

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVII

1998

January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

January 1998

Number 1

Letter From Cline Paden

March 6, 1973

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Probably no Bible topic has so much diversity of thought surrounding it as does marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

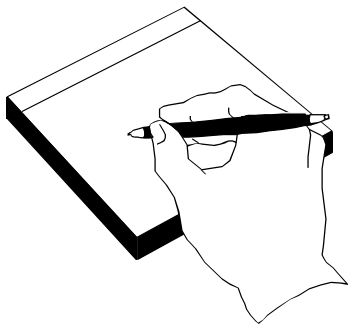
Each time we come to those sections of Scripture which relate to marriage we have to deal with practically every viewpoint that anyone has ever entertained. Our students come from every section of the country, and they come with every conceivable shade of brotherhood thought on these matters. They present these positions in class in the form of questions and comments. Our task is to leave the student with a position which can be substantiated by a "thus saith the Lord". This is no easy task, and we do not always succeed. But we do try. We cannot control what a student may believe, for he may have believed it long before coming to Sunset. We can only control what he is taught.

Briefly stated:

1. We believe that God joins a man and a woman in marriage. We believe that God is a witness to the covenant, but is Himself no partner in it.
2. We do not believe that unfaithfulness in sexual matters necessarily dissolves the marriage. The guilty may repent, the innocent may forgive, and the marriage may continue. However, if the innocent party elects to do so, he may "put away" his mate—but only in case of adultery.
3. We believe that this putting away, as the Greek words teach, "looses and sets free" each participant. After one has been put away for adultery neither of the contracting partners is left bound to the other.
4. We believe that the truly innocent party may remarry. This is strongly implied in Matthew 19:9, and may be as some contend, actually taught.
5. And while it is crystal clear that the now-put-away-guilty-party is no longer bound to anyone in marriage, we know of no positive Biblical warrant which would unquestionably sanction a remarriage for him. It may be inferred that since he is not now married to anyone he may for that reason be justified in joining himself to another, yet the position is devoid of outright Biblical consideration, and is left clothed in an atmosphere of doubts and uncertainties. To speak either way is to speak from indefiniteness—and from indefiniteness on any Biblical subject one should not presume to speak authoritatively.

Therefore, Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry.

[Signed]
Fraternally, Cline R. Paden



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Controversy

Our society teaches us to avoid controversy as if it is some type of evil or wickedness. This is especially true in religious matters. However, controversy is an essential element of Christianity. When one becomes a Christian, he enters into the army of Christ (Rev. 19:13-19). Individually, we become soldiers. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). As a soldier we are to enter into the fight. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18). "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12). We should be able to say as Paul did at the end of his life, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). We can only say this when we fulfill Jude's exhortation, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). We have a powerful enemy, thus we must put on the Lord's armor.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the

breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Eph. 6:10-18).

When one makes the choice to do what God says, he immediately becomes the enemy of Satan and all his forces. Satan will use every device he has within his power to destroy us. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). We must learn and be aware of all of his ways. "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11).

One of Satan's devices he uses to devour us is false teaching and teachers. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Pet. 2:1-2). Thus, we are taught to be on guard against false teachers. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves"

Policy Statement

All correspondence written to *Defender*, myself (Michael Hatcher), or to the elders at Bellview concerning anything in *Defender* is viewed as intended for publication unless otherwise stated. While it is not the practice of *Defender* to publish our correspondence, we reserve the right to publish such **without further permission being necessary** should the need or desire arise.

* * * * *

Occasionally we receive requests to reprint articles from *Defender*. It is our desire to get sound material into the hands of brethren. Thus, it is our policy to allow reproduction of any articles that should appear in this publication. However, honesty should demand that you give proper credit when reprinting an article. You should give the author credit for his work and we would appreciate your including that you got the article from this paper.

(Mat. 7:15). The apostle of love wrote, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Thus, we are in a controversy with those who are false teachers. In this controversy, we are to expose and rebuke them. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17). “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit. 3:10).

When one looks back at God’s Word, we observe that those great individuals in the Bible were always in controversies. Study the prophets and you will find them engaged in conflict with the people and false prophets regularly. A major part of the ministry of our Lord was in controversy with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes. Study some of Jesus’ dealings with them as recorded in Matthew 15, 22, 23. Consider the life of Paul and the constant controversies he engaged in. In just about every town he entered, he caused either a great repentance, riot, or both. Many of the New Testament books written by the Holy Spirit by the hand of Paul were directly related to false teachers and teachings. Thus, why should we shy away from controversy?

When controversy comes our way, we should always be ready to give an answer. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). I recognize that there are some “controversies” that are not true controversies, and there are some that are not of such a nature that we should waste our time with. “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes” (2 Tim. 2:23).

In the November issue of *Defender* we published an open letter to the Sunset church of Christ, her elders and preachers written by Tommy Hicks. We opened up the pages of *Defender* for Sunset to respond. As of the

day that I write this, they have not responded. We entered into a controversy. Was this controversy the type described above as foolish and unlearned? One of the issues raised in the article is the marriage, divorce, and remarriage issue. The students at Sunset have caused disturbances and divisions throughout the brotherhood over their false views concerning this matter (and other matters). Is this a “foolish and unlearned question”? We answer—no! How do we know? Two reasons: (1) It deals with the eternal salvation of individuals. If someone enters into a sinful marriage and remains in that marriage (thus committing adultery), they will be lost eternally. (2) When Jesus was asked questions concerning this matter, He answered those questions (Mat. 19). Yet, Sunset (her elders and preachers) has remained silent. Another issue now being raised is grace and law and if they are mutually exclusive. Is God’s grace and the law of Christ a “foolish and unlearned question”? There is also the matter of the Holy Spirit baptism. Is it still being taught that every Christian is baptized in the Holy Spirit in clear contradiction to the one baptism (water baptism) of Ephesians 4:4-6? Will there be any answer (per 1 Pet. 3:15) concerning these matters? If not, why? Why does not the Sunset elders and preachers clearly state what they believe for all to know? We urge readers to seriously consider the letter written by brother Cline Paden in 1973 concerning the marriage, divorce, and remarriage issue. Then carefully read brother Tommy Hicks reply.

To those who are members of Sunset, please call into question your elders and preachers and find out where they stand. Eternal destinies are in the balance, yours and others. If they are not teaching the truth which will make one free (John 8:32) then “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17-18). MH

OBSERVATIONS FROM AN ALUMNUS OF SUNSET SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Tommy J. Hicks

A native of Lubbock, Texas, I am an alumnus of the Sunset School of Preaching. Back when I was a student there (from January 1967 to January 1969) a person could receive excellent Bible training. However, during those two years, though hardly perceptible to

most, I witnessed the “winds of change” beginning to influence some of the instructors in the school.

Prior to attending the Sunset School of Preaching, I had attended Lubbock Christian College. One of my teachers at L.C.C. was K. C. Moser. Moser taught that

law and *grace* were mutually exclusive. Moser insisted that since Christians lived under *grace* then they were under NO LAW at all. I swallowed—"hook, line, and sinker"—Moser's false doctrine (with its implication of "salvation by faith only"). Fortunately, I had a sound, knowledgeable, gospel preacher for a grandfather. His name was J. R. Hicks. My grandfather knew K. C. Moser and he knew Moser's heretical doctrine from his days as a local preacher in Oklahoma. Upon learning that I had become a "Moserite," my grandfather devoted many hours to study with me. He was more than able to show me the error Moser taught—error I had accepted. Later, my grandfather would tell folks, "I had to study that boy out of that 'Moser mess.'" He did!

Fresh out of that "Moser mess" at L.C.C., I began my studies at the Sunset School of Preaching. Naturally, whenever K. C. Moser's name was mentioned or whenever something was taught that reminded me of Moser's doctrine, my ears would perk up. At first, when the instructors mentioned Moser or his doctrine, it was done so in respectful disagreement. Yet, it was extremely noticeable to me that, during my two years at Sunset, Moser's doctrine became more and more acceptable. Richard Rogers seemed to have been the most influenced by Moser (whether by being personally taught by Moser or by reading Moser's writings, I do not know). From his writings (*Freed for Freedom* in particular) and from lessons I have heard him present, it appears to me that Ed Wharton may have also been greatly influenced by Moser. (I hasten to add that Wharton does not appear to take the extreme view that Moser did on *law* and *grace*, though at times he comes very close to doing so.)

Twenty-eight years have passed since I graduated from the Sunset School of Preaching. The incremental, almost imperceptible changes that were taking place in the late 60s snowballed. While so many changes (not for the better, but for the worse) have come to pass, none stand out any clearer than Sunset's teaching on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." From 1967 to 1969, I do not recall that any of the instructors taught that the "guilty party" can scripturally remarry. I have asked some of the men who were in my class at SSOP and they have told me that they do not recall that any of the instructors taught us that the "guilty party" can remarry. Instructors (such as Richard Rogers, Ted Stewart, and Truman Scott) are now teaching that the "guilty party" **can** remarry after a divorce. Sunset's apostate teaching on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" is known around the world, brotherhood wide.

The first I heard that SSOP *might* be teaching

something it should not on the "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" question was in 1978. Living in California at the time, I had returned to San Angelo, Texas, to perform a marriage for a lovely Christian young couple. While in San Angelo, my wife, Sue, and I visited with many of our old friends. An older couple we visited asked, "Before you go back to California are you going to Lubbock to visit with your parents?" I responded that I was. Then, this couple asked, "Will you do a favor for us? Will you go to the Sunset Church of Christ and ask them where they stand on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?" This couple had a reason for wanting to know the answer to their question.

They had a niece whom they dearly loved and whom they had been financially helping through her schooling at Texas Tech. Only a few hours away from graduation and receiving her degree, she had abruptly dropped out of Texas Tech to enroll in the A.I.M. (Adventures In Missions) program at Sunset. Her aunt and uncle, the couple in San Angelo, learned that she had done so because she had fallen in love with a young man who was a student in the A.I.M. program. The young man in question had been married, but was divorced (and he did not have Scriptural authority to remarry). Sunset knew of the young man's marriage and divorce. Thus, the couple in San Angelo was unable to understand why Sunset did nothing to discourage what people (from Lubbock to San Angelo) knew seemed likely to happen—an adulterous relationship as the result of an unscriptural marriage. Thus, the aunt and uncle in San Angelo asked me to look into the matter for them.

After arriving in Lubbock, at my earliest convenience I went to Sunset and visited with brother Paden in his office. During that visit, I conveyed to brother Paden the San Angelo couple's concerns and asked him to respond to their questions relative to Sunset's stand regarding what the Scriptures teach on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." With a prelude of mild bluster to express his "righteous indignation" about people blaming Sunset for this and that, brother Paden asked Marge Smith (then secretary of the Sunset School of Preaching) to retrieve two copies of a letter (one for the couple in San Angelo and one for me) that he had prepared to answer just such questions. The letter brother Paden provided me was dated, March 6, 1973, and was addressed: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. This meant, evidently, that as far back as early 1973, enough people were beginning to question Sunset's stand on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" that, to save time, brother Paden produced a form letter and

kept a supply of them on hand. Besides this, brother Paden's 1973 form letter revealed a number of other things.

In paragraph two of his March 6, 1973 letter, brother Paden implied that the students were to be blamed, not the school, for the school being called into question on the issue of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." Explaining the school's obligation, brother Paden stated, "Our task is to leave the student with a position which can be substantiated by a 'thus saith the Lord'." In 1973, brother Paden said there was "a position" (singular) that could be Scripturally substantiated. Now, in 1997, I appeal to my brother, Cline Paden, to answer: "When it comes to the subject of 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage,' which 'position' (singular) does the Sunset Elders, the School of Preaching administrators and the faculty say can be substantiated by a thus saith the Lord?" The temperature in Gehenna will drop to below 32 degrees Fahrenheit before brother Paden will answer that very simple question. Why? Because brother Paden knows that the **teachers**, in what is now called the "Sunset International Bible Institute" (S.I.B.I.), advocate "practically every viewpoint that anyone has ever entertained" on the subject of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," and that they "present these positions in class in the form of questions and comments." In other words, today (1997), the teachers at Sunset are guilty of doing the very thing that brother Paden condemned the students for doing in 1973. Indeed, Sunset has changed—not for the better, but for the worse.

Again, in paragraph two of his March 6, 1973 letter, brother Paden emphatically stressed, "We cannot control what a student may believe, for he may have believed it long before coming to Sunset. **We can only control what he is taught**" (emphasis mine, TJH). Certainly, what is taught in the School of Preaching **can be controlled** by the elders at Sunset. That is not the question. The question is: "Are Sunset's elders controlling what is taught on 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage' in the School of Preaching?" Is it because of their control that Richard Rogers, Ted Stewart, and Truman Scott teach what they do on the subject in question? Brother Paden has been heard to say, "Yes, but we also have Norman Gipson and Ed Wharton who hold the 'traditional view' on 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage'." Question: "Is it because the elders are in control of what is taught in the School of Preaching that there are conflicting doctrines taught on the subject of 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage' at Sunset?" Are the

Sunset elders themselves divided on this issue? If there is only one position, "a position" (singular), "which can be substantiated by a 'thus saith the Lord,'" as implied in brother Paden's 1973 letter; and, if Sunset's elders "**control what is...taught**" in the School of Preaching; then, why are there contradictory, diametrically opposed doctrines being taught by the instructors relative "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" at Sunset? Why can we not get straight answers (in my case, "any answers") to these questions?

The Bible is "all sufficient" (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3, and 2 Corinthians 9:8). It is amazing beyond believe that a Sunset elder, not to mention the former Director of the School of Preaching, would deny the "all sufficiency" of the Scriptures. Yet, that is exactly what brother Paden did under point five in his March 6, 1973 letter. When it comes to the remarriage of the "now-put-away-guilty-party," brother Paden wrote, "It may be inferred that since he is not now married to anyone he may for that reason be justified in joining himself to another, yet **the position is devoid of outright Biblical consideration, and is clothed in an atmosphere of doubts and uncertainties. To speak either way is to speak from indefiniteness—and from indefiniteness on any Biblical subject one should not presume to speak authoritatively**" (emphasis mine, TJH). I take this to be an attempt by brother Paden to "hedge" on the issue. How ludicrous it is to say that the remarriage of the "now-put-away-guilty-party" is "devoid of outright Biblical consideration." What about Matthew 5:32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; and, Luke 16:18? There is no "atmosphere of doubts and uncertainties" in what the Bible teaches on the subject of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage!" It would seem that it is brother Paden who is "devoid of outright Biblical consideration" and who is trying to create an "atmosphere of doubts and uncertainties." On "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," there is no "indefiniteness" to be found in the Bible's teaching. Therefore, if one preaches the "all authoritative" Word of God, he speaks "authoritatively" when he teaches that any divorced person (except the one who has put away his mate for the cause of fornication) commits adultery if he remarries. Brother Paden needs to answer, "Is the Bible 'all sufficient,' or not?"

If, "To speak either way is to speak from indefiniteness—and from indefiniteness on any Biblical subject one should not presume to speak authoritatively," then why did brother Paden conclude: "There-

fore, Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry?" How could he draw that conclusion? Would he not be guilty of speaking authoritatively where he had just said "one should not presume to speak authoritatively?"

Since March 6, 1973, has Sunset "changed" what it teaches concerning "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?" Remember, then brother Paden wrote, "Therefore, Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry." Remember, he also said, "We can...control what...is taught." If they are controlling what is taught on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," and if Rogers, Scott, Stewart and others are teaching "that the guilty party may remarry," then Sunset has changed. If Sunset still wants the teachers to "not teach that the guilty party may remarry," and if Rogers, Scott, Stewart and others are teaching "that the guilty party may remarry," then Cline Paden and the other Sunset elders do not (or cannot) "control what...is taught." I, for one, am convinced that the Sunset elders are in control of what is taught. Thus, Sunset has changed (not for the better, but for the worse) when it comes to what is taught relative to "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." Again, this is but an example of one of Sunset's changes when it comes to doctrinal matters.

Since Sunset comes to individual Christians and to untold numbers of congregations seeking students and financial support, she ought to be more than willing to answer questions about "who" is teaching there—and

"what" is being taught there. Therefore, I ask the Sunset elders to answer: "Since you brethren are in control of what is taught in the School of Preaching on the subject of 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage,' please inform me and other interested brethren, specifically and plainly, what do you expect your instructors to teach on this subject?" Further, I ask the Sunset elders, "If an instructor teaches something other than what you have authorized him to teach on 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage,' what actions do you take in regard to that teacher?"

If any school is teaching doctrines contrary to the word of God, we must not send students and/or financial support to that school. To do so is to support and help in the spread of false doctrines. Any school that will not answer questions about what it teaches **on any subject** must be rejected when it comes seeking financial support and/or students. More than that, any graduate of that school must be carefully scrutinized when it comes to what he preaches and teaches. Although I am an alumnus of the Sunset School of Preaching, and although it breaks my heart to say these things, **I ADVISE BRETHREN—DO NO SEND STUDENTS OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO SUNSET!** Why? Because false doctrines are being taught at Sunset. Because when Sunset is questioned about what is taught there, one either receives "double-talk" for an answer or receives no answers at all.

P.O. Box 64430; Lubbock, TX 79424

BRETHREN, LET US WAKE UP

Shan Jackson

Matthew 13 is a familiar chapter in our Lord's life because some of His most known parables are contained therein. We remember His words: "Behold, a sower went forth to sow" (Mat. 13:3). Another parable He begins in verse 24 and, though not as well known, it also contains vital lessons for the individual, for the family, for the church, and for the nation. This passage deals with Jesus' lesson in which He used the wheat and the tares as His illustrative material. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field." What a wonderful visual thought this produces. But immediately Jesus inserts this altering information: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat" (Mat. 13:25). While they slept the enemy came in and accomplished his nefarious deeds. That single sentence, that one phrase: "while men

slept" deserves to be seriously pondered, for it indeed offers an explanation to many of the mysteries of life as well as addressing many of the problems faced by individuals, families, congregations, and our nation. No man, as long as he is wide awake, will allow friend or foe to enter in to corrupt. A careful glance at our present surroundings show the presence of much evil which is largely around because of our sleepy attitude. Carelessness—carelessness on the part of those who should be on watch.

THIS IS TRUE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Carelessness is the cause of many of man's problems. Carelessness, in many cases is the reason many fail to become followers of God. While men slept the sleep of indifference the years came and slipped away. With the slipping years, many opportunities also slipped that

they would have had for good. The true proverb “gray hairs are upon him here and there, yet he knoweth it not” does not deal with man’s ability to see but his inability to comprehend. While men sleep, Satan sows the tares of evil and often the tares grow so thick that good is completely destroyed. He occupies the soil so fully that good cannot begin to grow. Plus, the crops get heavier as the man grows older, heavier to carry, heavier to rid, even if he were awake. Careless Christians are like a raft in a swollen stream, we drift if we sleep.

THIS IS TRUE FOR THE FAMILY

While men (parents) slept the evil one had a chance to effect the minds of our children. He sows yellow journals and blue stories. He plants bad companions, and he has a seed bag full of evil suggestions, evil thoughts, evil desires. Or, if not as bad as that, while we sleep our children often grow without our help in their Christian lives. While we sleepishly, carelessly worry over self we often tend to forget our responsibilities at home. Be alert, watch, pray, plant God’s good seed ourselves in their lives. Never let Satan do his sowing unhindered and without a fight. Satan does his sowing while we sleep. Wake up! and his sowing will cease.

THIS IS TRUE FOR THE CHURCH

While men (elders) slept the flock is destroyed. Paul’s mighty words to the elders of Ephesus is a message to all God’s leaders, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers” (Acts 20.28).

THIS IS TRUE FOR THE NATION

Over the years our nation has slept and from our slumber we have now begun to awaken to see rogues exploiting our surroundings. While men slept, drugs began a death-strangle on our society. While men slept, alcohol took control. While men slept, atheists dominated our legislative thinking. While men slept, sex was

taken from the marriage bed and dragged through every gutter in our land. While men slept, our once proud, “God fearing nation” took its place with all the other trash of the world.

Yes, our foe has worked hard while men slept. Unless we awaken, his sowing might spoil another generation as well. As individuals, as families, as congregations, and as a nation we need to wake up—not to smell the roses, but to put a stop to the devil’s handiwork. Certainly there is a lot of evil that is beyond our capacity to control but much more is due to our lack of vigilance. Brethren, let us wake up!

P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

Web Site

We invite all to visit our web site on the Internet. The address is: home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery. Past issues of *Defender* will be available both for viewing and downloading. There is also a page for viewing sermon outlines and information concerning the lectureship books. Visit often as these pages will continue to be updated.

* * * * *

Appreciation

We express our thanks to all those individual who have supported us through the years. Special thanks is extended to those who have helped financially. While *Defender* is sent free to those in the United States and is a work of the Bellview Church of Christ, it takes a great deal of money for this work to continue. We would appreciate any financial help in this great work to help offset the expenses.

We also want to thank all those who have sent us articles. We realize that it takes a great deal of time and effort to write and thus want to thank those who think of us for publication.

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

February 1998

Number 2

THE RISE OF A NEW GENERATION

V. Glenn McCoy

In Judges 2:10-12 we read, "and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God." A new generation did not have the same appreciation in faithfully serving the Lord as did the previous generation.

The rise of a new generation has always presented numerous problems insofar as keeping alive God's true religion in the hearts of men. Even the rising of a new generation of Egyptians caused serious problems to God's people. They fared well until "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Exo. 1:8). A study of the many times the Israelites fell away will reveal how hard it was for men to be true to God over a long period of time. We find a period where the Israelites were faithful, only to be followed by a period where they rebelled against God. As you read their history you scratch your head and ask, "Why couldn't these people learn from their own history?"

When we come to the New Testament, we find the faithful church of the Lord of the first century, but shadows of apostasy were already evident. The study of the history of the years following the completion of the New Testament church reveals the apostasy gaining momentum and finally culminating in a complete departure from the church we read about in the New Testament.

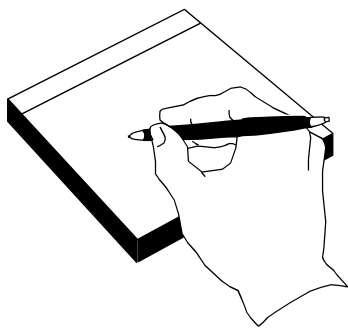
Then we read of the Reformation and following that the Restoration Movement. Men such as Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Walter

Scott, "Raccoon" John Smith, and many others called the people back to the Bible. The results were amazing. By 1860, there were at least 192,323 Christians who were part of the Restoration of the New Testament church! Kentucky alone had an estimated 45,000 members!

After seeing the tremendous success of those who called people back to the "ancient order," it is heart-breaking to see how a new generation arose who didn't have the same respect for the authority of the Word of God as the generation before them. The American Missionary Society arose to evangelize the world. The advocates of this readily admitted that this was not the New Testament way of evangelizing, but they argued that the New Testament method just wasn't working. They introduced instrumental music in worship. They couldn't justify the use of the instrument by the authority of the New Testament, so they took the approach that they could do anything that wasn't forbidden in the New Testament. This approach allowed them to introduce just about anything that they wanted to do.

Among the Restorers, the more faithful students of the Bible maintained, and rightly so, that we must have authority from the Scriptures for what we teach and practice in religion. The gulf between those who believed in the Bible as the only authority in religion and those who believed they could do anything not specifically condemned became wider and wider. The U.S. census in 1906, recognized a difference between the church of Christ and the Christian Church denomination, who took the liberal view. But, the division had

(Continued on Page 4)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Gift Of The Holy Spirit

I have been asked by a good brother to enunciate my view concerning the last phrase of Acts 2:38 which says, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." I realize that there are several differing views concerning this phrase, none of which does violence to the Scriptures. Therefore, this should never be a question which would cause division among brethren. It should be an area of study and prayerfully we can come to a greater understanding of God's Word. I also believe we should be able to answer any Bible question concisely and quickly. Thus, it is my studied opinion that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" is miraculous.

Some when they hear this become fearful and believe that individuals holding this view are advocating present day miracles. This is not the case. Simply because I believe that this phrase deals with miracles that does not mean that miracles are for today. The Bible clearly shows that when God's Word was completed, miracles came to an end. There is no purpose for miracles today. While the apostles received miracle-working power directly from God the only way that power could be passed to others is through the laying on of the apostles hands. Thus, when the apostles died and the last person whom the apostles had laid hands on died, miracles came to an end. Now, let us deal with some of the reasons I have come to this conclusion.

First, notice the only other time this phrase is used. Understand that simply because a phrase is used in one location, it does not always mean that it is used in the same way in other location. However, it does give us an indication of the meaning especially when it is consistent with other aspects of the text. The only time we find "gift of the Holy Ghost" is in the passage before us

and in Acts 10:45: "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." Peter was preaching the gospel to Cornelius and those with him. While speaking the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. The next verse shows that the meaning here is miraculous. "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Can this meaning be used in Acts 2:38? Is it consistent with everything else concerning Acts 2? My answer is yes.

Consider the context of the passage (which is vital to an understanding of any passage of Scripture). Remember in discussing the context that this was given during the first century (during a time of miraculous power) and not in the twentieth (which is totally non-miraculous). Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit to His apostles (John 14-16). He tells them to wait in Jerusalem until they receive power from on high (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8). On the day of Pentecost the apostles were together and the Father sends the Spirit to them (Acts 1:1-4). The apostles performed miracles. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 1:4). These are the events that brought the multitude together (Acts 2:6-7). The multitude was amazed at the events with some asking what it meant and others mocking (Acts 2:12-13). Peter informs the multitude that this is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. That prophecy entails the Spirit being poured out on all flesh (miraculous powers being given to all) and the promise of salvation. When the multitude was convicted of their sins they ask what they must do to receive that salvation. They were taught that they must repent and be baptized and they would receive the remission of sins (salvation) in our text. Next is the statement under consideration: "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In light of all the events that had occurred (the context) how could anyone there not conclude miraculous power (the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh) is what Peter meant. The context is obviously harmonious with the meaning of miracles as in Acts 10:45.

Let us also notice the parallel with Jesus' great commission as recorded by John Mark. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that

believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:15-18). The gospel was to be preached. On the day of Pentecost, Peter and the other apostles preached the gospel. Jesus said that one must believe. Peter instilled a belief in the Jews in Acts 2. This belief caused the Jews to ask what they must do to be saved. Jesus had stated that with one’s belief and baptism there would be salvation. Peter now tells the Jews that upon their belief they must repent and be baptized. The result of this action is the salvation or remission of sins Jesus promised. Jesus then stated that miracles would follow. Peter then promises miraculous power. Notice the parallel below.

Mark 16:15-18	Acts 2:38
Gospel to be preached	Gospel preached
Belief	Believe
	Repent
Baptized	Be baptized
Saved	Remission of sins
Miracles would follow	Gift of the Holy Spirit

The only difference is the inclusion of repentance by Peter which is recorded in Luke’s account. Others have simplified this into three parts: (1) stated conditions of pardon, (2) offered salvation, and (3) promised miraculous powers. Some question how we can contend the first part of Acts 2:38 applies today while the latter part is limited to the miraculous age, yet these same people have no difficulty in making the same distinction in Mark 16. The only difference is the verse distinction which did not exist when these were written.

It is also helpful to consider the terms Peter uses in relationship to their usage in the Scriptures. Consider the term translated into English as gift: *dorean*. This term is associated with miraculous powers. Simon the sorcerer attempted to buy the power to bestow miracles upon others, Peter informed him, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the **gift** of God may be purchased with money” (Acts 8:20). This is also used relative to the Gentiles and the miraculous power God bestowed upon them in Acts 10:45. Peter,

in rehearsing the events, said they had received the “like **gift**” recorded in Acts 11:17. These are the only times *gift* is used by Luke in Acts and it is always referring to miraculous powers (unless Acts 2:38 is the exception). Also consider how Paul uses *gift* in Ephesians 3:7 and 4:7.

Next consider the usage of *receive*. It is used frequently in the Scriptures where miraculous activity is involved. When the Samaritans were baptized into Christ, the apostles in Jerusalem heard of it. They sent Peter and John to Samaria to impart the Holy Spirit unto them. “Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might **receive** the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they **received** the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:15-17). When the Samaritans received the Spirit, they received miraculous powers. Again in Acts 10:47 Peter said that the Gentiles had “received the Holy Ghost as well as we.” In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised the apostles would **receive** power when the Spirit came upon them. They received miraculous powers. There is no question that these are miraculous in nature. Additionally one needs to consider John 20:22; Galatians 3:2; and 1 John 2:27. In light of the Scriptures use of *receive* with miraculous powers it would seem consistent to say that Peter in Acts 2:38 is using it in the same way.

Last, we would recognize that the apostles had the power to impart miraculous powers to new disciples. On that great day of Pentecost when the apostles (led by Peter) first preached the gospel, there were about 3,000 added to the Lord’s church. As we study Acts 8 we find that the apostles could impart miraculous powers to other Christians by the laying on of their hands. Therefore, when Peter said they would have the forgiveness of sins, upon their repentance and baptism, and then receive miraculous power, he was looking forward to the time when the apostles would lay hands on them. It certainly does no injustice to the Scriptures to teach that Peter promised miraculous powers to those who became Christians prior to the completion of the New Testament Scriptures. It also does not help the charismatic false teachers of our day. While there are others who will disagree with the conclusions I have come to (some very respected and loved brethren) this view is not a novel view in the least. It also has been held and is held by some respected and loved brethren. *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

actually existed at least twenty years before that time. At a later point, the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ split over the extremely liberal views of the Disciples. About twenty years ago the Disciples of Christ announced that they were no longer a part of the Restoration. They did not believe that the Restoration of the church of Christ of the New Testament was necessary or even the right thing to do. This is the ultimate result of the approach that the Bible is not our authority in religion.

It is heartbreaking to see a new generation arising today who are advocating some of the same basic things that split the church in the 1800s. We hear of those of the new generation who advocate the "New Hermeneutics." Hermeneutic" is the science of interpreting the Bible. What these men are doing is not "New" but the same old approach that some of our brethren took in the 1800s that split the church. Their position is that the New Testament does not provide us with a pattern, but we can do anything that isn't condemned. Doesn't that sound familiar? It should. It is the same philosophy that split the church of the last century. It is also the same old approach that has been used by the denominations for centuries.

Why can't these brethren let the church alone and allow it to remain faithful to the Word and to continue

to grow? What is there about God's people that they cannot stand peace and harmony? What is there about some gospel preachers who need to be recognized as having discovered some new truth that nobody else before them has discovered?

God's people can be faithful to Him from generation to generation if they will do as God directs, but we must be aware of the ever present danger of repeating history and digressing from the New Testament pattern.

It is God's will today that His Word be proclaimed faithfully by faithful preachers and teachers. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mat. 28:19-20). Paul told Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Preachers and teachers of today must realize the responsibility that is theirs in faithfully declaring the Word. Paul warned Timothy, "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim 4:1). We all must earnestly "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

22470 Mission Hills Ln; Yorba Linda, CA 92687

GOD'S KINGDOM, CLEAR AND RADIANT

Shan Jackson

Two thousand years ago the exalted idea of the kingdom of God rose upon the earth. The teachings of Christ made the kingdom clear and radiant. Already it had been foretold by the prophets. They told what they saw in the form of their own times. The Messiah would reign as the King of righteousness. With the breath of His lips He would lay waste the words of the wicked. With words of power, He would cause injustice and oppression to cease from the land. The words of His Father were to be written upon the hearts of His hearers. All the world would acknowledge His Deity and the sovereignty of His will. Jesus proclaimed powerfully that the kingdom would come and He would be its King. Again and again, no fewer than one hundred and six times during His recorded teachings alone, did He make this proclamation.

But Jesus also put the new wine of the kingdom into new wine skins. He divested the truth of the ancient forms and regulations of law. He taught more

perfectly than all the prophets before Him. He taught the spirituality of the kingdom from the approaching of perfect love to the cross itself. He demonstrated the power of faith and the secrets of the law of life. He lived the messages of the prophets and brought understanding to their pleas. But of all His glorious accomplishments possibly His greatest was His ability to locate the heart of the kingdom itself. "Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

The kingdom He taught is to be sought by man and is to serve as the highest good that man can achieve. "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:33). But Jesus also taught many other things about the kingdom. (1) It is reserved for those "poor in spirit" (Mat. 5:3). (2) It is not to be extended by the force of physical strength (Mat. 20:25-28). (3) Men by their sinful refusal of its power might exclude themselves

from it (Luke 14:15-24). (4) Its simple message should be communicated to the end of the age (Mat. 13:40-43).

What then is the kingdom of God? It is a system of order in an unordered world. It is also the reign of God in the lives of its subscribers. Furthermore, it is the purpose of living for every obedient soul. Hence, it had a place in the world from the very beginning. But when the Son of God appeared in the flesh for the redemption of man's soul, that appearance was so great a fulfillment and manifestation of the kingdom of God that all that had gone before seemed as nothing in its comparison. Therefore, He said, "The kingdom of God is at hand." Then it could also be said, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

We must, therefore, glory in opposition, and fight for the sake of fighting. As Paul would later write of his relation with the world, "I have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7). We must eagerly accept the opposition of the world when it cannot be righteously avoided and fight for the truth's sake both wisely and courageously.

The kingdom of God in its aim and idea is universal. Its intention includes all human situations and interests. To speak of a central local would deny its authority. Universal sin requires universal atonement

which is seen in a universal offer of salvation. As Jesus said, "All the world" and as Peter reemphasized, "All men everywhere." We read, "In the beginning God created," thus laying His claim as creator, coupled with Jesus' claim to "all authority in heaven and in earth," substantiates the fact that the world is Christ's and His message is for all. Much of it (the world) might be heathen, but all of it is human. Wherever the feet of man are walking there is the field of labor for the laborers. Shall we not remember that if our love for man is genuine? Our efforts must be sincere. If I love my neighbor, I must love his soul. Our Bible is not a book of philosophy of the soul but rather a history of souls. From first to last we see men and women who became personal friends with truth. Their lives serve as a constant and heartfelt reminder to the needs of life.

Two thousand years ago the kingdom came as it had been prophesied, and until He comes again to receive it again, we must strive to carry His continuing message to the lost of the land. We preach, not to unfold our thinking but unfold His will for their souls. To "seek and save" was His message, to seek and save is our mission.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios TX 77465

Mark your calendars!!!

Make plans to attend!!!

23rd Annual Bellview Lectures

June 13-17

Theme: Christian Fellowship

"THE BIBLE AND EUTHANASIA," OR "WHEN IS IT RIGHT TO DIE?"

Noah A. Hackworth

There is a dangerous trend that has taken shape in this country known as "mercy killing," or "euthanasia." Some think it is a recent phenomenon, but it isn't. The death of king Saul (2 Sam. 1:1-16; 1 Chr. 10) provides some valuable information along this line of thought. Saul was wounded on the field of battle (1 Sam. 31:3).

Knowing that his enemies were relentlessly pursuing him, that he was in pain and dying anyway, and that capture would mean torture, he requested that his armorbearer thrust him through, but the armorbearer would not. God does not endorse "active euthanasia," whether it involves thrusting a sword into a wounded,

dying, king or injecting a syringe full of phenobarbital into the veins of a dying person. What do we suppose God would have thought if Saul had been rescued by paramedics and put on life support, only to have some Amalekite unplug them? There is a vast difference between “mercy killing” and letting someone die if that person is already dying. We need to give attention to whether we are “sustaining life” or “prolonging death.”

One-time Surgeon General C. Edward Koop said,

The whole thing about euthanasia comes down to one word: motive. If your motive is to alleviate suffering while a person is going through the throes of dying, and you are using medication that alleviates suffering, even though it might shorten his life by a few hours, that is not euthanasia. But if you are giving him a drug intended to shorten his life, then your motivation is for euthanasia.

The Bible teaches the sacredness of human life. Once it is gone it cannot be reclaimed. We must remember that we are not our own; for we were bought with a price (cf., 1 Cor. 6:19-20). The trend in this country is to cut spending, which is the thing to do in certain areas. But what if the “younger generation” decides that we shouldn’t spend money to prolong the

life of our older citizens who are weak, feeble, and no longer able to contribute to our exorbitant spending? What then? Does the thought that their fate may be left in the hands of a “younger generation,” to decide whether they live or die, contribute to the security of the aged? There was a time in biblical history when the younger people made the **wrong decision** relative to the fate of Israel. Subsequent to the death of Solomon, the “older men” of Israel advised Rehoboam (king of the Southern kingdom) to make lighter the yoke which had been placed upon his people by his father (cf., 1 Kin. 12:4). But the counsel of the aged was rejected in favor of the counsel of the “young men” (1 Kin. 12:8), and Israel’s burdens were increased which resulted in a split in the Old Testament kingdom of God (1 Kin. 12:16-17). To deliberately shorten a life that belongs to God is wrong, and we need to remember, “For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:30-31).

4400 West Tulare Ave; Visalia, CA 93277

EXERCISE

Tracy Dugger

It is interesting to observe the quest for fitness our society seems to be obsessed with. When we turn on our televisions, we are flooded with a multitude of advertisements for exercise machines. Numerous people have taken up walking in malls, neighborhoods, schools, etc. Oftentimes when traveling to services we see many engaging in physical exercise. I ponder how these individuals need to be in services worshipping God and learning about His Will for their lives. These souls are depriving themselves of essential spiritual activity.

Keeping one’s body in proper physical condition has many advantages. It can decrease and prevent health problems. It can contribute to a longer life upon this earth. It has also been shown to improve mental stability. Eventually, though, the physical body is going to run down and die. Our life is but “a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jam. 4:14). Compared to eternity our lives upon this planet are but a blink. We, therefore, must be preparing for our eternal destiny.

Although there is some advantage to bodily exercise, one’s emphasis should be directed toward the spiritual realm. This is the exact point Paul made to Timothy: “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8).

Are we exercising our spiritual body? The exertion of our physical bodies may be important, but compared to the activity of our spiritual there is no comparison.

How can we exercise our spiritual bodies? By spending time studying the Bible, application of those biblical principles, worship, prayer and communion with God, attending Bible study, fellowship with other Christians, adding the Christian graces found in 2 Peter 1, doing good to others, acts of kindness, self-sacrifice, etc.

What about you? Are you exercising your spiritual self?

4604 Nelms Ln; Roanoke, VA 24019

STANDING FOR JESUS

Bryan Richardson

Many times people go to church services and sing the song, "Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus." We tend to get into a routine of going to services and singing this song (and others) and not really thinking about what the words really have to say to us. Are we really and truly standing for Jesus or are we just going through the motions? We need to stand firm for Jesus Christ and what the Bible teaches. Ephesians 6:11 says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." It says here to stand against the wiles of the devil. One cannot sit down and fight a battle. If we look at the next few verses, it tells us what the whole armor of God is. When a person is fighting a battle using a sword, he cannot use the sword very effectively if he is sitting down. We must stand up for Jesus and fight like a true soldier. There is a religious channel on television called Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). They have a lot of programs where the services of a denomination are taped so it can be played on the air. Denominations do not have the truth, but they seem to get more excited about what they are teaching than we do with the truth. The devil is actually using them to lead people away from the truth and into the error that is being taught to thousands of people. We have been sitting back too long and letting people take over with error. As Christians we need to stand more for Jesus.

Denominations use creed books and manuals that go against the Bible and they are doing more than we are standing on the Bible alone. Creed books and manuals add and take away from the Bible. Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:19-19 tell us what will happen when we add or take away from the Bible. We must stand for the Bible as our only guide book. The Bible is the only book that tells us how to go to heaven and how to escape hell.

We have sat down for so long that we have even let denominational error come into the church of Christ. We constantly have people standing up in our pulpits that teach error and go against the Bible. We need to start standing up and telling these people that they are wrong, and that we

will not stand for it anymore. We are sitting down and allowing them to go out into the denominations and seeing what is bringing in the large crowds, they are then bringing it back into the Lord's church and totally going against the Bible to have a larger number of people in attendance. Christians in the Lord's church need to stand up and say "no" to people who try to bring worldly things into the Lord's church. We need to stand for Jesus and not try to please the world.

We have sat down for so long that we have let the government cry out separation of church and state. We have let them take the Bible and prayer out of the public schools. The government is now wanting to get a law passed so any thing that has a religious connotation to it cannot be said, spoken, or heard of in the work place. If a Bible is taken to the work place, the person could be asked to leave his job for breaking the law. This is what will happen if we continue to sit down and not stand up for the Lord. We need to let the government know how we feel about the laws that they are trying to pass. The constitution of the United States says that we have freedom of religion and that no laws shall be made against it. We are actually sitting back and letting them violate the constitution.

Are you standing for Jesus? If Jesus was to come back, what kind of condition would He find us in? Would He find us standing up for Him or would He find us sitting down getting comfortable in our padded pews with the air conditioner or heater going. We need to stand up for Jesus as He would have us do. I want to make a plea to all church leaders and all Christians to stand up for the truth that is found in the Bible. We have been sitting for too long! The Lord may come back before we have another opportunity to "Stand Up for Jesus," so we need to act now. What kind of condition will He find us in when He comes back the second time? A lost or saved condition???

Route 10, Box 292; Jasper, AL 35501

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

March 1998

Number 3

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

Nothing New At Sunset

Tommy J. Hicks

In a previous article I said, "The first I heard that SSOP 'might' be teaching something it should not on the 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage' question was in 1978." I also said that when I went to Sunset to inquire into this matter, brother Cline Paden, then the Director of the Sunset School of Preaching, provided me with a form letter, dated March 6, 1973. Just over Paden's signature, the concluding statement of that letter was: "Therefore, Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry." My article indicated that Sunset had not taught error on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" while I was a student there (1967-69), and that it was my impression from Paden's 1973 letter and my 1978 visit with him in his office that during those years the school was still not teaching error on that issue. I was **wrong**!

Richard Rogers

Not long after my article was published, I began receiving letters and phone calls from other SSOP alumni. They let me know, in no uncertain terms, that Sunset had taught error on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" **before** I was a student there, **while** I was a student there, and **after** I was a student there. One of the first letters I received came from brother Perry O'Dell, a classmate of mine at SSOP from 1967 to 1969. Brother O'Dell succinctly told me: "You were wrong about the teaching about the 'guilty party.' Richard [Rogers] taught this false doctrine several times in class. He made mention that a person divorced was not married, therefore was free to marry." Another SSOP alumnus, Wayland McClellan, who attended from 1969 to 1971, wrote me and said:

In our classes with Richard Rogers, and I am not sure which ones it might have been, he used the illustration of two being handcuffed together. The point, supposedly, was to show that if one was released (that being the party which had the right to divorce) then the other (guilty) party would not be tied to anyone. It sounded "good" to a young Christian who sat in "awe" of his teacher, but the truth being that there was no Biblical basis for such a conclusion.

Brother McClellan went on to say that, until about a year after his graduation, he held the erroneous view taught to him by Richard Rogers. Fortunately, brother McClellan came to see that what he had been taught was error and he has renounced it. However, how many "young Christian" preacher students have "sat in 'awe'" of their teachers (Abe Lincoln, Richard Rogers, Truman Scott, Ted Stewart, and others) at Sunset, have believed and accepted the errors they have been taught there and continue to hold those errors to this day? Not only that, how many have been taught error at Sunset and then have gone all over the world teaching that error?

SSOP alumni from the 1965-67 class, from the 1967-69 class, from the 1969-71 class, and from later classes have come forward to say that Richard Rogers taught, all those years, that the "guilty party" can remarry after a divorce. So, I stand corrected. But, what does all this surfacing information reveal about brother Paden's 1973 letter?

The Paden Letter

An abundance of evidence (testimony from the students who were there, many of whom no doubt still have their class notes) proves beyond any doubt that, all through the years between 1965 and 1973, Richard

Rogers was teaching that the “guilty party” could remarry after a divorce. It is now evident that it was because of this very fact that many brethren were sending inquiries to Paden about what was being taught at SSOP relative to “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.” Evidently, so many inquiries were coming in that Paden felt it expedient to produce a **form letter** to deal with them. It is in that **form letter**, dated March 6, 1973, that Paden emphatically declared, “Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry.” In light of the fact that, in truth, it had been and was being openly taught (at least by Richard Rogers) that the “guilty party may remarry,” how could Paden make such a denial? Was he ignorant of what was being taught? Did he not investigate the matter even though it was repeatedly brought to his attention by the numerous inquiries he was receiving? Could it be that he knew what was being taught, but attempted to cover it up so that financial support and students would continue to come Sunset’s way? I do not know the answer to these questions, but I do know two things for sure: (1) Paden should have known what was being taught at Sunset; and, (2) what he wrote in his March 6, 1973, letter (whether intentionally or unintentionally) was not the truth.

Cline Paden’s protestations and disinformation to the contrary notwithstanding, it has been and can be verified and demonstrated that, since the mid 1960s to the present, Sunset School of Preaching (now called Sunset International Bible Institute) has taught and continues to teach that the “guilty party” may remarry after a divorce. Richard Rogers, a SSOP faculty member (“on” and “off”—he is presently “on”) since the mid 1960s, cannot successfully, correctly, and truthfully deny having taught, **at Sunset**, all through those years, that the “guilty party” may remarry after a divorce. He is still teaching that same false doctrine **at Sunset**.

Also, **at Sunset**, teaching that the “guilty party” may remarry after a divorce are Truman Scott and Ted Stewart, just to mention a couple (Truitt Adair, director of the school, other teachers, and Sunset staffers hold and teach the same view). I specifically named brethren Scott and Stewart for a reason.

The Scott Debate

Truman Scott, in addition to being a teacher in the school at Sunset, holds the position, “Dean of International Studies.” In my “Open Letter” to Sunset’s elders, I wrote:

The debate on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage that your faculty member, Truman Scott, had with

Wayne Jackson is in print. That debate not only revealed what brother Scott teaches regarding the Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage issue, it shows brother Scott’s lack of intellectual integrity. (PLEASE ASK ME TO PROVE THIS!)

Upon reading this material, brother Stewart phoned me and accused me of having “maligned” his “good brother—Truman Scott.” However, he did not show me “how” or “where” I had “maligned” brother Scott. Since brother Stewart has accused me of “maligning” brother Scott, I am compelled to prove what I said about brother Scott. What I said about brother Scott is factual, truthful, and contains no errors or misrepresentations; therefore, I did not “malign” him.

On September 25, 1982, the church in Martinez, California, hosted a “study discussion” on the subject of “Divorce and Remarriage” between brethren Wayne Jackson and Truman Scott. That discussion was printed in book form and entitled, *Divorce & Remarriage*. In this book, it is revealed that brother Scott teaches that “fornication” and “adultery” are not “sexual intercourse outside of marriage.” On page 38, brother Scott is quoted saying, “The Bible clearly teaches that any kind of sexual intercourse outside of the marriage covenant is sinful and damning for multiple reasons. **But that kind of contact is not fornication** and that is an extremely important clarification we need to make” (emphasis mine, TJH). Further, on page 48, brother Scott said, “The basic, original meaning of our key word, **adultery**, therefore, **is not sexual intercourse, but covenant breaking**” (emphasis mine, TJH). Any serious Bible student knows that brother Scott’s efforts to redefine these terms are not only silly, they are futile. However, it was necessary for brother Scott to attempt to do so in his vain striving to support his false doctrine. The book under consideration revealed that brother Scott would tell a man or a woman in their second marriage, after they had divorced their former mates where neither party had committed fornication, to “do everything you can, and exhaust all of your resources to make that marriage work” (p. 110). Thus, brother Scott teaches them to do everything in their power to stay in what Jesus called adultery (Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18). What does brother Scott teach concerning the remarriage of the “guilty party” after he/she has been put away by the “innocent party” for the cause of fornication? Pages 100-105 reveals explicitly, undeniably that brother Scott teaches that the “guilty party” may remarry after a divorce.

These previously mentioned things are in the book;

Scott said these things. As a participant in the discussion, before the book was printed, brother Scott took advantage of the opportunity to proof-read his presentations to make sure they were correctly set forth (see p. 125). No, I did not “malign” brother Scott when I said, “That debate...revealed what brother Scott teaches regarding the Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage issue.” It does. If there was any “maligning” here, brother Scott did it to himself.

Whatever Happened To Integrity?

When brother Stewart accused me of “maligning” brother Scott, perhaps, he had in mind my statement: “That debate...shows brother Scott’s lack of intellectual integrity.” If so, a question comes to my mind: “Has brother Stewart read the book?” (Does brother Stewart have the book **on hand, available** for sale in his bookstore?) If he had read the book, especially pages 122-128, I do not believe brother Stewart could seriously accuse me of “maligning” brother Scott relative to brother Scott’s “lack of intellectual integrity.” Throughout the discussion, brother Jackson, in a gentlemanly, scholarly, loving, Christian way, completely devastated and annihilated every one of brother Scott’s erroneous arguments.

None of brother Jackson’s arguments were more powerfully decimating to and exposing of brother Scott’s baseless argument (that adultery is not sexual activity, but rather that it is “covenant breaking”) than his argument from John 8. Brother Jackson said, “In John 8, the Bible says that the Jews brought to Christ a woman who had been taken in **the very act** of adultery.” Then, brother Jackson said to brother Scott, “My question to you is this: **what did they apprehend her doing?** Breaking a covenant? Or was she involved in illicit sexual activity?” (p. 122). It is here, in response to this argument, that brother Scott manifested his “lack of intellectual integrity.”

A Greek Word The Spirit Did Not Use

Responding to brother Jackson, brother Scott said the phrase “the very act,” in John 8:4, is a mistranslation of the Greek word *autophonia*. Concerning this word, *autophonia*, brother Scott declared, “Now that does not translate ‘the very act of.’ That translates, ‘by her own mouth she accuses herself’” (pp. 124-125). Furthermore, brother Scott said, “The expression ‘caught in the very act’ (‘the act’, ‘the very act,’) only occurs this one time in the Greek New Testament....It only occurs to my knowledge, one or perhaps two times outside of the New Testament” (p. 123). How do these statements

manifest that brother Scott lacks “intellectual integrity?” Brother Jackson laid brother Scott’s lack of “intellectual integrity” bare when he showed, “There is no such word in the Greek New Testament as *autophonia*” (p. 126). Contrary to brother Scott’s bogus definition of a word that does not even exist in the Greek New Testament, brother Jackson proved:

The word in John 8:4 is from the Greek term *auto-phoros* [the word that actually is there, TJH], a word found **frequently** [not a mere one or two times] in Greek literature, which means “caught in the act” (cf., the lexicons of: Liddell & Scott, p. 264; Arndt & Gingrich, p. 123; Thayer, p. 87; Abbott-Smith, p. 70; Robinson, p. 110; etc.). I personally found the word used by several Greek classical writers in exactly the same sense as employed by the apostle in John 8:4 (p. 127).

Is one manifesting a “lack of intellectual integrity” when he erroneously claims there is a certain Greek word in John 8:4, but no such word is found anywhere in the entire Greek New Testament? Is one proving he lacks “intellectual integrity” when he claims a definition exists (and gives it) for a word that does not in fact exist (but he claims that it does)? Is one demonstrating a lack of “intellectual integrity” when he presents himself to have so thoroughly studied a particular word that he is so authoritative on that word that he can (1) Reject established and proven scholarship, (2) Provide a definition for the word without etymological or linguistic evidence, and (3) Claim to know something of how many times the word is used in and out of the Greek New Testament? This should be sufficient to expose brother Scott’s “lack of intellectual integrity,” BUT THERE IS MORE!

Caught “In The Very Act”

Brother Jackson **caught** Scott “in the very act” of the previously mentioned misrepresentations and confronted him with his error. Regarding his use of the Greek word *autophonia*, in a letter to brother Jackson, dated October 4, 1982, brother Scott admitted what he called “an obvious error on my part” and even called it an “inexplicable error.” More than that brother Jackson said:

He promised that he would “go back and discover the origin or cause of the misstatement.” You can imagine my surprise—and my dismay—when, after more than **seven months** [May 13, 1983], I received Truman’s revised transcript and the **only change** was an alteration of *autophonia* to *autophoro*. Yet, left uncorrected was the entire false argument that had been erected upon his spurious word, namely, that the term meant “self-accused” (p. 127).

On October 23, 1982, Darrell Perry (the brother who published the book) wrote to brother Scott, saying,

“In addition, brother Jackson has informed us of your admitted mistake with regard to John 8. If it is your desire to add an appendix to the discussion correcting that error, let us know at your earliest convenience.” Later, on March 17, 1983, brother Perry wrote to brother Scott: “Concerning your comments on John 8 in the Question and Answer Period: You may wish, after going over that section grammatically and letting it stand as presented, to add a brief paragraph correcting the information you presented on that text. The number of words should hardly exceed the original number you employed.”

Brethren Jackson and Perry were magnanimous in their dealings with Scott. He made a false argument. He was caught and even admitted his error. He was allowed the time and the opportunity to correct the matter. A man possessing true “intellectual integrity” would have done so. Scott chose not to do so. On March 9, 1984, brother Jackson wrote to Scott: “I have no way of explaining why you have persistently refused to publicly admit your error in the John 8 argument other than the fact you simply do not wish to do it and **I know of no other light to view it save a lack of integrity**” (emphasis mine, TJH). Almost 14 years have passed since brother Jackson wrote that letter. Brother Scott still has not corrected his false argument. He still lacks “intellectual integrity.” I did not “malign” Scott when I wrote that he lacked “intellectual integrity.” He did and he does.

Examine The Evidence For Yourself

No one has to accept my word for any of these things. All anyone has to do is read the book, *Divorce & Remarriage, A Study Discussion*. I encourage everyone to do so and draw their own conclusions about Scott’s arguments and his “lack of intellectual integrity.” In the November 1997, issue of *Christian Courier*, brother Jackson stated, “Those who are considering a joint-effort with Sunset in various mission projects may well wish to take this matter into consideration. Truman Scott is a leading figure in Sunset’s mission efforts.” To this I add, if you are considering sending a “preacher student” to Sunset or if you are considering sending financial support to the Sunset preacher training school, consider the false doctrine, doctrinal error that is being taught there—consider the lack of “intellectual integrity” some of the instructors have—and then, **DO NOT SEND STUDENTS OR SUPPORT TO SUNSET!**

Errors Regarding The Holy Spirit

Not only do I urge you to read *Divorce & Remar-*

riage, there is another book that reveals a great deal about how Sunset personnel stand regarding false doctrine. Before I give the title of the book, I want to pose some questions. Question One: “Do **doctrinally sound** elders, preachers, and teachers in schools of preaching endorse and help in the spread of **false doctrines?**” **NO!** (1 Tim. 4:1-6, 16; Tit. 1:9-13; Rom. 16:17; Eph. 5:11.) It is wrong, sinful for anyone, even if he disagrees with a false teacher and the false teacher’s doctrines to give encouragement to the false teacher and, in any way, aid him in spreading his false doctrine. “For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 11). Question Two (this question is specifically for Cline Paden, Richard Rogers, Ted Stewart, Sunset’s elders, and all of the faculty members at SIBI): “Do you deny that Terry Rush, in his book *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*, taught (teaches) very serious doctrinal error?” If brother Rush did teach false doctrines in that book (and he most certainly did), then why did Cline Paden write the “Introduction” for the book? Why would Richard Rogers endorse the book, saying that it is, “An unusual, practical, challenging book. I found it highly provocative and useful” (back cover of the first edition of the book). Another endorsement on the back of the book reads:

Terry Rush’s book on the Holy Spirit is thought provoking, exciting, encouraging, edifying and challenging. Every Christian can derive great spiritual benefit by reflecting on the ideas presented in this Bible study.—Ted Stewart, Chairman, School of Missions/Graduate, Sunset School of Preaching.

On the “Acknowledgments” page of his book, Terry Rush thankfully noted, “Cline Paden, Richard Baggett, and especially Ted Stewart of the Sunset School of Preaching gave suggestions to improve the phrasing of the manuscript.” According to this, the aforementioned Sunset brethren not only endorsed brother Rush’s book, they helped him write it. There are no warnings, no disclaimers, no statements of disagreement, no expressed reservations to be found in Paden’s “Introduction” to, or in Rogers and Stewart’s endorsements of Rush’s book. None of these brethren can rightfully claim that they “endorsed the man, not the book.” In their remarks, they endorsed the book; therefore, they endorsed (without expressing a single word of disagreement) the false doctrines contained within the book. They became and are partakers of the false doctrines in the book. **Doctrinally sound** men do not endorse and help to spread false doctrines. **I respectfully challenge Paden, Rogers, and Stewart to deny that this book,**

a book they endorsed, contains numerous, serious false doctrines. It contains too many false doctrines for us to consider them all in this publication; however, we will note four of them.

Specifying Errors

Brother R. L. Popejoy wrote, "If there is a false doctrine in the religious world, our brethren will begin to clamor to it. Terry Rush in his book, *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*, advocates Adoptionist Christology" (*Firm Foundation*, October 1995, p. 16). Speaking of this same book, brother Terry Hightower penned, "As incredible as it sounds, from his perverted view of the Spirit's operation, Terry Rush sets forth a form of the 'Adoptionism' heresy which holds that Jesus was merely a human during the early years of his life" (*Studies in Ephesians*, 1997 Denton Lectures, p. 191). Though he at times attempts to buffer the full impact of this hideous doctrine, no one can successfully deny that Rush teaches a form of "Adoptionism" (between His birth and His baptism, Christ was nothing more than and was only a human being). Concerning Jesus, on page 28, Rush said, "He was emptied of being on the level... of the **nature of the invisible God**" (emphasis mine, TJH). On page 48, he wrote, "Jesus was totally human." When Jesus was baptized, Rush stressed, "The Spirit moved toward the 'Word-became-flesh' and immediately it was declared that Jesus is God's Son" (p. 18). Having taught a variation on the false doctrine of "Adoptionism" throughout his book, Rush seems to have reached a climax on page 124 with: "Jesus set the pace. He never misstepped. He was as common as a Missouri farmer. He was as good as a New England fisherman. **And until he linked with the Spirit of the Father, he was only a man.**" That is blatant, soul-damning doctrinal error. When Paden, Rogers, and Stewart endorsed the book, *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*, they endorsed Rush's false doctrine of "Adoptionism." Doctrinally sound men do not endorse false doctrines.

Terry Rush teaches the false doctrine of the "Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit" in his book, *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*. As mentioned, brother Hightower called it a "perverted view of the Spirit's operation." Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Rush expressly stated, "With him, we gain strength—invisible, **direct strength**—to do kingdom work" (p. 74; emphasis mine, TJH). Besides **direct strength**, brother Rush implied that the Spirit provides the Christian with direct divine revelation. He declared on page 70, "Christians are led

by the Spirit conclusively in that **we are able to see secret signals**" (emphasis mine, TJH). Throughout his book, Rush falsely teaches that Christians can do only what the Holy Spirit directly "empowers" them to do. If that were true, Christians would have no "free will." The concluding sentence of his book serves as a "parting shot" against those who do not agree with his "Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit" doctrine. His last words were, "May we be as committed to telling neighbors about Jesus, as we have been to telling ourselves that the Spirit does not work within us" (p. 126). When Paden, Rogers, and Stewart endorsed *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*, they endorsed the false doctrine of the "Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit." (I am not speaking of the Holy Spirit's work in "providence." I am speaking of the Holy Spirit working **directly**, without a medium, upon the Christian.) **Doctrinally sound** men do not endorse false doctrines such as the "Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit."

Another false doctrine Rush teaches, in *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*, is the doctrine of "Divine Illumination." The false doctrine of "Divine Illumination" claims that a man cannot understand the Bible unless the Holy Spirit "empowers" him to do so by "opening" his mind and heart to receive it. Rush expressed, "It is my observation that without the Holy Spirit the Bible only makes earthly sense" (p. 14). To this he added, "I am thoroughly persuaded that the Scriptures become nothing more than a book of 'blah' if we are not Spirit led" (p. 14). If the Bible "only makes earthly sense," without the leading of the Spirit, what of the unconverted? What of "free will?" Clearly, Rush's false doctrine is more in line with Calvinism than it is with the Bible. Whatever "spirit" it is that is leading Rush to understand the Bible as he does certainly is not the Holy Spirit. Contrary to Rush's false doctrine, the Bible does not need illuminating. It is the Bible that does the "illuminating," it is the light that shows men God's will: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105; cf., Isa. 8:20). Paul taught, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:3-4; cf., 2 Tim. 1:10). When Paden, Rogers, and Stewart endorsed *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*, they endorsed the false doctrine "that without the Holy Spirit

(Continued on Page 7)

THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road; Memphis, TN 38125

MARCH 29 - APRIL 2, 1998

“LESSONS IN LYRICS”

Sunday, March 29

9:30-10:20 AM	This Is My Father's World	Flavil Nichols
10:30-11:30 AM	A Might Fortress	Steve Ellis
6:00- 7:00 PM	Give Me The Bible	Goebel Music

Monday, March 30

9:00- 9:50 AM	O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing	J. K. Gossett
10:00-10:50 AM	To Us A Child Of Hope Is Born	Jimmy Clark
10:00-10:50 AM	Count Your Blessings (Women's Class)	Corinne Elkins
11:00-11:50 AM	Were You There?	Walker W. Crossno
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Why Did My Savior Come To Earth?	Howell Bigham
	Class 2: How Shall The Young	Daniel F. Cates
	Class 3: A Beautiful Prayer	Mike Hixson
	Class 4: Ten Thousand Angels	Toney L. Smith
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	Low In The Grave He Lay	Paul Sain
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: He Bore It All	Terry Claunch
	Class 2: There Is Just One Way	Melvin Sapp
	Class 3: Savior, Thy Dying Love (Women's Class)	Annette B. Cates
2:10- 3:00 PM	Ye Must Be Born Again	James W. Boyd
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Amazing Grace	John R. Vaughn

Tuesday, March 31

9:00- 9:50 AM	O Happy Day	Clifford Newell
10:00-10:00 AM	I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord	Lindsey Warren
10:00-10:50 AM	God's Family (Women's Class)	Maggie Colley
11:00-11:50 AM	Only In Thee	Gary Colley
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Have You Counted The Cost?	Ronald Choate
	Class 2: Master, The Tempest Is Raging	Gary Henson
	Class 3: The Church's One Foundation	Steve Wiggins
	Class 4: The Kingdoms Of Earth Pass Away	Jerry Murrell
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:00- 2:00 PM	Whosoever Will	Tommy Hicks
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: All Things Are Ready	Wayne Price
	Class 2: What Will You Do With Jesus?	Eric Owens
	Class 3: My Task (Women's Class)	Jane Foster

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR

2:10- 3:00 PM	All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name	Dub McClish
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Do All In The Name Of The Lord	Bobby Duncan

Wednesday, April 1

9:00- 9:50 AM	A Beautiful Life	Harrell Davidson
10:00-10:50 AM	Will Your Anchor Hold?	David Dial
10:00-10:50 AM	Is Your Life A Channel Of Blessing (Women's Class)	Vada Rice
11:00-11:50 AM	In Heavenly Love Abiding	Darrell Conley
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Holy, Holy, Holy	B. J. Clarke
	Class 2: Fairest Lord Jesus	Eddie Craft
	Class 3: O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee	Jeff Archey
	Class 4: Sing And Be Happy	Riley Nelson
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	I'll Never Forsake My Lord	Wayne Coats
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: Can He Depend On You?	Roy McConnell
	Class 2: Must Jesus Bear The Cross Alone?	Frank Paris
	Class 3: He Knows Just What I Need (Women's Class)	Martha Manley
2:10- 3:00 PM	Soldiers Of Christ, Arise	Roy J. Hearn
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Seeking The Lost	James Segars

Thursday, April 2

9:00- 9:50 AM	The Ninety And Nine	Wayne Lankford
10:00-10:50 AM	Shall I Crucify My Savior?	Larry Reynolds
10:00-10:50 AM	If I Have Wounded Any Soul Today (Women's Class)	Irene Taylor
11:00-11:50 AM	His Eye Is On The Sparrow	James Wyers
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Yield Not To Temptation	Jeff Clark
	Class 2: Lovest Thou Me More Than These?	Steve Rook
	Class 3: Blest Be The Tie	Terry Joe Kee
	Class 4: God Is Calling The Prodigal	Glen Alexander
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	We Are Going Down The Valley	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: What Will Your Answer Be?	Steve Sanders
	Class 2: Whispering Hope	Matt Amos
	Class 3: Does Jesus Care? (Women's Class)	Dorothy Mosher
2:10- 3:00 PM	Will Jesus Find Us Watching?	Perry Cotham
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	When All Of God's Singers Get Home	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

NOTE: An attended nursery shall be provided for all lectures. There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also for the evening classes.
WATER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED

the Bible only makes earthly sense...that the Scriptures become nothing more than a book of 'blah' if we are not Spirit led." Now, if Paden, Rogers, and Stewart do not believe this false doctrine, why did they endorse it? Why are they encouraging its spread?

Rush Makes No Sense

Interestingly, Rush taught the false doctrine of the mutual exclusivity of "law" and "Spirit" in his book, *The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense*. Knowing what is taught at Sunset relative to "law" and "grace," it does not surprise me that Paden, Rogers, and Stewart would endorse a false doctrine on the mutual exclusivity of the "law" and the "Spirit." Without mincing words, Rush asserts, "Spirit and law don't mix" (p. 38). Rush sees it as "Law versus Spirit" (p. 60). On page 63, Rush wrote, "God and sin do not co-exist; nor do Spirit and law." Brethren, do not be misled into thinking that Rush is just considering the "Law of Moses" when he says "Spirit and law don't mix" or they do not co-exist (as might be considered from 2 Cor. 3). Terry Rush includes "any and all law" in his statements disdaining *law*. Heretic liberals hate *law*. They deny it. They reject it. They condemn *law* and anyone who teaches that New Testament Christians do live under *law*. Be that as it may, Paul taught that "Spirit" and "law" do mix, that it is "law" and "Spirit" (rather than "Law versus Spirit" a la Rush), and that "law" and "Spirit" do co-exist. More than that, Paul taught that the Spirit has a law. He said, "For **the law of the Spirit** of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2; emphasis mine, TJH). If brother Rush's false doctrine were true—that it is "Law versus Spirit"—then it would also be true that it is "Christ versus Spirit" because Christ has a "law." Galatians 6:2 commands, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil **the law of Christ**" (emphasis mine, TJH). Not only is the *law* Christians live under called the "law of the Spirit" and the "law of Christ," it is also called "law of faith" (Rom. 3:27), the "law of love" (Rom. 13:10), the "law of liberty" (Jam.

1:25), and the "royal law" (Jam. 2:8). Why do Paden, Rogers, and Stewart endorse this heretical book that teaches this false doctrine (the mutual exclusivity of "law" and "Spirit") when the Scriptures teach so clearly that "law" and "Spirit" are not mutually exclusive?

Brethren, these are not the words of a vengeance seeking, unloving, disgruntled person. I take no delight in writing these things about my alma mater. No matter what anyone thinks or says, I love Cline Paden. I love Sunset. Because of all the good the school and brother Paden have done for me, I will be forever in their debt. I pray for them every day. My desire is that everyone reading these words will pray for them. Though some may chose to deny it, it is because of my love for the school and for brother Paden that I write these things. It is because of my love for the souls of men and for the truth that will save those souls that, until Sunset "cleans house," getting rid of the false doctrines and provides a faculty that genuinely possesses "intellectual integrity" I will continue to sincerely urge brethren—**DO NOT SEND FINANCIAL SUPPORT OR STUDENTS TO SUNSET.**

Closing Plea

In closing, my final plea is, please do not take "my word" for any of the things I have written in this article. By that same token, please do not take the word of the brethren at Sunset either. There is evidence (letters, books, testimony of Sunset alumni) verifying everything I have said in this piece. That evidence is available to you. Get the evidence. Sift through it for yourself. Check what I have written against that evidence. Then, draw you own conclusions. The books mentioned in this article can be purchased at a bookstore operated by brethren, through this publication, through Wayne Jackson, or through Ted Stewart. You may contact me for copies of the letters I quoted (send a 55-cent stamped, self-addressed envelope).

P.O. Box 64430; Lubbock, Texas 79464-4430

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

April 1998

Number 4

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

The Matrix That Failed: A Review Of Osburn's Quest

David W. Hester

Carroll Osburn is on a quest. Oh, he hasn't mounted a horse and gone off tilting at windmills, but he is tearing down straw men with his pen. In his book, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, he includes a chapter entitled, "The Exegetical Matrix Of The Quest For The Elusive Non-Sectarian Ideal." In it, he takes a position on the inspiration of the Bible which, at best, is neo-orthodox. However, it more closely resembles classic liberalism.

Consider what he said of J. W. McGarvey's view of inspiration: "Nevertheless, he held that the autographs and the corrected Greek text of the New Testament are inerrant. Errors are detectable in the text, but they do not affect faith." He goes on to quote assertions made by some that the gospels have certain contradictions in the text, and that they are not an objectively written piece of history.

Clearly, this goes against what the Bible itself says. "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" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Paul said that he spoke "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth," but in words "which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). This is a positive claim of verbal inspiration. Paul makes an argument in Galatians 3:16 based on a single word! If inspiration does not extend to the very words, as Osburn apparently believes, such an argument would be meaningless.

Nevertheless, how do we know that we have in our possession today, in the translations, what the autographs of the New Testament contained? Are we claiming that the autographs of the New Testament are

inerrant, or the translations?

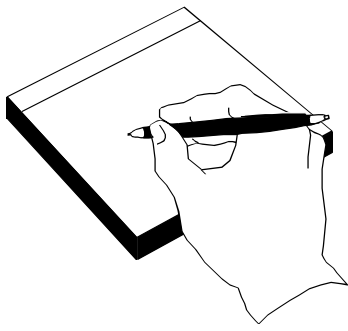
These two questions enter the realm of textual criticism. There is ample evidence which shows the Greek text we have now is trustworthy. Westcott and Hort say: "If comparative trivialities, such as changes of order, the insertion or omission of the article with proper names, and the like, are set aside, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the whole New Testament" (*Greek New Testament*, p. 564f). This would be a total of a little more than a half page of the Greek Testament.

Ezra Abbot gave similar findings, and said that 95 percent of the readings under question are "various" rather than "rival" readings. A. T. Robertson averred that the questionable words is of a "thousandth part of the entire text" (*An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 22). Truly, the New Testament has survived in a purer form than any other book—a form that is 99.5 percent pure! (*A General Introduction To The Bible*, p. 367).

But, what of inspiration? Does it extend to the translations, and if so, how? Given the examination of the Greek text, we may safely assert that to the extent which we have in our present Greek texts the original text, to that extent we have in our hands today the verbally inspired New Testament.

Now, that is not to claim that the copyists were inspired, or that there are inspired translations. But, we can be assured that we have the inspired Word of God in our possession.

(Continued on Page 4)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Man Must Be Baptized

Possibly the greatest controversy concerning salvation rests with the act of baptism. Baptism is a burial or an immersion in water by the believer for the remission of sins. We want to look at each of these points in our study for each are important.

Baptism is a burial or an immersion

Sometimes this discussion is under the heading of the “mode” of baptism. This is a misnomer as we shall explain. However, because of the way in which man baptizes, we use this terminology. When we look for the definition of a word we generally go to a dictionary. Please understand dictionaries are useful, but not always for finding the definition; they give the modern usage of words. One of the definitions Webster gives for “baptize” is “to dip (a person) into or sprinkle with water....” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language*, College Edition, p. 116.) I do not deny that is how people use baptism today. I do deny that is what the Bible has reference to when it speaks of baptism. The word baptize (or any of its forms) means to immerse, or to dip or plunge. A notice of some of the scholars shows this to be the meaning. Arndt and Gingrich say, “dip, immerse.” (William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, p. 131.) Vine says, “consisting of the process of immersion, submersion and emergence (from *bapto*, ‘to dip’).” (W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*, p. 98.) Little Kittel’s says, “‘to dip in or under,’ ‘to dye,’ ‘to immerse,’ ‘to sink,’ ‘to drown,’ ‘to bathe,’ ‘wash.’” (Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, p. 92.) Thayer says, “to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge.” (Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 94.) Others

would say the same basic thing.

If the New Testament writers wanted to express the idea of sprinkling or pouring they had words to express those ideas. To express the idea of sprinkling they could use the word *rhantizo*. Then for pouring they had the words *ballo* or the more common word for pour, *cheo*.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear what baptism is by its descriptions. Baptism takes “much water” (John 3:23). It takes a going down into and a coming up out of the water (Acts 8:38-39). These descriptions do not fit the act of sprinkling or pouring. However, these descriptions do fit immersion. The Bible also uses the term burial. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4). “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). When a burial takes place, the body is placed completely under the ground. “We don’t bury people by sprinkling or pouring a little dirt on them.” (Jerry Moffitt, “The Obligation Not To Live in Licentiousness,” *The Book of Romans*, ed. Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren, p. 99.) Thus, the act of baptism is immersion or submersion. The element one is submerged in is water (John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39; See also 1 Pet. 3:20-21).

Baptism is for the penitent believer

Some religious organizations “baptize” infants. Thus, it is necessary to study the question: who are the subjects of baptism? As we have studied in this lesson, teaching and learning precedes baptism (John 6:44-45). Upon hearing and learning, the proper subject for baptism must believe (Heb. 11:6; John 14:1). Then, a person desiring baptism must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38) and confess his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10). All these actions precede baptism, yet infants cannot do these things. Infants do not have the capability of reasoning correctly concerning the facts of Christianity and placing their trust in God, Christ and the gospel. Infants cannot make the good confession of their faith in Christ as God’s Son; they cannot talk yet.

Infants cannot repent for they have no sin of which to repent. Then, the act of baptism is for the remission of sins (as we will study). Babies are born innocent or free of sin, thus there is no need to repent or be baptized. The Bible states that babies are innocent and free from sin. Jesus teaches to enter the kingdom of heaven

one must become as an infant, and that the kingdom of heaven consists of infants or little children (Mat. 18:3; 19:13-15). If babies are born depraved sinners, then to enter the kingdom of heaven and to remain a member we must become depraved sinners and remain depraved sinners. How ridiculous! Instead, we must be pure and innocent. Study also Ecclesiastes 7:29; Psalms 106:37-38; and Ezekiel 28:15. We also know that babies are born free of sin because of the origin of man's spirit. God is the origin of man's spirit (Ecc. 12:7; Zec. 12:1; Heb. 12:9). God does not give something depraved and sinful, but He gives that which is good (Jam. 1:17). Thus, infants and babies are born free of sin and do not need to repent or be baptized.

Last, there is no example of an infant being baptized. No one can turn to any Bible verse and show where a baby is being baptized, or implied in the text. What they are limited to is the times in which the Bible speaks of the baptism of a household (Acts 16:14-15; Acts 16:30-34; 1 Cor. 1:16). To argue for infant baptism upon this basis one must make certain assumptions. He must first assume that the person was married (a bachelor could have a household consisting of slaves). He must then assume that they had children. They, then, must assume that the children were infants. And last, they must make the assumption that those infants were baptized. What a fragile house to build a doctrine upon, especially when that doctrine is contrary to the teachings of the New Testament.

Baptism is for the remission of sins

When one allows the Bible to speak for itself, then it is hard to understand why this becomes a problem. Let us notice a few Scriptures that teach the purpose of baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). To be saved one must believe **and** (a conjunction that joins two items of equal importance) he must be baptized. If we have a sentence such as "He that goeth to the courthouse and registers shall receive one-thousand dollars," no one will misunderstand. Both actions (going to the courthouse and registering) are necessary to receive the money. Both actions (believe and baptism) are necessary to receive salvation. Some have argued that since baptism is not mentioned in the latter part of the verse, baptism is not necessary. However, this does not follow. One cannot be scripturally baptized if he does not believe, thus, there is no reason to mention baptism. If one does not believe he will be damned; however, if he wants to be saved he must both believe and be baptized.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). A simple reading of the passage shows baptism is for the remission of sins. However, because of denominational false doctrines, people muddy the water. Some have claimed that the word "for" as is used here means "because of." An illustration of this teaching is found in the electronic version of Strong's Concordance (quoted from *Logos Bible Software*, but I understand it is in others as well, however, not in the written version).

"For" (as used in Acts 2:38 "for the forgiveness...") could have two meanings. If you saw a poster saying "Jesse James wanted for robbery", "for" could mean Jesse is wanted so he can commit a robbery, or is wanted because he has committed a robbery. The later sense is the correct one. So too in this passage, the word "for" signifies an action in the past. Otherwise, it would violate the entire tenor of the NT teaching on salvation by grace and not by works.

However, this goes against the meaning of "for." The Greek word *eis* is not retrospective ("an action in the past"), it is prospective (looking forward). Additionally, whatever the "for" means in relation to baptism, it also means in relation to repentance. Thus, if baptism is because they have the remission of sins, they repent because they have the remission of sins. This is something even they refuse to accept. Also, the Greek and English construction of "for the remission of sins" in Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38 are the same. If Acts 2:38 means because your sins have been remitted, then did not Jesus shed His blood because we already have the remission of sins?

When Saul traveled to Damascus, a blinding light struck him. Jesus revealed Himself to Saul as the one he was persecuting. Saul asked Jesus what he must do. Jesus told Saul to go into the city and it would be told him what he must do. Jesus then appears to Ananias and tells him to go tell Saul what he must do. Ananias tells Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul was told, as a penitent believer, to be baptized. In that baptism he would wash away his sins. Some hold that Saul was saved on the road to Damascus. If Saul was saved on the road to Damascus, then he was saved while he was in his sins. Saul's sins were not taken away, washed away, until he was baptized. When he was baptized he then was saved.

Peter clearly tells us that baptism saves us. “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). Yet, the denominational world argues that baptism doth also not now save us. They do exactly what Satan did in the Garden of Eden to Eve in adding the word “not” to what God said (see Gen. 3:4).

Briefly notice these other passages. Baptism places one into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) where salvation is (2 Tim. 2:10). Baptism places one into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), and there is only one (Eph. 4:4). Jesus said He would save the body (Eph. 5:23). It is by baptism we are born again (John 3:3, 5; Tit. 3:5) where we become a child of God (2 Cor. 5:17) and heirs of God (Rom. 8:17). It is also by this new birth, baptism, that we enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5). We are baptized into Christ’s death (Rom. 6:3-4) where Jesus shed His blood to forgive us our sins (Mat. 26:28; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). The gospel saves man (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-2) and those who do not obey the gospel will be lost (2 The. 1:6-9). The gospel consists of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). We must obey a form of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:17-18) which is found in the act of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). Anyway one looks at baptism it always comes out as it being for our salvation.

An additional question that we face today is: Must one know why he is being baptized or can he be baptized simply to obey God? While we realize that man does not have to have total understanding concerning baptism, he must understand that baptism is what saves man. The design or purpose of baptism must be understood by the recipient of baptism for that baptism to be biblical baptism. Paul discusses the institution of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11. He recounts how Jesus said to partake of this Supper “in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24-25). The word “in” is the same Greek word as “for” is in Acts 2:38. If one cannot partake of the Lord’s Supper simply to obey God and not understand the purpose (in memory of Christ’s death), then why should we think that one can be baptized simply to obey God without understanding its purpose (salvation, or the remission of sins)? No one can accidentally obey God. Everyone who is “baptized” whether immersed or sprinkled or whether he is doing it to show he has been saved or to be saved, he is doing

it in a general sense to obey God. Baptism has a specific purpose and one must understand that purpose for his baptism to be valid. It takes the right act based on the right belief to constitute Bible baptism. *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

Inspiration did not override the individual personalities and styles of each writer. Consider Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Their plan, style, and peculiar expressions are different. It is no accident that the style of John—simple Greek—is different from that of Paul. Inspiration means that God chose the words the writers used, but did not nullify their personalities.

Contrast all of this to Osburn, who asserts that there are contradictions in the text, quotes (without contradiction) one who says the gospels are not objective history, and challenges the view of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. He lumps all of this under the phrase “conservatism.”

But, Osburn’s view is more akin to neo-orthodoxy. In fact, it seems to be a combination of the existential view and the demythologizing view. The existential view asserts that the Bible becomes the Word of God when He chooses to use this imperfect channel to confront man with His Word. The demythologizing view says the Bible must be stripped of culture in order to get at the core of truth. It must be stripped of religious myth in order to get at the real message. It is perhaps no coincidence that Osburn does not mention neo-orthodoxy as a possibility.

Anyone who holds to the neo-orthodox position ignores what the Bible says about itself. As we have seen, the Bible claims verbal inspiration. Also, Jesus equated the propositional writings of the Old Testament as a whole with the Word of God (Mat. 5:17; 15:3-9; John 10:35). Also, he based an entire argument, against the Sadducees on a tense of a single word (Mat. 22:31-33)!

Clearly, Osburn is flirting with disaster. He is skirting the realm of classic liberalism, and will take many with him. This is the sad truth. The Carmichael Distinguished Professor of New Testament mounts his theological horse, brandishes his pen, and rides off on a quest which ends as did Don Quixote’s ruin. All the while, he sings, “To dream, the impossible dream.” Let us hope and pray it stays that way.

2485 Spring Valley Rd.; Tuscumbia, AL 35674

“Christian Fellowship”

June 13 - 17, 1998

Saturday, June 13

7:00 P.M.	What Is Fellowship	Noah Hackworth
8:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Corinthian Church	Curtis Cates

Sunday, June 14

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Mission Work	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:00 A.M.	Obligations Of Christian Fellowship	Stanley Ryan
11:00 A.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
2:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Lord's Supper	Garry Barnes
3:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The World	Joel Wheeler
4:00 P.M.	How To Treat The Withdrawn	Michael Hatcher
5:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
7:00 P.M.	Guilt By Association	Lester Kamp
8:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Restoration Movement	Randy Mabe

Monday, June 15

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Giving	Gary Grizzell
10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M.	The Holy Spirit And Fellowship	Keith Mosher
12:00 P.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
1:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Preaching	Mark Mosher
2:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Error	David Brown
3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: Fellowship And Error	
4:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
7:00 P.M.	Fellowship And Ephesians 4:1-6	Clifford Newell
8:00 P.M.	The Future Of Fellowship In The Church	Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 16

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And 2 John 9-11	Tim Nichols
10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Mark 9:38-41	Toney Smith
12:00 P.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
1:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Singing	Guss Eoff
2:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Preachers	Bob Berard
3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: Fellowship And Preachers	
4:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
7:00 P.M.	The Sermon On The Mount And Fellowship	Harrell Davidson
8:00 P.M.	Withdrawal Of Fellowship	Ken Willis

Wednesday, June 17

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And 1 John 1	Paul Vaughn
10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Prayer	Howell Bigham
12:00 P.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
1:30 P.M.	The Value Of Fellowship	Buster Dobbs
2:30 P.M.	May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?	Dub McClish
3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?	
4:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
7:00 P.M.	Fellowship And Ephesians 5:11	Eddie Whitten
8:00 P.M.	Why We Cannot Fellowship Denominations	Ronnie Hayes

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 850/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this brochure announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures*.

MEALS

The women of the *Bellview Church of Christ* will provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the *Bellview elders* and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, book stores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the *Bellview Lectures* in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Christian Fellowship* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price prior to June 30, 1998, or afterwards at the regular price. It will contain thirty-nine chapters and approximately 600 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you, at no charge, if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

HOW CAN LOVE BE HATED?

Shan Jackson

The title of this piece is rather confusing. It asks the question, How can love be hated? Here is the answer. The greatest gift God gave to the world was His love, and His love was capsuled in His Son. Christ's assuring statement: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17) shows us that. But when the world rejected His Son, it rejected His love. In rejecting His love, it mocked His gift. When they spat upon His Son, and when they beat and crucified our Lord, they showed hate for His love.

But we know something else. Though they hated His Son and rejected His love, they still did not destroy His love for them. He allowed His precious child to die a terrible death in spite of their abstinence and rejection. Romans 5:8 reminds us that even in their sin Christ "died" for them.

But we still know something else. His love continues today, and the underlying question of this piece is: Do we love, or do we reject, His gift?

We will divide this article into three sections. Each section will refer to one of three groups or individuals. The first section deals with the world. Consider just exactly what the world hates about Christ. Now, I say this in a stereotypical and metaphorical way. Certainly, not everyone in the world hates Christ. But if you take John 14:15 and read it in the negative, we soon realize that this is true. Jesus says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The negative reveals the same truth. Negatively Jesus would be saying, "If you do not keep my commandments you do not love me." Or, to reference our theme, "If you do not keep my commandments you hate me."

Notice also His teaching from John 7 where we see Jesus going to Jerusalem at the prompting of His brethren. They tell Him to go to Judea and let the people hear His message. Jesus says in verse 6, "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (vv. 6-7).

Brethren, the stereotypical, metaphorical world hates Christ because Christ pulls no punches. The world hates Christ because the teaching of Christ condemns the world (John 12:48). John 15:23 shows Jesus saying

that not only does the world hate Him, but it hates the "Father also."

Now, if the teaching of Christ condoned the actions of the world there would be no problem, but it doesn't. Therefore, the world hates Christ because His teaching and the world's actions are not compatible. If Jesus were alive today, our society would probably crucify Him again.

On one occasion Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). On another occasion he said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Mat. 5:14). When Jesus turned the light on the dark-loving world, the dark-loving world rebelled. Jesus is the "light of the world" and He said in John 3:20, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light." If Jesus is light and the world hates light, and He says that we are the light also, then why would we suppose the world would not hate us as well? Jesus said, "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake" (Mat. 10:22).

Our next point might come as a shock to you in its wording. God does some hating Himself. However, His hatred is not for the sinner, but for the sin. Christ died because we were sinners. If man had not been lost in sin, Christ would not have had to die on the cross. From the cross Jesus asked God to forgive, not to condone.

Proverbs 16 says that God hates arrogance, lying, back-stabbers, gossips, busybodies, etc. There is a 7th thing that God hates so much that Solomon says "it is an abomination" unto Him. He that sows seeds of discord among God's people is an abomination to our loving Father. I pity the Christian who stands before God's judgment throne who has sown the seeds of discord among God's people.

Finally, we as Christians also need to do some hating. We should hate anything that ever keeps us away from God's presence. As Jude says, "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (v. 23). Amos gives this sage advice: "Hate all evil, cleave to all good" (Amos 5:15, TEV). Brethren, if we hate all evil we will not get caught up in evil.

Jesus says, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Mat. 10:34). My dear brethren and friends, do you love the gift of God's love, or do you cling to the influence of this world? The decision is certainly yours, however it carries an eternity of results.

PO Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465-0904

WHAT IDENTIFIES GOD'S PEOPLE?

Tracy Dugger

In visiting another congregation during a gospel meeting, I was shocked at a few statements from the pulpit. The preacher, in expounding on the love that ought to exist between brethren, referenced John 13:34-35. These familiar passages state: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The preacher asked, "What trait identifies to the world Jesus' disciples?" He answered that our Lord did not say accapella singing, nor the fact that baptism for remission of sins is being taught, identified Jesus' disciples. He left a clear impression to the audience, with these and other statements, that love between disciples was the **only** identifying characteristic of God's people. He applied to John 13:34-35 that which Jesus never intended. Please do not misunderstand, I am in strong agreement that love between disciples is a vital trait of God's people (one in which I extensively preach), but this does not make it the **only** trait!

If love between disciples is the only trait identifying God's people, then the Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Muslims would be Jesus' disciples—there is obviously love and sincerity between many of them. We must understand that the Bible clearly reveals the existence of more than one characteristic of God's people and the church—there are numerous traits!

The local church for which I am privileged to labor has an ad in the yellow pages. This particular ad causes many out of town members of the church to call us for times of our assembly, directions, etc. Two particular things lead these Christians to call us: (1) Our Designa-

tion "church of Christ" and, (2) one aspect of our worship—"Accapella singing." These and other biblical characteristics identify us as the New Testament church. They grab the attention of people seeking to find a scriptural church to worship with.

Consider the following example: Suppose you were to move into an area where nothing of the church was known. In order to find a group of Christians to worship and work with, you would certainly consider love between one another as important (John 13:34-35; 1 Pet. 2:17; Rom. 12:8). But is this the only characteristic you are interested in? NO! Would you not also look for a church whose guide was the Bible? One that worshipped by song without the addition of mechanical instruments of music (Eph. 5:19)? One that weekly observed the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7)? One that taught the right plan of salvation (Hear—Rom. 10:17; Believe—John 3:16; Repent—Acts 2:38; Confess—Rom. 10:10; and be Baptized—Mark 16:16)?

We are to emulate the first century church in our practice and belief. Paul commended the Christians at Thessalonica for so doing. "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews" (1 The. 2:14). We too must be followers of the early church!

I appreciate an emphasis on love between brethren, but let us not be guilty of lessening the importance of many right things by overstating the case. Perhaps this is one reason why liberalism has been able to make some in-roads into some congregations.

4604 Nelms Lane; Ronaoke, VA 24019

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

May 1998

Number 5

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

A CHRISTIAN JOURNALIST: IRA Y. RICE, JR.

J. E. Choate

When church historians after A.D. 2000 look back on the history of the churches of Christ, the name of Ira Y. Rice, Jr., will loom large in the last quarter of the 20th century. As David Lipscomb, H. Leo Boles, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., B. C. Goodpasture, Guy N. Woods faced down in their time the "Goliaths" or modernism, so has Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Brother Rice earned a B. A. degree from the University of Oklahoma at Norman in the School of Journalism. No editors from Alexander Campbell, David Lipscomb, B. C. Goodpasture to the present have been educated at this professional high level of free American journalism. Those who fail to understand what makes Ira Y. Rice, Jr., a preeminently successfully religious journalist simply do not know these facts.

He was born to be what he is which is a preacher and a church of Christ journalist, however, harsh and incompatible the combinations seem to be on occasions. From boyhood, the preacher and the journalist were seen in the boy. William Wordsworth said that the "boy is the father of the man." He grew up under the powerful influence of his revered father who was the best known revival song leader and singing school teacher in Oklahoma and Texas. He says that Foy E. Wallace, Jr., and N. B. Hardeman were his heroes.

Rice told the writer that he must have been a born reporter. As a small lad walking about his neighborhood, he was fascinated by house numbers. His mother could tell where he had been because he copied down every house number he had passed in a little notebook. At the age of eleven when he was in the Norman, Oklahoma, Junior High School, he started a little paper

he named *The Gosling*.

He was never good at math, sciences, and physics, but he excelled in English, history, music, and debating. He said he tried out for the debate team in his senior year at Norman. Though never as good as the two top debaters, he held his own in his senior year in numerous school debates in Oklahoma and Kansas.

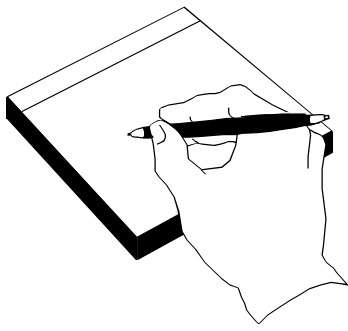
Rice entered the University of Oklahoma in 1937 with pre-law in mind. An English test was given to all new freshman. Rice was in the upper 4 percent who were assigned to a special English class. And he tells the story that he was made the Cleveland County District Secretary of the Boy Scouts and paid \$35.00 per month. Part of his duties included publicizing public scouting activities via the newspapers. During his freshman year, he decided to major in journalism.

During the Great Depression before his last semester, he dropped out of school to pay off his debts. He worked for major Oklahoma newspapers for five and one-half years. He returned to Norman, and beat his middle sister, Juanita, in the graduation line by twenty minutes to get his B. A. degree. He said he did not want her to graduate ahead of him.

What the critics of Ira Rice and church members at large do not know is that they are dealing with a complex personality educated in a great university and a citizen of the world. We owe him a great debt and the deepest apology for neglecting to pay him the homage he deserves. It is years over due.

His professional newspaper career came to an abrupt end. He was hired by Robert H. Packelman of

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Compromisers

The idea of compromise is the giving up or surrendering of something of importance to reach an agreement with someone (or thing). *Compromise* (nor any of its forms) are found in the Bible, yet the concept is certainly there. Speaking religiously, for there to be compromise there must first be an understanding that there is a standard of right and wrong. That standard for all men is God's Word. Jesus said that His words would judge us in the last day. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50).

Some have never been content to remain within the standard of the Word of God. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Pet. 2:1-2). During the Old Testament period there were false teachers and Peter says there will always be such. Jesus instructed us to "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. 15:9). Because there will always be false teachers John commands us to put all teachers to the test. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). These false teachers, and their followers,

refused to abide within the Scriptures by teaching and/or practice.

Compromisers are those who are willing to surrender some point of doctrine so they can have so-called fellowship, unity, and peace with those who teach or practice things contrary to God's Word. Denominationalists, because they did not like what the Bible taught, have compromised the Scriptures throughout their existence. They did not and do not have any respect for the authority of God's Word so they added their creeds, catechisms, disciplines, manuals, etc., to the Bible. These man-made doctrines and commands became more important than the Word of God. They were teaching for doctrine man's word, and, like the Jews of old, transgressed the commandment of God by their traditions. "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition....But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat. 15:6, 9).

Finally there was a group of men who started calling man back to the Bible. They were not trying to reform something that was never authorized in the first place. Their desire was to restore the original. To accomplish this they realized they must follow the Bible and the Bible alone. They followed the motto, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." This motto was a paraphrase of Peter's statement. "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). These men had a general respect for the Scriptures. Because they all were following the Bible without any additions or subtractions, these men lived and worked together in harmony. However, it was not long until some began compromising the Truth. They were not content to do only what the Bible says. The Scriptures command man to sing. They wanted to add mechanical instrumental music in worship to God. It did not matter to them that the words of Christ did not authorize it; they were going to have it. It did not matter to them that their bringing in the instrument would destroy the unity the church possessed; they were going to have it their way. This group left the Lord's church and formed a new denomination—the Christian Church. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19).

Today, within the Lord's church we have a liberal element that, like those who started the Christian Church denomination, have no respect for the authority

of the Scriptures. They are willing to change and alter anything that suites their fancy—and they have. Their desire is to please man; they have no real desire to please God. They want to fellowship the denominations which is impossible if they remain true to the Bible. “For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:14-16). Since these men could not remain true to the book and join in with their friends in the denominations, they are willing to compromise the Bible. They desire the plaudits of man rather than the plaudits of God. They have styled themselves as “change agents.” They are simply making another denomination. The sooner they go out from us the better because they, like the Christian Church, are no longer of us. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

the *Willacy County Chronicle* to work from eight to five. But a newspaper man has to work wherever and whenever the news is breaking. His editor told him that I have been checking on you that “you go to Edcouch, Texas, 21 miles away to do church work until bedtime.” The editor gave him a month to decide if he wanted to be a preacher or newspaper man. A month later Rice went to the editor’s office who already had his check waiting.

The critics of Ira Rice at long last must face up to the fact that they are dealing with a master journalist, not some journeyman apprentice. In my opinion, Rice is far more than an equal to the “PR” editors of the defunct *Mission and Image*, *Wineskins*, *Gospel Advocate*, and *Twentieth Century Christian*.

The next time the reader picks up a copy of *Contending For The Faith*, keep in mind that he is reading the copy of a born journalist who can smell the story a long way off, dig out the facts, who tells the story in technicolor. This is how Batsell Barrett Baxter described the writing style of Ira Rice in a personal commendation. It is not the rhetoric of Rice which upsets his critics, but digging out the facts and letting the truth fall where it will.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF IRA Y. RICE, JR.

Ira Y. Rice, Jr., walked out that day from his newspaper job and never looked back. On March 2,

1939, he brought out a small bi-weekly religious journal known as the *Christian Soldier* which he published for the next 9 ½ years. This was the same day and year that B. C. Goodpasture became editor of the *Advocate*.

Ira Rice became suspicious that neo-liberalism was being taught in our schools in 1965 while he was in the Singapore mission field. As brother Rice put it, his “son-in-the-gospel” Samuel Miao returned to the mission field from the Harding Graduate School with strange new doctrines and eventually split the Moulmain Church of Christ in 1968. This writer and other brethren in the 1950s were attending prestigious seminaries such as Yale and Vanderbilt. Our suspicions were the same.

THE EDUCATIONAL TROJAN HORSE:

The Rice family lived in Hamden, Connecticut, for one year (1965-1966) so Rice and his wife, Vada, could study Mandarin Chinese at Yale University. They worshiped with the Whitney Avenue Church of Christ. There they met Derwood Smith who was working on a Yale doctorate. They were hearing for the first time in the pulpit the exotic ideas of Rudolph Bultmann and Paul Tillich.

During that Yale year, Rice made a special trip to Nashville to learn if the new theology had reached into David Lipscomb College. It was learned from the Lipscomb administration that no less than five liberal Lipscomb faculty had left the school. I remember well those unhappy times.

It was after this that brother Rice wrote what I would call a classical document in his *Far East Newsletter*, December 31, 1965, in which he clearly forewarned that in the next ten or twelve years this “Educational Trojan Horse” would make the anti-cooperation division pale in comparison.

This letter was followed by the first of three volumes of *Axe on the Root* which was first printed in 1966. The much larger picture of the growing cloud of postmodern liberal theology was painted. The story was told as only a professional journalist is capable of telling a story.

The response to *Axe on the Root* was immediate approval. Guy N. Woods, Gus Nichols, B. C. Goodpasture, and H. L. Dixon were among the first to endorse fully brother Rice’s new publication. Later administrators in colleges and editors came to fear Ira Rice because they wanted to keep matters quiet as possible while pushing out problem faculty.

Then the long running campaign soon was mounted to paint brother Rice a “yellow journalist.” This tactic both succeeded and also failed in one major respect. The

best informed have continued to read the paper, and so have its enemies more out of fear than for information.

The publishing of other volumes of *Axe on the Root* could not possibly keep up with the advancing lines of postmodern theology. Thus he began publishing on a monthly basis *Contending For The Faith*. Thirty-two years later the publication is still going, stronger and more influential than ever.

When Restoration historians in another age begin writing their histories seeking truthful documented sources, they will discover that *Contending For The Faith* will be the most reliable single source. The modernists and the postmodern “change agents” have used Ira Rice as their “whipping boy” to cover their machinations and misdeeds for much too long. We’ll see to that! If the critics want personal anagogs, we can handle that too.

And to Ira Y. Rice, Jr., goes the accolade for being the most consistent, longest sounding, and trustworthy “voice crying out in this postmodern wilderness” of postmodern liberalism. As the campaign of destruction continues to be waged against the biblical churches of Christ, brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., is there on the “cutting edge” separating the sheep from the goats knowing well what it is all about. I choose to be with him in his crusade for biblical truth.

Restoration historians in the third millennium are indeed twice blessed in that they have available the three volumes of *Axe on the Root*, and *Contending For The Faith*, published since 1966 and 1970 which tell the

unvarnished story. The messages are as timely today as they were thirty years ago for all who would know how the churches of Christ have come to be where they are today.

3714 ½ Belmont Blvd.; Nashville, TN 37215

Editor’s Note: Brother Rice has been working under the oversight of the Bellview Church of Christ for twenty years. The announcement was recorded in the October 19, 1978 issue of “The Beacon” (the weekly bulletin). Since that time brother Rice and the elders of the Bellview congregation have worked together in the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There has been a harmonious, supportive relationship between them. Brother Bill Cline, who was then preaching here, is the individual who suggested that the elders undertake the oversight of brother Ira. Faithful preachers since have had a wonderful and rewarding relation with him. He has always been supportive of our efforts and a great encourager. I appreciate having this opportunity to honor this faithful soldier of the cross. Brother Rice is publishing his three volume autobiography entitled “Pressing Toward The Mark.” The first volume will cover 1917 - 1955. It is from birth into a Christian family to boy preacher. It will cover 23 years of state-side evangelism. Volume 1 should be out soon. If you would like to order a copy of this fascinating book, contact brother Rice at: 2656 Allshore; Memphis, TN 38118.

They Printed The Truth—But It Was A Mistake!

Jesse Whitlock

What an embarrassment to the A.D. 70 errorists of our day. I received the January 1996 issue of Max R. King’s theology called, *The Living Presence*. When I receive my copy each month, I announce the latest issue of the “Lying Pestilence” has arrived. So imagine my surprise upon reading Jack C. Scott, Jr.’s, opening statement on the front page of his on-going (and on and on and on...) article: “Eschatology: 101.” His explanation immediately draws attention:

Before beginning this article we need to correct a misprint from our last article that was important, to the meaning of the argument being made. In Vol. 6, No. 3, page 8, in the first column, the first full paragraph, the last sentence reads: “It is obviously set within some imagined time...” It should have read: “It is obviously **not** set within some imagined time...when this eternal

covenant and physical time would be brought to an end.” It is hoped that the reader saw this as a mistake. The futurists believe that the eternal covenant will some day end. The point was intended to show the opposite [Emphasis supplied by Scott].

Upon reading these lines I immediately thought about the writing of Holy Writ in 2 Peter 3:16, “As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they* do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” One must be *unstable* in order to accept the heresy that the cross of Christ and the day of Pentecost must somehow take a back-seat to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In reading the previous article by this author (Vol. 6, # 3, pp. 6-12), I noted the usual

diatribe, this time, based on Isaiah chapters 24-28; 51; 65-66 and advocating “the subsequent establishment of the new heaven and earth and Jerusalem. It is obviously set within some imagined time when this eternal covenant and physical time would be brought to an end.” And, this is where he is most anxious to add the needed “**not**”!!!

Perhaps Scott and company can take a lesson from the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Judge Rutherford’s followers quickly found that they could not convince people that Peter’s plain statement in 2 Peter 3:10 was somehow in error. So, they came out with their own translation called: *The New World Translation*. Then they changed the words of Peter to read, “and the earth and the works in it will be **discovered**.” However, they still found it hard to be consistent. *The New World Translation* still stated “the chaff he will **burn up** with fire” (Mat. 3:12) and “a third of the earth was **burned up**, and a third of the trees was **burned up**, and all greenness was **burned up**” (Rev. 8:7). 2 Peter 3:7 causes trouble for the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the A.D. 70 errorists of our day as well. The *The New World Translation* still says “by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire.” Shades of contradiction—what shall the false teachers do?

When I compared the two issues of the “Lying Pestilence” and noted the desperate attempt to be among that number “who changed the truth of God into a lie” (Rom. 1:25) it struck me that they need to produce their own translation of the Bible. They could take their direction from Genesis 2:17 and 3:4, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die...And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall **not** surely die.” Did you note the “**not**”? Isn’t this precisely the position of Kingettes today? They could call this perversion the “New International Covenant Eschatology Version.”

Imagine some of the passages that could be wrested to keep up with the “King-sized” mistakes of this heresy: 2 Peter 3:10, “But the day of the Lord will [**not**] come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall [**not**] pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall [**not**] melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall [**not**] be burned up” (NICEV). Acts 2:16, “But this is [**not**] that which was

spoken by the prophet Joel” (NICEV). John 5:28-29, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is [**not**] coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall [**not**] hear his voice, And shall [**not**] come forth” (NICEV). Acts 1:11, “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall [**not**] so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (NICEV). 2 Corinthians 5:10, “For we must [**not**] all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (NICEV). Colossians 2:14-15, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it [**not**] out of the way, [**not**] nailing it to his cross; And [**not**] having spoiled principalities and powers” (NICEV). Acts 17:31, “Because he hath [**not**] appointed a day, in the which he will [**not**] judge the world in righteousness” (NICEV). John 14:3, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will [**not**] come again, and receive you unto myself” (NICEV). 1 Corinthians 15:26, “The last enemy *that* shall [**not**] be destroyed *is* death” (NICEV). 1 Corinthians 11:26, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do [**not**] shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall [**not**] be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (NICEV).

Certainly you can see where the possibility for a new perversion on the market is feasible. Every A.D. 70 preacher and church would surely need such a tool to give credibility to their error. Obviously, no clear thinking individual can take a reliable translation of the Scripture, study it, and conclude: the final coming of Christ, the establishment of the church, the day of judgment, the end of the world, and the resurrection of the dead all occurred with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Yes, the truth was printed—but it was a mistake!

P.S. “**The A.D. 70 Theology**,” written by brother Curtis A. Cates is an excellent refutation of King’s heretical system of theology. A copy may be ordered from Cates Publications, 9194 Lakeside Dr., Olive Branch, MS 38654 for \$4.50 + P&H.

I am confident that no A.D. 70 advocate can meet or refute the powerful argumentation put forth in this mighty work!

809 East Pershing Drive; Ardmore, OK 73401

“Christian Fellowship”

June 13 - 17, 1998

Saturday, June 13

7:00 P.M.	What Is Fellowship	Noah Hackworth
8:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Corinthian Church	Curtis Cates

Sunday, June 14

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Mission Work	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:00 A.M.	Obligations Of Christian Fellowship	Stanley Ryan
11:00 A.M.	Lunch Break	
2:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Lord's Supper	Garry Barnes
3:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The World	Joel Wheeler
4:00 P.M.	How To Treat The Withdrawn	Michael Hatcher
5:00 P.M.	Dinner Break	
7:00 P.M.	Guilt By Association	Lester Kamp
8:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Restoration Movement	Randy Mabe

Monday, June 15

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Giving	Gary Grizzell
10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M.	The Holy Spirit And Fellowship	Keith Mosher
12:00 P.M.	Lunch Break	
1:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Preaching	Mark Mosher
2:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Error	David Brown
3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: Fellowship And Error	
4:00 P.M.	Dinner Break	
7:00 P.M.	Fellowship And Ephesians 4:1-6	Clifford Newell
8:00 P.M.	The Future Of Fellowship In The Church	Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 16

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And 2 John 9-11	Tim Nichols
10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Mark 9:38-41	Toney Smith
12:00 P.M.	Lunch Break	
1:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Singing	Guss Eoff
2:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Preachers	Bob Berard
3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: Fellowship And Preachers	
4:00 P.M.	Dinner Break	
7:00 P.M.	The Sermon On The Mount And Fellowship	Harrell Davidson
8:00 P.M.	Withdrawal Of Fellowship	Ken Willis

Wednesday, June 17

9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And 1 John 1	Paul Vaughn
10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Prayer	Howell Bigham
12:00 P.M.	Lunch Break	
1:30 P.M.	The Value Of Fellowship	Buster Dobbs
2:30 P.M.	May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?	Dub McClish
3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?	
4:00 P.M.	Dinner Break	
7:00 P.M.	Fellowship And Ephesians 5:11	Eddie Whitten
8:00 P.M.	Why We Cannot Fellowship Denominations	Ronnie Hayes

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 850/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this brochure announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures*.

MEALS

The women of the *Bellview Church of Christ* will provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the *Bellview elders* and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, book stores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the *Bellview Lectures* in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Christian Fellowship* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price prior to June 30, 1998, or afterwards at the regular price. It will contain thirty-nine chapters and approximately 600 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you, at no charge, if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

BIBLICAL CONVERSION

Noah A. Hackworth

From Solomon's porch Peter declared, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). The former quotation is from the King James Version (1611) and the latter is from the American Standard Version (1901). There are questions surrounding the phrase "and be converted." Albert Barnes remarked:

It conveys the idea of passivity, be converted, as if they were to yield to some foreign influence that they were now resisting. But the idea of being passive in this, is not conveyed by the original word. The word means, properly, to turn; to return to a path from which one has gone astray; and then to turn away from sins, or forsake them. It is a word used in a general sense to denote the whole turning to God. That the form of the word here (*epistrepsate*) does not denote passivity may be clearly seen by referring to the following places where the same form of the word is used: Matt. xxiv. 18; Mark xiii. 16; 1 Thes. 1:9

The Greek word for convert is *strepho*. It is used at least eighteen times in the Greek New Testament, and in the majority of cases it is translated "turn." It is particularly interesting to note that the turning is never ascribed to God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. It is suggested, however, that if we view God as the author of the entire scheme by which one is turned (saved), we may say God turns us. If we are looking at the instrument by which the turning is affected, we may attribute the turning to the teacher (cf., Acts 8:29-31). If we are viewing the act of turning, we may ascribe the turning to man himself. It appears that turn is a better translation of the Greek word *strepho* than "be converted."

How may we tell if a person has been converted (turned) to the Lord? First, one has been converted if he has "from the heart" obeyed the gospel of Christ, thus

becoming a child of God (cf., Rom. 6:17; 8:16; Acts 2:38). Romans 8:16 reveals two tremendously important points: (1) We know we are children of God; (2) We can know we are God's children because of the witness of the Spirit. The denominational world reduces the number of witnesses from two to one, their own. But the text requires two. To conclude that there is only one witness to sonship, the human spirit, is to be totally subjective. When we follow the instructions of the Spirit, we can know we are children of God.

Next, there will be fruit. The Lord said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2). Since the branch (the Christian) is connected to the vine (Christ), it has to be cleansed or purged which means it has to be pruned so it can produce more fruit. Next, one's manner of life (the way one lives every day) will indicate whether there has been a legitimate "turning" to the Lord. There must be a consistency between what is professed in the church building and what is practiced on the street (cf., Mat. 5:13-16). Though it is true that one could attend every assembly held by the church and not be converted or turned to the Lord, faithful attendance to such assemblies would indicate a right spirit or attitude (cf., Heb. 10:25). Finally, there is the possession of the mind of Christ. Paul said, "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phi. 2:5). The desire to have the mind of Christ in us is a good barometer of the changes going on in the converted life.

"Conversion" or "turning" to the Lord is the most important thing in one's life, and there are ways to ascertain whether it has taken place. We must remember that conversion takes place in this life. There will be no unconverted people in heaven.

5342 West La Vida Court; Visalia, CA 93277

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVII

June 1998

Number 6

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE?

A RESPONSE TO “2 JOHN 9 AND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP”

David W. Hester

Responding to professors is a daunting task. One could become intimidated in taking on those possessing doctorates and teaching at prestigious universities, especially when they are internationally known. Couple this with the reality of one's not teaching or possessing such degrees, and it seems as if one would be involved in something over his head.

However, this writer is just naive enough to dare challenge the pontifications of an internationally known Greek textual scholar. Brother Carroll Osburn has written a book entitled, *The Peaceable Kingdom: Essays Favoring NonSectarian Christianity*. In this tome, he calls for a move away from what he terms “sectarianism.” Although much could be said concerning other chapters, one in particular caught my attention. “2 John 9 And Christian Fellowship” advocates the position that the genitive in 2 John 9 is objective, “**about Christ**,” instead of subjective, “**from Christ**.”

With all due respect to the good doctor, he is wrong. When one carefully examines the analysis he gives to the epistle, the reasoning he employs to defend his position, and the sources he quotes, he sees all is not what the man of letters says it is.

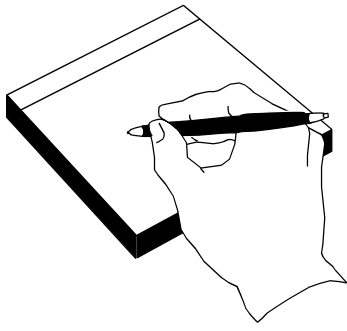
After brother Osburn gets through lumping faithful brethren in with the “anti” wing of the brotherhood, he then begins to deal with the passage. The professor avers that the “problem is not a grammatical one.” He affirms that the context must determine whether **the doctrine of Christ** in verse nine is subjective or objective. Point well taken. But, he then criticizes usage

of parallel passages to support the subjective interpretation. He says claims made based on such passages as Acts 2:42, “apostles’ doctrine”; Matthew 16:12, “doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees”; and Acts 13:12, “doctrine of the Lord” are “unconvincing.” He cites Hebrews 6:2 as an example of an objective genitive, “doctrines of baptisms,” and terms the parallel argument “misleading.” He emphasizes again the importance of context, and says this argument for the subjective genitive “does not stand.”

Brother Osburn puts himself in the “unenviable position” of being set against the best Greek scholarship available. The very arguments Osburn criticizes, based on parallel grammatical construction, are used by Rengstorf in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. He suggests New Testament usage indicates the *didache* (doctrine) of Jesus refers to His whole teaching, His proclamation of the will of God as regards both form and content. He gives Matthew 16:12 as an example, as well as Acts 2:42. He says these verses indicate “the whole” of what they teach. Rengstorf then cites Paul’s usage in Romans 6:17; 16:17; 1 Corinthians 14:6 and 26. He then says, “The same is true of the Johannine literature” and cites 2 John 9ff as an example. He also refers to Revelation 2:14-15; and 2:24 to buttress his claim. The scholar does mention Hebrews 6:2 and 13:9 as the “only” exceptions.

The curious reader, by now, may be asking the question: Why belabor these matters? The fact is,

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Compromisers

While the word “compromise” (nor any of its forms) is found in the Bible, the concept is certainly there. Compromise is giving up or surrendering something of importance to reach an agreement with someone (or thing). In the May issue of *Defender*, we considered the standard of right and wrong is God’s Word since it is that by which we will be judged (John 12:48-50). However, some have never been content to remain within that standard. This month I want us to notice three types of compromisers found within the Lord’s church.

There are those who viciously attack the church of Christ. Paul prophesied of a time coming when there would be those who will try to destroy the Lord’s church. “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:29-31). He describes these men and their end. “(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)” (Phi. 3:18-19). Individuals who come under this category of compromisers are also cowards. They will readily and willingly fellowship denominations. They go and speak to the denominations and instead of teaching them the truth, they try to embarrass the church. They will ridicule the one true church and support those groups that are opposed to the Truth. If asked to defend their false doctrine and actions, they will claim that they will not puke with a buzzard. They will try to convince

others that they are too loving and kind, but when they get to certain gatherings they will show their true colors of hatred of God and the one church. Men such as Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado, Terry Rush, Marvin Phillips, Jim Woodroof (or men whose names are associated with the Nashville Jubilee, or Tulsa Soul-Damning Workshop) come into this category of compromisers. These compromisers certainly have an effect upon the Lord’s church, but they have been exposed. Their direct influence is now very limited.

A second type of compromisers are those who defend those who are attacking the Lord’s church. It seems as if this is a continuing problem. The Jews had the same problem. Neighboring countries would defend and give aid to those attacking them. God clearly showed His attitude concerning this matter. “Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant” (Amos 1:9). Obadiah prophesied against Edom for acting in this manner. “For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou *wast* as one of them” (Oba. 1:10-11). God is not only displeased, but will bring condemnation upon these types of individuals. Yet, there are many who will defend those who viciously attack the church. These individuals might not teach false doctrines themselves. However, when we do what God commands in exposing the “unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11), these compromisers will then attack us for that exposure. They will accuse us of being troublemakers, much like Ahab did with Elijah. “And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kin. 18:17). In reality, just as Elijah was not the troubler of Israel, we are not troubling the church, but exposing those who are. These people instead of protecting the church, are protecting the false teacher. By doing so, they have compromised the truth of God and of the church.

The third type of compromisers are those who will not oppose the enemies of the church. This type of compromiser is the most subtle and dangerous compromiser. They would be highly offended if anyone would call them a compromiser. These are individuals who will preach the truth. One could sit under his feet and

never hear anything but God's Word. However, they will not take a stand when it comes to false teachers. The Bible mentions the city of Meroz just one time. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty" (Jud. 5:23). They were not a wicked, immoral people. They simply failed to help the Lord's people in their war against Sisera and the Canaanites. God will not tolerate neutrality, and the people of Meroz were trying to be neutral. Christ said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Mat. 12:30). Those who will not take up the sword of the Spirit and fight against the enemies of the church are just like the men of Meroz—trying to be neutral. These piously work under the guise of not wanting to offend anyone and not liking controversy. However, Jesus was the greatest controversialist which ever lived. When truth was on the line, Jesus was not afraid of offending people. While it should not be our intent to offend anyone, truth is far more important and it does offend those who are not content to follow it.

These last two types of compromisers are the most dangerous to the church of our Lord with the last being more than the former. They are also where many individuals reside. We need for all these compromisers (even though they might not consider themselves as such) to take God's sword and enter into the controversy with Satan and his forces. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

2 John 9-11 is crucial to the subject of fellowship. It plainly says those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ have not God. Conversely, those who do abide in the doctrine are in a right relationship with the Father. The question, then, hinges on the meaning of "**doctrine of Christ**." If, as Osburn claims, it is the doctrine about Christ, then we may fellowship anyone who simply confesses Jesus has come in the flesh. On the other hand, if it means the doctrine **from** Christ and His inspired men, then *we* cannot have fellowship with those who teach and practice doctrines (such as instrumental music) which are contrary to New Testament teaching.

Osburn continues by quoting from A. T. Robertson, who holds to the subjective interpretation, and then emphatically states Robertson himself insisted on contextual basis for interpreting the genitive. Fair

enough. However, he happens to omit a couple of crucial statements. Robertson, in *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, says: "Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ which is the standard of Christian teaching as the walk of Christ is the standard for the Christian's walk (1 John 2:6). See John 7:16; 18:19." Curiously, Osburn omits the latter half of the quote, following "Christian teaching." Is it because Robertson is alluding to John's earlier statement to "walk in his commandments"?

In a footnote, Osburn cites Marvin Vincent's *Word Studies In The New Testament*, and says he "merely observes, 'Doctrine (διδάχῃ). Better, as Rev., *teaching*.'" However, Osburn failed apparently to turn the page. Vincent goes on to add, "**Of Christ**. Not the teaching *concerning* Christ, but the teaching of Christ Himself and of His apostles. See Heb. 2:3. So according to New Testament usage. See John 18:19; Acts 2:12; Apoc. 2:14,15." The last verse cited is from Revelation. Of course, Osburn thinks the parallel grammatic argument is "unconvincing"!

The professor then quotes from Abraham Malherbe's article in *Restoration Quarterly* (1962) concerning *didache*. Malherbe asserts those who are adamant in insisting on the subjective genitive "never refer" to **2 John 10** and **7**. We could well say those who insist on the objective genitive "never refer" to verses **1, 2, 4, and 6**!

Osburn correctly asserts that the text must be understood in its entire context. He then says we must have "minimal input" from other documents. Why? Is it because those "other documents" would contradict his interpretation? It is quite interesting that many "scholars" want to isolate New Testament books completely from the others.

Although Osburn desires "minimal input" from other documents, he himself contradicts what he says! In classifying **2 John** as a "Hellenistic private letter," he bases the analysis of the literary genre of the letter on **other letters**! "Consistency, thou art a jewel." Osburn states there are certain "stylized epistolary conventions" used by John. Again, how does he know they were stylized? By looking at other Hellenistic epistles!

The man of letters states, "Attempts to relate 'the doctrine of Christ' in vv. 9-11 to 'commandments' and 'truth' in vv. 1-6 are unconvincing." He asserts that certain terms are "isolated" from the text to be used as the "mould" and verses 7-8 are omitted.

To whom is it “unconvincing” concerning “commandments” and “truth” relating to “doctrine of Christ”? Why, the distinguished professor, of course! He speaks of the “abusive omission” of verses 7-8, but as he begins his analysis of the epistle, he observes the “passover” in connection with verses one and two. He simply “passes right over them.” All he says about the first two verses is brief. “V. 1 serves as the opening of a lengthy salutation that is designed to promote fellowship among the readers and v. 2 highlights the basis of such fellowship, as does the stylized greeting in v. 3.”

Can this be considered an “analysis” of the two verses? In his hurry to verses 7 and 8, Osburn fails to realize the contextual connection of the first two verses, which **he himself had noted earlier**. Remember, the “entire document” must be considered. Verse one states, “The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth.” Notice, please, that the word “**truth**” is used twice by the apostle. Is he trying to tell us something?

The first usage, “in the truth,” could be interpreted as “sincerely.” Osburn himself classifies it as an epistolary convention, apparently unimportant. However, consider what A. E. Brooke says in the *International Critical Commentary*: “ἐν ἀληθείᾳ” Cf., 3 Jn. 1, where the word is again anarthrous. The phrase is not “merely adverbial,” a periphrasis for “truly.” It suggests a love which is exercised in the highest sphere, which corresponds to the truest conception of love. Cf., *peripatein en aletheia*, conduct in which everything is regulated by “truth.” A. T. Robertson says, “in truth, in the highest sphere, as in John 17:19 and 3 John 1.”

The second usage, “the truth,” is even more clear. It has the definite article before it, which indicates it must refer to the standard. Consider, again, what Brooke says: “The truth, as revealed by the Christ, and gradually unfolded by the Spirit, who is ‘Truth.’ It covers all spheres of life, and is not confined to the sphere of intellect alone.” B. F. Westcott affirms, “the truth, which is identical with Christ’s message (John 1:17), and with Christ’s Person (John 14:7).”

Verse two is again emphatic. “For the truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.” Robertson concurs with Brooke’s assessment of “truth,” and adds, “so it includes all who are in Christ.” Brooke himself says, “The possession of the ‘truth’ as an abiding force which dominates the whole life calls out the love of all who share the possession.” Westcott

states, “The common acknowledgment of the eternal Truth is the certain foundation of love...The Truth makes true love possible.”

When one examines Osburn’s comments, it seems he does not want to see the implications of the first two verses. He would dismiss their importance with a “wave of the hand.” He would say they emphasize, along with verses three and four, the proper way to live. But, what is the standard? Osburn is strangely silent. He avers that “truth” in verse four indicates sincerity, because of the lack of the definite article. Curiously, he refers to verse six as containing the word “truth,” when it does not. Could it be he is thinking of “his commandments” in verse six? The bottom line is, Osburn considers “truth” to refer to practical daily living and not to an objective standard. Again, though, attention must be focused on the first two verses! No amount of cute semantics will dilute the force of verses one and two.

Verse six says, “And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.” The closest Osburn comes to defining what “**his commandments**” are is his quotation of a commentator who says, “obedience is realized in the process of walking in love.” Again, a deemphasis on the standard of truth!

Note what Brooke says: “The immediate context suggests that the writer is especially thinking of Christian brotherly love. The highest expression of this love is found in obedience to all His commandments (however variously expressed) which God has enjoined in regulation of the relations between brethren. The clearest expression of love is obedience to the will of God, so far as He has revealed His will in definite precepts. It is quite in the writer’s style to make the more absolute statement, even if he is thinking particularly of a special application.” Mark that last sentence for later.

Brother Osburn avers that John “lays down in v. 8 the warning which dominates the sub-section of vv. 8-11, all of which is related as a unit to v. 7.” The professor would focus on verse seven as the key to understanding the meaning of *doctrine* in verse nine.

Verse seven says: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” Osburn says, “The context, then, makes abundantly clear that the ‘doctrine’ in view in vv. 9-10 is the one mentioned in v. 7, the failure to accept the doctrine of

the incarnation. 'For' in v. 11 shows that the verse provides the reason for the behavioral directive in v.10. In this way, then, vv. 8-11 relate to v. 7, showing why v. 7 provides the occasion for the plea in vv. 5-6."

The professor claims the subjective genitive "does not cohere with the literary structure of the letter"; "misses the entire point of the document"; and those who advocate the subjective, he claims, "do so without regard to the immediate context." To which we say in the words of Paul, "thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (Rom. 2:21). The very position brother Osburn is pushing does these very things, and more; his position controverts the New Testament! Of course, that does not matter, if one utilizes Osburn's "discourse analysis" method of examining biblical documents. Ignore the rest of the New Testament when approaching any book, chapter, or verse. The Bible is not its own best interpreter; the theologians are.

Contrary to what Osburn claims, the context of 2 John does not deal entirely with the person of Jesus; it deals with the truth. Certainly, verse seven describes the deceivers against whom this family was to oppose. However, as we have pointed out, verse six has often been forgotten in connection with verse seven, as has verses one, two, and four. The underlying theme of 2 John is "walking in truth." In other words, the totality of New Testament teaching is under consideration before verse nine, even before verse seven. Osburn himself recognizes this, in part; he says, "It is important to recall that the literary thrust of 2 John is stated clearly not in v. 9 but in vv. 5-6, **viz.** to love one another. Proper doctrine emerges in this discussion concerning the deceivers as a matter of utmost concern to the fellowship." Although he denies the position taken by this writer, he still recognizes the importance of the context of 2 John. Only, he doesn't want to concern himself with "lengthy salutations" and "stylized epistolary conventions" as being important.

Remember how it is important, according to Osburn, not to delve into material outside of 2 John to determine the meaning of verse 9? Well, the good professor seems to **not** practice what he preaches. Utilizing "discourse analysis," he says, "2 John itself must provide the essential data" in determining who the opponents were mentioned by John. Osburn then says, "Only when this is done is it methodologically permissible to turn to the wider Johannine corpus and then to any non-Johannine materials for supportive data." To

which we say, "permissible to whom?"

Of course, if one is a professor, it is very permissible to utilize such a method. Notice, in light of what Osburn had said earlier concerning usage of other material, what he goes on to say:

The understanding of 2 John emerging from discourse analysis, coupled with the data from 1 John, strongly suggests that this denial of the incarnation is not merely a reductionist Christology, but part of a comprehensive rejection of Jesus as Lord. This, coupled with the probability that these opponents were creating division within the Christian community, accounts for John's vehement appeal for their disfellowship. **The immediate context of vv. 7-11, as well as the larger contexts of 2 John as a whole and the entire Johannine corpus are in concert in supporting the objective genitive in 2 John 9** [emphasis added].

"Consistency, thou art a jewel." When non-"scholars" engage in analysis of 2 John and conclude verse nine is a subjective genitive, it is "unacceptable" to use outside materials. But, when a "scholar" concludes the opposite, and uses the same outside materials, it is "in concert" in bolstering the objective interpretation.

Brooke says of those who interpret *doctrine* in verse nine as objective, "Such an interpretation would seem to be **the outcome of preconceived notions of what the author ought to have meant rather than of what his words indicate**" [emphasis added]. Indeed, such seems to be the case with Osburn.

If one interprets "doctrine of Christ" as objective, he in effect accepts those outside the body of Christ as having a right relationship with both God and Christ. Osburn knows this, and urges it to happen. He says the passage was "never intended as a **carte blanche** for rampant sectarian disfellowship." He avers that "controlled exegesis" must center attention upon the incarnation of Jesus. He calls the subjective interpretation, and our usage of 2 John 9, "unwarranted" and the result of "uncontrolled 'proof-texting'" which, he claims, is "blatantly wrong and must be changed."

Well, now. Here we see the "true colors" of the good professor. He goes on to list a number of issues which, in his view, should be tolerated. Among them are: whether the Lord's Supper must be taken every Sunday, instrumental music in worship, premillennialism, and whether baptism is "for" or "because of" the remission of sins. He lists these matters alongside matters of opinion, and then says we "should remember the adage 'Christians Only...Not The Only Christians.'"

This is the objective of Osburn. He desires to
(Continued on page 7)

“Christian Fellowship”

June 13 - 17, 1998

Saturday, June 13			Tuesday, June 16		
7:00 P.M.	What Is Fellowship	Noah Hackworth	9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And 2 John 9-11	Tim Nichols
8:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Corinthian Church	Curtis Cates	10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	David Brown Toney Smith
Sunday, June 14			11:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Mark 9:38-41	
9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Mission Work	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.	12:00 P.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
10:00 A.M.	Obligations Of Christian Fellowship	Stanley Ryan	1:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Singing	Guss Eoff
11:00 A.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>		2:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Preachers	Bob Berard
2:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Lord's Supper	Garry Barnes	3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: Fellowship And Preachers	
3:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The World	Joel Wheeler	4:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
4:00 P.M.	How To Treat The Withdrawn	Michael Hatcher	7:00 P.M.	The Sermon On The Mount And Fellowship	Harrell Davidson
5:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>		8:00 P.M.	Withdrawal Of Fellowship	Ken Willis
7:00 P.M.	Guilt By Association	Lester Kamp	Wednesday, June 17		
8:00 P.M.	Fellowship And The Restoration Movement	Randy Mabe	9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And 1 John 1	Paul Vaughn
Monday, June 15			10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	David Brown Howell Bigham
9:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Giving	Gary Grizzell	11:00 A.M.	Fellowship And Prayer	
10:00 A.M.	Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today	David Brown	12:00 P.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
11:00 A.M.	The Holy Spirit And Fellowship	Keith Mosher	1:30 P.M.	The Value Of Fellowship	Buster Dobbs
12:00 P.M.	<i>Lunch Break</i>		2:30 P.M.	May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?	Dub McClish
1:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Preaching	Mark Mosher	3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?	
2:30 P.M.	Fellowship And Error	David Brown	4:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
3:15 P.M.	Open Forum: Fellowship And Error		7:00 P.M.	Fellowship And Ephesians 5:11	Eddie Whitten
4:00 P.M.	<i>Dinner Break</i>		8:00 P.M.	Why We Cannot Fellowship Denominations	Ronnie Hayes
7:00 P.M.	Fellowship And Ephesians 4:1-6	Clifford Newell			
8:00 P.M.	The Future Of Fellowship In The Church	Bobby Liddell			

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call our office at: 850/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 850/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this brochure announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are attending the *Bellview Lectures*.

MEALS

The women of the *Bellview Church of Christ* will provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the *Bellview elders* and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, book stores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the *Bellview Lectures* in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

BOOKS

The lectureship book, *Christian Fellowship* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price prior to June 30, 1998, or afterwards at the regular price. It will contain thirty-nine chapters and approximately 600 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you, at no charge, if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

(Continued from page 5)

change the church into just another denomination among many. But, an objective interpretation would allow anyone who only confesses “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” to be in a right relationship with both God and Christ. This flies in the face of clear New Testament teaching about the plan of salvation (John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Mat. 10:32; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4) and the church (Rom. 16:16; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; Col. 1:18).

When “doctrine of Christ” is interpreted as subjective, such a danger disappears. Anyone can go beyond the teaching which Christ and His apostles gave; the one who abides in the same undoubtedly is a Christian, for he is in compliance with the teaching of the New Testament on matters of faith. One other consideration must be mentioned. The subjective meaning would include the teaching about Christ simply because **it is part of the doctrine!** In applying this command, the family addressed would be able to face any false teacher. There is no doubt the specific teaching addressed is that found in verse seven. However, there is no basis for demanding the one and rejecting the other. As Woodson states so succinctly: “Christ’s work in redemption is so majestic and comprehensive that to demand such a never-to-be-overcome distinction is unjustified” (*Spiritual Sword*, April 22, 1991, p. 37). Osburn’s extremist view would completely ostracize the subjective aspect of the verse. The fact is, it is a “both-and” situation. To attempt to make this verse apply **only** to the Gnostic heresy would be to blind oneself to the teaching of the New Testament, the overall context of the book, and common sense. Ah, common sense. That which is so reviled by the “scholars”!

Contrary to Osburn, “disjunctive legalistic extremism” did not cause the “divisions and sub-divisions”

within the church which he refers to. It was those teaching false doctrines with impunity. Brother Osburn would have them “teach their views fully and fairly, but not divide the body.” Of course, if one objects, he has a “sectarian spirit” which closes doors which could be “open for vigorous dialogue.” Never mind that Romans 16:17-18 says to mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine! To Osburn, this passage would apply to the “sectarians”! He would have us maintain fellowship with the false teacher.

Unity—true unity—is found in abiding in the teaching of the New Testament. It is not found in “reason and consensus” as per Osburn. A majority vote may satisfy the people, but it does not satisfy God. As 1 Corinthians 1:10 says, “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Unity of faith and practice is only found when we unite upon the basis of truth.

It is high time for all faithful brethren to rise up and call the “scholars” on the carpet for what they are teaching. Do not be intimidated by the degrees, or by the “high-falutin” words they use. Utilize the sword of the Spirit and use reason and the “bat sense” the good Lord gave all of us. It seems as though the “scholars” are becoming more and more shrill in their ruminations. Is it because they are beginning to “feel the heat”? We need to turn the oven up a bit more!

The words of Paul are quite appropriate in describing the “scholars.” “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7). Those of us who comprise the *hoi polloi* must shake off our indifference and apathy and engage the enemy in battle. Only when Satan is opposed can he be defeated once and for all.

Route 4, Box 138; Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

July 1998

Number 7

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

A Review of the Bellview Lectures

Toney L. Smith

It was my good pleasure to have attended the Twenty-Third Annual Bellview Lectureship. This was the first time that I had been to Pensacola and attended this lectureship. For years I have read the material published in the books and did as many have done over the years who studied and used the lessons presented. I came away very impressed with the well-organized schedule and, of course, by the scriptural presentations. Every speaker that I heard was prepared and presented his lesson in "truth and love" (Eph. 4:15). I came to appreciate the eldership for the sincere attitude demonstrated and their determination to stand for truth. They are to be commended and encouraged to keep on "contending for the faith" (Jude 3). Michael Hatcher, the preacher at Bellview and the director of the lectureship, did a splendid job of keeping things on schedule and smoothly moving from one speaker to the next. The entire congregation made everyone feel welcome. There is no way of knowing just how much work went into the preparation for this lectureship. The ladies of the Bellview congregation prepared a very fine meal each day: and I might add it was enjoyed by all. I look forward to going next year and drinking in the good spiritual feast.

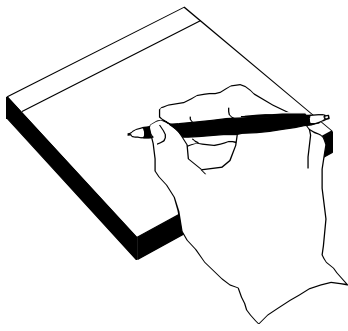
I must also comment on the theme of this year's lectureship. We studied a most vital topic, the timely subject of *Christian Fellowship*. I know of no other subject that is more neglected and abused. In fact, many of our problems in the church today stem from false concepts concerning fellowship. The liberal mind-set is intending to change the kind of fellowship which is

found in Scripture. Over and over the emphasis was made that fellowship is not "unity in diversity" or "going along to get along." I found myself thinking and praying that many in our brotherhood could hear every lesson. In fact I bought several books to give to friends.

Brother Hatcher edited the beautiful 602 page book which contained some 39 chapters. I have not read all of them as of yet, but I plan to study each one as time will allow. I am also planning to use many of these lessons in material that I will preach in the coming days. The publication contains some much needed book reviews. The reviews centered around books that have espoused certain false views concerning fellowship. Gary Summers reviewed *I Just Want To Be A Christian* by Rubel Shelly; David Hester gave a review of *In The Grip Of Grace* by Max Lucado; H. Daniel Denham reviewed *Who Is My Brother* by F. LaGard Smith and Terry Hightower reviewed "Core Gospel/Bull's-Eye Concept." Each one of these men did a fine job of exposing these false teachers and in giving an overview of these books. Brother Wayne Coats was unable to speak at the Lectureship due to his surgery, but his chapter on the "Unity Movements And Their Lessons For Today" is valuable material which needs to be studied. David Brown spoke in Brother Coats time slot and gave a fine review of the movements and actions that destroyed fellowship during recent digressions.

I really believe that this sort of lectureship will be, in part, the dam which stands between faithfulness and apostasy. Somewhere and at sometime God's people

(Continued on Page 4)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Nametags

During our lectureship (and if you were not here, why not?), I encouraged everyone to wear a nametag. I stressed that by wearing a nametag others would be able to know your name and/or remember your name. This would help out one another during the lectures. I jokingly added that this way you could look down and see who you were. There is another sense in which this is true and needed by every person. It is called self-inspection.

Paul wrote by inspiration of God, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5). He also wrote, "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4). These verses teach us to look down and see who we really are. In the latter verse the work which Paul mentions deals with our actions or our behavior. In the preceding verse he encourages us to examine ourselves regarding our spiritual state. Are we in the faith?

Being in the faith involves being in the right state. There are only two states: right or wrong, in Christ or out of Christ, in the church of Christ or not in the church of Christ, a Christian or not a Christian. To be in the right state involves the question of God's commands regarding salvation. God, through His grace, provided a way of salvation for sinful man. Sin had separated man from God. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). Man needed reconciling to God. "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given

to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18-19). He did this by sending Christ to this world to die for the sins of mankind. "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). The blood that Christ shed on the cross is available for all mankind. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). Yet, not all will avail themselves of the opportunity of being saved; the majority will be lost. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mat. 7:13-14). To be saved (accepting God's grace) one must first be taught the Word of God. "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 6:44-45). Upon being taught of God, man must believe in God (the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the salvation which comes through Christ). "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). That faith leads one to repent of his sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). That person will confess his faith. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). That confession is that Jesus is God's Son. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Then his faith which he has confessed will lead him to the waters of baptism. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of

sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). This baptism in water for the remission of sins is that act which changes our state from being lost to one who is saved. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). The *for* of verse 27 is a conjunction of explanation showing when one becomes a child of God—at baptism into Christ. (Baptism into a denomination is not baptism into Christ and will not change our state and he is still in a lost condition.) Being baptized into Christ is being baptized into the church of Christ. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). We must examine ourselves to make sure we are truly in the right state.

Being in the faith involves having the proper attitudes. When we enter into Christ through baptism, we are then to take on the characteristics of our Father. Paul writes concerning the Colossian brethren that they “have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:10). Peter tells us, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:3-4). We are to be partakers of God’s nature—become like God. The way we become like God is by changing our mind to be like God’s mind. “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:23-24). God even chastens us to bring us into the proper attitude. “For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness” (Heb. 12:10). After Peter reveals that we are to “be partakers of the divine nature,” he goes on to give us some of those characteristics. “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Paul gives some of those characteristics in setting forth the fruit of the Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,

temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). While these two passages do not cover the issue completely, they get us off to a good start in seeing the nature of our God, and therefore the attitudes we are to develop within our lives.

Being in the faith involves doing the right things. When we get our mind in the proper frame, we then will be able to bring our actions into accord with God’s Will. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2). We do not live according to the world. “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17). We are transformed or changed (we get metamorphosis from this Greek word) from the actions of this world to the actions God wants. God gave us the Bible as a pattern for our lives. It tells us what God wants us to do and what God does not want us to do, commanding some actions and condemning other actions. We must examine our lives and make sure we are doing all that God demands of us as Christians and making sure we have eliminated from our lives anything contrary to God.

Look down and see who you are. Take a serious examination of yourself in relation to God’s Word and see how you measure up. One day we will stand before God and give an account of ourselves. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil” (Ecc. 12:14). “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done in his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16). “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). When you give account of your life, what will God say? Will God say, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” or will He say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”? You can know the answer to

that question by honestly looking down and seeing who you are. *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

must become more knowledgeable concerning these matters. The false teachings of these liberal thinkers must be overcome. Good and godly lectureships are playing a part in this process. I thank God for congregations who are willing to stand out in the crowd and proclaim the clear and plain truth of God's Word.

In conclusion, I again commend the Bellview congregation and thank them for the lectureships. To the readers of this brief review, let me encourage you to make plans to attend next year's Lectureship and by all means sit down right now and order the book *Christian Fellowship*. Every library should contain this volume. We may never know all the good that will be accomplished by this series of lessons. I truly believe that understanding Christian fellowship is vital to eternal life. May God continue to bless this good work.

501 Gaylord St; Dresden, TN 38225

EUTHANASIA AND THE CHRISTIAN

Burt Jones

From the moment of our conception, each of us engaged in a general battle that, as in our salvation, we must face and work out "with fear and trembling." The outcome of this battle is never in any doubt, because vulnerable, and all too often alone, sooner or later we all must die.

Even as Christians we do not all make life's pilgrimage on equal terms. For reasons that are sometimes difficult to accept, the path for some in this world is covered with roses, and after a long and healthy life, death comes swiftly and easily. For others that is not the case. The bed of roses is replaced by a bed of nails; with poverty, rejection, physical handicaps, and humiliation seemingly the only things constant in their lives.

Let me say at the outset that those of us who have not had to carry such a burden are not to judge those souls who have, even if when death painfully grabs at them, they should plead with us for an early end to their dismal journey through this world (Jam. 4:11; Mat. 7:1).

We hear more and more about those, even in the body of Christ, advocating euthanasia or "mercy killings." This is upheld, they say, so that they may die with dignity. They do not want to end up in a hospital bed with "lots of tubes and needles running in and out of them." In other words, they want to choose their own way of dying.

As Christians and as preachers, I am certain that we have seen scores of faithful brethren who were in the final stages of an excruciating death who would never have chosen to die connected to a series of life support systems, with the machines becoming somehow ridiculous appendages usurping what little dignity they possessed. Yet, they did not rebel against God. They accepted their lot and anticipated being spirited into

paradise.

Stephen died a dignified death even though surely he would not have chosen to be painfully pelted with stones by hate-filled men.

Examine the way in which he died. He said "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:60).

With the sophisticated technology of today's medical profession, human beings may be kept "alive" almost indefinitely. We all agree that something must be done to more clearly distinguish that thin line that separates life from death. The question is—what?

The "what" we are being asked to consider today is voluntary euthanasia. Now some think that to be opposed to the active taking of life, they must be determined to keep the heart beating at all costs. Most physicians agree that there comes a time when death can no longer be held at bay.

Once we unleash euthanasia, once we take upon ourselves the right to terminate a human life, we have no means of controlling it. Once we begin: once we as Christians compromise, death in the end comes to be equally administered to everyone—to the unwanted fetus, to the deformed, the mentally defective, the old and the unproductive, and then logically, to the political adversary and to those ethnically unacceptable.

The founders of the Hemlock Society, established to guide and to assist those who embrace the idea of euthanasia for those who feel they can't take anymore, must understand that if it is available for one, it must be available for all.

As difficult as it is to contemplate our death or the passing of a loved one, we must remember that as death has its dark side, it is also a blessing from God to the

Christian. "Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15).

Can we not see where the pressures of legalized euthanasia will be the greatest? It will be among the poor and dispossessed. The inner cities will have sunk in a sea of euthanasia long before the first ripple touches the shores of Palm Beach.

Time and again patients have proven that life, even a deformed or prematurely curtailed, and to us who are "whole," an unimaginable life, can be made noble and worth living.

Advocates of euthanasia obviously do not reckon with God. He alone gives life and has the right to take it. Man, made in the image of the Creator, is different from soulless creatures. For this reason his life is uniquely special and may not be taken at will.

We may not fully understand why suffering is allowed, but the Old and New Testament alike are full of reassurances that, as faithful Christians, we have not been and will not ever be abandoned by God. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psa. 23:4). "Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee" (Isa. 41:10).

Brethren, the real tragedy is that man has turned his back on God, and has set himself up as the measure of

all things (Isa. 5:21). Abandon God and granted, you can have euthanasia; but, a death "precious in the sight of the Lord" it cannot hope to be.

The Christians' plea to those grasping for relief through euthanasia is to give up their goal of self-destruction. Instead, be content "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

God sometimes places us on our backs in order that we may look upward. Worry-free days are not always the best environment for developing spiritual stamina. It is the hour of deepest affliction, while under the discipline of pain, so unbearable that, perhaps escaping this life may seem the solution, our thoughts should return to the inspired writings of Paul. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Euthanasia is suicide. Suicide is a damnable act! No matter how merciful it may seem, the Record warns us that "in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them" (Rev. 9:6).

Whether it be euthanasia or some other burden tearing away at our sanity, the Christian must remember that Christ offers comfort for the grieving and cleansing for the guilty.

P.O. Box 985; Moundsville, WV 26041

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Harold Blevins

What must the preacher do when many do not believe that the Bible teaches that it is commanded to assemble at the appointed worship times? **The preacher must preach the Word** (2 Tim. 4:1-4; et al.). We realize, of course, that when one is: (1) physically handicapped, (2) feeble with age, (3) hindered to such degree as to keep one from work, school, or play, and (4) temporarily visiting (such as vacations) that member is not expected to be present at the worship service(s) at this locale.

This writer knows that few truly believe that it is commanded by the authority of the Almighty in the Bible that Christians must assemble at **every** worship service of the church of Christ. This is alarming! Souls are at stake!! Please ponder these passages of Holy Scripture: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conver-

sation...Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:7, 17).

LISTED BELOW ARE TWENTY-FOUR REASONS WHY WE SHOULD ATTEND ALL THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF OUR LORD

1. Baptized believers are the called out (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 2:5-17; Jam. 4:4).
2. Christians are to give diligence (2 Pet. 2:5-7).
3. Always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).
4. Serve the Lord fervently (Rom. 12:11; Luke 2:49; Mat. 7:21ff).
5. Reasonable service required (Rom. 12:1-3).
6. Spiritual food, and knowledge of our Lord is needed (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; Mat. 4:4).

7. Do not miss the good part (Luke 10:38-40).
8. Let your light so shine (Mat. 5:16; Phi. 2:15-16).
9. Christians belong to God (1 Cor. 6:18-20; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 4:17-18).
10. If we neglect equals condemnation (Heb. 2:3; Mat. 25:1-13, 30).
11. Yield yourselves (Rom. 6:13).
12. Seek first the kingdom of God (Mat. 6:33).
13. Seek closer associations with Christians (1 Cor. 15:33, ASV).
14. Follow Paul (1 Cor. 1:11; 1 Pet. 2:21).
15. Worship should be a joy (Psa. 122:1).
16. Is it a good work to attend? (Heb. 10:23-26).
17. Attend because of the brevity of life (Psa. 90:10; Job 14:1; Jam. 4:14).
18. Need to redeem the time (Eph. 5:15; Col. 4:5).
19. God keeps accurate record of our works (Rev. 20:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
20. Obedience to all things is insufficient (Luke 17:10).
21. Influence upon our companions (1 Pet. 3:1-7).
22. Influence upon our children (Eph. 6:4).
23. Influence upon others (Mat. 5:14): (1) When we forsake the assembly, we do not reflect the light of the Redeemer. (2) Paul wrote to them at Colosse, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col. 4:5).
24. Influence upon the whole church: (1) When we do not attend, it is a poor example to the weak members. (2) Inexcusable absences (especially from lack of correct Bible study) on our part are poor patterns for the new converts. (3) When a member of the Lord's Body believes that he is **NOT** commanded to attend all worship services: he is lost!!! Such divides the church (Luke 11:17); he has no fellowship

with the Body of the Lord (1 John 1:6-7); and walks with Satan, and not with the Father (Luke 22:31; Eph. 4:14). One can not resist the devil unless he knows the Word (1 Pet. 5:8-9). (4) All must learn to resist the Devil (Jam. 4:7). If we want to be saved, and go to heaven then attendance is our duty and desire—**not that which we are forced to do!!!**

A special note to the faithful souls who attend constantly. There are those who are always willing to attend regularly at this congregation, and to teach others these commandments on attendance and other Bible doctrines (2 Tim. 2:2). To each one of them this scribe wishes to point out Scriptures that are given to the faithful. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). Also, please read Revelation chapters 21 and 22. There is a special place for them that love the Lord enough to obey (John 14:15; 15:14; 1 John 5:3). That place is described as heaven in the last two chapters of the Bible.

May God give us strength (Phi. 4:13) to build on the Rock (Mat. 7:24-25; 1 Cor. 10:4). Preach the Word and receive a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:2, 8); and keep on keeping on being faithful to the Father (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:1-9). **What would you do?** This is what this preacher and every preacher is **commanded** to do: "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

Please, dear reader, read this in the spirit of Christian love in which it was written. Let us strive to enter into that golden gate called Heaven (Luke 13:24; Rev. 21; 22).

535 Clearwater Road; Belvedere, SC 29841

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

David W. Hester

I stood in the lobby of the church building, stunned by what I had just heard. I felt somewhat like Wile E. Coyote does when he sees the Road Runner kick it in to "warp speed." You know the feeling.

Having just concluded preaching in a Gospel Meeting, I had been confronted afterwards by a denominational preacher. He mistakenly thought I was someone else, but (to my dismay) engaged me in a protracted

discussion over the possibility of apostasy. I attempted to show him, especially from 2 Peter 2 and Galatians 5, how it is possible for a child of God to so sin as to be lost eternally.

I could see I was getting nowhere with him, so I asked him a question. "Say a person 'gets saved,' as you put it, and later enters into a homosexual relationship, stays in that relationship, and dies in it. Is he saved?"

Without missing a beat, he answered, "Yes. The blood of Christ covers him."

Somewhat shocked, I said, "What about 1 Corinthians 6:9-10?"

He said, "It doesn't matter. That person is saved by the blood of Jesus. Are you going to limit God's grace?"

I tried to approach it from a different angle. "Okay, what about Judas Iscariot? Is he saved?"

Again, without a pause, he said, "Yes, he's in Heaven with Jesus."

You can see now why I was flabbergasted. In all my years of preaching, never once had I heard anyone say that the betrayer of our Lord was forgiven.

All patience and willingness to discuss on my part went out the window at that point. I said, "Man, that's satanic! You're telling me that homosexuals and the betrayer of the Lord are in Heaven?"

He persisted in his claim, although the discussion had effectually ended at that point. He shortly left, claiming I did not preach the truth!

The position taken by that individual is the logical outcome of the proponents of "once saved, always saved," whether or not they want to admit it. The aforementioned preacher at least was forthright in admitting he accepted the conclusion, although it is wrong. Many do not want to accept it. They say, "If you lost it, you never had it, and if you had it, you'll never lose it."

Most of the proponents of this doctrine usually say that Judas was never a true disciple. However, the gospel writers make it clear he was counted among the original twelve. In fact, Acts 1 is plain on this matter. Verse 17 quotes Peter saying, "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry." Luke

further adds that the group prayed in verse 25, "That he [Matthias] may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell." Could language be clearer? Judas **was** a faithful disciple, **until** he succumbed to temptation, sinned, and compounded the problem by killing himself.

As for the homosexual, he has hope through the gospel. However, he must give up his sin! First Corinthians 6:9-11 lists homosexuality with other sins that will keep one from entering heaven. But, Paul says in verse 11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Repentance is the key. One must give up sinful practices prior to becoming a Christian, and continue to do so afterwards. Second Peter was written to Christians, but Peter warned them against falling away from the truth. How could one lose something he never had in the first place?

We understand the denominationalists holding to this false doctrine. But, what is more alarming is that there are some brethren who are beginning to flirt with it! There are even some preachers who are becoming more bold to proclaim it from pulpits and bulletins. Such should not be! I don't know if that preacher I mentioned at the beginning will ever come to the truth. I doubt it. But, that doesn't mean we can't try to reach as many people as possible with the truth of the message of the Good News of salvation in Christ through obedience to Him. Let us also resolve to tell the truth about the possibility of apostasy.

2495 Spring Valley Road; Tuscumbia, AL 35674

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVII

August 1998

Number 8

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

“WHAT A FELLOWSHIP!”

Joe E. Galloway

These words were both sung and stated in lessons several times June 13-17 at the Twenty-third Annual Bellview Lectures. What a joy it was to have fellowship with many of like precious faith during these lectures, and how blessed we are to have fellowship “with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3)! The theme of the lectureship was “Christian Fellowship.” Some thirty-one lectures were delivered on topics relating to this theme, with three Open Forum sessions.

This was a very appropriate and needed theme. We live at a time when more and more in the church are calling for change, including an attempt to get us to fellowship the denominations. It is evident that some have already gone out from us in belief and practice, although they are still trying to maintain an acceptance from us that will enable them to influence us to become more like them. These need to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17) as was done in these lectures! Withdrawal of fellowship needs to be practiced by God’s people when erring members cannot be brought to repentance whether it be in matters of morals, matters of doctrine and practice, or in any other matter of unfaithfulness (2 The. 3:6). Our fellowship must never be any broader (or narrower) than those God will accept. His Word very clearly tells us what all must do to *gain* fellowship with God and how we must live to *maintain* such.

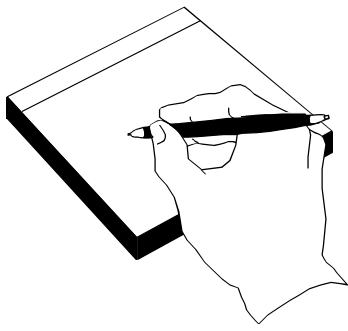
Those who did not attend the lectureship may still have access to these excellent lectures by purchasing the lectureship book, the cassette tapes, or the video tapes. The Bellview church at a very reasonable cost that barely covers their production costs makes these all available. The book is a 602-page, hard cover volume containing the full-length lectures. In addition, four excellent reviews are published of recent books by Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado, F. LaGard Smith, as well as

the “Core Gospel/Bulls-Eye Concept” in books by C. Leonard Allen, Richard T. Hughes, Michael R. Weed, and Bill Love. These alone are well worth the price of the book! Other lectures you will certainly want to read are those on “Guilt By Association,” “The Holy Spirit and Fellowship,” and “May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?” The series by Wayne Coats on “Unity Movements and Their Lessons For Today” needs to be read by all. Due to his physical battle with cancer at the time of the lectureship, brother Coats could not be present to deliver his lectures. In his stead, David Brown did an excellent job each day on this topic—so, you will particularly need to order the tapes of his lessons to receive the additional material.

A successful series of lectures involves much planning and work. A large part of the Bellview congregation is actively involved, along with its deacons, and the ladies who provide a fine meal for lectureship guests each day. The elders: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, and Fred Stancliff; along with their preacher, Michael Hatcher, not only are involved in the planning and in much detail work, but are present at the lectures and assisting in many ways. They are known for their strong stand for truth, for their emphasis on mission work, and for their work with the Bellview church.

Let me encourage you to plan to attend next year’s Bellview lectures (June 12-16, 1999). My wife and I consider this to be so valuable that she takes a week’s vacation each year to enable us to attend. We have been successful in encouraging others to come to the lectures for the past several years, too. The theme for next year on “Worldliness” is certainly another one that is much needed for the Lord’s church today. Plan to attend if at all possible!

218 Pinecrest Drive; Greeneville, TN 37743



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Preachers

We as preachers have a great deal of difficulty at times knowing where to go and where not to go in preaching the gospel. Some would never even consider this question. Some believe that they can go anywhere to preach the gospel. They will go wherever they are invited. One preacher made the statement, "I will go anywhere to preach the truth." I disagree strongly with this view. However, some would agree with the statement I heard today from a conservative, well-known, gospel preacher, "No one is going to tell me where to

preach." I might add: Not even God. If I were invited to speak at the Tulsa Soul-Damning Workshop, then the Nashville Jubilee, then the Abilene Christian (?) University Lectures, then the Gulf Coast Soul-Damning Workshop, and other faith-destroying lectures, would it be proper to go there and preach the truth? Individuals, such as those above, would say yes, and they would go if invited. Would anyone get the wrong idea if I appeared with apostates on their lectures? Would it be supporting them, in any way, to appear with them? Does the Lord's statement to come out from among them and be ye separate have anything to do with this subject, or is it come out from among them and be ye separate but continue (or go) and preach with them (2 Cor. 6:14-17)? Should we have no fellowship with them but rather expose them or should we have no fellowship with them, expose them, but continue to preach for them (Eph. 5:11)? During our lecturership and for our book brother Bob Berard did an excellent study concerning this matter. I am reproducing it here for your study and consideration. Brethren, please give serious thought to these matters and truly come out from among them and be ye separate. *MH*

FELLOWSHIP AND PREACHERS

Bob Berard

INTRODUCTION

Far from simply eating a meal together with a resultant good time had by all, fellowship with God and His people spans the breadth of one's life in Christ and wields an influence for good and against evil, unequalled in power! This fellowship involves man's harmony of heart and cooperation of effort with the supreme Authority of Heaven and earth. Such fellowship obtains only when men submit to God's revealed counsel in thought, word, and deed (Mat. 4:4; 6:24; Acts 10:35; 2 Cor. 6:1; 10:5; Col. 3:17; 1 John 1:3-7). In so doing, they unite with, or fellowship, the Almighty as His indomitable spiritual army, and can say with Paul: "If God is for us, who is against us?" and "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

This extensive beneficial influence exerted by man's fellowship with God means that fellowship abused is tragic; nevertheless, it is common, as common as sin (Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 5:6; 1 John 1:6). Both the neglect of Christian duties by inaction and the performance of acts not authorized by God are contrary to His will and inconsistent with His fellowship (Jam. 4:17; 1 John 1:6). All sin then is detrimental to fellowship with God since it counters God's cooperative work with man, reduces good influence to nil,

and enlists unholy fortifications in the devil's ranks. Thus, those persisting in sin align themselves with Satan in opposition to God and undermine fellowship with God (Mat. 12:30; Jam. 1:22; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 3:4).

GOSPEL PREACHERS' SPECIAL VISIBILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING FELLOWSHIP

The responsibilities of Christian fellowship are upon all of God's children; however, public proclaimers of the Gospel, by virtue of their work, are often more visible in the brotherhood as to whom they fellowship and from whom they withhold fellowship than are other members. Even more importantly, evangelists are obligated to preach the whole counsel of God which is permeated by the biblical doctrine of fellowship (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 20:26-27; 2 John 9). This preaching and teaching is not only by spoken and written words—it is also communicated by behavior. As Paul told Timothy, "be thou **an ensample** to them that believe, in word, **in manner of life**, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). Given these greater opportunities for influence, preachers carry greater responsibility and face a weightier judgment (Jam. 3:1). Therefore, preachers, even more so than other members, direfully need to know, teach, and practice biblical fellowship and to

respect its limitations. With preachers particularly in mind then, as to both their teaching and practice, the remainder of this chapter addresses Christian fellowship obligations under two major headings: (1) the duty to fellowship all who are in fellowship with God, and (2) the duty to withhold fellowship from all who are out of fellowship with God.

THE DUTY TO FELLOWSHIP THOSE WHO ARE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

The Psalmist said, "I am a companion of all them that **fear thee**, And of them that **observe thy precepts**" (Psa. 119:63). He spoke of extending fellowships to others according to the Divine criteria of fearing God and keeping His commandments (Ecc. 12:13). The criteria is the same in the New Testament order: "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:35). Clearly God wants men to conform to His heart or attitudes, and to comply with His authorization, and men of such heart and compliance want others of like mind to join them in fellowship with God (Mat. 4:4; 22:39; Col. 3:17). God not only authorizes (permits or approves) fellowship on the above noted bases, He also obligates (demands or requires) man to fellowship other men of right heart and life. Jesus explained the "in" and "out" of fellowship saying: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Mat. 12:30). He corrected James and John in their confusion about His disciples explaining that "he that is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:40). If one is truly with and for the Lord, he gathers with the Lord; that is, he conforms himself to the Lord's primary concern of saving souls, his own and others. He, thereby, becomes the spiritual companion and co-laborer of those doing likewise (Luke 19:10; Mat. 10:28; 16:26; 22:39). If he refuses fellowship to those who are for and with the Lord, he opposes the Lord as well (Acts 9:4).

Despite the Lord's instruction on extending fellowship, glaring disregard of the same occurred in the early church and among the best of preachers. Peter, a preacher and an apostle of Christ, wrongfully withdrew fellowship from Gentile brethren, fearing the Jews. He was rebuked by the apostle Paul, who concisely expressed the seriousness of Peter's error explaining that it was "because he [Peter] stood condemned" (Gal. 2:11-12). Peter's action on this occasion, being sin, was not only a breach of fellowship with his Gentile brethren—like all other sin it was a breach of fellowship with God.

In defiance of fellowship obligations, the church today has far more members out of fellowship with God and His faithful than are in, and preachers often lead the way. Consider the following groups of such violators:

1. Most numerous in the flight from fellowship with God and His faithful are liberal brethren who continue to profess Christ's name, conduct worship services, and do

religious works, but ignore His authority (Tit. 1:16; Col. 3:17; Isa. 59:1-2). Though they claim to be broadening *fellowship*, in actuality, liberals overstep the bounds of God's fellowship (2 John 9). Extending what they suppose to be God's fellowship, but actually loosing the bounds thereof, they are only extending their human fellowship and the devil's.

Hireling preachers lead the way in this digression in defiance of both their obligation to personally comply with God's requirements and their obligation to proclaim to the church all the obligatory matters which contribute to fellowship within the bounds of Truth (John 8:31-32; 17:17-21; Acts 20:26-27; 2 Tim. 4:3-4).

2. Thousands of brethren in various anti-camps, like their Judaizing counterparts of the first century church, have broken fellowship with the faithful by insisting upon man-made laws for God's heritage (Gal. 2:3-5). These are guilty of violating the Bible-based guideline of liberty in options (Rom. 14). Where the liberal looses what God has bound (and thereby compromises Divine fellowship), the anti binds where God has loosed, compromising the same Standard (Mat. 16:18-19).

3. Millions of full-tilt worldly apostates, like Paul's one time co-worker, Demas, have forsaken the Lord. They have "left the church" and the divinely-approved fellowship for a fling with the devil's illicit pleasures (Heb. 11:25; Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10). These often completely abandon any semblance of worship and service to God in their rejection of God's obligations. Every few years, like Demas, one of our faithful preaching brethren leaves the Lord and the faithful for love of the world.

4. Many indifferent or otherwise wrong-spirited and hypocritical apostates still worship or go through the motions of worship among the faithful; they still enjoy some interaction with their brethren. They associate and participate with the brethren, but their hearts are not with God or the cherished goal of His people. Typically, their works are minimal acts of convenience or efforts to win the approval of men. They are deficient in love for God, truth, and souls. Perhaps some who are supposed to be faithful Gospel preachers are in this number.

What Should Preachers Do Regarding the Duty to Fellowship Those in Fellowship with God?

1. **Preachers Must Conform in Obligatory Matters** (Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Tim. 4:2). This is a duty as broad as the whole of New Testament mandates and the way God prescribes for having fellowship with Him and His faithful people (2 John 9). When preachers personally conform to God's demands and preach that same conformity, the Word of God prevails (Isa. 55:11).

God's preached Word is the divinely-appointed means through which God's mind is declared that man might know the heart of God and the direction God would have him go (1 Cor. 1:21). Only in coming to a knowledge of

God's obligations can man come to have a heart like God's and do as God would have him do (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. Preachers Must Grant Liberty in Optional Matters. Preaching the truth involves declaring the right of brethren to differ on matters of option (Gal. 2:3-5). Some brethren, perhaps overly caught up in their zeal to oppose the swelling tide of liberalism are drawing, or are poised to draw, their own lines of fellowship, cutting off some who are still in fellowship with God. Those insisting on the King James Version as the only acceptable Bible version and those marking and avoiding brethren without any proof of the sin alleged are doing anything but endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. Are these preachers unfamiliar with the grief caused the church by the antis of a few decades ago who bound (and still bind) what they only suspected to be sin (Pro. 6:16-19; 17:15)? Do they think that the cure for liberalism is to tighten up the doctrine of Christ?

3. Preachers Must Have Love in All Matters. Truly loving preachers endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; they follow the Lord's total fellowship program, a program which mandates the extension of fellowship to all who are in fellowship with God. Loving preachers will not disrupt fellowship because they envy the success of their preaching brethren; rather, they will rejoice that the truth is proclaimed with good results (1 Cor. 13:6; Phi. 1:15-17). They will not care who gets credit for a spiritual victory; but, squelching every prideful inclination, they will continue to preach Christ and Him crucified, giving glory to God, and credit where credit is due (Rom. 13:7; 1 Cor. 2:2; 10:31). They will forego "getting-even," being willing to suffer wrong rather than harm the Lord's cause (1 Pet. 2:20). They will not press matters of option to the dividing of brethren and will not resort to unscriptural tactics even in addressing the most consequential violations of God's mandates (Col. 3:17; Rom. 14:3). They will not wrongly conceal a matter or be naive in their judgment, but will view things in the best possible light giving others the benefit of the doubt (1 Cor. 13:5-7).

THE DUTY TO WITHDRAW AND WITHHOLD FELLOWSHIP FROM THOSE NOT IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

God desires to bring all lost men into salvation and into His fellowship, a goal contingent upon man's obedience to the Gospel (Gal. 3:26-27; 2 The. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:9). However, consistent with His desire to save and fellowship man, God charges the faithful to withdraw and withhold their fellowship from those not complying with the terms for His fellowship (2 The. 3:6, 14-15; 1 Cor. 5:5). The authoritative, unchanging doctrine of Christ encircles all those in fellowship with God, thereby indicating those who should be fellowshiped by God's faithful; simultaneously it delineates those not in fellowship with God and who

should not be fellowshiped by the faithful (2 John 9).

Therefore, one complies with God's desire to save and fellowship men when he obeys God in withdrawing and withholding fellowship from those who are out of fellowship with God. When one behaves toward those out of fellowship with God in a manner indicating that he is in fellowship with them, he disregards God's demands regarding the limits of fellowship and His desire for saving souls.

Frequent Failures to Withdraw and Withhold Fellowship

Ignoring the Bible's requirement to withdraw fellowship from the disorderly member is business as usual in most churches. In like sinful manner, wilder liberal brethren increasingly extend fellowship to both the disorderly member and to non-members of the Lord's church. Elders are primarily responsible for this sin because they are charged to rule or lead those they oversee in keeping every Bible mandate (Heb. 13:17; 2 The. 3:6). If they did their job, preachers and other brethren would follow suit or be excluded themselves. However, many elders seem oblivious to their charge to take heed and to watch for the souls of their flocks; surely many giving flawless account of each dollar in the treasury will be surprised when they are called to "give account" for each person under their oversight (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-3).

Preachers have contributed to the church's failure to withdraw and withhold fellowship according to God's will by failing to dispense anything but minute doses of instructive discipline and even less corrective discipline. Some have used both words and deeds to make incremental or wholesale changes in the pattern of sound words, and consequently, to distort the bounds of biblical fellowship (2 Tim. 1:13; 2 John 9-11).

Rank apostates like Max Lucado have pulled out the stops with a go-for-all-the-fellowship-you-can-get approach. With book sales like Lucado enjoys, why not broaden the book-buying base? If Lucado's god is not his belly, whose is (Rom. 16:17-18)?

The devil, of course, knows that many cannot be deceived by the obvious departures of denominational religion or its contemptible copy-cats like Lucado, Shelly, and Walling. Accordingly, the chief deceiver has devised more subtle ways of prompting encroachments in the faithful church's fellowship. He tailors them to fit the differing whims of men. The hirelings' ilk tapers off from the most blasphemous and blatant liars to those with fewer and less grievous false doctrines (not to say that any false doctrine is acceptable, just that some have more grievous consequences). Finally their lot whittles down to those cowards who tell no lies and teach no fatal error, but knowingly withhold vital truths (Acts 20:26-27; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4). It is this last batch that softens the soil to accept fatal error.

Knowing that many folks like to ease into, rather than plunge into apostasy, the devil cunningly prepares their palate for false doctrine by first removing the staples of their spiritual diet for a season. Particularly, this basic spiritual food is that clearly conflicting with the main course of fermented wickedness he plans to serve later. Years removed from hearing preaching about man's accountability to God and responsibility to obey every Bible obligation, benumbed brethren are far more susceptible to change-agent doctrines like women church leaders, innovations in the pattern of worship, and fellowship with denominations. Thus, the no-error-but-not-all-the-truth-either preacher is also a devil's servant; he simply works at a "cleaner" level of the soul-subverting operation. Such cannot claim with Paul to be "pure from the blood of all men" and such do not stand justified before God (Acts 20:26-27).

Whether the overt and insolent or the covert and careful approach of undermining the ancient landmarks of God's truth, preachers so involved are traitors to the Captain of salvation. May their tribe decrease and rapidly so.

The Current Apostasy Confuses Fellowship Matters

With the current digression underway, many good, conscientious brethren understandably will, on occasion, be mistaken in their fellowship decisions. An unfaithful brother will be used in the church's work by a church that knows nothing of his sin. Faithful preachers will agree to speak on a program not knowing of its sponsor's harmful stance. A brother, who from all reports was true to God on one day, may, like Demas, seemingly change his loyalty overnight. Similarly, an eldership or entire congregation may drift from the moorings of truth in relatively short time. Given such numerous fickle individuals and churches, fellowship mistakes will be made. The faithful will simply continue to do their best and make correction for mistakes as they are learned (1 John 1:7-9). Those loving souls will not be too hasty or too harsh in making accusations of wrong-doing (1 The. 5:14; 2 Tim. 4:2). "For judgment *is* without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy" (Jam. 2:13).

Nevertheless, the times of difficult discernment are no excuse for being willfully indiscriminate in decisions regarding using or being used in works, thereby ignoring God's demands to withhold fellowship from some. Such misconduct should be rebuked by the faithful and those involved should repent (2 Tim. 4:2).

Disguised Fellowship Errors

Consistent with the devil's wily ways, various brotherhood men are at times knowingly or unknowingly involved in fellowship of those they should be withdrawn from. Particularly in mind are the elderships, churches, schools, and editors who use false teachers in an approving way and the preachers who allow themselves to be used by apostate

sponsors. Consider in turn the "use-any-preacher" sponsor and the "preach-anywhere" preachers.

Use-Any-Preacher Elderships, Churches, Editors, et al.

Many elderships and others in position to invite preachers to preach or write, often with the advice and encouragement of a so-called gospel preacher, use preachers who hold and teach fatal error. When challenged, some of these have replied that such a preacher will not be speaking on their lectureship or writing in their paper about the false doctrine that he holds. Their rationale seems to be: "we can use any preacher we want to use, as long as he preaches the truth on our program; we are responsible only for the work he does while he is with us." They fail to see or do not care to see that the implications of this practice are their approval of the false teacher, and thus their fellowship with him in violation of Ephesians 5:11, 2 Corinthians 6:17, and 2 John 9-11. Using him in their work declares that there is a harmony of hearts and a cooperation of efforts between them and him. Following their practice of using a man to do a spiritual work in disregard of his being out of fellowship with God, a church could use Billy Graham or Yassar Arafat for a gospel meeting, so long as he preaches the truth on that occasion.

Preach-Anywhere Preachers.

Akin in philosophy to use-any-preacher elderships, some preachers declare their "right" to preach anywhere they are invited to preach. They agree, on occasion, to participate in spiritual works that are controlled by apostate brethren, works that are used to undermine the Lord's cause. They insist that they can preach the Gospel wherever they please without regard for spiritual costs; they deny that such has any spiritual downside.

When brethren desperately need a clear and united picture of the faithful of Christ rightly applying the Bible doctrine of fellowship in opposition to those departing from God, and when brethren need to see in **action** as well as in **affirmations** that God's people will have no part of the God-forsaking conduct of liberal apostates, some of our notable men are blurring the lines of fellowship (Rom. 12:9; Eph. 5:11; Phi. 3:17). Their voiced opposition to the digressives, without an avoiding of them, fails to send the clear message that God wants in telling the brotherhood who is in and who is not in God's fellowship (Rom. 16:17-18).

Please hear an explanation noting what is not and what is opposed regarding these preach-anywhere preachers.

1. Of course, there is nothing sinful in preaching the Gospel! Indeed, the opposite is the case since that very preaching is commanded by the Lord (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).

2. There is nothing sinful in being among sinners of the world or even among apostate brethren in some situations. Some of the best work a preacher can do involves his being amongst and in direct interaction with

those who are out of fellowship with the Lord. Properly conducted debates with brethren who support fatal error and the rare opportunities to speak in denominational pulpits are instances in which truth can shine from the very midst of darkness and bring beneficial results.

Similarly, the preacher who is allowed to speak at a liberal congregation may do so in some circumstances, since his presence alone does not constitute forbidden fellowship (Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 5:11). He should, however, weigh the good he may do in the pulpit against the harm that may be done by knowledge of his whereabouts independent of a knowledge of his spoken words (Rom. 14:15-16). Such judgments may be difficult to make, but we ought to have enough sense to know that some care is needed—and more than just the fact that someone will be somewhere to hear the Gospel preached should be considered.

3. There is something sinful (and this is the thing here opposed) about being among apostate brethren and preaching the Gospel when such is conditioned upon making concessions affording the devil to have his day as part of the package. It is this third part of the conduct, the concession made to permit the enemy to advance his agenda, that is faulted. A preacher can do much harm to the cause of Christ if his acceptance of an appointment to preach the true Gospel of Christ is contingent upon his agreement to conditions which are certain to result in a second and far more influential and destructive message also being “preached.”

For example, Abilene Christian University (ACU) (Those not realizing the apostate state of this university should read David P. Brown’s *A.C.U., Ever Changing, Never Changing?* [Austin, TX: Biblical Notes, 1993]) sends flyers, brochures, and/or posters far and wide in promoting its lectureship. If the program lists, but makes no distinction between a Rubel Shelly and a Johnny Ramsey on the program, the message sent to many will be that these men and ACU are in cahoots (See the 75th Annual Abilene Christian University Bible Lectureship, *Studies in Matthew*, February 21-24, 1993.) Large, attractive posters advertising the ACU lectures are displayed in church meeting houses where brethren do not know better or could care less about what they disseminate. By this material, the young people of that congregation are encouraged to attend such institutions of higher education and soul damnation. The liberals, many of whom are always looking for something to defend their liberalism, can be all the more persuasive with those having reservations about ACU, saying, “Look, Johnny Ramsey is on the program!”

Specifically criticized is a Gospel preacher agreeing to speak on a lectureship program, knowing that: (1) the sponsor is out of fellowship with God, (2) speakers on the program are out of fellowship with God, (3) his name will be listed on a program among those apostate speakers with no distinction made as to him being any different from them, (4) no note, other than what he may say in his

speech, will be made as to his being against the sponsor, against the other speakers, or against the false doctrines advanced by the sponsor or other speakers, and (5) there will be mass advertising of the program of sponsor with a list of the participants including him in such a fashion as to convey the cooperative efforts of all concerned.

Is it not obvious that the message of a typical lecture-ship flyer of this sort in essence is saying: “This sponsoring institution is doing the work it wants to do through the cooperative effort of all of the listed speakers”? Is it not also reasonably concluded that each man whose name and picture appears on the advertisement knew in advance that such advertising would be done and that it would picture him as being one among many who would be working together in a common effort? Since the flyer is a product of the sponsor, would the sponsor be knowingly acting contrary to its own interest? No, the men calling the shots know what they are doing, and they are doing what they think will further the effort they want furthered. Why would the men calling the shots for the program, men who are not in fellowship with God, want to use a Gospel preacher who opposes their doctrines and their direction on their program? Obviously they see some benefit in using him!! Is it not strange that the Gospel preacher who opposes their goals, but agrees to speak on their program and be advertised with their parrots, does not see his part in contributing to their ends?

Would the same preacher allow himself to be so used if he knew beforehand that the advertising would have him explicitly labeled as a false teacher or by some other depreciative label? If not, why not? Do such men not maintain that as long as they are able to preach the Gospel, nothing else matters?

I marveled one year to hear brother Dave Miller explain how he and brother Ramsey had tried to dissuade a youngster from attending an apostate university. While appreciating that effort and many other efforts of brother Miller, his effort was certainly contradicted by what both he and brother Ramsey have done in agreeing to appear on apostate university programs. The ads in publications, the flyers, the brochures, and the posters send a message to tens of thousands, by virtue of the reputation of a good name, that this university is still loyal to the Lord. It is a short-sighted approach that fails to notice the harm which can be done by a good thing (Gospel preaching) done in a wrong manner (preaching on an apostate lectureship) (Heb. 5:12-14; Jam. 3:13-18).

Objections of the Preach-Anywhere Preachers.

Some have defended the Gospel preacher’s preaching on programs of digressive brethren. Hear several objections with refutation.

1. Preachers are **not in fellowship** with those they mingle with **unless they “agree together and endorse one another”** (my emp., BB) (Dave Miller, “A Balanced View of Fellowship,” audio tape recording of lecture delivered at 11th Annual Shenandoah Lectureship, 1997, Shenandoah Church of Christ, San Antonio, Texas.) While no one has fellowship with God unless

he agrees with God, not so much is required to constitute fellowship with error; the devil is not nearly so particular as God. John indicates that brethren are not to indicate their approval of a false teacher by receiving him into their house or by extending him a greeting. This does not mean that a false teacher could not be assisted in any way, but it does mean he should not be so treated as to indicate approval of his false doctrine. Surely, John does not mean that one can do whatever he likes to indicate approval of the false teacher as long as he does not actually agree with him (2 John 9). With this restricted definition of fellowship error, the Corinthian brethren were doing no wrong in allowing the brazen fornicator to continue enjoying their association, so long as they did not **agree** with him. Why did Paul not simply command that church to cease their agreeing with and endorsement of the fornicator?

2. Another brother emphasizes the good that can be done by the speaking opportunity, and cites as proof, the harm that could be done in a sound lectureship if Rubel Shelly were given just a small classroom of people. If a Rubel Shelly could do harm with a small part in a sound program, a Johnny Ramsey could do good on an unsound one. What is proven by this objection? Only that a Gospel preacher preaching the Gospel can do some good; but, this is something no one is contesting. The problem is paying too high a price to preach the Gospel. The price might be, doing even more harm than the good that could result from the preached Gospel. Could the brother not spend the same time and energy preaching without the adverse effect?

3. The claim is made that such an appearance is no different than what Jesus did in association with the sinners of His day. Are the cases parallel? No! Jesus was in the midst of sinners teaching the truth and this is not at all what is opposed, nor should it be. Such situations afford excellent opportunities to do some of the best work Gospel preachers can do. What Jesus did and what the preachers herein faulted do are not at all the same thing. Compare and contrast what Jesus did and what a preach-anywhere preacher, whom we will call Johnny, does. Pay attention to the prepositions.

Jesus and Johnny are seen present **among** sinners; Jesus and Johnny are **in** association with sinners; neither Jesus nor Johnny agree **with** false teachers or other sinners;

but, the big difference is that Jesus is teaching **to** sinners and Johnny is teaching **with** false teachers. Johnny is not wrong by being **among** the false brethren on an apostate lectureship per se; he is not wrong for having some sort of association **with** the false teachers; and, he is certainly not wrong for disagreeing **with** and teaching **against** false teachers on the lectureships in question. But Johnny is wrong for teaching **with** the false teacher in such a way as to give the impression to thousands who receive the advertising that he and they are working in harmony with the apostate lectureship.

A real parallel between Jesus and the preach-anywhere preachers would involve Jesus' agreement to speak on the ASU (Annual Sadducee University) lectureship with a number of false teachers of the Sadducee sect. His consent would give permission for advertising to be sent all over Palestine listing His perfect name, Jesus Christ, right between Rabbi E. Z. Doctrin and Rabbi I. B. Aham with others of the heretical religious elite. Many would conclude along the lines of "birds of a feather flock together," thus lowering Jesus' reputation, raising the Sadducee's reputation, and confusing the masses. The blindly loyal ASU alumni would use the advertising about Jesus' participation to defend the heretical university to those questioning its stand or the other speakers' loyalty to God. "How can ASU be at odds with God?" they might ask, "We have His Son on the ASU lectures!"

An Appeal. Preach-anywhere preachers need to re-evaluate their practice and its consequence. Jesus said: "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea" (Mat. 18:6).

CONCLUSION

In concept the Bible's teaching on fellowship is simple, but complexity and faith-testing pressures build in application of its truths. The current digression compounds the difficulty. May God help us to ever trust in Him and firmly resolve to heed His Word extending fellowship to all who are in fellowship with Him and withholding or withdrawing fellowship from all those who are out of fellowship with Him.

PO Box 39; Spring, TX 737

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

September 1998

Number 9

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

IS ALL WE DO WORSHIP?

Garry Barnes

Change means: "To make different in some particular: to make radically different; to give a different position, course or direction to." (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, G & C Merriam Company, Springfield, MA: 1973, pp. 185-186.) Change, like wealth, is neither inherently good or bad. What makes change either good or bad is what is changed, or the reason something is changed.

The key word in the lectureship this year is **change**. There are three basic attitudes toward change among members of the church. One attitude is "change for change's sake," or expressed another way, "change just to be different." Another attitude is, "no change for any reason," or "all change is bad—**tradition bound**." The third attitude is one of willingness to consider the proposed change, and be willing to change if it is scriptural and may be of benefit. The first two attitudes are not scriptural, at least they are not of a biblical nature. I hope no one present has either of these attitudes. One is just as wrong as the other. Therefore, I pray we all have the third attitude mentioned above regarding change.

What does **change** have to do with the teaching that all we do in life is worship? I feel assured that many of those who hold the position all one does is worship, have the attitude of "change just for change's sake." Because of the clear teaching of God's Word on the subject of worship, one holding the teaching all we do is worship, either greatly misunderstands the teaching of God's Word on the subject of worship, or is seeking to justify some unscriptural practice by this philosophy.

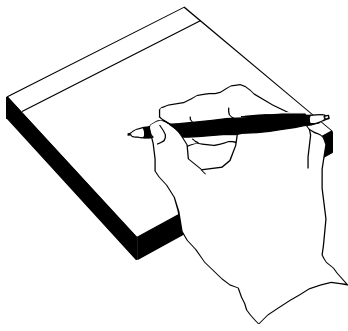
Having made these comments let me say like Amos, the prophet of old, who said he was not a prophet,

neither a prophet's son; I am not a Greek scholar, neither a Greek scholar's son. Therefore, we will approach this topic from the view of the member in the pew who can take a Bible, a concordance, a word study, and a Greek lexicon and find the same information given in this lesson.

The teaching that all one does is worship ignores the plain teaching of the Scriptures and opens the door for almost anything to become acceptable in worship to God. Paul in Romans 15:4 says: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Let us look at several Old Testament Scriptures to see what we can learn from them about worship to God under that period. "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5). "And it come to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth" (Gen. 24:52). "And the people believed: and when they heard the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped" (Exo. 4:31). "And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off" (Exo. 24:1). "And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, everyone in his tent door"

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

“Brotherhood Watchdogs”

On the Internet there are lists of email where individuals can write a message and it will be sent to all individuals subscribed to that particular list. Recently, on one of the list an individual (Todd Clippard, whom I understand is a faithful gospel preacher) made a comment concerning “watchdog publications” and said he did not “want to [be] pigeon-hole[d] with Ira Rice and others for whom I have little or no respect.” It was interesting to me that the only name used in this regard was brother Rice. I do not need to try to defend him; he does not need to be defended as his actions speak for themselves, and the majority of responses I received were in defense of brother Rice. I do know that I have profited from his writings (having read *Contending For The Faith* since the late 1970s) as he obeyed God’s command to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). I want to consider some of what brother Clippard wrote trying to explain why he has “little or no respect” for brother Rice, especially since he made “no apologies for what was contained in the post.”

Notice some of the words that he used to condemn brother Rice. He wrote that, “I have found the articles exposing false teachers to be quite caustic and unkind in tone and content....have gone beyond the boundries [sic] of decorum and good taste....‘heretic detectors’ who spend most of their energy turning over every stone and investigating every hint of heresy....extremists to the right of the brotherhood....I will always try to maintain my dignity and respect the dignity of those with whom I disagree.” My first reaction is that it is obvious that the legs of the lamb are not equal. He has the right to condemn brother Rice and others for being this way, yet that is the very thing he is doing in his post, along with a couple others who made similar

statements.

If we are to determine our respect, or lack of it, based upon the terms a person uses, surely we should also apply this standard to the writers of the Bible. I believe most people agree that Stephen was speaking by inspiration of God as the beloved physician (Luke) records his sermon in Acts 7. Stephen called the Sanhedrin “stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears” and then added that they were “betrayers and murderers” of the Just One (Acts 7:51-52). He then tells them that they had received the law but they did not keep it (Acts 7:53). I guess some would not consider this “caustic and unkind in tone and content.”

We can next consider Peter and Jude (especially since 2 Peter 2 and Jude are so close). We will consider the specific words of Jude. First look at Jude 4 and view how Jude looks at the false prophets Peter mentioned. “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” I guess such language is shameful. However, it does not stop there. In verse 8 he adds that they are “filthy dreamers” who “defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.” He then tells us that they “speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves” in verse 10. In verse 11 he places a woe upon them. Then in verse 12 begins describing them with these words, “clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” He continues in verse 16 adding that they are, “murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage” In verse 18 he then adds that they are “mockers” who “walk after their own ungodly lusts” and then tells us they “separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit” in verse 19. Obviously, since Jude’s entire book concerns these individuals, he must have been a “‘heretic detectors’ who spend most of [his] energy turning over every stone and investigating every hint of heresy.”

We could also mention Paul’s referring to the Judaizing teachers as dogs, evil workers, and mutilated ones (Phi. 3:2) who are enemies of the cross (Phi. 3:18). He also said they were deceitful (2 Cor. 11:13). How-

ever, let us (for space sake) consider Jesus in this regard. In Matthew 15, Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees “hypocrites” because they “draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mat. 15:8). He then told them that their worship was vain (Mat. 15:9), then called them blind leaders of the blind (Mat. 15:14). Later in Matthew 23 Jesus calls them hypocrites seven times. Additionally he tells them they do not allow people to enter the kingdom and when they do make a proselyte they “make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (v. 15). He again calls them blind guides (vv. 16, 24) and adds fools (v. 19). Regarding their life he says, “ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (v. 25). He tells them they are “whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (vv. 27-28). He then calls them serpents and a generation of vipers and asks them “how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (v. 33). Surely Jesus was “quite caustic and unkind in tone and content” in His remarks to these religious people. He surely went beyond the “boundries [sic] of decorum and good taste.” Jesus must be one of those “extremists to the right of the brotherhood” who are simply “‘heretic detectors’ who spend most of their energy turning over every stone and investigating every hint of heresy.”

Brethren, I hope that you see how unfair it is to judge someone based simply upon the words which a person uses in print. If we do so, then whose standard will we use? To one person certain words might be “quite caustic and unkind” while they are not to another person. If we lose or “have little or no respect” for a person based upon this, then we must lose all respect for Peter, Paul, Jude, and even Jesus and the Holy Spirit (for He inspired the writers of the New Testament). To make judgments based upon this is also unfair because we do not know the heart of the person and we might not know the fights and battles the person has been through. If what they say is false, then expose (prove) that it is false. However, men such as brother Rice, and many others like him (the Wallace’s, Coats, Brown, Cates, Elkins, etc.) are fighting the battles that many others would not fight. Because of their work possibly many Christians will be saved from the apostasy that is among us. Instead of criticizing, let us uphold their hands in this great work of “earnestly contend[ing] for

the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). MH

(Continued from Page 1)

(Exo. 33:10). “And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish” (Deu. 8:19). “And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them” (Deu. 17:3).

In Deuteronomy 26:8-10, when Israel had come into the land flowing with milk and honey, they were to bring the firstfruits of the land, and set them before the Lord and worship before the Lord. In 1 Samuel 1:3, Elkanah went out of his city yearly to worship and sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. In verse 19, they worshipped before the Lord and returned to their own house in Ramah. In 2 Samuel 12:20, David after the death of his infant son, rose up, washed and anointed himself, changed his garments, and came into the house of God and worshipped, then returned to his own house.

“But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel” (1 Kin. 9:6-7a). In 1 Kings 16:31, Israel went and worshipped and served Baal. “And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped” (2 Chr. 29:28-29). “We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool” (Psa. 132:7).

In Isaiah 27:13, when Israel had been returned from Assyria and Egypt, they would worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which come against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zec. 14:16).

There are many similar Scriptures from the Old Testament that could be given with the above, but these are sufficient to prove the point. What can we learn from these Scriptures? All the Scriptures given above use the same Hebrew word *shachah* according to *Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*. (MacDonald Publishing Company, McLean, VA; p. 490.) We can learn

three major points from these Scriptures: (1) Worship was a stop and go activity; not something done continuously; (2) worship was often done in a certain place; and, (3) the word worship is many times used with the word serve or with other activities.

If everything one does is worship, why did Abraham “go yonder and worship”? Why were Moses, Aaron, and the seventy elders of Israel told to “worship ye afar off”? If every thing is worship, how could Israel “serve and worship other gods”? If every thing is worship, why were the children of Israel to bring the “firstfruits of the land, and set them before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God”? Yes, things written aforetime were written for our learning—let us then study and learn!

Many capable men in our brotherhood have spoken and written on this subject, such as Roy Deaver, Bobby Duncan, Eddie Whitten, and Curtis Cates. Brother Cates has just recently published a very fine booklet entitled: *Worship: Heaven's Imperative, or Man's Innovations?* I highly recommend it for your study.

When we turn from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we find the same principles there concerning worship, as found in the Old Testament. Jesus set forth the foundation for all our worship in John 4:21-24, while speaking to the Samaritan woman. “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Note that there would be a change in worship. The Samaritans had worshipped after their own teaching in the mount of Samaria. The Jews, in a fashion, had worshipped under the law of Moses. Now both Jew and Samaritan would worship (if true worship) under the same system of teaching—the New Testament law given by Christ (Heb. 7-9; 2 Cor. 3:6-18; Jam. 1:18-26).

Jesus here set forth three fundamental truths of acceptable (true) worship. First, it must have the correct object of worship. That object was the God, the Father, the same object of true Old Testament worship. The second principle of true worship is the spirit of the worship (worshipper). The spirit of the one worshipping is his attitude; i.e., his state of mind, where the heart is. In Matthew 15:1-9, Jesus speaks of the Jews making

void the laws of God by their traditions. He refers to the saying of Isaiah to the Jews of his day, quoted in Isaiah 29:13: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mat. 15:8). The third condition of true worship is that of truth. Worship to the Father must be according to His Divine will. Look at Matthew 15:9: “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.” When the commandments of men are substituted for the teaching of God's will, then worship becomes vain or empty.

When any one of these three principles of true worship (object, attitude, truth) is missing, it is no longer true (acceptable) worship. It is interesting, yet alarming, that well known brethren are at great variance on the teaching and understanding of what constitutes worship. There are, on one end of the picture, some who hold that worship is all spirit (attitude) and that worship is nothing external. They believe that such acts as prayer, singing, etc., are only expressions of worship done in the heart (mind). Then, there are others who assert that worship involves almost entirely the actions such as singing, prayer, etc., and that the spirit or intent plays little part in worship.

From the teaching of God's Word, how can any of these conditions and parts of worship be separated one from the other? Does it not take both the attitude (heart) and truth directed toward God to make true worship? Certainly, if I go through the motions of the Lord's Supper, but all the time my mind is on worldly things, making no discerning of the Lord's body, I have not worshipped God; that is, not acceptably. On the other hand, digging a post hole, even with genuine love for God is not worship. I have no authority (truth) for such an **act as worship**. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). “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” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In our worship, God, in His Word, has instructed us as to what to do. His Word teaches us to teach/study His Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18), to sing, making melody in the heart (Col. 3:15-17; Eph. 5:18-20), to observe the Lord's Supper in memorial of Christ (Mat. 26:26-29; Acts 20:6-8; 1 Cor. 11:20-27), to give as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and to pray (1 The. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:8; Luke 18:1). Each of these acts is to be done upon the first day of the week when the

church is assembled together.

Does this mean one cannot do any of these at any other time? No. The only one of these that could not be done by any Christian at any other time is the observing of the Lord's Supper, which can only be observed in the assembly of the church on the first day of the week. I can sing at other times (Jam. 5:13). I can pray any time (1 The. 5:17). I can give to help others at other times (Jam. 2:13-17; 1 John 3:17-18). I can teach God's Word any time (Mat. 28:19-20). Could these be considered worship at other times? Yes. Does this mean or necessitate that every thing one does is worship? NO!

In the New Testament, there are several Greek words that are translated "worship" in our English Bible. The three most common of these are: *proskuneo*, *sebomai* and *latreuo*. *Proskuneo* is by far the most common Greek word for worship used in the New Testament. It is defined: "To make obeisance, do reverence to," and is used of an act of homage or reverence. (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*; MacDonald Publishing Company, McLean, VA; pp. 1258, 1259.) *Sebomai* is defined: "to revere, stressing the feeling of awe or devotion." (Ibid.) *Latreuo* is defined: "to serve, to render religious service or homage." (Ibid.) It is this latter Greek word about which some have raised problems. It is a form of *latreuo* (*latreia*) that in the NIV translation is translated "worship" in Romans 12:1. (Ibid., p. 1031) This is the primary version and passage that those who teach everything is worship use as a proof text. Let us look at the text of Romans 12:1-2.

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is **your reasonable service**. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will go God" (KJV). "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is **your spiritual worship**. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and prove what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (NIV).

Even allowing the Greek word *latreia* to be translated "worship" does not necessitate that everything one does is worship. The Greek word *latreia* is more often translated service. Notice, Paul goes on to say, in verse two, that in presenting ourselves in living sacrifice to

God, we are no longer to conform to the world; but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. This we are to do to "prove" what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God. What is there to be proven to be good and acceptable, if everything is worship? A man and woman give themselves to each other in marriage, but not everything each does is to honor the other. This does not mean they no longer love each other, nor that they are not committed to each other. As indicated, before a problem of allowing an arbitrary definition of the word "worship" is the difficulty that would arise in defining and teaching against unscriptural practices of worship.

When we study God's Word and when we teach God's Word, let us consider the entire text of any passage, on any subject. Beyond that, let us study all other passages on the same subject and consider what they teach about that subject. Let us practice the exhortation of Acts 17:11 to listen and then search the Scriptures to see what is taught in God's Word. Let us heed 2 Timothy 2:15 to study to show ourselves approved unto God. If we would all practice these Bible principles most of the problems that exist in the church would never arise.

Another Scripture used (perverted) by those who hold this false doctrine of everything we do is worship is Colossians 3:17: "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." They use this Scripture to say because everything we do is to be done in the name of the Lord, everything done must be worship. What Scripture(s) teaches that everything that is done by the authority of Christ is worship? He told the disciples to wash one another's feet. Was that to be done as worship? If something is authorized (commanded) by Christ to be done as worship, must it not be a necessity that we obey it? Where do we get the authority to pick and choose the items of worship we will engage in, and what items we choose, to omit?

Where is the scriptural authority to take a shower, go to a football game or drive a semi-truck across the country? I believe one can see very quickly there is no authority (book, chapter and verse) for such actions. Therefore, one of two conclusions must be drawn. (1) Either such actions, even by Christians, are not worship, or, (2) Christians can participate in unauthorized (unscriptural) activities as worship and still be pleasing to God. How can those who teach this doctrine claim to follow one of their own proof texts—Colossians 3:17?

(Continued on Page 7)

First Annual Lubbock Lectureship

THE FAITH

Once For All Delivered

Tommy J. Hicks, Director

Sunday, October 11

9:00 AM	By What Authority?	Michael Hatcher
10:00 AM	The Faith Once For All Delivered	Gordon Brewer
11:00 AM	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
2:00 PM	The Sect Spoken Against	Eddie Whitten
3:00 PM	Forsake Not The Assembly	R. L. Popejoy
4:00 PM	God Does Answer Prayers	Bob Berard
5:00 PM	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:00 PM	The Church Of Christ	Curtis Cates
8:00 PM	According To The Pattern	Marvin Weir

Monday, October 12

9:00 AM	The Lord's Supper	Ken Free
10:00 AM	Hell And Eternal Punishment	Don Walker
11:00 AM	Prove All Things	Kevin Rhodes
12:00 PM	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
2:00 PM	Love And Tolerance	Bob Sweeten
3:00 PM	How The Holy Spirit Works Today	David Brown
4:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	David Brown
5:00 PM	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:00 PM	Legalism And Leberalism	Terry Hightower
8:00 PM	Faith And Works	Lindell Mitchell

Tuesday, October 13

9:00 AM	Preach The Word	Michael Light
10:00 AM	The Unity Of The Spirit	Robert Dodson
11:00 AM	Traditions Of Men And Of God	Daniel Denham
12:00 PM	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
2:00 PM	Ye Shall Know The Truth	Gary Summers
3:00 PM	Women, Worship And Work	Jerry Moffitt
4:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	Jerry Moffitt
5:00 PM	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:00 PM	Law And Grace	Buster Dobbs
8:00 PM	The Love Of God	Oran Rhodes

Wednesday, October 14

9:00 AM	Worship In Spirit And In Truth	Michael Wyatt
10:00 AM	Teach And Admonish One Another	Joseph Meador
11:00 AM	Ascertaining Bible Authority	Don Tarbet
12:00 PM	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
2:00 PM	Satan And His Origin	Lester Kamp
3:00 PM	Shall We Join "Promise Keepers"?	Dub McClish
4:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	Dub McClish
5:00 PM	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:00 PM	Our Common Salvation	Tommy J. Hicks
8:00 PM	The One Baptism	Stephen Wiggins

Thursday, October 15

9:00 PM	Mark Those Causing Divisions	Roelf Ruffner
10:00 PM	Repent: The Forgotten Command	Eddie Parrish
11:00 PM	Have No Fellowship	Jesse Whitlock
12:00 PM	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
2:00 PM	Halt Between Two Opinions	Kent Watson
3:00 PM	What Are Salvation Matters?	Garland Elkins
4:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	Garland Elkins
5:00 PM	<i>Dinner Break</i>	
6:30 PM	Singing	
7:00 PM	Marriage, Divorce And Remarriage	Gary Colley
8:00 PM	The Father, Son, And Holy Spirit	Darrell Conley

- Free Housing in Members' Homes*
- Special Motel Rates • Free RV Spaces*
- Exhibits Display • Attended "Pre-Schoolers" Nursery
- Lectureship Book (Containing All 35 Lectures)
- Audio & Video Tapes (All Lectures Available)

* For more information about "Free Housing," "Free RV Space" and "Special Motel Rates," call (806) 794-5008 or (806) 798-1019. Reservations must be made in advance and will be taken "first come, first served" as long as space is available.

Presented by the

Southside Church of Christ

8501 Quaker Avenue; P.O. Box 64430

Lubbock, Texas 79464

(806) 794-5008

(Continued from Page 5)

They are in trouble which ever of the two above conclusions they choose!

Who is going to equate singing of “How Great Thou Art” in the assembly of the saints, with singing “Happy Birthday” to a rowdy group of five-year olds? Who would even try to equate the teaching of God’s Word, with the screaming and hollering at a high-school football game? Who would dare equate the observing of the Lord’s Supper with eating hot dogs and coke in a deer camp? Who would be so brass to equate the coming before the throne of God in reverent prayer, to the calling of a herd of pigs to the feeding trough or asking a banker for a car loan? Blasphemy! I almost cringe in fear to even ask such questions.

Brethren, why would anyone want to make such a mockery of God and His Word, to even show such little common reasoning? I know of **no one** among us who denies this false teaching that all one does is worship, who contends that one’s obligation to God or their service to God starts and stops with the assembly of the church on Sunday morning. If they do, then they are also in error. Everyone understands Christianity is a daily manner of life (1 Cor. 15:58; Rom. 12; Jam. 2-4; Tit. 2:11-14). We understand clearly that our lives are to be examples through which others can see Christ living in us (Mat. 5:16, 38-48; 1 Cor. 8). We understand that we will give account to God for the words and deeds of every day of our lives (2 Cor. 5:10; Jam. 1:22-27, 3:1-12; Rom. 14:11-12).

All of these things are very true, still it does not make every activity of every day of one’s life an act of worship. We need to discern between worship and service. We need to remember that worship must always have the right object—God; the right spirit—willing, believing, loving; and the right authority—truth, God’s word, to be true worship and to be acceptable to the God of heaven.

Truly, one must give himself/herself in living sacrifice. We cannot worship or serve two masters (God/ world, self [Mat. 6:24]). We are lively stones, built up a spiritual

house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by Jesus. As an holy nation, a peculiar people; we are to show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

But, let us not abuse God’s Word to seek to justify such unauthorized practices in our worship as the use of the instrument, choirs, hand-clapping, etc. For any activity, whether it be in the assembly or in everyday life, to be acceptable to God, it must be taught in God’s Word. The use of instruments, choirs, etc., are not taught in God’s Word. The visiting of the sick, teaching the lost, helping a neighbor and living godly moral lives are taught in God’s Word. There is a vast Bible difference—not to mention common reasoning—between singing songs, hymns and spiritual songs in the assembly of the church and a group having a victory celebration after winning an important football game.

Priscilla joined with her husband, Aquila, to teach Apollos “the way of the Lord more perfectly” (Acts 18:26); but that did not give her scriptural authority to preach in the assembly or to become an elder in the Lord’s church (1 Tim. 2:12, 3:1-9). God’s Word always has (still does) and always will give a pattern for worship, just as it gives a pattern (plan) for the salvation of man from his past sins. Let us then, “be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the mist of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; **holding forth the word of life**” (Phi. 2:15-16).

***Editor’s Note:** Brother Barnes wrote this for the 1994 lectureship book “Changes In The Church Of Christ.” We appreciate his good work in writing this. We reprint it at this time because of its importance regarding this false doctrine. This false doctrine is the cause of many errors within the Lord’s church. We must do all we can to soundly defeat this erroneous doctrine.*

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXVII

October 1998

Number 10

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

Lester Kamp

INTRODUCTION

The idea of guilt by association is an important one because of its relevance to situations which occur frequently in our lives that require definite decisions on our part. Some of these dilemmas relate to those who are preachers, but others of these problems impact all Christians. Preachers have to make decisions about involvement in preachers' luncheons, at which there are false teachers from various congregations. When the opportunities arise, preachers have to decide whether they should accept invitations to speak on lectureships. Part of this decision making process should include consideration of the other speakers and the general reputation of the lectureship in terms of soundness. For most lectureships, subjects are assigned and guidelines are given. If one does not have the opportunity or the determination to speak out and expose the errors and the false teachers involved, then he becomes guilty by association. If the error is not exposed, then the association with those in error is endorsement.

What of members who find themselves in a congregation where error is taught or practiced without refutation? When members remain in that congregation, they become guilty of the error by their continued association with that congregation though they disagree with what is taught or practiced there. There comes a time after continued objections are made to no avail regarding the error when faithfulness to God requires disassociating oneself from a congregation which does not follow God's Word. There is something more important than fond memories of the congregation in years gone by, more important than weddings and other special occasions taking place in that building over the years, and more important than family and friends who are members of that congregation. It is

more important to be faithful to God, faithful to His Word. "We must obey God" (Acts 5:29).

Though these people do not teach error, they are guilty because of their association with those who do. Though these people do not practice error themselves, they become guilty of sin by their association with those who practice error. These issues are relevant to many situations with which we have to deal today. The Bible should be our guide in this and all matters. The purpose of this study is to look at what God has to say about "guilt by association."

EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURE

Let us first observe that the idea of "guilt by association" can be identified by some examples given in the Scriptures. In these passages we can see that God disapproves of continued association with those who practice things contrary to His Will. Continued association will bring God's wrath and punishment. "Guilt by association" is a principle which can be identified in Scripture; God considers those who continue in such association with evil guilty and worthy of punishment.

Genesis 19

Recall the destruction of Sodom. Because of the sinfulness of the city God was going to destroy it. Abraham had earlier pleaded with God to spare the city if only ten righteous souls could be found (Gen. 18:32). Ten such could not be found. Peter describes Lot in this situation: "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds" (2 Pet. 2:7-8). God sent two angels to warn Lot and his family of the imminent destruction of the city. On the morning of the destruction, the angels gave these instructions to Lot: "Arise, take thy

wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city...Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed” (Gen. 19:15-17). Though Lot was righteous he would have died if he had continued his association with the inhabitants of Sodom. He was to completely sever his relationship with the city; he was not even to look back at the destruction lest he be consumed with the wicked. “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). Continued association with the guilty would have brought punishment. Those who continued their association with the wicked were considered by God “guilty by association.” Surely remembering Lot’s wife teaches this lesson.

Numbers 16

In Numbers 16 Korah, the son of Izhar, led a rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron. Moses’ appraisal was: “*Both* thou and all thy company *are* gathered together against the LORD” (Num. 16:11). Korah and his companions complained, “*Ye take* too much upon you, seeing all the congregation *are* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?” (Num. 16:3). Moses responded, “Even to morrow the LORD will shew who *are* his, and *who is* holy; and will cause *him* to come near unto him: even *him* whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him” (Num. 16:5). God purposed to destroy the whole congregation of Israel at this time. Moses, however, intervened and pleaded in behalf of the people. God spared them because of Moses’ pleas. But notice that God originally planned to destroy all of Israel—those directly responsible for the rebellion along with those who were in association with them. Those innocent of rebellion were guilty by association because they were **with** those who were guilty. Ultimately two hundred fifty men lost their lives because of this rebellion. The earth opened, and they perished. An interesting statement for our present study is found later in this same chapter of Numbers. “And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins” (Num. 16:26). These instructions here reveal that had they not completely separated themselves from Korah and his co-conspirators they would have been consumed along with those who had rebelled. They would have been guilty by their very association with Korah and the others. Those who were innocent of rebellion had to completely and totally separate themselves from the guilty lest they also be consumed by the wrath of God. God said, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs.” In verses 32-33 we are told

that “the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all *their* goods. They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.” Those that “*appertained* unto Korah” does refer to his children for they “died not” (Num. 26:11). Those that “*appertained* unto Korah” must, therefore, refer to those who associated themselves with him. Among these were some who were guilty only because of their association with Korah. They were guilty by association.

Joshua 23

“Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you” (Jos. 23:12-13).

Allowing the heathen nations to remain in the land and associating with them would influence Israel to sin. Israel would become guilty of sin because of their association with those who lived contrary to God’s Word. God’s constant warning against such association with evil manifests the danger of such fellowship.

Ezra 9

When Israel returned from captivity the people, including the priests and the Levites, had “not separated themselves from the people of the lands” (Ezra 9:1). This had led to “*doing* according to their abominations” (Ezra 9:1). The guilt of sin had resulted from their association with the wicked. When guilt occurs, then the wrath of God is warranted and certain. Israel observed: “Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed *us*, so that *there should be* no remnant nor escaping?” (Ezra 9:14). They recognized that “affinity with the people of these abominations” was harmful because it brought the guilt of sin upon them.

Psalms 1

In the first verse of this Psalm there is a description of the God-blessed person; the holy life of those devoted to serving God. The description could be summarized: “Avoid the company of the wicked.” One has stated, “Three kinds of wickedness are described; active participation in evil counsels, quiet acquiescence in sin, association with scoffers.” (*The Bible Commentary*, ed. F. C. Cook {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981}, 4:173.) This verse has often been used by Bible teachers to show the progressive nature

of sin denoted by the words: *walketh, standeth, sitteth*. Notice here the suggestion that the righteous man recognizes the danger of continued association with the wicked. It is, of course, impossible to eliminate all association with the wicked of the world. Another commentator has well stated the meaning of the verse: "You must mix with them in daily business; but do not choose their society. When let go from necessary engagements, make for the people of God (Acts 4:23)." (F. B. Meyer, *Choice Notes on the Psalms* {Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984}, p. 11.) Association with the wicked is dangerous because of its effects; association with the righteous is to be preferred (Rom. 12:10).

Psalm 26

David contemplates his determination not to sin. As he describes his determination in this regard, he reveals, at least in part, how this is done. He states, "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked" (Psa. 26:4-5). David realized that association with others has an impact on activity in sin or abstinence from sin. He would not sit down with those whose lives are empty; he would not hang around those who were pretending to be something that they were not; he despised the association of those who practiced evil; and he would not linger among the wicked. The guilt of sin often comes through one's associates.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Paul tells us "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33, ASV). Association with evil characters influences those in that association to sin. If we are to maintain a godly life, we must be careful to associate with those who will help us live righteously and not with those who will bring us under the yoke of sin. It must be recognized that it is usually easier to pull others down to a lower level of life than to pull others up to the level of life that God desires of us.

SPECIFIC WARNINGS ABOUT ASSOCIATION

Repeatedly God has warned us about having fellowship with the wicked, the false teacher, and those who have departed from the faith. Fellowship with God's people is a wonderful blessing; fellowship with the world is destructive. We must be in fellowship (association) with those who are in fellowship with God; we dare not fellowship those who are not in fellowship with God. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ...But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:3, 7). Association is based on "walking in the light," on obeying God's Word.

2 Corinthians 6

When God's people refuse to "come out from among" those who walk contrary to His instructions, we disobey God and become guilty of sin by our association. The inspired Paul tells us, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). God states through Paul, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17). The foolishness of fellowship with the sinful world is pointed out by several questions raised which make such association absurd. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?...what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Cor. 6:14-15). There is no common ground; there is to be no fellowship between God's people and those who serve Satan. About such association, God says come out from it. To fail to do so is disobeying God.

In terms of association with a congregation which is no longer following the mandates of God's Word, Dub McClish wrote:

Those who are determined to faithfully serve God sometimes find themselves allied with those who decidedly are not. This applies to many members of congregations that still wear the name "church of Christ," but have ceased to be concerned with Scriptural authority for their teaching or practice. What are faithful saints who are in a congregation whose elders and preacher are not at all concerned with abiding in the "old paths" to do? The Lord's answer is clear: "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

One stated purpose for exiting such an institution is to avoid fellowship with its sins. One has fellowship with such a church by means of **financial support**....One who remains in such a church also has fellowship with its error and evils by means of **implicit endorsement**. In spite of energetic argument by the liberals, it is folly to deny the connection between **fellowship** and **endorsement**. If one participates with (for such is the definition of "fellowship") those who are teaching and practicing error, he is tacitly endorsing (agreeing with and encouraging) their error. He is lending his name and whatever influence for good he might have to efforts which oppose the Gospel. To remain a part of such a congregation is thereby a manifestation of support for it. This is why John wrote that we were neither to open our homes nor extend cordial greeting to false teachers, for to do so is to partake in (i.e., have fellowship with) their evil works (2 John 10-11).

All of the objections one might register to the elders and preacher concerning unscriptural doctrines and practices in a digressive church are rendered mute when one stays there in spite of them. In fact, somewhere along the line it becomes hypocritical to continue to object if: (1) it is seen that no repentance of the error and evil is forthcoming, and (2) the objector stays in spite of apostasy. The message of such behavior to liberal preachers and elders (and all other

observers) is that the objector is not really very concerned after all.

Brethren who object to and do not agree with much of what is going on in the congregation of which they are members need to understand that merely registering an objection and then staying there is not enough. Like it or not, as long as one is a member of an apostate church he is **endorsing its apostasy!** (Dub McClish, "Come Forth, My People—4," *The Edifier*, May 17, 1990, p. 2.)

When the leadership of a congregation has departed from the Truth and this departure has become obvious, there is very little (if anything) which can be done to bring the congregation back to the "old paths." (Bill Jackson, "Not Once in 2000 YEARS!" *Matters of THE Faith*, Oct.-Dec., 1995, pp. 6-7.) Unity among God's people for which Jesus prayed requires separation from those who are not in fellowship with God. The very basis for this unity is God's Word. Jesus prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one" (John 17:20-21). The unity about which Jesus prayed was obtained "through their word." Truth unites, and Truth divides. Unity results among those who follow the Word; disunity (separation) results between those who follow the Word and those who do not. The church is after all "the called out," those who uniquely belong to God (Tit. 2:14), having severed their relationship with the world of sin. Unity among God's people requires disassociation from those who do not speak the same thing, who cause division, and are not of the same mind and judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

Ephesians 5

According to Paul even a little fellowship with evil is wrong (i.e., sinful). The inspired instruction is: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11). There is no such thing in God's view as "big F" and/or "little f" "levels of fellowship." God's Word knows nothing of Rubel Shelly's inventive terminology. The Bible does not teach the idea of fellowship based on "Gospel" and not on "doctrine." The source of this doctrine is Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett; it is the doctrine of men. Acceptance of such doctrines may increase our popularity among men; but remember what Paul said, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). Believing these doctrines may be comforting now, but ultimately we will be lost because of them. God has drawn lines between those who love the Truth and obey it and those who reject the Truth. We must be careful not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

TREATMENT OF FALSE TEACHERS

In the New Testament we are told how to deal with false teachers. These very passages rule out continued

association with them. It is impossible to obey God regarding false teachers and continue to associate with them. A preacher who claims to be faithful to God, sound in the faith, and insists that he can speak on unsound programs (e.g., Jubilee, Tulsa "Soul Winning" Workshop, ACU Lectures, etc.) is not faithful to God. Such association except to reprove and rebuke is sin according to God's Word. A careful study of some of these passages will clearly show this to be the case.

2 John

John tells us that fellowship with error (specifically the false teacher) is endorsing and encouraging the error. The warning is: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [i.e., the doctrine of Christ, that which Christ has authorized], receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10-11). It is possible to become "partaker of other men's sins" (1 Tim. 5:22). Any "joint participation" with those who walk in darkness is itself sin. There is no middle ground except the ground of compromise. Those that do not gather with Christ by preaching, teaching, and living the Truth are scattering abroad (Mat. 12:30). These are the only two options. If a person is not with Christ, then he is opposed to Christ. We cannot walk with those in darkness and at the same time walk in the light ourselves. Endorsing and encouraging false teachers by our participation with them, by our words, or by our silence is wrong. We must be careful to avoid "guilt by association."

Romans 16

Regarding those who "cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine" of Christ, Paul tells us to "mark them" and "avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). We cannot avoid those with whom we continue to participate in lectureships, in congregational activities, or other joint activities. When we invite false teachers to come in to teach the congregation of which we are part, we are certainly not avoiding them. We are providing a place and opportunity for "spiritual wolves" to devour the flock with their false doctrines. When we agree to speak on programs (lectureships, etc.) with known false teachers without reproving or rebuking them, we are not avoiding them or marking them as God requires. We are sinning by disobeying God. God will hold us guilty by our association with these "spiritual wolves."

Brethren, we need to wake up! Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Mat. 12:30). We cannot

(Continued on Page 6)

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

NOVEMBER 8 - 12, 1998

“STUDIES IN 1, 2 PETER AND JUDE”

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

9:00 AM	James Gravelle	The Books of 1, 2 Peter and Jude—An Introduction
10:00 AM	Dub McClish	The Christian and Persecution (1 Pet. 1:6-7; 2:12; et al.)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	David Watson	Watchfulness Concerning the Devil; Closing Comments (1:5:8-14)
3:00 PM	Goebel Music	Ungodly Men and Their Destiny (2:2:12-22)
4:00 PM	Michael Hatcher	Difficult Passages: How could angels sin unless temptation and sin were able to invade Heaven (2:2:4; Jude 6)? Will the earth and its works be “burned up” or “discovered” (2:3:10)? How is the close parallel between some of Peter’s and some of Jude’s words explained (2:2:1-16; Jude 4-11)? Where and when did Enoch prophesy, and does Jude’s statement show that he borrowed from the apocryphal <i>Book of Enoch</i> (Jude 14-15)?
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Lester Kamp	Warnings About False Teachers (2:2:1-11)
8:00 PM	James Meadows	Answering False Doctrines: Does the Holy Spirit directly operate on the hearts of men to sanctify them (1:1:2)? Will God so guard the Christian that he cannot be lost (1:1:5)? Are some persons “appointed” (elected, predestined) to disobey God and be lost and others to be God’s people (1:2:8-9)? Does God call people to Him by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in which he has an experience of irresistible grace (1:2:9; 5:10)?

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

9:00 AM	Tim Nichols	Difficult Passages: Is the “kiss of love” a permanent obligation or a cultural option (1:5:14)? In what sense and when do saints become “partakers of the divine nature” (2:1:4)? Can a Christian reach a spiritual plateau at which he will no longer sin (2:1:10b)? How can the “word of prophecy” be “made more sure,” and to what do “the day dawn” and “the day-star” refer (2:1:19)?
10:00 AM	Raymond Hagood	Dealing with Persecution; Salvation and Baptism (1:3:13-22)
11:00 AM	Marvin Weir	Difficult Passages: When, how, and where did Christ preach to the “spirits in prison” and who are these “spirits” (1:3:19-20a)? How does suffering in the flesh cause one to “cease from sin” (1:4:1a)? How and by whom was the Gospel preached to the dead (1:4:6)? What is the “end of all things” that was “at hand” when Peter wrote (1:4:7)?
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Jesse Whitlock	Answering False Doctrines: Could God still be giving additional revelation now, since He gave some (1, 2, 3 John, Rev.) after Peter and Jude said that “all” had been given (2:1:3; Jude 3)? Can the ordinary person read and understand the Bible, or must there be a professional “clergyman” to interpret it for him (2:1:20)? Does the “day of the Lord” refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (2:3:10)? Will God guard us from stumbling so that we cannot be lost at last (Jude 24)?
3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	Daniel Denham	Will the Wicked Really Be Punished with Eternal Fire (Jude 7)?
3:45 PM	Daniel Denham	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Bob Berard	Redemption from Sin Through Christ’s Blood (1:1:13-25)
8:00 PM	David Brown	The Lord’s Coming and Its Accomplishments (2:3:10-18)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

9:00 AM	Noah Hackworth	Exhortation to Live Above the Lusts of the Flesh (1:4:1-11)
---------	----------------	-------------------------------------------------------------

10:00 AM	Gary Colley	Wife and Husband Duties; General Tenderness Urged (1:3:1-12)
11:00 AM	Tommy Hicks	Answering False Doctrines: Are women forbidden to braid their hair or wear jewelry (1:3:3)? Do a wife’s subjection to her husband and a reference to a woman as a “weaker vessel” imply the inferiority of women (1:3:7)? Do those who have died in disobedience have a second chance to obey Christ in Hades (1:3:19-20; 4:6)? Do elders have no actual authority in their local congregations, leading only by their good examples (1:5:3)?
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Garland Elkins	Answers to Skepticism Concerning the Second Coming (2:3:1-9)
3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	Curtis A. Cates	Does Deity Strengthen the Christian in Some “Supra-Literary,” Immediate Way (1:5:10)?
3:45 PM	Curtis A. Cates	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Lindell Mitchell	Contend Earnestly for the Faith (Jude 1-11)
8:00 PM	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.	Exhortation to Elders and Others (1:5:1-7)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

9:00 AM	B. J. Clarke	Difficult Passages: What is the “sprinkling of the blood of Christ”? Is this a reference to baptism (1:1:2)? How are Christians guarded “by the power of God” (1:1:5)? In what sense was Christ “foreknown...before the foundation of the world” (1:1:19-20)? In what sense will the ungodly glorify God “in the day of visitation” due to our good works (1:2:12)?
10:00 AM	Eddie Parrish	Salutation and the “Christian Graces” (2:1:1-11)
11:00 AM	Richard Massey	How to Face Fiery Trials (1:4:12-19)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Tim Ayers	Subjection to Rulers and Masters Enjoined (1:2:13-25)
3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	Joseph Meador	The Nature of Biblical Inspiration (1:1:23-25; 2:1:20-21)
3:45 PM	Joseph Meador	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Bobby Liddell	The Need for Reminders and the Source of Scripture (2:1:12-21)
8:00 PM	Gary Summers	The Requirement of Holiness in an Unholy World

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:00 AM	Robert Dodson	Christ, the Chief Cornerstone and our Foundation (1:2:1-12)
10:00 AM	Ted J. Clarke	Descriptions of the Ungodly and Exhortations to Faithfulness (Jude 12-25)
11:00 AM	Gene Burgett	God’s Great Mercy and Our Living Hope (1:1:1-12)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Don W. Walker	Difficult Passages: Whose sins are covered by love, and who does the covering (1:4:8; cf., Jam. 5:20)? What is the “judgment” that is to “begin at the house of God” and why does it begin there (1:4:17a)? In what sense will the righteous be “scarcely saved” and how is this harmonized with the “richly supplied” entrance into Heaven for faithful saints (1:4:18; 2:1:11)? To what does the promised perfecting, establishing, and strengthening refer, and how and when would Christ accomplish this (1:5:10)?
3:00 PM	DISCUSSION FORUM	
	Terry M. Hightower	Does God Really Hear and Answer Prayer (1:3:12; 4:7)?
3:45 PM	Terry M. Hightower	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Don Tarbet	The Hoax of Premillennial Theology
8:00 PM	Darrell Conley	The Books of 1, 2 Peter and Jude—A Summary

BOOK AND TAPES
OF LECTURES
AVAILABLE

PRESENTED BY
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Order books from Valid Publications, Inc., 908 Imperial Drive, Denton, TX 76201-8610
Phone/FAX: 940/387-1429; E-Mail: valpub@airmail.net

312 PEARL ST.
DENTON, TX 87201
817/387-1429

(Continued from Page 4)

“gather” for the Lord while working together with those who “scatter.” Our association with the workers of darkness will be perceived by them and others to be endorsement of those things that they do and teach. Brethren, if we desire God’s approval, we cannot do so.

Paul did not ignore false teaching; he states emphatically, “mark them,” and “turn away from them” (ASV). “This means refuse fellowship or it means nothing. The present day attitude of some, fellowship them regardless of what they teach, is a repudiation of this plain admonition. The doctrine of Christ unites. False doctrine divides.” (Franklin Camp, “Fellowship,” *The Church Faces Liberalism*, {Freed-Hardeman Lectures}, ed. Thomas Warren {Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1970}, p. 239.)

Titus 1

Paul tells Titus that elders by “holding fast the faithful word” must stop the mouths of those who are “teaching things which they ought not” (Tit. 1:9-11). This does not sound like inviting them in to preach to the flock that they oversee! Rather than treating them like faithful proclaimers of God’s Word and associating with them as if they are harmless, their mouths are to be stopped and not given the opportunity to harm the people of God. Rather than ignored, they are to be stopped. Elders have a responsibility to protect the “sheep” under their charge from the deceitful ways of false teachers. Elders have the responsibility to keep the sheep separate from the wolves who will devour them.

One of the reasons that the Lord’s church is being destroyed in so many places today is that the elders are not following God’s Word in their treatment of false teachers. Too many elders are too impressed by “good words and fair speeches” (Rom. 16:18) and degrees and titles rather than “sound speech, that cannot be condemned” (Tit. 2:8). Too many elders are too concerned about numbers and popularity rather than faithfulness to God’s Word. Elders need to be watchful and alert to the dangers of false teachers. Elders need to wake up to their God-given responsibility to stop the mouths of wolves and stop them from associating with God’s people which will destroy them.

WHAT DOES WITHDRAWING FELLOWSHIP MEAN?

Apparently some of our liberal brethren do not believe in withdrawing fellowship from anyone. They believe in having fellowship with everyone whether a denominational false teacher or one who is supposed to be a member of the Lord’s church but has left “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Max Lucado, for example, has no problem collaborating with well-known

denominational false teachers in books or with making public appearances with them or in their church assemblies. Huge crowds of brethren assemble from around the country at the annual Tulsa Soul-Damning Workshop, Nashville Jubilee, ACU Lectureship and other similar forums in spite of the fact that the speakers for these programs are false teachers whose errors have been documented and exposed.

Promise Keepers attracts attention and involvement from many brethren in spite of their erroneous view of salvation by faith alone and their use of “altar calls,” their use of mechanical instruments in worship, and their belief in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. The Promise Keepers is an un-biblical organization, but many brethren continue to see no harm in it. Some “big names” among us promote it, participate in it, and have spoken to its gatherings. However, such participation does not correct the errors; such participation is sinful because it is endorsement of error and “guilt by association.” A local preacher for a congregation of the church here in Aurora encouraged his congregation to attend a Promise Keepers gathering because Max Lucado would be there to speak. Max’s presence is an important reason for faithful brethren to stay away from such gatherings. Max is an honored writer among Baptists; he teaches via his radio program that baptism is not essential to salvation and that one may simply pray “the sinner’s prayer” to be saved; he teaches the denominational concept of the church by teaching that all sincere religious folks are on same “Fellow-ship,” just in separate compartments; he openly endorses denominational error by writing books and participating in unscriptural events such as Easter and Christmas; etc. Max Lucado is a false teacher! Endorsing him and encouraging the participation of other Christians in events simply because of his involvement speaks volumes. According to the adage, “Birds of a feather flock together.”

I have noticed that among those who see no lines of fellowship there seems to be no one that is not fellowshiped even if their doctrines and practices are extreme. Rubel’s bulletin recently carried this announcement: “Check out these Bible Class opportunities...Don Finto to Speak on Messianic Judaism.” A self-proclaimed apostle (and good friend of Max Lucado) who has been marked and withdrawn from by all faithful brethren is invited to teach a “Bible Class” at Woodmont Hills! Churches of Christ in Nashville have long since disassociated themselves from the Belmont church where Don Finto reigns as an “apostle,” but now the Jubilee folks commend him and provide him an opportunity to teach among them. This shows that they have no concept of the withdrawing of fellowship which is taught in the New Testament.

Brethren, we need to be careful about using articles in our bulletins written by false teachers. We need to be careful about announcing activities in other congregations where false teaching is accepted and false teachers are endorsed. We need to recognize we can become guilty of sin without becoming personally involved in the teaching of error. We can be guilty by our association with those who have departed from God's Way.

1 Corinthians 5

Paul tells the Corinthian brethren, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened" (1 Cor. 5:6-7). Paul clearly states that if the sin(ner) remains among them, others will become guilty by that association. The sinner is to be delivered to Satan so his soul might be saved and that the church might remain pure. Allowing the sinner to remain among the brethren enabled others to become polluted by that sin. Those who persist in sin must not continue in association with faithful Christians. Guilt comes sometimes from association. Fellowship must exist only among those who are in fellowship with God. Fellowship is limited to those who "walk in the light" by following God's Word. When a person persists in doing or teaching those things contrary to God's Word, there must of necessity be a break in the fellowship between that person and the faithful.

2 Thessalonians 3

The command of God is that the faithful withdraw "from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 The. 3:6). This is not an optional matter; this is according to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ. Walking disorderly means to live without regard to the teachings of the New Testament, or to teach contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Withdrawing requires disassociating oneself from those who are no longer faithful to God. To refuse to withdraw from those is to become unfaithful ourselves. Continued fellowship with those from whom God said to withdraw is to make ourselves unfaithful and is to withdraw ourselves from the fellowship of God. We become guilty of sin by such continued association with those out of fellowship

with God.

Titus 3

"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Tit. 3:10-11). Rejecting the heretic requires a discontinuation of our association with him. Why is God so concerned about our association with such a person? It is because of the effects of such association. The innocent becomes guilty through continued association. The false teacher must be rejected by the faithful. The faithful are in danger because of association with such characters. The false teacher must be noted (marked) and rejected.

2 Timothy 3

When Paul warns against the "perilous times" of the "last days" (which began on the day of Pentecost following the Lord's ascension and will continue to the end of the world), he concludes with these words: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5). His warning involves not only turning away from the sins that are mentioned in the preceding verses, but also turning away from those who practice such sins. Paul warned us not to participate in these sins and not to continue to associate closely with those who practice them. Association with those who practice evil must stop if one desires to be faithful to God. We can become guilty of sin if we continue in that association.

CONCLUSION

After studying the Scriptures, it should be obvious that "guilt by association" is something that God recognizes as true and repeatedly warns us against it. Those who refuse to recognize this truth and who continue to associate and fellowship those who have departed from the Truth will surely reap the consequences. God will hold them accountable for their souls and the souls of those that they have influenced away from God's Word.

13605 E. Alameda Ave; Aurora, CO; 80012-1302

Editor's Note: We appreciate this fine manuscript written by brother Kamp for the 1998 Bellview Lectureship book.

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVII

November 1998

Number 11

Web Site: <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/dmowery>

IS EVERYTHING THE CHRISTIAN DOES WORSHIP?

Eddie Whitten

Editorial Comment: Recently a prominent brother embraced the view that except for sin everything a Christian does is worship. A congregation divided over this doctrine with this prominent brother affirming this position. Some are now trying to sweep this heretical doctrine under the rug by ignoring what has taken place and putting a moratorium on it. Instead, the Scriptures should be followed. The individual must publicly repent. Prayerfully, this brother will realize the false doctrine he has preached. We add this article to the one we printed in the September issue (along with others) dealing with this damnable doctrine. Brother Whitten prepared this fine article for the 1990 Bellview Lectureship book.

INTRODUCTION

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Mat. 2:11). “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Mat. 4:8-9). “While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live” (Mat. 9:18). “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (John 4:20). “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9).

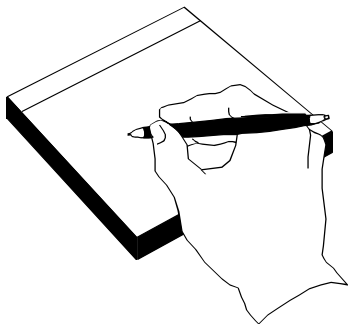
These are only five of the eighty references in the New Testament to the term *worship*, or some form of the word.

In each reference there is the allusion to an act that is performed, or to be performed, by someone toward another. Not always is the reference directed toward the Lord, such as the case of the Ephesians bowing before the goddess, Diana. Therefore, the use of the word involves: (1) one to be worshipped, (2) one to perform the worship, (3) an act of worship, and (4) a special attitude, or spirit, involved in the worship, as in John 4:23-24: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.”

A sharp distinction is noticed between the normal, mundane course of life and in the events of worship in the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 1, the account is given of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Samuel. It is said of Elkanah, soon to be Samuel’s father, that he “went up out of his city yearly to worship and sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts of Shiloh.” The point here is that the purpose of his going to Shiloh was to *worship*. Also, that he had to make a trip to accomplish that worship. He was not worshipping in everything that he did in his everyday life. For him to worship, he had to do something special: he had to make a trip; he had to plan for this trip each year, and when he arrived in Shiloh he had to perform a sacrifice.

When the reign of Solomon came to an end, the kingdom of Israel divided. Rehoboam became the king of the southern kingdom of Judah, and Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the king of the northern kingdom, Israel. Jeroboam was a renegade, and reasoned: “If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusa-

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Hurricanes

Recently, as most know, a hurricane (Georges) came through our area (thankfully none of our members were harmed). The weather bureau started tracking this storm while it was still hundreds of miles from the States. They began giving warnings as to the seriousness and direction (as to the possible tracking) of the hurricane. As the hurricane neared, the warnings became more frequent and with more information. These warnings are very necessary because of the potential danger involved with hurricanes.

Spiritually there are many dangers we face. Thus, the Bible commands the giving of warnings. Jesus taught that there would be false teachers which we must beware. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. 7:15). To beware is to turn one's mind and attention to something—in this case false teachers. Paul revealed that Christ in you is the hope of glory and then says, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). In speaking to the Ephesian elders, Paul says that he had warned them for three years. He, thus, encourages them to watch (to give strict attention to, to be cautious): "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). Preachers have the obligation to do exactly what Paul did—warn. Paul tells the young preacher Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Peter gives us the obvious reason, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil

spoken of" (2 Pet. 2:1-2). Part of the work of the gospel preacher is doing the same thing as the weather bureau—warning brethren about the evils and false doctrines that are so prevalent in the world and, sadly, in the church. Through these warnings precious souls may be saved, if they heed the warnings.

Despite the fact that the weather bureau is to warn, sometimes people go overboard in doing their job. When the hurricane came into this area, every television station in the area began 24 hours a day reporting on the hurricane. Often they repeated the same information over and over. It soon became tiresome.

Some brethren are like the television stations when it comes to false teaching. Should warning be given—**Absolutely!** Should we go overboard in giving warnings—**No!** In giving the warnings necessary, as the danger becomes more immediate, the warnings should also. Yet, we must never go overboard in only giving warnings. We are to do as Paul did in Ephesus—Preach the whole council of God. "For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all** the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). However, there are many that center upon one doctrine. They become incapable of discussing anything else. When someone is with them, the conversation invariably turns to their pet doctrine. They become like the television stations who turned to 24 hours a day hurricane reporting. These men are hobby-riders and radicals (even though what they stand for and against is according to the truth). They are so narrow-minded (not like the narrow-mindedness of Matthew 7:13-14) that they ignore other doctrinal matters of someone as long as the person agrees with them on their pet issue.

Sadly, some have become hobby-riding radicals today. Dan Billingsly is an excellent example of this type of person. Brother Billingsly invented a doctrine of the covenants and began preaching this false doctrine and that doctrine only. Anything he writes or preaches concerns this perverted doctrine. Another doctrine that many are becoming hobby-riding radicals today concerns the doctrine dealing with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There are primarily two views today; the personal indwelling (the Spirit Himself is in our spirit), and the representative indwelling (the Spirit dwells through the Word). Many have already arrived at the point of this being the only subject they discuss (on both sides of this issue). Some believe that if everyone would agree with their view, all the problems in the church would simply disappear. One believes that they have been sent by God at just this time to lead the church into "truth."

Brethren, these type of men are dangerous. Eventually they must be marked and avoided for the safety of the Lord's church. We must warn brethren of dangers within

the church, however, we cannot allow ourselves to become hobby-riders on any subject. Sadly, the hobby-rider never sees himself as such and usually his close friends do not realize the error of his way. May God help us to see ourselves as God sees us. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

lem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah” (1 Kin. 12:27).

Jeroboam built two altars, one in Dan in the north, and at Bethel in the south, and placed golden calves there for the people to *worship* so they would not go back to Jerusalem as they should. He stated, “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” (v. 28). Verse 30 says, “And this thing became a sin: for the people went to *worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.”

Thus, we see that in both the New Testament and the Old Testament, the use of *worship* is applied to a specific, predetermined act of homage or sacrifice on the part of one to another. The object of worship to the Christian is Jehovah God, the Creator of the universe and the Father of all mankind.

THE SOURCE OF CONFUSION REGARDING WORSHIP

The apostle Paul, writing to the church in Rome, stated, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1).

The Greek word which is translated by the English “service” in this passage is *latreia*, which means either to perform an act of worship or to render a service. (Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1885), p. 372.) The mistake is being made which limits the meaning to only that of *worship* rather than the broader meaning of the word. With this limited view, the passage would read, in essence, “I beg you therefore, brethren [on the premise that God has made it possible for both Jew and Gentile to be saved because of man’s obedience and God’s mercy, ch. 11], to lay your bodies upon the altar of constant and continual sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual worship” (NIV). This rendering, of course, would indicate that everything one does becomes a spiritual sacrifice which is worship. However, there are many Scriptures which use both words in the same context, such as:

- Deu. 4:19 — worship them, and serve them
- 8:19 — serve them, and worship them
- 11:16 — serve other gods, and worship them

- 17:3 — served other gods, and worshiped them
- 29:26 — served other gods, and worshiped them
- 30:17 — worship other gods, and serve them
- 1 Kin. 9:6 — serve other gods, and worship them
- 9:9 — laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them
- 16:31 — served Baal, and worshipped him
- 22:53 — served Baal, and worshipped him
- 2 Kin. 21:3 — worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them
- 21:21 — served the idols that his father served and worshipped them
- 2 Chr. 7:19 — serve other gods, and worship them
- 7:22 — laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them
- 33:3 — worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them
- Jer. 8:2 — All the host of heaven which they have loved, and which they have served, and after which they have walked, and which they have sought, and which they have worshipped
- 13:10 — to serve them, and to worship them
- 16:11 — walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshiped them
- 22:9 — worshipped other gods and served them
- 25:6 — go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them

Jesus’ answer to Satan’s temptation in the wilderness also expressed the same distinction: He said, “Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Luke 4:8; cf., Mat. 4:10).

These are sufficient to illustrate the distinctiveness of the terms “worship” and “service” as they are used by inspiration.

There are also several different Hebrew words used in the Old Testament which are translated exclusively “worship.” These indicate actions or attitudes such as “to bow down,” or “prostrate oneself,” or “worship”; to “prostrate oneself in worship,” “to kiss toward”; “fearing God,” but in the course of worshipping in specific acts; “an act of reverence.” There are also several words, both Hebrew and Greek, which are rendered “service.” Among those words are the Hebrew, *sharat*, and the Greek word, *leitourgeo*. *Sharat* means “to minister,” or “to serve.” It occurs nearly 100 times in the Old Testament. It refers to personal service to someone of high rank such as Joseph to Potiphar (Gen. 39:4). It most often refers to religious service such as the ritualistic duties of the priests and Levites in the tabernacle or temple. Moses told the Levites that they were to “stand before the congregation to minister unto them” (Num. 16:9).

Leitourgeo is a compound Greek word of *laos* (people) and *ergon* (work) meaning “work for the people”

or “public service.” This is the word by which the duties of the priests at the altar were described. This was not an expression of worship, but the performing of priestly duties related to the worship of the people toward God. In the New Testament, it is never rendered as “worship.” Paul wrote in Romans 15:16 that he had become a “ministering servant” for Christ in preaching to the Gentiles, in which his converts were a sacrifice offered up to God. This is the *leitourgia*—the public religious service that every Christian (who is also a priest) can offer today. This is service, not worship!

Latreuo is the word which is being misunderstood in connection with Romans 12:1. It is derived from the word *latron*, meaning reward or wages. Its original meaning was to serve for wages, but in time it came to simply mean “to work” or “serve,” in general. It is found 90 times in the Septuagint, and the noun nine times, always in the sense of religious service. Whereas *leitourgeo* is used only of priestly functions, *latreuo* refers to the people generally.

In the New Testament, *latreuo* appears 21 times and *latreia* (noun form) five times, always in the religious sense. There are differences in Greek lexicons as to the exclusive application of “service” to *latreuo*, but the conclusion follows: “The fact remains that ‘*latreuo*’ and ‘*latreia*’ refer to service in general, and not to worship in particular.” Paul tells his readers to “present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1). This does not speak of a life of constant, continual worship, as some are inclined to believe. Paul is urging sanctification upon his hearers. Just as Old Testament sacrificial offerings are always called *service* rather than *worship*, so Paul uses the same term in Romans 12:1—a service that is *reasonable* or pertaining to the mind. Having once been truly converted, we can continue to “offer service [*latreia*] well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe” (Heb. 12:28). (Credit is given to Gary Workman for much of this material and research in his excellent article, “Thou Shalt Worship The Lord Thy God,” in the 1986 Ft. Worth Lecture book, pp. 278-284.)

THE TREND TOWARD SUBJECTIVISM

Modern trends in worship are toward the subjective. The decade of the '80s produced many departures from the objective view toward the Bible and refined some of the departures from previous years. The Bible is progressively being ignored as the criteria for decisions regarding worship and daily conduct. A Pentecostal aura hangs over the thought process; i.e., an emotional barometer determines whether a program, or action, is approved. The higher the emotional appeal, the more excitement is generated in implementing the practice. Emotionalism then becomes the motivation for religious activity. This basis for belief produced the “feel good about yourself” emphasis which still prevails. The believer now attends “worship” to be made to “feel good about himself” regardless of what

his situation may be spiritually. The natural result of such a priority is that the believer is led to attend worship to “get something out of the service” rather than giving his worship unto God. A great hue and cry issued forth from this subjective approach to worship. Church leaders began to listen to the pleas of the people to provide for them their “felt needs.” “Things” took the place of teaching. The Bible soon became secondary in importance in matters of faithfulness and devotion. The important aspect of the operation of the church was “church growth.” Church growth was numerical in nature under this emphasis. How many people could be “won to the Lord” was the goal. Numbers took top priority rather than spiritual growth or faith. Whatever it took to attract numbers to the church became the approved method of evangelism. The “traditional,” “old wine skin,” “legalistic,” church method of “preaching the word” became too austere and restrictive. There was no “charisma” to appeal to the senses, therefore little or no church growth was being noticed.

The old story of the frog being placed in a pot of cold water and the water being heated slowly until the frog boiled to death tragically applies in many, many cases. Good, faithful brethren have been lured into a slow, deliberate process of departure from the truth so subtly that they scarcely recognize it. Basic principles of God’s righteousness have been removed from their thinking. As Paul stated it in Romans 10:1-3 “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

One of the most subtle attacks being leveled at the church today is the precept of subjective theology. The basis of this philosophy is that there is no standard of authority to which man can go to determine what is right or wrong religiously. *Anything that seems right in the thinking of each individual becomes right for that individual!* Secular humanism is characterized in exactly the same language. Every man becomes his own authority thereby eliminating the authority of God, the Bible, as one’s guide. This philosophy is embraced in what is called “The New Hermeneutic,” an effort among us today to become more sophisticated and acceptable in the eyes of the denominational world. To compete with denominationalism in church growth, it is necessary to abandon the “old paths” and cater to the whims and fancies of people. In this effort the Bible is being relegated to a lower level of importance with regard to worship and conduct in the church. Many authors are now referring to the church of our Lord as

another denomination; the Bible is no longer a rule book, or a pattern of salvation, it is a group of love letters designed to encourage us to be more like Jesus who is depicted as a “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” type of individual. They conveniently and eagerly overlook the warnings against sin and the horrible consequences of sin. Those who espouse this insidious philosophy are playing right into the hands of those who embrace secular Humanism. God no longer reigns supreme in their lives, but what is socially popular and acceptable becomes their “little ‘g’” gods.

Attitudes toward worship. The natural effect of the thinking expressed above, **and which is rapidly spreading within the brotherhood**, is that the worship of God is vastly altered. The significance of the worship assembly is greatly reduced. The idea toward worship is that it is a time *and a place* where members of the church can go to hear peaceful platitudes that warm the cockles of one’s heart, and thrill to the oratory or pulpit manner of an accomplished speaker, but fail to see the picture of a crucified Christ dying for sinful mankind. They hear no description of the ugliness of sin and worldliness; no admonition to avoid the temptations of worldly conduct, or the pain of punishment for wrong-doing. The prospect of the horrors of hell for those who refuse to obey the gospel is carefully avoided—it might drive someone away and that would affect “church growth.” To mention some practice among our brethren that does not conform to the authority of the Bible is strictly prohibited! Therefore, the attitude toward *preaching* is grossly altered and compromised.

The Lord’s Supper, one of the most solemn and precious of the acts of worship, is also diminished in importance. It is now being teased and toyed with as if it were some sort of item for our convenience. Being offered on days (or nights) other than on the Lord’s day and for whatever occasion is deemed appropriate. For instance, the Lord’s Supper has been offered at a wedding on Friday night, on Saturday morning at a conference where the participants passed by the elements to partake rather than having the elements passed among the assembly so those of a “weaker faith” would not be offended, and was suggested even on the occasion of a **picnic**! If this high-minded, arrogant disregard for the death of our Lord Jesus does not illustrate the degree to which the worship of God has been denigrated by these lax and liberal attitudes toward worship **in the church**, then nothing does. When the sanctity of the Word of God, and the purity of our worship of God is discounted to be nothing more than a part of one’s everyday life, such attitudes multiply.

Attendance. Part of the results of the “everything we do in life is worship” belief is the effect it has on our

attendance. The “worship on the creek bank” idea fits in very well with this attitude. The assembly of the saints (Heb. 10:25), does not have the significance that it has otherwise. Therefore, the importance of one attending every worship period of the local church is reduced to a matter of convenience. Long time excuses for missing the worship, such as “company is coming,” or “we are going to Aunt Martha’s house and Sunday morning is the only time we can travel,” or “it’s the only day we have to do what we need to do,” etc., becomes justification for the summation that “all we do in life is worship, anyway.”

When a holy obligation is compared with secular desire, the indication is present that the importance of the worship of God is already suffering. Man can rationalize just about anything he wants to if he works at it hard enough and long enough. If we can only justify the thought of everything we do in life is worship, then we will not be obligated by holy principles to give much significance to the public worship.

DOES IT MATTER WHAT WE BELIEVE?

It destroys the purpose of worship. The question is often asked, “What does it matter if I believe that all we do in life is worship?” There are two basic problems with the attitude thus expressed: (1) It displays a lack of understanding of what is entailed in true worship, and (2) it destroys the very purpose of worship. True worship of God involves the recognition of the worshipper that he is in the presence of the Divine. Even though the ignorant pagans of years past in the far reaches of the south Pacific islands, or in darkest Africa, feared the unknown to the extent that they erected idol gods to whom they bowed down in abject superstition, they still expressed the attitude of complete subjection and loyalty to their god(s). In the religious world, this is still the circumstance with the vast majority of the people. They worship idols out of fear or ignorance. Such was the case with the Athenians who were charged by Paul in Acts 17 of worshipping an “unknown god.” Today’s attitude challenges the necessity of worship at all in an “organized, constructive, regimented” manner. Unless worship is done according to the manner which men *want* to worship, the insistence of those who want to worship *God’s* way is rejected. This only proves that there is great misunderstanding in the minds of many regarding the subservient relationship man should have toward God. Listen to the words of Jesus as He engaged in conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well in Sychar: “The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor

yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:19-24).

The purpose of worship is to express unto God our adoration, loyalty, and devotion for providing man with an escape from the power of Satan; and to acknowledge His majestic, unspeakable power in regard to our destiny. We are both to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30); and fear Him as the one who will effect our eternal reward (2 The. 1:7-9; Heb. 10:31). In order for these matters to be present in mind, we must worship in spirit and truth. This cannot be done in the midst of secular activities and pursuits.

It reduces the impact of true worship. One of the saddest tragedies of man is the loss of the true meaning and benefit of biblical worship. The “me generation” has spawned the attitude of **getting** the things that will please the individual more than the biblical principle of **giving**. *It is difficult for those who are interested in receiving to grasp the joy that can be realized through giving.* The nature of worship demands the prostration of one’s soul before God in humble, contrite submission. In this submission there is fulfilled the yearning of the soul to be fed by the deep, spiritual wellspring of God’s grace. There is the sublime sensation of **receiving** that which builds us up spiritually, realized through the unreserved **giving** of ourselves in worship. The receiving of God’s grace derived from true worship is not realized from the selfish motive of “going to church to get something out of the service” as the manner of many is today.

It is not surprising to hear so much dissatisfaction with the procedures taking place in so many congregations of the Lord’s church. Even in the stronger, sound churches who are vitally interested in maintaining the purity of God’s order of worship and service, there are heard dissenting comments of the quality of the worship services: “the singing is terrible,” “the preaching was not uplifting,” “the Lord’s Supper took too much time,” “all he preaches on is giving,” “he preaches too hard,” “he uses too much scripture,” “he doesn’t use enough scripture,” and on and on. If the preacher or the elders demand too much from the congregation they are castigated. If they don’t provide enough activities to please the social mores of the people they are criticized. It is no wonder that people cannot be satisfied: the emphasis is not on the proper object of worship—God! If we are trying to please God instead of the people, our worship would be more meaningful to us

and spiritually edifying. At the same time, we would be gaining strength by the exercising of our minds unto spiritual matters that pertain to the salvation of our soul rather than on the color of another lady’s dress, or the number of people who are away on a camping trip, etc.

It places unwarranted significance upon secular matters. In many denominations, there is great participation in affairs of the community, state, and nation. Many secular, political issues have become the focal point of their annual conventions, councils, conclaves, etc. Political positions, candidates, and campaigns have become a large part of the activities of many denominational bodies. Moral issues are discussed and voted upon as to what this, or that, denomination is going to believe in that regard. Usually, the issue is determined by majority vote of the group present which is supposedly representative of the people from whence they came. What the Bible has to say about the matter is of little consequence just so long as the majority is satisfied. The result has been, and will continue to be, organizations that are governed by the will of the people rather than by the will of God. Because of different views on many items, both religious and secular, different religious bodies have been established. Denominationalism is the ultimate result.

What caused the drift from Bible authority as the standard of worship and conduct to the majority will of the people? It is this writer’s conviction that the very same desire for social and political involvement and influence that we find in the church of the Lord today had a very great contribution toward that end.

But, how does this situation equate with the question of this moment? The answer is rather elemental: When the emphasis of our spiritual life (our worship) is diluted by the influx of secular interests and influence, the beauty and holiness of our worship is severely weakened. Secular matters become more significant in religious considerations, and the vicious circle begins. The idea of “all that the Christian does is worship” emanated through religious bodies which are highly guided and governed by secular influences, such as Pentecostal and Calvinistic bodies. In our quest to be more acceptable in social and religious circles, we are incorporating into our thinking this very same denominational idea.

It dishonors God. We appeal again to John 4:23-24, noted above. This is a great passage that reflects the attitude the worshipper must have toward God, the one to be worshipped. The very context of the passage indicates that worship is a very holy and reverent action. It is a time to pay deep, sincere, awesome respect, love, and fear to the Creator of the world and all that therein is (2 Pet. 3:10). It is a time when man can prostrate himself before God, who

holds the destiny of every individual in His hand, and give thanks for His unbounded mercy; His unlimited power; His undying love; His inestimable grace. It is a time when those who realize the significance of God's relationship with man can express the thoughts of their hearts through prayer; who can petition God for His Divine providence in each life, and who can receive the spiritual edification that belongs to the obedient servant. It is a time when the fellowship of kindred minds can be renewed and strengthened through the common bond of the blood of the Son of God. It is a time when the secular cares and frustrations can be properly evaluated and relegated to their proper secondary priority. It is a time when the spiritual quality of life can be enhanced to the extent that the temptations and heartaches of secular existence can be overcome through the assurance of eternal life.

Worship is so holy and sacred that to prostitute it with such things as entertainment, personal and sensual family practices, secular employment, and all the other non-religious activities in which man can rightfully involve himself, is nothing short of blasphemy!

Unless and until we, as God's people, can come to the understanding of the purpose and holiness of worship, and claim it as a precious privilege available only to the obedient servant of God, it is unlikely that we will be totally convinced that worship is a special activity to be enjoyed on special occasions, not as a minor part of everyday life!

CONCLUSION

As we live our lives here below, we need only to listen to the Word of God, the Bible, for our standard both in the secular world, how we live before men, and in the spiritual world, how we live before God. The matter of "Is everything a Christian does worship?" should not be a problem for the devout Christian. How we live before men should be governed by the principles relating to our spiritual service. Jesus stated in Matthew 5:14-16: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in

the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Jesus also said, in John 15:19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

The way a Christian lives before men, if it is in harmony with the Word of God, serves as a living sacrifice. He may suffer persecution because of his service. Second Timothy 3:12 tells us that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." He may be tempted above what he may think he can bear, but Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."

The end of the matter is this: Serving God in our everyday life; worshipping Him on the occasions when worship is to be offered; and being the kind of spiritual influence upon our fellow man to lead him to salvation is *our reasonable service!* May God help us to that end.

3616 Brown Trail, Bedford, TX 76021

Howell Bigham has just written another sermon outline book, this time on Ecclesiastes entitled *The Preacher*. It contains 20 sermon outlines on selected Scriptures from this rich inspired literary work of Solomon. You may order this book (or any of his other sermon outline books) by writing Howell at 6677 Co. Rd. 236, Town Creek, AL 35672 or by calling him at (256)685-2973. The cost is \$4.00 plus \$1.25 S/H.

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**