

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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VOICES FROM THE PAST...

AMOS REPROVES ISRAEL

Roy J. Hearn

It seems the more sinful and wrong people are in religion, the greater the hatred they have for those who question their conduct, faith and practice.

Amos was a humble, unassuming man. He made no pretensions to being teacher or prophet: "I was no prophet; neither was I a prophet's son" (Amos 7:14). He was a righteous, God-fearing man, studied God's will, loved truth, hated iniquity. Paul said: "Woe unto me, if I preach not the gospel." Amos felt the same: "The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy" (Amos 3:8)? He accepted Jehovah's commission to rebuke the sins of Israel and other idolatrous nations.

Jeroboam the First, sacrificed the true worship of Jehovah for political reasons. He feared the people would forsake him if they continued worshipping at Jerusalem; therefore, he placed a golden calf at Bethel, another at Dan, saying: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (I Kings 12:26-33). Corruption increased. No succeeding king of Israel made things any better. Jeroboam II, during whose reign Amos prophesied, was as bad as his predecessors. Amos was sent from Tekoa in Judah to cry against the sins of Israel and turn them to God.

ISRAEL'S SINS

Israel's sins are many: "I know

how manifold are thy transgressions, and how mighty your sins." Jehovah searches the heart. He can know our every thought (I Sam. 16:7; Rom. 8:27). We must needs be pure within (Matt. 5:8). Amos named some specific sins of Israel.

1. They corrupted true worship — turned to idols (5:5). At Bethel was a golden calf. Various idols were worshipped at Gilgal and Beersheba. Some passed by Jerusalem, the true place of worship and sacrifice, to Beersheba, long time rendezvous of idols. How often now do God's people pass up the worship of Jehovah and pass on to the temple of idols of worldly ambition and pleasure (James 4:4; I John 2:15-17)?

2. They hated those who reproved them (5:10). They persecuted God's preachers and faithful people. Israel was wholly determined to do evil, and could not stand reproof. Amaziah, priest of Bethel, accused Amos of conspiring against the king and that the land was not able to bear his words (7:10). Amos was invited to leave the country, "Go back to Judah; prophecy no more at Bethel." Israel had not only grown so corrupt that they hated one who rebuked them, but were so full of wickedness they abhorred a righteous man.

Micaiah always spoke the word

of Jehovah instead of seeking to please the people. Ahab said: "But I hate him; for he doeth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil" (I Kings 22:8). Micaiah could not do otherwise. Stephen was stoned to death because he condemned the wickedness of the Jews (Acts 7). Christ was hated for preaching against sin and error (John 8:30-44). Paul queried: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Gal. 4:16)? Ahab asked Elijah: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (I Kings 18:17)? The demons said to Christ: "Let us alone" (Mark 1:24).

Such attitudes are not too rare among church members today. Too many are frequenting the halls of Gilgal and Beersheba. Too often do they spew venom at godly preachers and elders who seek to turn them to righteousness. Too many preachers have suffered unjustly the ruination of their reputations by ungodly church members who were determined to pursue evil as Israel did. How often do denominationalists reject the saving Gospel, telling us to keep it to ourselves? "Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish" (Prov. 12:1). "Reprove not a scorner, lest he

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Amos Reproves Israel...



Editorial...

WHERE THE CHURCH GETS ITS FUNDS

An announcement has been received from the **Graymere Church of Christ** in Columbia, Tennessee. They are announcing a REVIVAL in March 2008 — the 6th Annual Youth Workers Retreat. They include a list of eleven speakers. The only reason we mention this event is to point out the Registration Fee of \$60 per person for the weekend. They tell us though that if you're married, your wife can attend free.

I've studied and searched the Bible my whole life and have never found a scripture that authorizes the church to charge people to attend or participate in a spiritual service. Colossians 3:17 demands that we have Bible authority for all we SAY and for all we DO. Having a Revival weekend is something that is being done. So, the question is, where, what scripture, authorizes charging (such as a registration fee) for attending this event put on by the church? I wonder, could you attend if you don't register? Could you attend if you just stood in the back? I contacted them over a month ago asking for scriptures that authorizes the church charging for its services. I received an acknowledgment of my letter but it did not include even an attempt to explain or defend their practice.

The Bible authorizes *how* and *when* the church is to obtain the funds it needs to do its work. I Corinthians 16:1-2 says, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." The Scriptures authorize Christians to make free-will offerings every first day of the week. From these funds, the church works in three areas: *evangelism* (spreading the Gospel to the lost), *benevolence* (helping the needy), *exhortation* (building up the saints through Bible instruction). The Bible

nowhere authorizes the church to have garage sales, bake sales, entertainment venues or beg from the general public.

Since the New Testament is our authority and example, can you imagine the church at Antioch or Jerusalem announcing that Paul and Peter would be speaking and then charge people thirty pieces of silver to attend? What if all the apostles came together in Rome, Athens or Ephesus? That certainly would be an event well worth attending and hearing them preach the unadulterated Gospel of Christ! Can you imagine the church charging a registration fee to attend? I guarantee you one thing, you wouldn't hear any uncertain sounds among the apostles (cf. I Cor. 14:8). They would preach the whole truth and nothing but the truth (Acts 20:20,26-27). I wonder, do you think they would address the subject of having Bible authority for all we say and do? Do you think they would make sure they could point to a verse which authorized their teaching and practice? The Holy Spirit made clear to us all that whatever we *do* or *say* is only approved by God when we act according to his instructions (Col. 3:17). So, what verse(s) instructs (authorizes) us to charge people to hear us speak?

The Gospel is free to the whole world. We beg and plead for people to listen. Our task is to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). We must preach Christ and him crucified (I Cor. 2:2). As faithful servants of the Lord, we cry aloud and spare not, showing people their transgressions and sins (Isa. 58:1). We beg for people to "...stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16). But, as the people of Jeremiah's day, so often brethren today say, "We will not walk therein." So many are like Israel of old, concerning which, God tells Isa-

iah, "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, **children that will not hear the law of the LORD:** Which say to the seers, **See not;** and to the prophets, **Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:** Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" (Isa. 30:8-11).

I can't imagine why people don't want to hear the Truth; and sadly, multitudes of brethren are among this number. Jude 3 tells us to "earnestly contend for the faith." Are you obeying this verse? I John 4:1 tells us to test and examine those who come before us with their teaching and practice because many false teachers have gone out into the world. Are you obeying this verse? II John 9-11 warns us to not fellowship those who do not hold to the doctrine (teaching) of Christ. We are not to support or encourage them in any way. And, if we do fellowship them, we do not meet God's approval; as a matter of fact, we stand condemned in his sight. Our job is to call attention to those who act without a "thus saith the Lord" (Rom. 16:17). "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:18). False teachers and workers must be pointed out and rebuked. Brethren must be warned of them (Rom. 16:17). We are not to follow the "pernicious" (deadly, harmful) ways of false teachers and workers (II Peter 2:2). How many have ever read any of these verses? Do they even know they exist? How many have ever pondered their meaning? How many will say, I know that's what they say, but that's not what they mean. Well, what do they mean? If they don't mean what they say, then what do they mean? Someone step forward and expound upon them for us that we all may learn the way of the Lord more perfectly.

Do you love the truth (Zech. 8:19)? Will you stand in the gap (Ezek. 22:30)? Will you be among that number who say, "speak Lord, thy servant heareth" (cf. I Sam. 3:10)?

THE ARMY OF THE LORD

Lindon Ferguson

The church is spoken of under different figures. It is referred to as: a *body* with Christians as members (I Cor. 12:12-27; Rom. 12:4-5); a *vineyard* with Christians as workers (Matt. 20:1-16); a *temple* with Christians as worshipers (Eph. 2:21; I Peter 2:5).

One of the most striking pictures of the church is the simile of the body of Christ depicted as an *army*. There is to be a **militant** spirit characterizing the church as each member marches loyally under the banner of their Heavenly King. The purpose of this conflict is to become conquerors over Satan and evil.

The warfare spoken of is not *carnal*. It is a *moral* conflict. This is a conflict of truth against error, of knowledge against ignorance, of light against darkness, of righteousness against unrighteousness, of Christ against Satan.

In the battle against false ways and evil forces we must “*put on the whole armour of God*” (Eph. 6:11), “*war a good warfare*” (I Tim. 1:18) and “*fight the good fight of faith*” (I Tim. 6:12). The purpose of accomplishing these things is that we may one day be able to enjoy the bliss of heaven. This is the end that Paul had in mind when he wrote “*to stand against the wiles of the devil*” (Eph. 6:11), “*to withstand in the evil day*” (Eph. 6:13) and “*to lay hold on eternal life*” (I Tim. 6:12). We do not have the option to enter this battle and to leave it at our own discretion and be pleasing to God. Those who are his New Testament people are either with him or against him. In this conflict between righteousness and unrighteousness, neutrality is out of the question (cf. Matt. 12:30).

As this article begins to set forth certain features about this spiritual army, let it be pointed out, with sadness, that some of our brethren are no longer fighting. Please consider the following features of this army:

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THIS ARMY IS CHRIST

The commander of our salvation is without spot and blemish. He is a

perfect commander (Heb. 2:10; 4:15; 7:26; I Peter 2:22). He has all power in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). He is the head of all things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23). We make no mistake by following Christ (Heb. 12:1-3; I Cor. 11:1). To follow Christ means that our God will supply for us that which is necessary for our protection in this conflict with evil (Eph. 6:10-17). We must put on the armour, unsheathe the sword of the Spirit and engage the enemy head on. To follow Christ means also that we are to be praying soldiers (Eph. 6:18), adding the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-11), maturing in the Christian life (Heb. 5:12-14; II Peter 3:18) and willing to examine self (II Cor. 13:5). With such information before us, we can say with Paul, “*For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*” (II Tim. 1:12).

THIS ARMY IS MADE UP OF VOLUNTEERS

One is not drafted into this army, but it is for “*whosoever will come*” (Rev. 22:17; Matt. 11:28-30). No one is forced to serve God. Before entering this army one must decide if the cause is worth fighting for and will there be victory. The apostle Paul has well supplied the answer to such questions in Romans 6:23. Here we read, “*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” Salvation is in Christ (Acts 4:12; II Tim. 1:10).

In order for the volunteer to become a part of Christ’s spiritual army, he must possess *faith* (Rom. 10:17), he must *repent* (Acts 17:30), he must *confess faith* in Christ (Acts 8:37) and he must be *baptized* for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). He who will do this and be a loyal soldier, has in prospect a glorious retirement in death (Rev. 14:13).

ONE OFFENSIVE WEAPON IS TO BE UTILIZED BY THIS ARMY

Every observation thus far suggests an army that is unusual in its

makeup. In this main point we learn that the one offensive weapon is also unusual. The weapon referred to is the “*sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (Eph. 6:17). This instrument of spiritual battle is sharper than any literal two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). This sword will lay bare our false pride, prejudice, compromise and friendship with the forces of evil. When the nomenclature of this weapon is very familiar to us, and then with proper use, we will be victorious over unrighteousness. When attired with truth, righteousness, the Gospel of peace, the broad shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, we become heaven’s most powerful argument against sin. However, be it known, that God knows what we are doing and what we are not doing with that which he has supplied us with (cf. Job 34:21; Prov. 15:3; Heb. 4:13).

A FURLOUGH IS UNKNOWN TO THIS ARMY

In the army of the land, one may take a furlough and do or not do as he pleases. In this army, however, we are always, under normal/general conditions, to be available to worship God.

Christians can take vacations and be gone from home, but this does not relieve them of their responsibility to worship (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9; Heb. 10:25; John 14:15). How sad it is for a Christian to think he has the right to put God out of his life for two weeks (or more) every year. Deserters from this army, without repentance, face a punishment that no court martial could ever declare, the eternal Gehenna (II Peter 2:20-22; Rev. 21:8; 20:15; Mark 9:43-48).

SATAN IS THE DEADLY OPPONENT

There are a number of names found in the Bible for this evil opponent. The word Satan means *adversary*. This term is used in the Old Testament 19 times with 14 of them found in the book of Job. It is used 35 times in the New Testament. Satan is an adversary who lies in wait. The

term devil means *slanderer* or *false accuser*. In considering just these two names we can easily see and know that we must never let our guard down. To remove the sentry while the enemy is near would render us foolish (I Peter 5:8; Eph. 6:11; II Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:15-17). May we continually be mindful of Peter's words in reference to the devil, "*Whom resist steadfast in the faith*" (I Peter 5:9).

CONCLUSION

One day there will be a great reunion for the faithful soldiers of Christ when He comes to take us home (I Thess. 4:13-18). The crown will be awarded because we "*fought a good fight, finished the course, kept the faith*" (II Tim. 4:7).

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HOW LONG BEFORE WE SAY, ENOUGH!

Charles Coats

One of the things that has been a great detriment to the work of the church in recent years are the so-called Christian colleges. Regardless of what they were years ago, these institutions are working hard to make the church like every other religious body on the face of the earth. They are systematically taking away the distinctiveness of the blood-bought institution of Jesus Christ.

One such college that has done much damage to the church is **Rochester College** (formerly **Michigan Christian College**) in Rochester, Michigan. Over the years, they have provided a forum for various false teachers, and even had a preachers training seminar that used a keynote speaker who was not a member of the church and another speaker who was Dean of Bible at Notre Dame University. They have also had at least one unity forum with Great Lakes Christian College of Lansing, Michigan (a Christian Church institution).

Just this week, we received an invitation from Rochester College to come to a new seminar they are having — "RESOURCE! A Seminar for Christian Leaders and Ministers" (www.rc.edu/resource). Without even noticing the speakers for this seminar, it is easy to see it is going to take the church farther from God. Note these two statements from the brochure.

*Anyone who doesn't occasionally feel overwhelmed by the demands of Christian ministry may not be taking **his or HER** calling seriously enough.* (Emphasis mine, c.c.)

*It continues the high standard of format, venue, **ECUMENICAL SPIRIT**, and solid textual and theological grounding.* (Emphasis mine, c.c.)

Since Rochester College also recently held a Diversity Seminar in which they promoted more public roles for women in the church, it is not surprising to see that they

include women in the ministry.

Besides the statements quoted above, when one looks at the speakers and the topics they will discuss, we can clearly understand that the church will not gain from this seminar, but will be weakened. All of the lessons are based on the theme for the seminar —

"Reading 1 Corinthians and Doing Christian Ministry." The speakers and their topics are as follows:

Gordon Fee — "Reading 1 Corinthians"

Bob Russell — "1 Corinthians & Christian Leadership"

Sally Morgenthaler — "Reading 1 Corinthians and Reconsidering Worship and Evangelism"

Kenneth Greene — "Reading 1 Corinthians and Working with Diversity and Justice"

Mike Cope — "Preaching 1 Corinthians"

Rubel Shelly — "Reading 1 Corinthians and Reconsidering Issues of Divorce and Remarriage"

The last three speakers all claim to be members of the church of Christ, but Mike Cope and Rubel Shelly have long been known to make no distinction between the church and the denominational world. In fact, they have long promoted fellowship between the church and the denominations.

The first speaker listed, Gordon Fee, according to the brochure sent with the invitation is an "*ordained minister with the Assemblies of God.*" The second speaker listed, Bob Russell, is said to be retired now, but "*became the pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, at age 22.*" The third speaker listed, Sally Morgenthaler, has no church affiliation mentioned but is said to help "*churches craft worship experiences that help them shift from maintaining a subculture to transforming their surrounding communities*" (whatever that means!).

Since the brochure says that Sally Morgenthaler "*has been a significant influence in the discussion of Christian worship for fifteen years,*" I thought it would be interesting to

know more about her. Since she is an influence in Christian worship, then it would be easy to assume that she is a member of the church. However, such is not the case. Sally Morgenthaler is the on-site worship consultant for Denver Seminary and Pathways Church. She has been the featured speaker at several seminars, including those of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The Reformed Church in America, The Presbyterian Church USA, The Brethren Church, Disciples of Christ, The United Methodist Church, and The Wesleyan Church, to name a few. This information is from Malone College (www.malone.edu/4033) which gave Sally Morgenthaler its Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar award.

Christians should be alert to the dangers of reconsidering things from God's word, especially when promoted by those who are known to want to change the church from what God desires to what they desire. The lessons as noted above include two such ideas to "reconsider:" Worship and Evangelism and Issues of Divorce and Remarriage. Change is written all over these lessons, yet many Christians will attend this seminar and take these changes back to their congregations and help their own congregations fall away from God.

How long before we say, "Enough!" Have we gone so far in the church that we no longer see the error in being a partaker with those that are contrary to the will of God (Eph. 5:7,11)? Have we gone so far that we do not see the error in the things which are going on at Rochester College (II Thess. 2:11,12)?

This is a ministers and leaders seminar put on by a so-called Christian College that claims its affiliation with the church of Christ that uses an Assemblies of God preacher, a Christian Church preacher, a woman in a leadership role that will go to any religious group to spread her views, and false teachers from within the church. Is this not enough to wake up the faithful members of the church who will rise up and say, "Enough!" Or, is it too late, and we have already been overtaken by the Devil?

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INSTANT CHRISTIANITY

Rod Rutherford

We live in an age of speed. We try to cram as many activities into a day as possible. With many, the definition of a successful person is one who is always busy, always on the run, and has more demands made on his time than he can possibly satisfy. Because of this fast pace of life, a host of consumer services and products have been marketed. "Fast food" restaurants, which specialize in ready made food so the traveler can get on his way quickly have become the vogue. For the hurried, harried housewife, there is a great variety of quick foods such as TV dinners, "pop in the oven" pizzas, instant potatoes, instant pudding, instant coffee, etc. Everything is available to us instantly. We have come to expect and demand such services and products.

In other aspects of our lives, we also seek instant gratification. Many young couples unrealistically expect to begin married life in a modern home with all the labor-saving gadgets it took their parents 20 years to accumulate. "Shortcuts" up the career ladder are sought so that one can quickly be promoted into the higher paying brackets without having to toil for years to work oneself into such positions.

Sadly, many view Christianity in the same way as they view their consumer products or career aspirations. They want instant results and so they attempt to bypass the daily struggle over a long period of time to achieve spiritual maturity. Prayer "seminars," fasting, and emotion filled, clapping, stamping "workshops" are offered to guarantee instant "spirituality." The years of diligent study of God's Word, of prayer and daily cross-bearing which are essential for a sound, solid, well-balanced spiritual maturity are set aside in the vain hope to achieve this instant spirituality. Those who think they have become mature by such shallow means soon find that when the emotions subside, when the "feeling" is gone, and trials confront them, they do not have the spiritual resources necessary to overcome.

There is a great desire in our brotherhood today to achieve instant

church growth by the same type of approach. Personal work methods that move and manipulate by psychological pressure and cultic techniques are applied. A whole host of social and recreational activities are offered to draw the unthinking masses. There will always be those who come seeking the loaves and the fishes as in Jesus' day (John 6:26,27). When the loaves and fishes run out, they are soon gone on to some other organization which will supply their carnal cravings.

The Jerusalem church is often cited by advocates of instant church growth as proof that their approach works. What they do not stop to consider is that the response of 3,000 souls on Pentecost (Acts 2) was the natural fruit of a harvest long cultivated by prophets of old who foretold the coming of the Messiah, by widespread knowledge of the Scriptures among the Jews, by the ministry of John, the Harbinger of the Christ, whose preparatory work shook Judaism to its foundation; and by the personal ministry of our Lord Himself. Jesus' three years of patient preaching, marvelous miracles, and training of the Twelve bore fruit on Pentecost Day. There was already a great body of believers in Jesus in Israel as evidenced by the fact that in one of His recorded post-resurrection appearances, "He was seen of above 500 brethren at once" (I Cor. 15:6). The conversion of the multitude on Pentecost and the continuing conversion of great numbers in Jerusalem was not instant church growth, but the culmination of much preparation and planting over a long period of time.

The only way to build a strong mature faith that will meet the trials of life and carry one safely through to the Celestial Shore is by daily cross-bearing, diligent study, persistent prayer, much meditation, and increased strength as a result of surmounting spiritual obstacles (James 1:2-4). The only way to build a strong,

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Instant Christianity...

"BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN"

James E. Farley

The apostle Paul issues a warning to the Lord's church at Ephesus concerning the danger of immaturity in the Christian faith resulting in their being "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). The New King James Version has this verse, "...no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting..."

The Lord expects us to GROW (Eph. 5:15; Heb. 5:11-14; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18). The way of the Lord demands that we be alive; and any living thing that is not growing is either dead or dying. It is true that we have to die to become a Christian...die to sin...crucify the old man...but Christ must LIVE in us by faith as we rise to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-6; Gal. 2:20). As we walk this new life in Christ, we must renew our minds daily through study and use of the Word of righteousness.

Only by the Lord's Word can we discern good from evil, right from wrong (Rom. 6:3-5; I John 1:5-7; II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 4:16; II Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:13-14).

The devil, our adversary, does not want us knowledgeable. He does not want us to grow in knowledge and grace, for his two main tools are *ignorance* and the *lie*. It is easy to lie to ignorant folks! Satan cares not that a person, or a group of people, are zealous, just as long as they are ignorant (Rom. 10:1-3). The father of lies and liars (John 8:44) has little trouble convincing ignorant people of his false ways, for if a person does not know the Truth (John 8:31-32), how will he be able to judge whether a doctrine or practice is right or wrong? Yes indeed...it is easy to lie to ignorant folks!

God has placed the treasure of the Gospel in earthen vessels (human beings). That means he has given the commission to preach the good news to men, not to spiritual

beings (Compare II Cor. 4:7; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:26,29; Acts 9:6,10-17; Acts 10:1-6). So too, Satan uses men to carry on his deceptive work. He has ministers, and they, like him, are very active in carrying out their father's bidding, deceiving and being deceived (II Cor. 11:13-15; II Tim. 3:13). These troublemakers pervert the Gospel of Christ, and lead men and women into a snare to become captives of the devil (Gal. 1:6-10; II Tim. 2:25-26; 3:5-9). Keep in mind that they do this with deception and trickery. They appear to be "ministers of righteousness" (II Cor. 11:15).

We know that Satan is active and very successful among and through denominational churches, and for years we have prepared ourselves to fight "against the wiles of the devil" on that front (Eph. 6:10-20). However, when those from among our own number turn out to be his deceitful disciples, it delivers a blow that is staggering indeed. This is especially true when we have come to love and trust the one who turns out to be a heretic (Titus 3:10-11).

Paul wrote of some "false brethren" who came in "privily" (Gal. 2:4). Jude says they "crept in unawares" (Jude 4). You see, they sneak in, for they are of their father, the devil. They "lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). They ambush using lies and hypocrisy as their camouflage. They are ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15-20; Acts 20:27-32). Think for a minute about that picture. Think what one lone wolf could do to a flock of innocent, unsuspecting sheep! Obviously the Lord wants us aware of this great danger, and He wants us to prepare to meet them and stop their pernicious ways! Therefore, we must "try the spirits" to see whether they are of God, and if they do not have the doctrine of Christ, they must be marked and avoided (I John 4:1; II John 9-11; Rev. 2:2; Rom. 16:17-18). Furthermore, when one of these heretics is uncovered and warned twice, he must be rejected. Notice the urgency in Titus 3:10-11. If a wolf is loose in the flock, we do not use tolerance and patience

PARENTS, AMERICANS, BEWARE!

A joint project by the **National Education Association (NEA)** and the **American Psychological Association (APA)** is giving parents 16,000 new reasons to question the agenda of national teachers' union leaders. The NEA and APA have partnered to produce a booklet titled, "Just the Facts about Sexual Orientation and Youth," which they plan to distribute to every superintendent in America's 16,000 school districts. Among the so-called "facts" in the 24-page document is the opinion that homosexuality is "a normal expression of human sexuality." The booklet also warns teachers not to discuss "transformational ministries" that suggest homosexuality is a condition that can be changed. Religious-based views are regarded as harmful, if not dangerous. This is no surprise to those who have followed the leftward drift of the NEA leadership. For years, the organization has used teachers' dues to subsidize its top officials' left-wing fanaticism, which includes everything from promoting homosexuality and abortion in schools to pushing birth control. The APA is no better. In the past few decades, the group has gone from listing homosexuality as a mental disorder to becoming one of its biggest champions in the public square. Now both groups are using their influence to transform public schools into incubators for their radical social agendas. These lessons in political correctness must stop! Log on to www.frc.org and download the real facts about "Homosexuality in Your Child's School"

—Mark McWhorter, Pell City, AL

with him. We do what we can quickly to rid the flock of this pressing danger.

Brethren, may God help us to be loving in all we do for Him (Eph. 4:15). We must love Him first and foremost with all our heart, mind, soul and strength (Mark 12:30). We must love Jesus who is the Christ; the one who bled and died for us (I John 4:19). If we truly love Him we will obey Him (John 14:15). We must love the church of Christ, purchased with the precious blood of the Lamb (Titus 3:15; I Peter 1:22; 3:8; I John 3:14-16; 5:1-3). Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25). We must love the Word of God that directs us as a lamp in this dark world of sin and error (Psalm 119:97, 104-105, 127). And, we must love the souls of men and women even to the point of warning them of these kinds of dangers. Paul loved the church and he warned of the dangers of wolves within (Acts 20:28-32).

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Instant Christianity...

(Continued from page 21)

sound, growing church that will continue to increase is by patient plowing and planting of God's Word in the "good and honest hearts" of men (Luke 8:15). A steady diet of strong Gospel preaching from the pulpit and Bible teaching from the classroom, coupled with wise oversight of godly elders who truly care for the souls of the flock, is the only formula for church growth that will be pleasing to God and eternal in its results.

Mighty Rome was not built in a day nor is a great congregation or a strong Christian character developed instantly. Let us follow God's ways, not man's and we can be assured of success as it is measured by God's infallible Word, not by man's shallow standards.

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Amos Reproves Israel...

(Continued from page 17)

hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee" (Prov. 9:8).

It seems the more sinful and wrong people are in religion, the greater the hatred they have for those who question their conduct, faith and practice. As then, so now, *"They abhor him that speaketh uprightly"* (Amos 5:10). What shall we do? God said to Ezekiel: *"Son of man...hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me"* (3:17). Thus he must be freed from the blood of others. Paul would not give place to false brethren, *"no, not for an hour"* (Gal. 2:5). *"Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith"* (Titus 1:13). *"Preach the word"* (II Tim. 4:1-4). Have courage such as these faithful men of God. The church needs far more reproofing, sharply, and less of the type of so-called love that is lulling the church into perdition.

3. Israel oppressed the poor, perverted justice (5:11-13). Their judgments became bitter and nauseating before God. The poor were helpless. Only the rich, by bribery, could get a favorable decision. No matter how clear his case and his innocence, the poor was trampled upon; he had not wherewith to bribe the judge, and court decisions were for sale. Great burdens were placed upon the poor; unjust amounts were exacted from them in rent and taxes. In this, Israel violated the law forbidding bribes and injustice against the poor (Exodus 23:6-8; Deut. 16:18-20).

God loves the poor. He blesses those who help the poor (Prov. 28:27; Matt. 19:21). Christ teaches to work to that end (Acts 20:35). Early Christians were very liberal toward needy brethren (Acts 4:34-35). One will not go to heaven merely because he is poor, he must be righteous. The poor have made some rich.

In face of the injustice of Israel, Amos said: *"Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silent in such a time"* (5:13). Some of our courts are now no better than Israel's. Then, if poor, he would not receive justice, regardless of his innocence. Greater burdens would be placed upon him. Under such conditions the poor would be better off to keep their mouth shut,

being helpless.

Sometimes prudence may be promoted by selfishness. Some keep silent to their own profit even though others are being defrauded and their souls destroyed by false teachers. One should be prudent, but not exercise it to his own profit to the hurt of the Cause of Christ. Even in the face of persecution and loss of property or life, the servant of God must stand immovable for right. Jonah could not escape his duty, neither can we.

EXHORTATION

Israel's temples of idolatry faced ruin and Israel was threatened with extinction (Amos 5:5-6). God is a righteous judge. He is a consuming fire. Turn to him (Isa. 55:6-7). Israel refused the overtures of the prophet. Some few were perhaps saved by the preaching of Amos, but the nation was carried into Assyrian captivity about 721 B.C., never to return.

"Seek good, and not evil" (Amos 5:14). Israel was exhorted to be honest and just, to *"hate evil, and love the good."* "Love is of God; hate is of the devil," but not always. If men love evil and hate good, both are of the devil. If they love good and hate evil, both are of God. If one loves good, he will hate evil; if he hates evil, he will love good. If one does not love what is good, he does not hate evil; if he does not love the truth, he does not hate error (Psalm 97:10; Prov. 13:5; Rom. 12:9). Whoever loves God supremely, strives diligently to do His will.

Amos was the best friend Israel had. He warned them of God's wrath and sought to turn them from sin unto salvation. The best friend one has now is he who tells him the truth unto salvation (John 8:32). It is strange that intelligent persons will cling to evil and error they know will send them to perdition; and at the same time, hate him who seeks to save them. *"...Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel"* (Ezek. 33:11)?

My fellow-preacher, elder, deacon, where do you stand? **Are you an Amos or an Ahab? Are you a Paul or a Pilate?** In these days threatening the church of our Lord, do you stand upon the Rock; or, are you keeping silent?



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"The Olive St. church of Christ, 420 N. Olive St., Mexico, MO is seeking a full-time preacher who is dedicated to teaching the truth, capable of teaching and doing personal work a must. We are a congregation of 20-30 members. We can pay \$25,000. If more is needed they will need to raise their own support. We do not have a house. We are in a mission area in a town of just under 12,000, good family orientated town with good schools, about 40 miles from Columbia, MO where the University of Missouri is Located. Send resume, sermon tape or DVD to Olive St. church of Christ, 420 N. Olive St., Mexico, MO 65265, Attn: Search committee. Email to wlsnyder@mywdo.com or lnoosaman@mexicommo.net. Thanks" ...**Wesley Snyder, Mexico, MO.** "Thanks so much" ...**Jean Blansett.** "We are still enjoying *Seek The Old Paths*. Thanks" ...**Aubrey & Barbara Michael, Corinth, MS.** [NOTE: Gladys Scott, sister Michael's mother, has recently gone to her reward. She was a loving and faithful member of the church for more than 80 years. She always had a warm smile and delightful disposition. She was an encourager of Gospel preaching and Gospel preachers. She will be greatly missed. —editor] "Thanks" ...**Mark Rennix, Valley Bend, WV.** "Enjoy your paper. Would like to add our preacher to your mailing list" ...**Ronald McConkey, Terre Haute, IN.** "My article you printed in STOP has received quite a response. All of them have been positive. I hope this may help people be reminded of the great commission. Thanks for printing it" ...**Roger Scully, Morgan City, LA.** "I would love to receive *Seek The Old Paths* and also if I could, I would like to have it sent to my nephew" ...**Dale Summers, Higginsville, MO.** "A small contribution to help. Your STOP paper is indeed inspiring and true, greatly needed to spread the true Gospel. Thank you for sending it to me. Keep up the true work of God" ...**Helan F. Huddleston, Louisville, KY.** "Our cousin had the *Seek The Old Paths* mailed to us. We look forward to reading it each month. Please keep it coming and add the addresses below to your mailing list. Please keep our names anonymous from the mailbag and the contribution list. Thank-you" ...**Anonymous.** "Thank you" ...**Susan Patten, Cedar Hill, TX.** "Thank you so much" ...**Jim & Judy Marshall, Chattanooga, TN.** "Please remove my name from *Seek The Old Paths* bulletin. Thanks" ...**Jack Hayes, Valdosta, GA.** "Brother Robinson, I was in the process of reading the December, 2007 issue when I thought to send you this note. This is a great issue. I assume that the editorial was yours. I especially like the comparison use of the eye glasses, walking stick and P.A. system. Brother Scully was to the point on an issue with which I also have had some concerns through the years. I know of one congregation that has several thousand "sitting" in the bank for a building fund. This is a congregation of less than 50 and their current building seats 200 or more. They are generous at times when it comes to giving but for some reason refuse to touch the several thousand. What will the brethren do with all this money on the Day of Judgement? Keep up the good work" ...**Rickey Burks, McMinnville, TN.** "Thank you" ...**Richard Weight, Florence, OR.** "Our address has changed. We love the paper and would love to continue to receive it" ...**Joe Dickey, Adamsville, TN.** "Dear brother. Greetings to you from Sullurpet church of Christ. We are doing fine here by the grace of God and by the prayers of the saints. Please pray for me and the work here brother. Happy new year to you and your family" ...**S. Dhananjaya, India.** "Thank you" ...**Dan Freda, Evansville, IN.** "Thanks. I really enjoy the paper. Keep up the good work" ...**Wesley Snyder, Mexico, MO.** "You have so much good help in the STOP. Hope I can keep on getting it" ...**name withheld, OH.** "We would love to receive *Seek The Old Paths*. We are interested in the true doctrine of Christ. Thank you" ...**Roy McGaugh, Gatesville, TX.** "Please send us the magazine" ...**Woodrow Miller, Dayton, OH.** "Greetings from the church that meets in Allenhurst, Georgia. We have been receiving your sound publications for some years. It continues to be one of the best publications in the brotherhood. We request that you continue to send us a bundle each month. Please accept the enclosed check and use it in whatever way you deem best for the publishing and distribution of this good work. May God continue to bless you in your good efforts" ...**Bob Miller, Allenhurst, GA.** "I have been receiving *Seek The Old Paths* for several years. I appreciate it so much. It has been a great help to me. Usually read it from cover to cover as soon as it arrives. May God bless your efforts and those of your staff and writers in exposing error. Thank you

so much" ...**Dortha McCutcheon, Argyle, TX.** "I have received STOP for quite some time. It has been a great aid in my study of the Bible and my determination to keep the faith. Here is a small contribution for the cause. God bless in your efforts to reach the lost with the truth" ...**Boyd Meeks, Ravenden, AR.** "Thank you so much! Keep on standing firm for the truth" ...**David & Braunice Jamieson.** "Just saw an old issue of STOP of May 2005. Very interesting. Please send me any number of old issues and please keep me on your mailing list. I am a good friend of Perry Cotham and a well known evangelist in India. Thank you and God bless you" ...**Joshua Gootam, Andhra Pradesh, India.** "I subscribe to your monthly publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. I do enjoy very much. Keep up the good work on your montly newsletter. Just wanted to say thank you for the information you sent me. It will be a help to my daughter. Have a blessed day" ...**Sue Siligato, Millville, NJ.** "I appreciate the articles in STOP and have shared them with my sisters. Please send STOP to them and a friend who is interested in getting it" ...**Shirley Reed.** "Please add our names to your mailing list. Thank you so much" ...**Maurice Crownover, Chattanooga, TN.** "A friend of mine gave me two copies of your monthly publication. I was wondering if I could start receiving this publication through the mail. Thanks" ...**Pat Harris, Shelbyville, TN.** "Thank You!!" ...**Milton Strickland.** "Thank you for helping us to continue on the Old Paths. Please use the donation where it is needed most. May God Bless us all" ...**Ed & Jewel Warfield, Lancaster, CA.** "I would like to sign up for your magazine *Seek The Old Paths*. I picked up a copy at a lectureship in Indianapolis and enjoyed it very much. We attend church at South Holland church of Christ in South Holland and Peter Bumpass is our minister. Thank you" ...**Don Thompson, Park Forest, IL.** "Thanks so much for a wonderful and truthful paper. I am requesting one to be mailed to our preacher, he said he would like to receive it. Thank you again" ...**Wilma Donaldson, Dickson, TN.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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