, such as kings, prophets, apostles, and Jesus Himself, as we saw in 1 Peter. Moses and David are other excellent examples. Moses is called the shepherd of Israel in Isaiah 63: 11 and David is referred to as a shepherd in 2 Samuel 5:2. Similarly, in 1 Peter 5, elders are given the responsibility of shepherding. Shepherding is not a new concept, but God has had different men hold this type of responsibility for millennia.

As we look back to the Old Testament scriptures, we are going to answer our two questions. First, why do congregations need elders?

Zechariah 10:2 reads, “For the idols speak delusion;

The diviners envision lies, And tell false dreams; They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; They are in trouble because there is no shepherd.” The word in this verse, which is translated as “in trouble” in the New King James, is the Hebrew word ‘anah’. Similarly to most words in Bible manuscripts, this word is not always translated the same way in English versions of the Bible; therefore, we must observe some of the translations for this word in English. The NKJV renders the word “in trouble”, the Geneva Bible translates the word “troubled”, the ESV, the ASV, and the NASB all say “afflicted”, the ‘NIV says “oppressed”, and Darby translates the word as “in distress”. The point that I’m trying to make here is that, despite the different translations, you can probably see a common theme. No translation that I’ve seen offers anything that would make this situation seem good, and we’re immediately given the reason why. Look back to the end of the verse. “They are in trouble because there is no shepherd. “ This will serve as the answer to question one. This is what happens when the sheep don’t have a shepherd.

Secondly, we will attempt to answer the question, “what if shepherds don’t fulfill their responsibilities?”

For this, we are going to examine Ezekiel 34:1-5. This passage says, “And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. “ We can see pretty plainly from this passage what happens when shepherds do not fulfill their responsibilities. In verse 5, notice how the sheep were scattered and became food for the beasts of the field. There’s also something else of importance we need to examine. Take a look at verse 2. When we look at this verse, we see the command from the Lord to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. In the same verse, we see the words “Woe to the shepherds of Israel”. We know that there are shepherds present

because they are addressed in the passage; however, also notice verse 5. It says, “they were scattered because there was no shepherd.” Why does the passage read as though there are shepherds in the first four verses but then state there was no shepherd in the fifth verse? To be frank, it is because there is no difference between bad shepherds and no shepherds at all. If you have shepherds that aren’t fulfilling their role, you lack true shepherds altogether.

In conclusion, I have one more question to ask. Why is the topic of the eldership so important? It is because of the answered questions above. Congregations will be much better off if they have responsible, Godly men leading them in the leadership role that’s authorized by the scriptures. We don’t want the flock in danger because of a lack of shepherds, but we also don’t want men in the role that negate their responsibilities. Based on what we’ve read, we must conclude that the eldership should not be viewed as optional. In fact, if we want to follow the Biblical pattern, then we need to try our best to ordain elders in every congregation (Acts 14:23). It might not be something that’s immediately attainable everywhere, but it is something that all congregations should be striving to have one day. Remember: elders are not something we should simply view as a want. Elders are something we must view as a need. —OPA

LET US....continued from page one

Let us leave the first principles. “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1). In other words, let us leave the “lettuce leaves” and go on to stronger food. The first principles are important, and we should constantly be reminding ourselves of them, but there are deeper truths that we must learn and internalize in our lives. Always push yourself to “dig a little deeper in the storehouse” of God’s truth. Never be satisfied with what you know. The word of God is inexhaustible - you can never claim that you have mastered it. A group of members here in Shreveport have been reading through the Bible for the past fifteen years. Invariably, someone will remark, “I never saw that before”. That is the wonder of God’s word.

Let us draw near. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22). Let us draw near - not stay as far away from the Lord as we can - but seek to get closer and closer to Him. It is so important that a Christian live in close communion and fellowship with the Lord every day. We do that with a sincere heart and an ever growing faith in God. Why can we do that? Because our hearts have been cleansed by the blood of Christ. When did that happen? When our bodies were washed in the waters of baptism. We must not leave the Lord at the edge of the water - we must get closer and closer to him by a sincere heart that moves us to live by His word.

Let us not waver. “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23). Don’t allow anything to distract you from serving the Lord. Hold tight to that commitment you made when you first confessed Christ before men.

Let us stir up one another. “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24). Everyone needs encouragement. Paul says to “consider one another”. I must be concerned about my brother/sister’s salvation as much as I am about my own. I must pay attention to others. Then I need to try to “stir them up” or motivate them to grow in love and good works. One of those good works is mentioned in the next verse: “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). Just a word of encouragement is all some folks need to help them live better.

Lay aside and run. “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2). “Let us” do three things: Get rid of anything that hinders in running the Christian race. Then run with endurance - it’s a marathon, not a sprint. Do that with your gaze on Jesus - becoming more and more like Him.

Be thankful. “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28). Vincent translates the words “let us have grace” with the word “thankfulness”. Whatever we do in Christian service, we do with gratitude for all God has done for us. God has saved us and allowed us to be subjects in His kingdom - members of His family. And we serve Him gladly with reverence and godly fear.

Praise the Lord. “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15). Every hour of every day the child of God should seek occasions to praise the Lord for all the wonderful blessings He bestows on us - His love and mercy, His goodness, and the peace and joy we have in Christ. The story is told of a fine Christian man who was a great singer. He got cancer of the tongue, and surgery was required. On the operating table, he asked the surgeon if he would ever be able to sing again. The doctor sadly said no. With this the good man said, “I have enjoyed praising my Lord for many years. You say I will never sing again. I want to sing one last song of praise.” There on that operating table, the man sang softly the words of Isaac Watts’ great hymn, “I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath...” The song says the writer will praise God even after death. Heaven will be a place of constant praise. We should never let pass an opportunity here to praise the Lord in word, in song, and in deed.

The writer of Hebrews has allowed us to enjoy a wonderful salad of “let us” from God’s word. Every single “let us” in the book of Hebrews is like a divine invitation into a deeper and better Christian life. When we practice these encouragements, we are going to grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Don’t you love “let us”? I hope we all do.

After I wrote the above words, I thought about what we are going through in our nation and in the church right now. I’m sure the writer of Hebrews would give us the same advice he gave 2000 years ago to Hebrew Christians who were struggling with their faith. These are troubled times, but we have never suffered what the Christians in the first century suffered. So, “let us” be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. “Let us” never grow weary in serving the Lord. “Let us” face each day with the assurance that all things work

together for good to those who truly love the Lord. “Let us” know assuredly that if God be for us who can be against us. We will come through these times stronger than ever before because tribulation works perseverance, and perseverance works character, and character works HOPE. Wfussell1@comcast.net

Our Departed

MCKINNEY - Myron Douglas McKinney, son of Collin and June Fisher McKinney was born November 20, 1942, in Modesto, California. He passed from this life July 30, 2020, in Lebanon, Missouri at the age of seventy-seven years. Myron leaves to cherish his memory, his wife, his Sunshine, Lynn; four children: son Michael, daughter Brie, son David and wife Cindy, and daughter Lisa; one sister: Glenda and husband Richard DeGough, mother-in-law Doreene and husband Don Permenter; two sister-in-laws; Cindy Otero and Beth Hale, one brother-in-law, Eric Hale; nine grandchildren; seven great grandchildren; many nieces, nephews, family, friends and his much loved brethren in Christ. Myron was baptized into Christ at the age of 16 by Homer L. King. He graduated from Hughson High School in 1960. He worked as a carpenter for many years. In 1977 he attended and

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completed a course at Porterville Horseshoeing School. Horseshoeing proved to be the occupation Myron enjoyed most. Myron enjoyed being his own boss. He enjoyed visiting with his clients as he worked on their horse. These conversations had a wide range of subjects and from time to time gave him the opportunity to share God's Word. Myron provided for his family by shoeing horses for 29 years. On January 12, 1979, Myron was united in marriage to Margaret Lynn Hale. This union was blessed with two children; Brie and Michael. Myron and Lynn shared over 41 years of love and God's blessings. Myron and his family moved from California to Lebanon, Missouri in 2006. They began worshipping with the church of Christ on Hayes Street. This was his home congregation until the time of his death. Myron loved gospel music and had a beautiful singing voice. He was a diligent student of God's word and enjoyed sharing it with others individually and from the pulpit. He will be missed by his family, friends, brethren in Christ; but most of all by his Sunshine, Lynn.

Publishers Note: It is so sad to learn of Myron's passing. We had been friends since both of us were in the second grade of school. My sincere condolences to all the family. —DLK

LITTLE -W.F. (Dooger) Little of Gridley, CA was born July 17, 1931 in Dallas, TX and departed this life on June 15, 2020. Dooger was one of six children born to George and Willie Little. After a brief residence in the Daisy, AR area, the Little family moved to Gridley, CA when Dooger was still a young boy. Dooger was a faithful member of the Lord's Church for some 76 years, having been baptized into Christ by Brother Paul Nichols near Yuba City in 1943. A short time after graduating from Gridley High School in 1951, Dooger met his future bride, Miss Dorothy Wheeler, at a church service held in Dooger's home. Dooger and Dorothy would go on to tie the knot on June 13, 1958, Dorothy's 20th birthday. To this union six children would be born, Letricia, Paul, Leonard, Sherita, Juanita and Cricket. Dooger never shied away from hard work. He picked fruit as a young man and went on to share his passion for all things botanical in the classroom and, for many years, as the owner of his own landscaping business. Of greater significance, however, were Dooger's spiritual labors. He was a church leader, teacher, writer, and a student of both Greek and Hebrew. He was a faithful member of the Lord's Church in both Yuba City and Olivehurst for many years. Dooger had several

significant health struggles in his later years, including a stroke, and subsequently a degree of dementia. He was diagnosed with Pneumonia in February of this year and was not able to rally from his accumulated maladies. Dooger is survived by his wife Dorothy, sons Paul Little (Yolanda), Leonard Little (Charla), daughters Letricia Summers (Byron), Sherita Cassity (Sean), Juanita Romans (Frances), Cricket Green (Josh), one brother, Jerry Little, one sister, Selma Ferry, ten grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. This writer counted it a great privilege to celebrate his life and review God's promises for the redeemed with those present.

—Ivan Costa

Announcement

DO YOU NEED THIS BOOK? - The second edition of my book, One Loaf and One Cup: A Scriptural and Historical Survey (expanded and corrected) is now available.

The Covid-19 crisis has challenged the closeness of Christian fellowship, especially in worship, more than any issue of the last 100 years. However, the scriptural and historical case for sharing the loaf and cup in the Lord's Supper remains unchanged and unchallenged.

The new edition is available for \$20 a copy. Shipping is included in that cost. Please send checks payable to Clinton De France to
2121 S. Columbia Ave.
Ste. LL1
Tulsa, OK 74114

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, August 14. In this issue we are publishing a picture of some of the old preachers. Brother Paul Nichols believes this was taken before he and Wilma married in 1949. According to our records they married in Nov of 1949 so this may have been taken at Sulphur in July 1948. He has been of invaluable help in identifying the preachers. I knew several but he knew nearly all of them. We are also publishing an article written by Brother H.C. Harper in the February edition of the Truth, which he published until 1932 when my father, Homer L. King became publisher and the name

was changed to Old Paths Advocate. We are using the article of Bro Harper's as an editorial. As you can see right away, he was straight and to the point. The virus continues to disrupt about everything, everywhere, it seems. The world is in its grip. Let's try to be patient and careful until finally it is in our rear view mirror. Our prayers are ever with and for the faithful.

Rick Martin, teachermartin@gmail.com, August 12. The congregation here is moving along. So far, we have had no problems with the authorities. The governor has opened our state back up with a few restrictions. Some say he has opened it too soon. School in our county opened last week. There have been some glitches along the way, which I suppose are to be expected. My youngest son Ben, teaches and my grandson Noah started pre-k. We pray for the Lord to watch over them and all other essential workers during these unprecedented times. We continue to get request for Bible study course from our TV program. Recently, Matt and I assisted Gaylon Jones in obeying the Gospel. Gaylon is 87 years old. His wife Nell has come to church here for years, longer than any other member. Gaylon never showed any interest in the church, but a few years ago he started to come with her. In fact, we were all a little shocked when he came. We are happy that he finally made the greatest decision he could ever make. I recently enjoyed hearing Carl Johnson at Temple, GA. We made the decision not to have our Annual Singing this year. It is disappointing that we cannot have it. Kevin Presley will be preaching for us the 3rd Sunday. May the Lord bless His people everywhere.

Conrado V. Libertino, Philippines, cvlibertino@yahoo.com. Greetings to you and your love one in Christ name. How are you now a days? I pray that you are fine and in good health. I and my family are fine. About my health I am fine but there are times that my blood sugar and also my Uric acid is high. In the past months I suffered from my arthritis and my legs was swelling and I almost can't walk. I cannot go to my doctor for check up because we Senior Citizens are not allowed to go out and I continue my medication. This time we are under Modified General Community Quarantine for there are cases of covid 19 here in Dipoiog City. Our brethren here and other places are in problems because of this covid 19. No work no pay, businesses was closed even transportation was stopped. We cannot travel outside Dipolog City and to other places and even our schedules was cancelled. We pray that problem about

covid 19 will end in the near future but we don't know if when because covid 19 cases is still going high here in the Philippines. Thank you and God Bless.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bdickinson@juno.com, July 23. Jerry and I were scheduled to hold a meeting together in Tulsa, OK (11th Street Acres Congregation) on the dates of Aug. 2-9. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered us from doing that, we have been asked to conduct a "virtual meeting" which will air on their Web site. Lord willing, I will travel to Tulsa on July 27 (Monday) and be there through the following Wednesday night (July 29). During this 3 day period, Jerry and I will tape 4 sermons each. Also, I've been asked to preach for them on that Wednesday night before making my way back home. It will certainly be a joy to work with Jerry again in an evangelistic effort, giving us two brothers an opportunity to visit for a few days, and I'm also excited about spending some time with Clint DeFrance. Clint is a tireless worker, someone who is always looking for opportunities to evangelize here in America and abroad, and it will be uplifting to spend some time with him. Jerry and I will both be staying in the home of Dwight and Karen Smith. Not only is my wife, Judy, kin to both of them, but they have been our dear friends for many years. Indeed, everything about this trip promises that it should be a delightful experience. In case you haven't read between the lines, what I'm saying is that I'm ready to get out of the house (and Springfield for a while) and go hold a gospel meeting! My prayer is that the Lord will hasten the day when things get back to "normal." Finally, besides laboring with the Jamesville congregation, I have an appointment to preach at Montreal, MO on the 4th Wednesday night of every month. These brethren generally have a full house on Wednesday night, they love the Lord and one another, and their singing is always lively and melodious. What a blessing to be with them!



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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

BY THE 300 (AND 1) THAT LAPPED I WILL SAVE YOU!

By JERRY DICKINSON

“So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, ‘Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.’ And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. Then the Lord said to Gideon, ‘By the 300 men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place.’” Judges 7:5-7

The Bible says the Midianites and children of the East lay along the valley like grasshoppers and their camels could not be numbered. There were at least 120,000 Midianites - an overwhelming force that swarmed into Israel, taking their crops and oppressing the people. God dispatched an angel to a farmer named Gideon, encouraging him to call together an army with the assurance that God would deliver the Midianites into his hand. Gideon, however, was a cautious man to put it mildly. We might even refer to him as Doubting Gideon. He pleaded with the Lord for confirmation of the promised victory before he would proceed.

“Don’t be angry with me Lord,” he pleads, “But I need a sign of assurance.” In fact, he asked for two signs! What is remarkable is that the Lord did not get angry with him and granted his request for the signs. The Lord, obviously, knew his man and realized his faith and courage needed bolstering and condescended to give him the miraculous signs he required to complete the task God has given him. Remember the other skeptic, Doubting Thomas, who also would not believe until he had seen and touched the risen Lord. Amazingly, again Jesus did not get angry with his doubting disciple but told him to see and touch and believe.

The great lesson here, it seems to me, is that the Lord understands our doubts and does not get angry with us, but seeks to reassure our faith and bolster our courage if only we will bring our doubts and misgivings to Him. The Lord could see that Gideon had doubts and misgivings about the challenge before him, and did what was needed to reassure him that Israel would be victorious. Really, no wonder Gideon was skeptical. When he finally sent out a call for men only 32,000 came to his side. Only 32,000 against 120,000 - outnumbered 4 to 1 ! Extraordinarily (in Gideon’s mind for sure) the Lord tells Gideon the men are too many. If, God explains, Israel wins with this number they will think they won by their own prowess. The Lord wants to prove, once and for all, that He is the source of their victory. The Lord has Gideon send home all who are trembling and afraid, and 22,000 trembling soldiers leave. Now Gideon, with 10,000 men left is outnumbered 12 to 1.

Gideon is now instructed to winnow his army down even further by watching them as they drink water. Those who put their faces all the way down and gulp in the water are placed on one side, and those who scoop up water in their hands and lap like a dog are placed on the other side.

Only 300 lap and God tells Gideon, “There is your army! With those 300 men I will deliver 120,000 Midianites into your hand.” Now Gideon is outnumbered 400 to 1 ! Judges 7 details how the Lord gave Gideon a complete victory over an overwhelming force and proved once and for all that the battle is not man’s but the Lord’s. The two tests God used to winnow down Gideon’s fighting force have been called the Fear Test and the Fervency Test. As previously noted, God can use us even if we are doubtful if we will take our doubt to Him. “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,” was the plaintive cry of a father to Jesus and the Lord blessed that man and his son. Doubt is one thing, but trembling with fear is another, especially in a soldier. The Lord cannot use us if we are tremblingly afraid to fight at His side. The second test had to do with fervency and urgency. The 300 who lapped, drank water like the rest but they were urgently ready to fight. They knew what was most important and urgent, unlike the others who were too busy taking care of their own needs to be ready to answer the summons to battle.

God’s fighting forces, then, are those who are courageous and fervent. Those are the people God can and will use to win the battle against evil no matter the odds. Recently, I preached this story and my granddaughter Emma, who is 12 years old, came to me after the sermon and said, “Pepop, you kept saying that God used 300 men to win the battle, but it was 301. You have to count Gideon too!” I told her she was right. Thank the Lord for the inspiring example of the 300 brave and dedicated men, plus Gideon, who, despite doubts and the need for reassurance, trusted that the Lord would give them the victory. God specializes, after all, in things thought impossible. With only 300 men (plus one) God proved there is nothing He cannot do!

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable;

Got any mountains you can’t tunnel through;

God specializes in things thought impossible;

He’ll do the things others cannot do!