

# 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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## Strange Things Are Happening

Wade L. Webster

**"A**nd whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "In the name of the Lord Jesus" means by the authority of the Lord, or as the Lord has authorized in His word (Acts 4:7-10). Sadly, there are many things occurring in our world today which are not authorized by the Lord. The Bible often refers to these things as being "strange." As brother Roy Deaver correctly points out, "The Bible often uses the word "strange" in the sense of not acceptable because not authorized." Certainly, many strange (unauthorized) things are happening in the world today.

**STRANGE FIRE** (Lev. 10:1-2). Moses records, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:1-2). Nadab and Abihu offered "strange (unauthorized) fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1). As priests they had been instructed concerning what fire they were to use (Lev. 6:8-13; 16:12-13).

Instead of taking coals off of the altar as God had directed for starting the fire, they chose to do things their own way. God was not pleased with this disobedience and "there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2).

Today, many are still offering "strange" fire before the Lord. For example, many have added the instrument to their worship. This is "strange fire" because it is not authorized by God. God has told us to sing, not to sing and play. Paul records, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). Again he writes to the Colossians: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). In the New Testament God has authorized singing, so anything other than or in addition to singing is unauthorized (i.e., strange fire).

**STRANGE GODS** (Deut. 32:16). Moses records, "They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger" (Deut. 32:16). From the very

beginning, the children of Israel were instructed not to serve idols, yet they did. Moses records, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:3-5). In spite of these instructions, time after time Israel went "a whoring after other gods" (Judges 2:17). In fact, the words "strange god" or "strange gods" are used 18 times in the Old Testament. These gods are referred to as "strange" because they were unauthorized.

Today, many are serving "strange gods." They are serving the gods of prosperity (Matt. 6:24), popularity (Exodus 23:2; Matt. 7:13-14), and pleasure (Gal. 5:19-21). The only God that we are authorized to serve is the God of Heaven (Deut. 6:4-5; Matt. 4:10). Thus to serve any other god would be unauthorized (i.e., a strange god).

(Continued on page 3)  
**STRANGE THINGS...**



*Guest Editorial...*

## CAN WE LEARN FROM HISTORY?

Charles A. Pledge

**W**e often read the Old testament and shake our heads in amazement over the many apostasies of Israel. Theirs was one long up and down history of a people who could not learn from their own mistakes. But, as we compare the people of God in the twentieth century, do not we see the same thing happening? Israel of old thought they were the favored people of God under any and all circumstances. Even in their deepest ruts of apostasy, they considered themselves as deserving of the greatest blessings of God. Too many Christians think the church to be safe and secure spiritually beyond all danger of apostasy. Is this true?

Restoration, that concept of restoring ancient, New Testament Christianity, assumes the fact of apostasy. Restoration is based upon a need: a need to be restored; to be renewed; the need to be put back in its first position. If there is no need, the whole concept of restoration is invalid. Rubel Shelly says there is no need. He affirms that we have misunderstood the church; that there was no falling away because the perfect church never existed. Rubel Shelly notwithstanding, however, the church did fall away. Paul spoke of the falling away that was to come. He wrote in II Thess. 2:1-3: *"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor*

*by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."* Paul the apostle, and Rubel the doctor, differ. As for me, I shall believe Paul the apostle.

It is contradictory to speak of restoration while all the time thinking that we have finished the work of restoring. The work will never be finished in the strictest sense so long as mortals compose the membership of the church for which Jesus died. This is not to argue that we have not seen the church restored in its organization, work and worship. Rather, it is to argue the mortal membership; for mortals have a long history of apostasy. We have the right concept. We have seen right efforts put forth, and we have seen the right effects produced. But we must continue the work of restoring because no sooner have we completed the work of today than the work of yesterday begins to be undermined and torn down. Every generation must deal with the results of the work of skeptics among us who are discontented with the simple way of the Lord. These skeptics will destroy. They thrive on tearing down. Someone must rebuild what they have torn down. That work is the work of restoration.

So complacent have we become that in many areas, reformation rather than restoration is the battle cry. The church of our

Lord, upon failing to please God, has fallen away. The church fallen away must be restored; raised again to its first position. Reformation merely patches a work; it never completes it. Reformation is the sectarian concept. It never did work. It can't work. The seeds of defeat are embedded within its basic premises. Reformation is pluralistic in concept. It is the doctrine that two contradictory premises are both right at the same time. Look at denominationalism over the past 200 years. It has grown corrupt to the core. Where do you find defense of every sin condemned by God in his word? in denominationalism! Who are the leaders in defense of sin in most communities? denominational leaders. Such corruption is the result of pluralism. Everything is right; no one is wrong.

There are many congregations that need restoring today; congregations which have fallen so far from God that they may not be identified by the New Testament as the Lord's people. They need to be restored. And so long as one congregation is in need of restoration, the work of restoration will never be finished. Surely, even the most idealistic, impractical individual will agree with this conclusion.

The church is eternal in nature. It's seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). So long as the seed exists, the church exists, at least in seed form. But, as Israel of old became so sinful, God brought the bondage of slavery upon the whole, spiritual Israel may also become sinful by failing to practice and teach God's truth. Apostasy of one congregation does not mean that all the other congregations of the Lord's people will fall with them. Even if all but one congregation became apostate, this would not demand the last one to also become apostate.

When we see a brother err from the truth, do we want to

reform or restore him? Do we want to patch him up and get him back in our midst, or do we want to convert him from error and sin (James 5:19-20)? Should this not also be our disposition concerning congregations which depart from the truth? Restoration: the raising back to the first position, should be our aim. And, so long as time continues, restoration should be an active work by every one who loves the Lord and desires his way to be exalted. We have restored the worship of God. By that we mean that we have learned to identify and practice the worship God wants of us – at least to a small portion of the world. But what about the billions who have never even heard of Jesus, let alone learned how to worship the heavenly Father in truth? Do they not all shout the need for restoration to be continued? We have learned that the local congregation must be governed by elders and served by deacons. But what of that growing sentiment among us (copied from our religious neighbors) that the preacher is in charge and we must have a paid staff of servants to serve our needs? Does such not demand restoration? And what of the concept of the work of the church being limited to building buildings and entertaining us all the time? Surely, there is a crying need for restoration! Let us restore!

If Israel of old had been blessed with leaders every generation such as Nehemiah, Ezra and others of like disposition to restore, they would never have fallen into such disrepute with God and such miserable, abject suffering they underwent because of their apostasies. Let us learn from their mistakes; and from our own. If we choose to ignore history we are doomed to repeat its failures.

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## STRANGE THINGS...

(Continued from page 1)

**STRANGE WIVES** (I Kings 11:8). *“But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart”* (I Kings 11:1-3). In I Kings 11:8 the Bible refers to these wives as “strange wives.” These wives of Solomon were referred to as “strange” because they were not authorized by God. It is true that the word “strange” has reference to their being foreigners, but it also has reference to their being unauthorized. God’s people were instructed not to intermarry because of the idolatry of the heathen nations.

Solomon disobeyed the Lord and married these idolatrous women who *“turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father”* (I Kings 11:4). We read of a similar problem in the days of Ezra (Ezra 10:10-12) and Nehemiah (Neh. 13:23-27).

In the New Testament we also read of a man who had taken a “strange” (unauthorized) wife unto himself. King Herod had taken his brother Phillip’s wife. John the baptizer said unto Herod, *“It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife”* (Mark 6:18). Herod had no right to his brother’s wife or to any other man’s wife.

Many today stand condemned with Herod for their “strange” (unauthorized) wives. They have disregarded God’s marriage laws

and have entered into adulterous marriages (Matt. 19:4-9). “Strange wives” were not acceptable then, and they are not acceptable now.

**STRANGE APPAREL** (Zeph. 1:8). Zephaniah writes: *“And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the kings children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel”* (Zeph. 1:8). The “strange apparel” as it is mentioned in this verse has reference to foreign apparel. It is hard to believe that God would have punished his people for their preference in clothing alone. This “foreign” or “strange” apparel must therefore have had reference to something that was shameful or prohibited. What seems to have been wrong with the apparel is that the choice of this apparel involved the choice to be as the people of the world. One commentator correctly stated: *“Those clothed with foreign apparel are the rulers, the wealthy, and the socially elite who by their dress indicated their leaning toward Egypt or Babylon and the ways of those heathen nations.”* God has always commanded his people to be different (Lev. 19:5-6; I Peter 2:9) and to be separate from the unclean things and associates of the world (Isa. 52:11; II Cor. 6:17).

Many today by their “strange apparel” are leaning toward the ways of the world, rather than the ways of godliness and Christian modesty (I Tim. 2:9).

**STRANGE DOCTRINES** (Heb. 13:9). The Bible records, *“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines...”* (Heb. 13:9). The “strange doctrines” referred to by the Hebrew writer in this passage have reference to the doctrines of false teachers. These doctrines were “strange” because they were unauthorized and unapproved by God. To the Galatian brethren Paul wrote: *“I marvel that ye are so soon*

removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8).

These "strange doctrines" about which the Hebrew writer warned were contrary to the doctrine of Christ. These false doctrines nor the false teachers were to be received (II John 9-11).

Today, there are many "strange doctrines" which are being taught. The doctrines of Catholicism, Denominationalism, Modernism, Liberalism, and Antiism are among these strange doctrines. The Bible, without additions or subtractions, is all that man needs today (II Tim. 3:16-17); any other doctrine is from man and not of God.

**STRANGE FLESH** (Jude 7).

Jude writes, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). Jude portrays Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, as "going after strange flesh." This has reference to the sin of homosexuality. Moses records the incident saying, "But before they lay down (the angels), the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them" (Gen. 19:4-5). God hates homosexuality. God said through Moses: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination" (Lev. 18:22). As someone

has said, "God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve."

Many today, like these wicked cities, are going after "strange flesh." It is no more authorized today than it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities are "set forth for an example" to all who would so live today (Jude 7).

"Strange things are happening" both in the church and in the world today. Men are offering strange fire before the Lord, serving strange gods, marrying strange women, wearing strange apparel, teaching strange doctrines, and going after strange flesh. If man would only follow God's standard of authority, the Bible, these things would not be a problem. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17).

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## Man's "Think So" Does Not Equal God's "Say So"

Goebel Music

In a day and age when secular humanism (along with various other "isms") has convinced so many that there are no absolutes, no objective standard, man is to do his own thing, as the "highest" goal is man, etc., it is not surprising to hear what many people spurt, spout, and shoot out of their mouth relative to God's Word. However, I'm "still shocked" when I hear my brethren burst forth with some sayings like, "In my view," "In my opinion," "I am not convinced," "I take issue with," "I don't believe in logic," and "It seems to me."

### AN EXAMPLE OF MAN'S "THINK SO"

The following "current" state-

ment serves well to "identify" man's popular, prevalent and prevailing attitude.

"It is distressing to me that there are learned men among us who will write the words penned in a recent editorial. This is, "...the churches of Christ use vocal music not necessarily because it sounds better, but rather because we are convinced that it is the only acceptable form of musical worship for the public assembly of the saints...It is a matter of biblical principle." "We" are not all convinced that a cappella music is the only acceptable

form...I take issue with the definition of biblical principle. I find such things as a loving God, loving one's neighbor, justice and mercy to be biblical principles. A vague inference as to whether God prefers this type of music or not is not a biblical principle, but is at best a studied opinion, and more likely pure speculation..." (Greg D. Coldwey, San Antonio, Texas, *Christian Chronicle*, January 1989, "A cappella Music," p.23.).

It is "not mine" in this brief article to "examine" completely and thoroughly this statement, but just

note an item or two, such as:

1. *We are not all convinced.* Just because a man is “not convinced,” does not make an item either right or wrong. Many today are “not convinced” of the one New Testament church, that baptism is for the remission of sins and that it must be a burial, that denominationalism is wrong, etc. So what? From almost the beginning of time we know that many have “not been convinced” that God means what he has revealed unto his people.

2. *I take issue with.* This is nothing “new.” Truth has been the “battle ground” for a long time, as men have “seemingly” always “taken issue with” God’s Word either in his “explicit” or his “implicit” statements and “just what” constitutes “what.”

3. *I find such things...* My, Oh, My! It seems that this writer “thinks” that “other biblical principles” would “exclude” (and he names some) “this” biblical principle. What is the law of hermeneutics that teaches this? Do “his findings” rule out others?

4. *A vague inference...* The word “vague” means obscure, nebulous, fuzzy, unfocused, abstract, confused, wishy-washy, veiled, imprecise, indefinite, etc., etc. I would suggest a study of the verb, infer, or the noun, inference, and how they relate to logic, deduction, understanding and “what it all adds up to.” How can any thing be “vague” that is listed at least ten times and the words in the passages are not “generic” but “specific?”

5. *A studied opinion.* An “opinion” is not “always” a bad word, as it may mean “belief, judgment, conviction, way of thinking, doctrine, principle, deduction, conclusion,” etc. I just believe that a man “must study” to ever be “approved” of God and “ready to give an answer” (cf. II Tim. 2:15; I Peter 3:15). One thing for sure, if any man “wills...he shall know...of the teaching, whether it is of God, or...” (John 7:17). This writer must have had “something” of “an opinion” to state, “...at best a studied opinion.” Wonder if his could be wrong? Wonder why he is “not convinced.”

6. *More likely pure speculation.* I certainly realize that there are various ways “speculation” might be employed, but from the context its

meaning seems to be that of “guess, shot in the dark, assumption, conjecture, hunch,” etc. The clarity of the words used in the New Testament leave no room for “guesswork.”

- a. Matt. 26:30. “...they sung a hymn...”
- b. Mark 14:26. “...they sung a hymn...”
- c. Acts 16:25. “...and singing hymns...”
- d. Rom. 15:9. “...sing unto thy name.”
- e. I Cor. 14:15. “...I will sing ...”
- f. Eph. 5:19. “...singing and making melody with...”
- g. Col. 3:16. “...singing with grace in your hearts...”
- h. Heb. 2:12. “...I sing thy praise.”
- i. Heb. 13:15. “...the fruit of the lips which make...”
- j. James 5:13. “...let him sing praise.”

Since our “admonition” is “not to go beyond the things written” (cf. I Cor. 4:6, ASV,) as that is what will “judge us” (John 12:48), we need to “find out” what “is written” about “music in our worship.” The text is “sung, singing, sing and fruit of the lips” and that is “what is written.” Call it “more likely pure speculation” if you like, but I prefer to call it “that which is written” and “that which will judge us.”

### MAN’S “THINK SO”

The Bible is our evidence, Biblically speaking, that this type reasoning (?) has been around a long time. It is “nothing new” to hear what we are hearing today.

1. “But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, *Behold, I thought ...*” (II Kings 5:11).

2. “*I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*” (Acts 26:9).

These two are “classic” examples of people “reasoning without God,” however, much is said in both the Old and New Testaments about such. Sometimes it is “I said in my heart,” “...walk...after their own thoughts,” “reasoned with himself,” “...supposed,” etc. Such declares that man’s “think so” is certainly not to be on the par of God’s “say so.” I

wonder if this is how Cain thought, or how Nadab and Abihu functioned?

### GOD’S “SAY SO”

To our most “enlightened” (?) minds of “today,” the following do not “hold the meaning” they should, but let us notice some of “what is written” in THE BOOK.

1. “...Dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God...” (II Kings 5:14).

2. “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22).

3. “Thus did Moses: according to all that Jehovah commanded him, so did he” (Exod. 40:16).

4. “Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me...” (II Tim. 1:13).

5. “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God:... If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching...partaketh in his evil works” (II John 9-11).

6. “And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men...” (II Tim. 2:2).

7. “If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37).

### GOD’S “THOUGHTS” MUST BE “OUR THOUGHTS”

Isaiah well spoke about “God’s thoughts” and “our thoughts,” when he wrote the warning found in Isaiah 55:8-9. However, still today we have those “uncertain sounds” (cf. I Cor. 14:7f) among us. These need a genuine reminder of:

1. “...The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise that they are vain” (I Cor. 3:20).

2. “...Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ...the foolishness of God is wiser than men...” (I Cor. 1:20ff).

3. “*I thought on my ways, And turned my feet unto thy testimonies*” (Psalm 119:59).

4. “Search me, O God, and know my heart: *Try me, and know my thoughts*” (Psalm 139:23).

5. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

6. "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col. 3:17).

7. "Who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church" (I Cor. 4:17).

I am convinced, like Belshazzar, that "our thoughts" ought to be "troubling" us (Dan. 5:6,10). No wonder we have so many who are "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men..." (cf. Eph. 4:14); God's thoughts are not "their thoughts!" This is why we have "perverse things" taught (Acts 20:30) and why

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Brother Music's new book will be available the middle of November. The title is: "EASY TO READ VERSION Easy-to-Read or Easy-to-Mislead?" It is a multiple purpose book dealing with much more than just a verse by verse discussion of this corrupt version put out by our brethren. It also has chapters dealing with: Inspiration, the versions and versionists, the World Bible Translation Center and their Russian Version along with five Indian languages as well as their English version for the deaf (EVD). It is 1,207 pages in content and can be purchased for \$6 a book! **We strongly recommend you order copies by the case** since there is a tremendous amount of work involved in handling single copies. There are 10 books to the case. The total cost for both books and UPS postage is \$77.50 per case. Perhaps several in your area can place your order together to make a full case. This will save both work and half the postage cost. Single copies including the postage will be \$9.50. Remember, UPS requires a full street address. They will not deliver to Post Office Boxes. Brethren, please order by the case and distribute these books to those that need them. Order from GOEBEL MUSIC, 5114 Montclair, Colleyville, TX 76034.

the gospel has become "perverted" (Gal. 1:7). We perhaps need, like Simon, to pray that "the thought" of our heart be forgiven us! If our thoughts are not God's thoughts, that is, based on God's Word, then we will have "every man doing that which is right in his own eyes" (cf. Judges 17:6; 21:25). There is absolutely no way that MAN'S "THINK SO" CAN EQUAL GOD'S "SAY SO!"

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[NOTE: From time to time we receive mail that is somewhat critical of the work we do in **Seek The Old Paths**. However, we do appreciate ALL the mail we receive. One such letter from Celina, Tennessee, raised a number of questions which needs to be examined with Bible answers. Because of space limitations we cannot answer all his questions this month; therefore, we will begin with this issue a series of "Questions And Answers."]

I begin this answer by saying...

I have received your letter; and, with much sadness and with no little concern, have waded through its lines. Believe it or not, but I do appreciate you taking the time to write and express your concerns. It is my hope that you will read carefully and consider the contents of this response as I have certainly done with yours. I will quote the different parts of your letter and then "in love" (Eph. 4:15; seeking another's best interest) seek to give a scriptural answer for the reason of the hope that is in me (cf. I Peter 3:15). Quotes from your letter appear in bold print.

**It's such a beautiful morning to get up and go outside and see the sunrise and listen to the birds sing and then see the slop that your paper is putting out throughout the world and especially this area.**

I pray the churches in Clay county, and all the surrounding counties, are remaining steadfast in the faith. My desire is that they not be like those who "received not the love of the truth" and "believed not the truth" (II Thess. 2:10,12), but instead, "love the truth" (Zech. 8:19), "buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). I desire and pray the same will be so with you.

"Slop" is defined as: "1. Liquid spilled or splashed. 2. Soft mud or slush. 3. Unappetizing, watery food

or soup. 4. Waste food used to feed pigs or other animals.” I take it from your use of this word that you do not believe *Seek The Old Paths* has much substance or value for human consumption. I, nor thousands and thousands of others, certainly do not believe *Seek The Old Paths* is “slop” as you describe it. It fills a void and has a great purpose in the Lord’s kingdom today as I will explain later in this letter.

It’s not only sad, but irresponsible, that you would refer to “*contending for the faith*” as all Christians are commanded to do as “slop” (Jude 3). It makes me wonder if you would preach against “anything” except those who preach against sin. To expose error and refute it is what God demands (II Timothy 3:16-17; 4:2-4). If you call that “slop,” then what do you preach? Notice the following examination of some verses.

**II Timothy 3:16-17** demands we expose and oppose error and set it strait. “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” Notice each of the highlighted words.

“**Doctrine**” means: “*teaching, instruction, learning, information.*” Did not Jesus say, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32)? Without the knowledge of truth there can be no freedom from sin. Therefore, the Word of God is profitable for: teaching, instructing, learning. No words of men can accomplish such – only the Word of God brings salvation. Do you preach doctrine?

“**Reproof**” means: “*a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested, to convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted. To find fault with, correct, to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, to call to account, show one his fault, to chasten, punish, evidence, reproof.*” In your preaching and teaching, do you exercise the word “reproof” or do you ignore it? It appears from your letter you sneak around it. How can this be done with God’s approval? This word demands that we refute error, wherever it is found, even in the Lord’s church!

“**Correction**” means: “*restora-*

*tion to an upright or a right state, improvement, a straightening up again, rectification (reformation).*” When one is shown the error of his ways, he then needs to be shown what is right so he may correct and straighten up his life. When error (the wrong way) is refuted we must then seek to show what the right way is.

“**Instruction**” means: “*the whole training and education of children, whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions; hence instruction which aims at the increase of virtue; chastisement, chastening, disciplinary correction, nurture.*” When one has corrected his life, he is given instruction in how to maintain it – how to go on to perfection. God’s word provides those things necessary to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18). As the Holy Spirit said, “*That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (II Tim. 3:17).

When the Truth is preached and taught (doctrine), it serves to show one the error of his ways (reproof). Having exposed sin and error, it provides what is necessary for one to straighten up his life (correction) and how to grow and mature as he should in the Christian life (instruction). This is what God’s Word says. I cannot make any apology for it nor can I skirt, dodge, avoid or sidestep its precepts. Can you? From your letter it appears you can.

**II Timothy 4:2** also demands we oppose and expose error wherever it is found. “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*” Let’s notice some words in this passage.

The admonition of this passage is to preach the **Word**. This is the Word of God, not man’s words. Those who dare preach are not exhorted to proclaim the words of Peale, Schuller or Carnegie. It is not the task of God’s preacher to preach himself, but his message is to be Jesus Christ and him crucified (I Cor. 2:2) and all that goes along with it – the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). If one deems the Lord’s Words too harsh, unkind and unloving (as many do), then he is in the

wrong business!

“**In season, out of season**” means: when it’s liked and when it’s not, when it’s popular and when it’s not. How the message will be received and how men will react when they hear it is not of consideration when it comes time to preach God’s Word. I may have a good friend or family member that is guilty of sin but my job is still to preach the same Word to them as I do to everyone else. I must not consider what may come as a result of this lesson or sermon. Truth is Truth regardless of who is involved.

“**Reprove**” is the same as “reproof” in II Tim. 3:16. Look at its definition above. It means to refute, confute, to bring to light, expose. The purpose of preaching is to expose sin. Preaching that does not reprove is not Gospel Preaching. Since you do not believe in reproving sin and those promoting it, as is evident from your letter, what do you preach?

“**Rebuke**” means: “*to tax with fault, rate, chide, rebuke, reprove, censure severely, to admonish or charge sharply.*” Gospel preaching tells what sin is by defining it and exposing it. It then finds fault with it and rebukes it sharply, along with those guilty of it.

“**Exhort**” means: “*to admonish (warn), exhort, to beg, entreat, beseech, invite, invoke, call for.*” Gospel preaching: 1) tells what sin is and exposes it, 2) finds fault with those guilty of it and rebukes them, and 3) exhorts those who are guilty to come out of it. Is this the kind of preaching you do? It doesn’t appear from your letter that you do for you do not believe we are to follow the teaching of these verses. Please, brother, heed the admonition of God’s Word and do what it says to both save thyself and those that hear thee (cf. I Tim. 4:16). The time is certainly here that is spoken of in II Tim. 4:3-4, “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*” This describes exactly the contents of your letter. Please, let it not be so.

[Part two will follow next month]



"I enjoy your publication very much and would like to receive it at my home" ...*Florence, AL*. "I would like to thank you for sending S.T.O.P. to us. I am praying it will open some eyes and change some lives" ...*Red Oak, OK*.

"I saw my first copy of S.T.O.P. today, the Aug/94 issue. The church there is to be congratulated on its stand against liberalism; and Jubilee in particular" ...*Magnolia, TX*. "Keep up the good work. I always look forward to my S.T.O.P. and just wish more brethren would remove their head from the sand and quit acting like ostriches" ...*Dunlap, TN*. "Thank you for the service you offer the brotherhood" ...*Logansport, IN*. "Just received my first copy of S.T.O.P. Sure enjoy it and gave it to a former elder and he thought it was great" ...*Tyler, TX*. "Excellent paper" ...*Kemmerer, WY*. "The problem is that ordinary members don't really know what's going on in the brotherhood. Preachers do, but don't inform congregations because (?) they don't want to stir up folks. I don't think they're being fair to us!! Thanks for your courage" ...*Wheeling, WV*. (Editor's note: It's a preacher's job to know what's going on, or else how can he know how to preach to the needs of his audience. It is also the eldership's job to know and they ought to make sure the membership is informed - gmr). "I like to read the paper whether true brethren take a stand and defend the true gospel" ...*Randolph, MS*. "I really enjoy reading S.T.O.P." ...*Pontotoc, MS*. "A friend gave me some copies of recent publications and I enjoyed them - good stuff!" ...*Taft, CA*. "I am enclosing a check to help on the mailing and publishing of S.T.O.P. It is a good paper and is needed to inform every congregation of the Lord's people of error that's creeping into hurt the Lord's church" ...*Semmes, AL*. "I enjoy receiving your publication each month and commend you on your courage to stand for the truth. I feel sure that the past lectureship was indeed a good one. In today's increasingly immoral society where morals are relative to each individual's beliefs and circumstances, such lessons are indeed needed" ...*Palestine, AR*. "We have received your publication for some time now and we enjoy it very much. We also appreciate your hard work trying to teach the truth to the world and the brotherhood" ...*Ludington, MI*. "May God continue to bless you and strengthen you as you go forward to contend for the faith" ...*Peoria, IL*. "Our thanks to you for S.T.O.P. and your excellent efforts to spread the truth" ...*Magnolia, AR*. "Recently, while visiting relatives in Tennessee, I saw your publication. I enjoyed every word and admire your efforts of getting the truth of the word into a dying world. I will look forward to each issue" ...*Indianapolis, IN*. "I just wanted to let you know I have received two copies of S.T.O.P. and I really enjoy them. We need the truth taught in the Lord's church today very much. As long as the truth goes out to people maybe they will wake up before its too late" ...*Lebanon, TN*. "I have been given a copy of your publication. I appreciated reading the material and also your stand for the truth" ...*Lakeland, FL*. "We receive your publication each month. We love it. We always rush to the mail box when we know its time for it. Thank you so much for standing for the truth. May God bless you" ...*Mt. Vernon, OH*. "I so much continue to appreciate the work you all continue to do. May God be with you" ...*Lucedale, MS*. "I commend the East Corinth Church of Christ for the good work they are doing in His service" ...*Pelahatchie, MS*. "I am enjoying immensely your excellent publication. I have requested it be sent to many others. Many have thanked me for doing so but more are silent. It may fall on quite a few deaf ears but if we gain only one or two precious souls who will become more committed and vigilant in guarding the Truth, then all our efforts will surely be worth it. I am so thankful to God for strong steadfast elders and dedicated courageous evangelists such as in your wonderful congregation there at East Corinth. I could not afford to send out, in quantity, such a quality publication so it is with thanksgiving that I praise your efforts in loving our Lord so much to make this work possible. So many are being swept along with the tide of liberalism! A lot of people seem unconcerned and don't seem to sense any urgency - they are ignorant of the "issues" and seem to be determined to stay that way - not realizing that this uninformed

state makes them easy targets for false doctrine" ...*Tucson, AZ*. "First, I would certainly join with others who commend you for the excellent publication which I have enjoyed for about a year and a half. I find it to be sound in every way. My wife and I enjoy listening to the lectureship tapes on the car tape deck as we travel. We then give the audio tapes to the High Plains congregation so that others can take them home and listen to them. The video tapes, along with others from lectureships around the country, are used in lieu of a located preacher which we cannot afford. We usually have 13 in attendance in the Lord's Day morning services, but we hunger and thirst for the truth which we obtain from these tapes" ...*Cheyenne, WY*. "I appreciate your paper. You are doing a great job. Keep up the good work" ...*Joppa, AL*. "You do a great job" ...*Vienna, WV*. "I want to personally say thanks for the good effort you are heading up. May God continue to bless and help you is my prayer. I think of good sound brethren every time I read III John 1:1-2" ...*Cookeville, TN*. "I thank you very much for S.T.O.P. I keep all of you in my prayers. Thank you very much" ...*Clio, AL*. "A friend of mine gave me one of your papers. We want to encourage you to continue seeking the old paths and keeping the Lord's church sound. Thank you very much. May God bless you in your service to Him" ...*Indianapolis, IN*. "Just a note to express my continued appreciation of the truths found in S.T.O.P." ...*Washington, OH*. "Thank you so much for the job you are doing in exposing the false teachings that are dividing our congregations today" ...*Shelbyville, TN*. "I have just finished reading your June/94 issue entitled "Should Women Function as Translators in the Assembly" and the guest editorial, "The Silence of I Cor. 14:34-35." This was profitable reading. Keep up the good work. We appreciate your stand for the truth" ...*Signal Mountain, TN*. "We enjoy the paper so very much. It is an excellent paper. Keep up the good work" ...*Meridian, MS*.

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the East Corinth 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.

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