

Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Vol. XLII

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January

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Report on a Meeting

Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.

Liberals and assorted apostates in the churches of Christ have been on a relentless course for the last generation or so to rewrite the history of the Restoration Movement. In particular they wish to blame the churches of Christ for the rupture in fellowship with the Disciples of Christ/Christian Church. Conservative historians, such as the late Earl West, have correctly analyzed the historical data and maintain that the division took place because of the introduction of the American Missionary Society (AMS), mechanical instruments of music in worship, and other innovations. The root cause of this division was the rejection of the inspiration and authority of the Bible by the Disciples of Christ/Christian Church. Liberal historians, such as Douglas Foster, maintain the opposite and take their cue from the digressives in those denominations. They teach that the division in the late 19th Century took place because of the issue of slavery and the Civil War with the churches of Christ being primarily to blame.

This is why I and others in Maury County, Tennessee, were concerned at the following announcement

made by the President James K. Polk Memorial Association:

The next Polk's America program will be held on Tuesday, November 27th at 7 p.m. in the parish hall of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Columbia. Russ Adcox, Senior Minister of Maury Hills Church of Christ (i.e., Maury Hills Church), will present the program "A Unity Movement Divided: Slavery and the American Restoration Movement."

The American Restoration Movement **birthed** [emphasis added] the Churches of Christ, Christian Church, and Disciples of Christ. It was essentially a unity movement designed to bring Christians together. However, just as the movement was gaining steam it ran headlong into the most divisive issue in our country's history...slavery. Russ Adcox will talk about some of the principal leaders of the movement and how they sought to respond to the growing division.

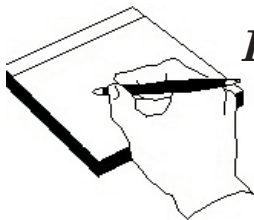
Adcox comes from a family long associated with the church in Maury County (five generations). In 2001 liberals from several congregations in the area formed the Maury Hills Church and built a building in southern Columbia, TN. This group is very ecumenical and digressive. They use women in their worship

services and have used mechanical musical instruments occasionally in their vain attempts at worship. They also have three female "ministers" on their staff. They have three worship services on Sunday morning with simultaneous children's worship. Their website states that they sing "a capella" because it is pretty and not because the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is sinful. Adcox is very active in the community. He even serves on the board of Zion Christian Academy, a Lutheran school.

I attended the lecture on November 27, 2012. There were about 25-30 in attendance. To my knowledge there were no brethren (except apostates) in attendance beside myself. The speaker, Russ Adcox, gave a fairly decent slide presentation about the early Restoration Movement. He did try to tie it into the denominational world. He pointed out repeatedly that slavery divided the movement.

There were many snide, condescending remarks by Adcox about the church of Christ. Alexander Campbell was labeled a "rationalist" (as opposed to irrational liberals?).

Continued on Page 5



Notes From The Editor

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Marriage Question

I received a question from a brother dealing with various aspects of the marriage, divorce, and re-marriage question. In my response, given here, I am not dealing with the specifics of the situation he has asked (so as to avoid: he said, she said, situations), but dealing with the principles that are applied to any situation realizing one's eternal destiny hangs in the balance.

God is the one who joins in marriage (Mat. 19:6). There are three classes or groups God will join: (1) those never married, (2) those who have lost their spouse by means of death, and (3) those who put away their spouse because the spouse committed fornication. The first two are pretty obvious but the third one is where the controversy resides. Yet, let us notice the Biblical authority for them.

Paul shows those who have never been married may marry in discussing the present distress the Corinthians were going to go through. He writes, "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.... But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall

have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you" (1 Cor. 7:8-9, 28).

Paul shows that those who have lost their spouse by means of death have the right to get married when he writes to the Romans: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:2-3).

In answer to the third category a great deal of the discussion revolves around Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, as these give authority for those who put away their spouse because the spouse committed fornication has a right to get married. Yet, I believe we miss a great deal of the solution to much of the controversy by not paying more attention to Matthew 19:6 and the statement, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

God is the one who joins a man and woman in marriage. The joining of a man and woman is not done by the state, by any religious institution (in spite of the Roman Catholic Church claiming it is a sacrament of the Church), or anything or anyone else other than God. Since God is the one who does the joining, only God can do the unjoining.

God joins them upon certain conditions, and God will only unjoin them upon certain conditions. Man (in whatever form that may take, i.e., government, religion, etc.) might say that two men are married, yet God will never join

them together. God is not bound to what man might say or do. The same can be said regarding divorce. Man might say, you are divorced, but that does not mean God has unjoined them. This is the force of the last statement in Matthew 19:6: "let not man put asunder." Putting

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

it a couple of other ways: Man is not to attempt to put asunder what God has joined, or man can try to put asunder what God has joined but he cannot accomplish it.

In that joining together that God does, man has the obligation to abide by the requirements that the government establishes (as long as those laws do not contradict God's laws; Acts 5:29). Thus, the government has the right to say that one must obtain a license, get a blood test, have someone who is registered by the government perform the marriage ceremony, or any number of rules it desires, and as long as those rules do not violate God's laws, we are obligated to abide by them in obtaining a God-joined marriage. Recognizing the government's proper role in the joining in marriage does not mean that they are the arbiters of who is joined together. The example given previously regarding homosexual marriage (which is now being recognized in several states and foreign countries) shows that even though the state might proclaim two people married does not mean that God has joined them together.

The same principle applies to the unjoining of a couple. Just as God does the joining, only God can do the unjoining. Man (government) might say that a couple is divorced, but unless God unjoins them, they are still married; just like if the government says a couple are married, unless God joins them, they are not married (man's laws do not over-rule God's laws, God's laws are supreme). Upon what basis does God unjoin them? Some say that once God joins them together, they can never be unjoined. However, some would say that there is no such thing as God unjoining a

joined together by God couple. Some would attempt to force Jesus' statements regarding the putting away of a fornicating spouse as explaining the Law of Moses. However, the statement by Jesus, "But I say unto you" (Mat. 5:32) or "And I say unto you" (19:9) is making a contrast between what the Jews taught to His teaching. Thus, the exception of Matthew 5:32, 19:9 is applicable today. Others might say that 1 Corinthians 7 does not give the exception so during the New Testament times that exception does not apply. A rule of correct Bible study is that one must take everything the Bible says regarding a specific topic and draw a conclusion that is harmonious to the whole. These brethren have ignored what Jesus taught so they can hold to their no-divorce for any reason doctrine. These brethren err in so doing because Jesus gave an exception and to refuse to allow that exception is wrong.

Some have asked about the specific question regarding a legal divorce when fornication has not taken place. First, we need to realize that what is normally called the "waiting game" has both parties doing wrong. There is no innocent party when a couple divorce and try to wait the other one out till one spouse commits fornication so the supposed innocent one can now apply the Lord's exception with the right of remarriage. Both parties are wrong in the "waiting game" situation and neither has the right to remarry.

However, there is another situation that some erroneously call the "waiting game" when it is not. A couple enter into a God-joined marriage. One of them decides that they simply do not want to

be married any longer (for whatever reason). The other, knowing neither one has a God-given right to divorce, opposes the divorce and does what is within their power to prevent it knowing that neither party has committed fornication. Yet, the one goes ahead and obtains a legal divorce. Even though a legal divorce has taken place, God is not bound by man's laws and man (even though he might try) cannot put asunder what God has joined. Thus, This couple is still joined by God. What if the one who obtained the civil divorce then obtains a civil marriage (it is not a God-joined marriage)? Does the one who has continued to do everything God has stated, have the God-given right to put away the fornicator? Of course, that one does. How could anyone tell someone that you cannot exercise the exception God gave in Matthew 5:32, 19:9 to a God-joined marriage of Matthew 19:6? The brethren that are forbidding the innocent party to exercise that exception have no right to do so. As brother Guy N. Woods stated:

He has ignored the exception which the Lord put into the verse. He strikes out the words, "except for fornication," in order to deny what the Lord, by implication, affirmed. It should read, in his view, "Who-soever shall put away his wife *even in the case of fornication and marries another, commits adultery and he who marries her thus put away commits adultery*" (45).

Let us make sure that we teach what God's Word teaches, forbid what God forbids, and allow what God allows.

Work Cited

Woods, Guy N. *Questions and Answers: Volume II*. Nashville: Gospel Advocate. 1986.

MH

2013 Spring Church of Christ *CFTF* Lectures

Christ—The Great Controversialist

February 20 – 24, 2013

(Wednesday – Sunday)

Elders: Kenneth Cohn, Buddy Roth, and Jack Stephens

David P. Brown, Director

Wednesday, February 20

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM Christ—The Great Controversialist

8:00 PM Christ Confronted Satan

David P. Brown

Gary Summers

Thursday, February 21

9:00 AM Christ Confronted Religious Traditions

10:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Truth

11:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Repentance

Michael Hatcher

Ken Chumbley

Don Tarbet

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the End of Time

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Errors About Miracles

3:30 PM Open Forum

Gene Hill

Daniel Denham

Dinner Break

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Unity and Fellowship

8:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Himself

Charles Pogue

Lester Kamp

Friday, February 22

9:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Materialism and Money

10:00 AM Christ Confronted His Disciples' Errors

11:00 AM Christ Confronted Worry

Skip Francis

Geoff Litke

Wayne Blake

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the New Birth

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Pride

3:30 PM Open Forum

Daniel Denham

Charles Pogue

Dinner Break

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Worship

8:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Forgiveness

Danny Douglas

Don Tarbet

Saturday, February 23

9:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Civil Government

10:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Love

10:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Women, #1—LADIES ONLY

Terry Hightower

Ken Chumbley

Rheba Stancliff

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Hypocrisy

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About Women, #2—LADIES ONLY

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Error about His Kingdom

3:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About Salvation

4:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the Nature of Man

Danny Douglas

Rheba Stancliff

John West

Bruce Stulting

Lynn Parker

Sunday, February 24

9:30 AM Christ Confronted Error About Faith and Knowledge

10:30 AM Christ Confronted Error About Heaven and Hell

Lester Kamp

Gary Summers

NOON MEAL PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the Father

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the Holy Spirit

3:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Terry Hightower

Michael Hatcher

Dub McClish

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Continued from Page 1
David Lipscomb “hated” government. Churches of Christ were too “divisive.” The same old liberal mantra we have heard for years but which some in the audience had not heard. There were many giggles and snickering by some in the audience. It was sickening and embarrassing.

During the Question and Answer period, the chairman of this meeting made a point of saying that there had been complaints about Adcox’s announcement in which he said that the Restoration Movement “birthed” the church of Christ. Adcox half-heartedly referred to the fact that some brethren believe the church was established in Acts 2, A.D. 33.

I made the following points in my interspersed questions and comments:

1. Churches of Christ existed in

Great Britain in the 17th Century before the Restoration Movement.

2. David Lipscomb was anti-slavery but not abolitionist. Adcox said he did not know much about Lipscomb’s views on slavery.

3. The American Missionary Society contributed to the division before the slavery issue or instrumental music.

4. Brethren in the North, such as the preacher Ben Franklin of Indiana, opposed the American Missionary Society and the instrument before the Civil War.

5. Adcox belittled the division in the church of Christ over orphan’s homes, while knowing nothing about the issue. I commented that anti-brethren based their objections (though false) on the authority of the Scriptures. He maintained it all

came down to the “silence of the Scriptures.”

He did not dwell much upon the instrument and the division but did say most of the congregations back then did not have an instrument because they could not afford one. I wish I had challenged that insulting statement. The whole lecture lasted about one hour.

The chairman approached me after the lecture and asked if I had been treated fairly. I told him that I felt I had and thanked him. Since the meeting, the Director of the Association has extended an invitation for me to give an opposing view in the future. I am preparing to do so now. I pray the Lord blesses my efforts (Jude 3).

Columbia, TN

Are We to Judge?

Lester Kamp

Every false teacher and every one whose behavior is sinful tries to hide behind Matthew 7:1-4, actually behind a partial quotation and a misapplication of these verses. When these verses are cited by these workers of evil, usually all that is stated is: “Judge not.” In short, they say that any sort of criticism is contrary to God’s Word because Christ here condemned all judging. The only thing wrong with this is that it is totally self-contradictory and totally false.

First, as with many false doctrines it is self-contradictory. Here stand the false teachers and the impenitent sinners stating that all criticism is sinful, and yet they seem not to realize that they are self-condemned by the very principle that they advocate.

They criticize and condemn those who would criticize or condemn them. They violate the very principle that they advocate. This is not unusual. Those who violate God’s Word try desperately to avoid the condemnation of that Word by seeing a different application and interpretation of that Word when it comes to themselves. Paraphrasing Peter in 2 Peter 3:16, these false teachers and sinful “wrest” this Scripture and others to their own destruction.

Second, neither the text before us, its context, or any other Scripture teaches what they want. The Lord does not condemn all judging either here or elsewhere in Scripture. It should be obvious from the text itself that Jesus here has a special kind of

judgment under consideration which He condemns. Jesus describes this judgment as coming from someone who is in a worse condition than the one he condemns. Using the terminology found in the New King James Version, the one condemned has a “speck” in his eye while the one who is doing the condemning has a “plank” in his own eye. The Lord condemns the person who is unconcerned about his own sin while being more than eager to point out and condemn the sin in others. The Lord here condemns the judging done by the hypocrite and the double standard of hypocrisy. The self-righteous hypocrite is wrong because he magnifies the sin of others while ignoring the glaring sins of his own life.

Notice the verse which follows our text: “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Mat. 7:5). In this statement, Jesus makes it clear that He is not condemning all judging for in this verse He tells us what we must do regarding the sin we observe in the lives of those around us. Jesus says that we must first deal with our own sin, and then we will be able to see clearly enough to help others rid themselves of sin. The lesson before us is: sin must be dealt with in our own lives before we can help others deal with their sins. Do not ignore our own sins and then concentrate on the sin of others. The same standard, God’s Word, applies to all.

In Romans 2:1, Paul calls attention to this same sin among the Jews which Jesus identified and condemned in Matthew 7. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”

Further, Paul admonishes the “spiritual” who see a brother overtaken and overcome in sin to look to themselves when trying to bring the sinner back to faithfulness (Gal. 6:1). Sin in the lives of others should not be ignored. The presence of sin unrepented of brings death (Rom. 5:12). Recognizing sin and its consequence is necessary to obey the instructions of Galatians 6:1. In other words, judging is required to obey this passage. Yet again, those that obey this command are cautioned not to overlook their own sin and/or ignore it, “considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Looking again at Matthew 7, notice that Jesus in this very context

rather than condemning all judgment required judgment of those who would obey Him. For example, He commands, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (7:6). Jesus is not talking here about literal dogs and swine. The pearls to which He refers are not literal. He is teaching us that we need to discern (i.e., distinguish, or **judge**, between those who will recognize the worth of the Word of God and those who will reject it, abuse it, and try to destroy it). To obey this command we must be able to judge others so we can tell who are the “dogs” and “swine.”

Jesus also warns us about false prophets in this same chapter of Matthew. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (7:15). We must, therefore, be able to discern who these false teachers are. Jesus tells us how to make this judgment when He said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (7:16). In this passage judgment is far from condemned; it is absolutely necessary!

As we expand our view of God’s Word to include the remote context of Matthew 7:1-4, we observe that judging is again required. Those who would have us believe that Jesus condemned all judgment would have Jesus contradicting Himself. In John 7:24 Jesus states, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” Note that in the latter part of this statement Jesus said, “judge righteous judgment.” Righteous judgment is commanded. It is therefore not optional. If we obey Christ, we will judge righteous judgment. The judgment Jesus requires of us is not according to

outward appearance; things are not always how they appear. The judgment Jesus requires is righteous; that is, according to God’s Holy Word, the Divine Standard of right and wrong. “All thy commandments *are* righteousness” (Psa. 119:172).

Jesus commended the Ephesian church for their ability to make judgments regarding who were and who were not apostles. He said of them, “thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2:2). Jesus would not have commended them for what He previously had condemned. When Peter sinned, Paul rebuked him to his face (Gal. 2:11-14). This behavior on the part of Paul was the right thing for him to do. Nevertheless for this to be done necessitated judgment, the ability to know that what Peter had done was wrong. Peter’s behavior was sinful, and Paul rightly condemned it. In his discussion with the Corinthian church regarding the fornicator in their midst, Paul poses the question: “Do not ye judge them that are within?” (1 Cor. 5:21). According to the way this question is stated the correct answer is: “Yes, we are to judge those that are within the church.” The inspired solution for the sin in the congregation at Corinth required judging. Judgment was necessary to discern the sin and the sinner so they could be dealt with appropriately.

The truth is that Jesus does not condemn all judging in Matthew 7, or elsewhere. What is condemned is hypocritical, self-righteous judging that overlooks sin in one’s own life and concentrates on the sin of others. When the Word of God is obeyed and taught, sin will be reprov’d and rebuked and the way of righteousness will be commended. “Preach

the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Righteous judgment is necessary to recognize and expose sin and to recognize and obey the Truth. Try as some might to protect their sinful practices and doctrines by twisting the meaning of God’s Word, one day we will all stand before God in judgment. All will be held accountable for their behavior according to the standard of God’s Word (John 12:48). It behooves us all to begin now making the right application of that Word to our lives. When sin occurs in our lives we need

to deal with it in the way that God tells us in His Word. When others care enough about us that they condemn the sin that exists in our lives, we should be grateful and apply the remedy demanded by God’s Word so we might be saved. Rather than looking for a way to avoid what God has said, we need to be willing to turn from our sin and obey God to have the forgiveness that He offers. Condemning those who would help us identify sin in our lives so we might remove it is foolish indeed. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21). However, “He that justifieth the

wicked, and he that condemneth the just, Even they both *are* abomination to the LORD” (Pro. 17:15). Someone has well written, “Refusing to warn a person about his sin is just as unloving as refusing to warn him about a serious disease he may have. A person who does not warn a friend about his sin cannot claim love as his motive.”

“When one runs to Matthew 7:1-5 to protect the false teacher and impenitent sinner in the body of Christ, he either does not understand the passage or he deliberately perverts it” (Dub McClish, *The Edifier*, June 14, 1984).

Aurora, CO

Sympathy

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to brother Dub McClish and family at the passing of his beloved wife, Lavonne McClish. Lavonne was an excellent Bible student who regularly wrote articles. She also used her writing skills to encourage others by notes, letters, and email. She regularly sent us notes to encourage us in the works in which we are involved. Faithful brethren will miss her. The words of the apostle Paul gives us hope and comfort when he writes:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in

the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 The. 4:13-18).

John was told to write: “Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). The works sister McClish did will certainly follow her. She was one who lived for Christ and thus had the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). She, as Paul, could say, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phi. 1:21). It was a pleasure to have known her.

MH

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Book Reprint

We had the book *Back To The Bible* (the 2010 Bellview Lecture-ship book) reprinted and recently received it from the printers. This is the third printing of the book. We are thankful that it has been so well received.

We designed this book to be able to hand to someone who was not a Christian and teach them the basic fundamentals of Christianity: what they must do to be saved, proper worship, and proper Christian living. Each chapter was written in a narrative form (telling a story). The book has 15 chapters and about 145 pages.

We have intentionally kept the book at a low price to accommodate the purchase of multiple copies to hand out to others. Because of price increases in various areas, we had to raise the price of the book from \$3.00 to \$4.00 per book (excluding shipping costs), which is still a great bargain. These books have also been used effectively in Bible class settings. Why not buy multiple copies and try them in evangelizing others?

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"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Attitudes Toward Truth

Roy J. Hearn

Pilate asked Jesus: "What is truth?" God's Word is truth—it came by Christ (John 1:17; 17:17). The law of God was given to Christ who in turn delegated the Holy Spirit to reveal it through the apostles (16:12-15; 17:8). God's Word is indestructible (Mat. 24:35). One may oppose truth, but cannot deny it. Regardless of all the opposition to it and perverting of it, truth remains truth and all must stand or fall by it (2 Cor. 13:8). Our reception of any truth depends on our attitude toward it. If we are seeking to please ourselves, only such truth as suits us will be accepted. Improper attitudes, refusal to accept and abide by truth, hinders, even prevents, salvation for those who do so.

God's truth revealed in the Bible is indestructible. The New Testament of Christ is now law to man. God's spiritual law is just as binding and unchangeable as the laws of nature. Consider:

The value and importance of truth. Christ said: "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). If truth makes us free from sin, error does not. All forms of doctrine not found in the New Testament are not truth,

therefore, cannot make free. The names, doctrines, and institutions of men are not truth, therefore those following them are not free from sin, but are in rebellion to God (1 Sam. 15:22-23; Mat. 15:8-13). The New Testament is our complete and infallible guide (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It furnishes all we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, we plead with our religious friends to test all doctrines by God's Word (2 John 10), for God only accepts one divine truth (Gal. 1:6-9).

Should not be offended at truth. God's Word represents Him. The Word was given by the apostles (John 16:12-15). To reject the Word as given by the apostles in the New Testament is to reject the Holy Spirit, Christ, and God (Mat. 10:40). Christ was hated because He taught the truth, and that truth condemned the sin and false doctrines of His day (John 8:32-46). When we present the truth from His Word exactly as He gave it, and men hate us and the Word we teach, they are not hating us but Christ. One cannot accept Christ, and be a true believer in Him without accepting all His Word.

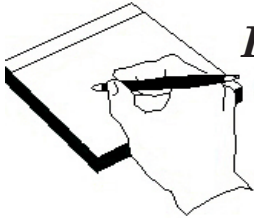
The apostle Paul prophesied that

some would turn from the faith and follow false teachers (1 Tim. 4:1-2). We have false teachers today with consciences so hardened, the truth has no effect upon them. Paul told Timothy to preach the "word," but some would not endure sound doctrine, but turn aside to fables (2 Tim. 4:3).

This is true now. Some preachers never touch the Bible when preaching. It is all about what "I believe," and from there it leads to the sickbed, then the deathbed, morgue, and finally graveyard. These are fables, and Paul commands to warn honest souls against them. Only truth can make one free, not "experiences" or fables—let us adhere to truth.

To be offended at and to reject truth is to be offended at and reject Christ (John 12:48). We are going to be judged by Christ's Word. All shall give account as to how they have handled it. Knowing that all shall be judged by the Bible, it is imperative that all live by it to the saving of their souls. Paul says: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Gal. 4:16)?

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

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Be Strong In The Lord

Paul teaches us that we are to put on the whole armor of God so we can stand against the power of the devil. He then tells us of the Christian's armor:

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. 6:14-18).

However, Paul begins this section of the Christian's armor by telling us, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (6:10). The reality of what is taking place today is that the Lord's church is not strong but is continually becoming weaker. The church needs to be strong. For the church as a whole to be strong, each individual Christian must be strong. Yet, there seems to be many hindrances to the strength needed today.

First, we are digesting the **wrong type of spiritual food**. Jesus taught that the one who would be blessed by God is the one who hungers and thirst after righteousness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst

after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mat. 5:6). The Psalmist defines righteousness as God's commands. "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psa. 119:172). Paul says that the Gospel reveals God's righteousness to us. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17). Thus, we are to be hungering and thirsting after God's Word. Peter states, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). However, many do not feed their minds on God's Word, instead they are digesting the wrong kind of food. We have many today who sit at the feet of false teachers instead of those teaching the truth. Elders often open their doors to wolves in sheep's clothing, instead of watching out for the flock of God, or they encourage the flock to go hear brother False Teacher who is at a meeting or Family Bible School at a nearby congregation. Only by hearing the Truth and hiding it in our hearts will we have the strength to overcome sin in our lives. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11).

A second great problem that is causing us to fail in growing strong is that we are being **distracted by the world**. As Jesus explained the parable of the sower, he said, "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection"

(Luke 8:14). As a result, the spiritual appetite of many is dwindling. We have a great problem today in that many Christians love the world more than they love God. John wrote, "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). Far too often we are allowing the world to mold us into its form instead of following Christ.

Next, there is a general **disrespect for God's Word**. When we disrespect God's Word, we cannot grow strong. We have so many challenges to the Scriptures today. We have those who challenge the inspiration of the Bible saying it is not really from God. Others deny the all-authoritative nature of the Scriptures looking to other things as their authority in life. There are some who are now claiming that we need something in addition to God's Word. They claim that the Christian must have a direct working of the Holy Spirit on their spirit to grow strong and overcome sin in their life. Some continue on to say that all Christians are baptized in the Spirit when they are baptized in water to receive that direct work-

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

ing of the Spirit in their lives. Paul wrote, "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, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). This affirms that Scripture comes from God, not man. It also affirms that the Scriptures when used properly will make us (1) a man of God, (2) perfect or complete, and (3) complete furnished to all good works. We do not need anything other than the Word of God to lead us to do what God desires for us to do. It provides all that we need to get us to heaven. Peter wrote, "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" (2 Pet. 1:3). In God's Word, given by His power, He has given us everything we need for life and godliness. This life and godliness comes through knowledge that comes by studying God's Word. Through this knowledge and our application of God's Word to our lives, we can obtain heaven's home. Peter goes on to say, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). The Bible has the answers to the fundamental questions of man (where did we come from, why are we here, and where are we going). There is nothing else that will give satisfactory answers to these questions. God's Word is not only all-

authoritative, it is also all-sufficient to direct our lives and guide us to heaven.

A fourth hindrance to our growth so we are not strong is an increasing **disregard for worship**. In speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus said, "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 4:23-24). God desires worshippers. Yet, for far too many worship is a drudgery and weariness. It should be something we are looking forward to. It should be the highlight of our week. We have the opportunity to come before the throne of grace and give praise and adoration to our God. We additionally have the opportunity to be with our brethren and encourage them and receive encouragement from them. David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psa. 122:1). Do we find our joy in attending worship? The problem with some is that they go to be entertained by the preacher, song leader, and prayer leaders, instead of going with the attitude of worship. Thus, they do not "get anything out of" the worship service.

Last is that there is a **dislike for the work of the Lord**. Spiritual matters should be a priority within our lives, otherwise we will not grow and be strong. Paul wrote, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,

where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Our heart and desire must be on spiritual matters. Yet, as noted previously, we have become so worldly oriented that our heart and desire is on earthly matters. This has even been seen by congregations changing to appeal to us instead of to God. They seek to please man instead of pleasing God. Thus, congregations provide recreation and entertainment (often building gymnasiums) to appeal to the physical desires of man, instead of staying firmly rooted in the Lord's work. The work of the Lord is spiritual in nature, not physical. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). That spiritual work we are to be involved in is that of saving souls. Jesus stated His purpose in coming to this world when He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The saving of souls is going to be done through preaching to the lost, edifying the saved, and benevolence to those in need, not in entertainment and recreation. We need to get to work for the Lord. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).

MH

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Continued from Page 1

We should love truth—it is equal to loving God. We have learned that God's Word is truth (John 17:17). Christ said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3). Therefore, to love God is to obey Him. If one refuses or neglects to obey Christ, he does not love Christ. He only promises to save the obedient (Heb. 5:9). Obedience to God's Word determines our being acceptable to Him (Acts 10:34-35). We must love the truth to be saved (2 The. 2:10-12). If one persists in following a course of his own, and not authorized by Jehovah, God will not only allow him to go his way, but will send delusions to help him on his way to destruction. If one is determined to seek truth and obey regardless, God will help him find it and save his soul.

The wayside hearer is the one whose heart is hardened against the

truth and will not receive it (Mat. 13:14-15). Friends, harden not your hearts as the old time Jews did and were not allowed to enter the promised land. If you do, you will not enter the home of the soul. The Jews were rejected because they followed their own doctrines instead of God's truth (Rom. 10:1-3).

We must receive the truth with unprejudiced minds. God's Word is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). Hearts of men are represented by the soil. The one who will not open his heart to truth is the wayside hearer. He allows Satan to turn him from the truth (Mat. 13:19). The good ground hearer is the one who hears, receives the truth (seed) into his heart (soil) and keeps it and brings forth fruit. Open the door of your heart (Rev. 3:20). It may be costly, even to separation from family and friends, but the sacrifice must be made if necessary, to be saved (Luke 14:26-28). Hold to the truth and be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

Must believe and obey the truth. Belief alone is insufficient. The devils believed and trembled, but were not saved (Jam. 2:19). Some believed in Christ, but were afraid to confess Him (John 12:42-43), therefore, were denied by Christ (Mat. 10:33). Faith only does not save, but faith that leads to obedience does (Jam. 1:22; 2:24). One is purified when he obeys the truth (1 Pet. 1:22). Moses believed in God; but, he was not allowed to enter the promised land because of disobedience (Num. 20:10-12). Thus, we see believe is used in two senses: to give mental assent to God's existence and in the fullest sense—obey God. The latter saves, the former does not.

Conclusion

In order to be saved one must obey God's truth (2 The. 1:7-9). Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men to obey Him (2 Cor. 5:11). Believe, repent, confess, and be baptized today.

Deceased

Brotherly Kindness

Daniel Denham

The apostle Peter commends brotherly kindness (2 Pet. 1:5-7). We should bend every effort to cultivate this grace and the other graces. "Brotherly kindness" translates the Greek word *Philadelphia* and means the "love of brethren." It refers to "the love which Christians cherish for each other as 'brethren'" (Joseph H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 653).

In 2 Peter 1:7: brotherly kindness precedes the grace *charity*, which comes from the Greek noun "agape." The grace of *Philadelphia* is a fundamental foundation upon which

progress to that higher form of love depends. *Agape* expresses "a more reasoning attachment" as distinguished from the idea of *phileo*, according to R. C. Trench (*Synonyms of the New Testament* 41). *Agape* refers to a form or state of love that is more intellectual (42).

Philadelphia, though not completely divorced from reasoning, is more emotional. It contemplates the feelings, good will, and natural affections that one ought to obtain from the relationship between Christians brothers.

What does brotherly kindness do?

What does it involve? How can we understand its aims better? How can we develop more brotherly kindness? When we find Biblical answers to these questions the Lord's purposes will triumph even more in the world.

Peter shows three means to reveal more of the importance of practicing brotherly kindness. First he wrote that the higher form of love, *agape*, is added to brotherly kindness. Someone said, "If agape is the badge of discipleship, then brotherly kindness is the pin that holds it in place."

Second, Peter taught that brotherly kindness, along with the other

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Christ—The Great Controversialist

February 20 – 24, 2013

(Wednesday – Sunday)

Elders: Kenneth Cohn, Buddy Roth, and Jack Stephens

David P. Brown, Director

Wednesday, February 20

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM Christ—The Great Controversialist

8:00 PM Christ Confronted Satan

David P. Brown

Gary Summers

Thursday, February 21

9:00 AM Christ Confronted Religious Traditions

10:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Truth

11:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Repentance

Michael Hatcher

Ken Chumbley

Don Tarbet

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the End of Time

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Errors About Miracles

3:30 PM Open Forum

Gene Hill

Daniel Denham

Dinner Break

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Unity and Fellowship

8:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Himself

Charles Pogue

Lester Kamp

Friday, February 22

9:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Materialism and Money

10:00 AM Christ Confronted His Disciples' Errors

11:00 AM Christ Confronted Worry

Skip Francis

Geoff Litke

Wayne Blake

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the New Birth

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Pride

3:30 PM Open Forum

Daniel Denham

Charles Pogue

Dinner Break

6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Worship

8:00 PM Christ Confronted Error About Forgiveness

Danny Douglas

Don Tarbet

Saturday, February 23

9:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Civil Government

10:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Love

10:00 AM Christ Confronted Error About Women, #1—LADIES ONLY

Terry Hightower

Ken Chumbley

Rheba Stancliff

Lunch Break

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Hypocrisy

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About Women, #2—LADIES ONLY

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Error about His Kingdom

3:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About Salvation

4:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the Nature of Man

Danny Douglas

Rheba Stancliff

John West

Bruce Stulting

Lynn Parker

Sunday, February 24

9:30 AM Christ Confronted Error About Faith and Knowledge

10:30 AM Christ Confronted Error About Heaven and Hell

Lester Kamp

Gary Summers

NOON MEAL PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION

1:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the Father

2:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About the Holy Spirit

3:30 PM Christ Confronted Error About Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Terry Hightower

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Christian graces, makes us fruitful. Our Lord commands that we bear much fruit (John 15:1-10).

The third way Peter shows the importance of brotherly kindness is by saying that it helps make our “calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10). This sure calling and election gives us the abundant “entrance...into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (1:11).

When we understand brotherly kindness, we desire it. Brotherly kindness is peaceful, preferential, progressive, and perpetual. The essence of this virtue creates the seeking for peace among brethren. Common sense and Scripture bear witness to this truth.

“Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous” (1 Pet. 3:8). “Love as brethren” is from *philadelphos*, the same word as brotherly kindness. In verse 9, Peter forbids retaliation. “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it” (3:10-11).

Brotherly Kindness Is Peaceful

Peter teaches that peace is based, in part, upon brotherly love. He posits that brotherly kindness will help us to be of one mind. It will cause us to insist upon “walk[ing] by the same rule” and minding “the same thing” (Phi. 3:16). Brotherly kindness will seek a godly peace, not just peace at any price.

Brotherly Love Leads Us to Prefer One Another

Brotherly kindness promotes a preferring of one another. “*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring

one another” (Rom. 12:10). *Prefer-ring* comes from *proeegeomai*. It means “to go before and lead” (*Vine* 885). In this passage it means “taking the lead in showing deference one to another” (*Vine* 886). Brotherly kindness disposes us toward giving honor to our fellows instead of seeking our own glory. Brotherly kindness exterminates petty jealousies and hatreds.

Brotherly Kindness Advances Our Spiritual Progress

Brotherly kindness is progressive. It leads to the *agape* form of love which seeks the best interest of others even when they return evil for our good. Peter also taught the progressive nature of brotherly kindness in his first letter. “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren [*philadelphia* or brotherly kindness], *see that ye* love [*agape*] one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet. 1:22).

Unfeigned stresses the genuineness of brotherly kindness on our behalf. Christians are the spiritual offspring of God. We are in the household of God (Eph. 2:19), and we should behave toward each other as brothers and sisters. We are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:14-17). Progress in the virtues of the Christian faith ought to be typical of God’s children.

Brotherly Kindness Is Perpetual and Militant

Brotherly kindness is not just an occasional quality of the Christian. “Let brotherly love continue” (Heb. 13:1). It is in vogue.

Brotherly kindness favors militancy in the proclamation and defense of “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Brotherly kindness means courtesy

and consideration. Brotherly love will not cause us to compromise truth, but it will temper our words (cf. Col. 4:3-6; 1 Pet. 3:15).

Brotherly kindness will not prevent exposing sin or rebuking false teachers. The apostles and our Lord openly reproved, rebuked, and named sinners, and they had brotherly love; therefore, brotherly love does not bar those methods when called for (Mat. 23). Brotherly kindness kept grace in their actions and speech and should do the same for us. Brotherly kindness guards against abusive speech.

Meekness is commanded when dealing with the erring (Gal. 6:1), but this does not ban dedication to the truth (Pro. 23:23) nor boldness. Peter and John spoke boldly before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:13), and Saul of Tarsus “preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus” (Acts 9:27). Paul told Timothy and Titus to be bold (2 Tim. 4:1-4; Tit. 2:15). Brotherly kindness is behind such boldness, tempering, and strengthening it.

Love the Brotherhood

Brotherly kindness is innate in the fellowship of Christians. This truth is self evident in the definition of the word. All Christians are born again. Brotherly kindness is for every child of God.

Brotherly kindness applies to the brotherhood in general, and those brethren we know. I should have brotherly love for the brethren in Des Moines, Iowa, even though I have never been there. If I should meet some Christian from Des Moines then I should practice brotherly kindness to that person in particular. This reasoning from the general to the specific is the same that Paul used when he said that

we should do good to all men (the general principle) and also said “as we have therefore opportunity” (Gal. 6:10). If we maintain the proper attitude of brotherly kindness as a general principle, then we will be able to apply it to the people we meet.

Brotherly Kindness Is Impartial

It is unlimited by race, sex, wealth or social standing (Jam. 2:2-13). “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons” (2:1). The intrinsic value of each child of God is the same. Racial bigotry and social snobbery have no place in the kingdom of God.

Hindrances to Brotherly Kindness

False doctrine is a hindrance to brotherly kindness. Its very nature is divisive, and division produces bitter strife and acrimony. We must be sure to “*speak* as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11) for the sake of brotherly love and unity and for the sake of the truth itself.

Unbridled tongues poison brotherly kindness. Every child of God would do well to read James’ warnings against the unruly tongue daily. Even when we **speak against**

false doctrine, we must not stoop to vitriolic language, innuendo, and diatribes.

Elitism hinders brotherly kindness. Sinful pride and arrogance regardless of its source, racial, social, material, destroy peace among brethren. We must rejoice in the successes of others and not think too highly of ourselves if brotherly love is to be unhindered.

Indifference, which is evidence of a selfish attitude, is a mortal enemy of brotherly kindness. Indifference causes us to treat others with coldness. Indifference can lead to disdain of others. We become indifferent when we focus on self; the fruit of indifference is apathy.

The war indifference wages with brotherly kindness kills many visitation programs and efforts to restore erring members. Brotherly love will invigorate such labors.

Patience, Persistence and Prayer

Patience is essential to brotherly love. We must be long-suffering with our brothers just as the Lord is long-suffering with us. Earthly families often endure slights of loved ones; they even endure hardships brought

about by family members. Spiritual family members must also be patient with brethren.

Persistence is necessary to brotherly kindness (1 The. 5:15). Brotherly love will abound if we continue to overcome evil with good. We must never stoop to the low tactics of the men of the world; they lose their politeness when the going gets tough, but the Christian must persist in brotherly love.

Prayer, especially prayers for those who treat us poorly, will feed brotherly kindness in our hearts. If a brother mistreats you, pray for him, and do him good. Prayer is a safeguard against falling into temptation. Prayer will surely promote brotherly kindness.

Let us remember the importance and value of brotherly kindness; without it we cannot go to heaven. Let us remember its special nature. Let us also remember the vast scope of brotherly kindness and avoid the hindrances to its growth and practice. As with the other Christian graces, patience, persistence and prayer will help us grow.

Parrish, FL

The Plan of Salvation

Tim Smith

Does your preacher give the “plan of salvation” often? I have noticed a decline in the practice recently, and quite frankly I do not like it! If he does not, why does he not? Is it because he is ashamed of it? Perhaps you are tired of hearing it? Maybe he does not think it is necessary? Never be ashamed of the exclusive process whereby men and women are forgiven for past sins and fitted for judg-

ment. Never grow tired of hearing it. Never think: “Everybody already knows it and it is not needed anymore.” The people here not only have the plan memorized, they probably have the three or four variations I use down pat also. Ask them—especially if you do not already know it.

Dothan, AL

Editor’s note: recently I attended a conservative congregation and at the

end of the sermon, no plan of salvation. These things are a shame, brethren. We should have greater respect for God’s plan than to omit it at the end of a sermon. Some say that everyone already knows it, then that is good. However, our job as preachers and teachers is to “put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth” (2 Pet. 1:12).

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At a Crossroads

Charles Pogue

The church of our Lord is at a very critical crossroads. Congregations that were once known for their faithfulness to the truth of God, and for their opposition to error and human innovations, are now in serious trouble. These congregations are engaging in a two-fold compromise with the Scripture.

In the first place, congregations that once held the truth that one may not fellowship a false teacher, nor one who fellowships a false teacher (2 John 9-11), are now embracing the falsehood that one may fellowship one who fellowships a false teacher so long as he does not directly fellowship the false teacher. The reality is that when one is in fellowship with a person who is in fellowship with the false teacher, he is by that very act, also fellowshiping the false teacher. If not, why not? Fellowship is appropriately defined as joint participation. The apostle John says that one who fellowships a false teacher by merely inviting him into his house or bidding him "God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." The one who is guilty of violating those restrictions is now in the place of the false teacher and one who fellowships **him** is now in

his formerly disobedient position of being a partaker of the evil deeds. To those who sarcastically ask, just how many steps or layers will you go through to determine who you may fellowship and who you may not, the proper answer is, as many as it takes! We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). Would anyone be so foolish as to argue that it is wrong to have direct fellowship with an unfruitful work of darkness, but not indirect fellowship with the same? It is false on the face of it.

Some brethren, attempting to justify appearing on the same lecture program with a false teacher, tell us there is a difference between association and fellowship. Not according to the respected and reliable Thayer's Lexicon that defines *Koinonia* by these words and in this order: "fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse" (852). Association is fellowship! Thus, one who claims he can associate with a person without having fellowship with the same, is denying the very basic use of language, not to mention that in the most descriptive example of withdrawal of fellowship in the

New Testament (1 Cor. 5), two of the specific instructions given to the Corinthian brethren were do not keep company with him, and do not eat with him. Surely no one needs it to be pointed out to them what that is, but in case they do: **it is association!**

This change of position on fellowship has nothing to do with any result from the study of the Scripture, but rather, as far as we can determine, was initially embraced to continue to support Apologetics Press despite the error of its new director, Dave Miller. To avoid hypocrisy, this change had to extend to others, such as, to continue support of "In Search Of The Lord's Way," they invited Phil Sanders to speak on their lectures despite his claim that members of the Christian Church denomination are our brethren, and even though he extended fellowship to the Sunset International Bible Institute, which has long been known for its compromises on truth. A third example has been extending fellowship to those who fellowship Mac Deaver and his direct operation and baptism of the Spirit errors, while at the

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Notes From The Editor

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Hearing

Jesus makes the statement, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:23). The importance of hearing cannot be overstated. It is impossible to please God without having faith according to the Hebrews' writer: "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" (11:6). Paul tells us how faith comes: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

The importance of preaching is stressed throughout the New Testament, but what good does preaching do if no one hears? Thus Jesus stresses the need to hear in Mark 4:23. Additionally, Jesus makes two important statements regarding hearing. After informing them of the importance of hearing, Jesus then states, "And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given" (4:24).

We must be careful regarding **what** we hear. This deals with the contents of what is heard. If what we hear is degrading, profane, contrary to God, then it will have an effect on us in lowering our standards of right and wrong. If we are to "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying" (Eph.

4:29), then by what reason can we conclude that we can hear those things? Corrupt, immoral words are not to be spoken, but neither should they be heard. When others begin speaking putrid words, we need to step in and say something to put a stop to it. Sadly, we have allowed foul language to become the norm with so many today.

We should also make sure we put a stop to false teaching. We should be listening to and heeding true doctrine, but when false teachers begin spouting their error, we need to stop their mouths (Tit. 1:11). Sadly, so many even in the Lord's church today would not know false doctrines if they should slap them in the face. The church today, like Israel of old, is being destroyed by lack of knowledge. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6). False doctrine and practices that are without any Bible authority are pervading the church today. The Church of Christ is losing its distinctiveness and becoming nothing but a denomination among denominations (the Lord's church, the true church of Christ is not one, but many, if not most, with the name on the building are or have already become a denomination). We must take heed **what** we hear, that we hear God's Word.

Jesus also said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Luke 8:18). While Mark 4:24 concerns the content of what is heard, this concerns more the attitude we have in hearing. Notice with

me four attitudes we should possess in our hearing of God's Word.

We need to have the attitude of reverence in approaching God's Word. In this sense, we need to understand the value and worth of the Bible; we need to esteem the Scriptures. Realizing their origin will help us have a reverential attitude. The Bible comes from the very breath of God. Paul wrote, "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). While holy men of God did the actual penmanship, they were being carried along by the Spirit: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Paul commends the Thessalonians by saying, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 The. 2:13). We must have the greatest of esteem for the Bible, it is unlike any other book ever produced.

Second, we need to approach the Scriptures with respect. When we have respect for God's Word, then we will not go about trying to change and alter that Word. Nadab and Abihu learned the hard way

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

that God demands respect for His Word when they “offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not” (Lev. 10:1). The result of their disrespect is: “And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD” (10:2).

Jeroboam told Israel that it was too difficult to do what God said, so he changed the worship God authorized in the Law of Moses (1 Kin. 12). His epitaph became “Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.” The result of these changes are seen in what happens to Jeroboam’s house: “And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth” (13:34), and to Israel: “And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin” (14:16).

There are those today who try and change or alter God’s Holy Word. Some have changed the unique nature of the church to try and include denominations. Brethren have tried to change God’s plan of salvation saying that we are saved by grace alone or faith alone. Others have tried to change the organization of Christ’s church by what is nothing more than a papal system (preacher rule or one elder with a Diotrephes attitude), others by making elders subject to the congregation (by Dave Miller’s elder r/r or congregational vote on elders decisions). Many have tried to change the worship of the church by

bringing in mechanical instruments of music when God said to sing, partaking of the Lord’s Supper on days other than the first day, or praying to someone other than the Father (directing their prayers to Jesus or to the Holy Spirit). Some ignore and change what God has specified regarding fellowship, so they continue to fellowship those who are no longer in fellowship with God. Likewise, the morality or ethics God established are constantly under attack by those who would change them to accommodate people.

We also need to approach what we hear testingly. Luke records of the Bereans, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). The Bereans were noble because they used the Scriptures to test what was being said to make sure it was true. The apostle of love tells us, “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). Knowing there are many false prophets and teachers, we have the obligation to put what they say to the test. Far too many simply accept what is fed them by a preacher or elder. We need to get into the habit of testing everything that is taught. As Paul said, “Prove all things” (1 The. 5:21). Then we are to “hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (5:21-21). What

happens far too often is that some controversy or discussion arises, and since we have confidence in a certain person or preacher, we simply accept what he says as truth without investigating it or proving it. This often leads to us accepting error.

Last, we need to come to God’s Word responsively. Upon proving all things, we then need to respond in obedience to what God has said. We need more like Ezra when it states of him: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10). Not only did he seek the Law, he had determined to do it. His determination to respond according to what the Law said is the attitude that we need to possess. Only those who do what God says will be blessed. Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). Then at the end of the New Testament, we have John writing, “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. 21:14).

We need to be careful what we hear, but we also need to make sure we have the proper attitude in hearing. We must always be willing to make sure what we hear is truth and then act accordingly.

MH

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Defender

3

Continued from Page 1

same time asserting they recognize Mac Deaver as a false teacher. The legs of the lame are unequal.

The second branch of the treacherous tree of treasonous compromise is accepting certain changes for the dual purpose of trying to justify numerous illicit fellowships, and to try to make the church more appealing especially to younger people whom they say must have softball teams and golf outings or they will not be open to accepting the truth, or if they do accept it initially, be kept faithful by it. As some have correctly stated, if you catch them by entertainment, you have to keep them with the same.

Younger people like the new versions of the Bible, thus an archaic judgment on the part of the elders that only the King James or American Standard will be used as the primary text in the pulpit and classes must be discarded. Everyone loves the Super Bowl, thus the time of the Sunday evening service on Super Bowl Sunday should be changed to accommodate the most important game of the year. As if that is not enough, participation in sporting events is especially important to the young, so it really is not a sin to forsake the assembly to engage in a tournament or game.

The younger crowd of men and women do not care much for doctrine either, so what we have to do is keep sermons stressing do's and don'ts and thus saith the Lord to a minimum and give our primary attention to a food pantry and making a difference in the social conditions of our respective communities. "Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13). Why do that, Paul? In order that no one will "despise

thy youth" (4:12)!

One brother declared that we should not be afraid to be creative dressing up our windows to get people to look in so they will walk in. He went on to affirm that we should have two or three window events for every door event. If I interpret that correctly, two softball games equal one sermon in converting the lost, and a round of golf and a camping trip must be used in conjunction with the Bible class to keep them converted. The saddest thing about this is where the frantic futile fodder was fed to a gullible gathered group—the 2012 Memphis School of Preaching lectureship!

Have some decided that we should put on a façade resembling the denominations to be more appealing to the masses? Have brethren decided the Holy Spirit and the apostle Paul were wrong to affirm that the power of God unto salvation is the Gospel (Rom. 1:16)?

Some of those who fit the conditions described in this article attempt to have their cake and eat it, too. By that we mean, while they continue on occasion to speak out against some false doctrine, they fellowship those who fellowship those who teach the very error they condemn, if not the ones who hold and teach it. Thus, that by which they attempt to conceal their hypocrisy becomes the very vehicle by which it is exposed.

Those who are concerned about the new spirit of compromise now sweeping congregations that once stood against false teachers of every stripe and their fatal error are marginalized, criticized, and demonized. They are treated that way when the only things they are guilty of are loving the Lord, His truth, and His church. While a new apostasy

is getting under way some brethren are ignorant of it, some deny it, some are aware of it and do not care, and some are aware of it but think it is exaggerated. The reality is that some congregations are at a crossroads, and even if the present members do not go completely into error, if history remains true to itself, their offspring, both of the fleshly and of the spiritual kinds, will.

Apostasies have happened before, and there have always been one or two issues that are right at the forefront of the falling away. So far as I can see, we have another apostasy that is beginning to gather more and more momentum, and the two primary issues can be stated in just two words: fellowship and change. The boundaries of fellowship are being cast aside, while the desire for change for change's sake is the welcomed philosophy of the new left.

It is time to choose the path, or if already chosen, to stay on it. That is the path that goes straight ahead into heaven even though it is narrow and difficult, and puts one at odds even with friends and family whose actions, if not their words, say, "Crossroads, it is no big deal." But, it is a big deal, a very big one. It is the biggest of all deals, for the souls of many are at stake.

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Granby, MO

Editorial comments: A good illustration of the fellowship problem has recently been seen. The website BrotherhoodNews lists as its publisher, editor, Randal Matheny. He recently wrote about an article (one which most all would agree with) appearing on the website Biblical Notes. This website is the work of

Weylan Deaver and the article was written by him. Randal Matheny has given his stamp of fellowship on both the article and its author. Weylan Deaver has taken the position of his father, Mac Deaver, regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit (that has been exposed in the pages of *Defender* by brother Daniel Denham). However, it does not stop there, Randal Matheny is also the editor of *Forthright Magazine*. He is also listed as one of the writers on the Biblical Notes website and in his biography there it has him working with Forthright Press along with being the editor of *Forthright Magazine*.

Now, even if Randal Matheny does not personally hold to the false Holy Spirit baptism today doctrine and direct work of the Spirit on the Christian today doctrine of Mac Deaver (all the other writers on the Biblical Notes website do), he is in fellowship with those who hold these false doctrines. Thus, all those who are associated with Forthright

Press, *Forthright Magazine*, and Brotherhood News are brought into fellowship with the Deaver false doctrines of Holy Spirit baptism and direct work of the Spirit on the heart of the Christian. Will these other brethren “come out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Cor. 6:17) or will they continue in their fellowship errors?

However, it does not stop there. In the January 2013 issue of *The Spiritual Sword* the editor, Alan E. Highers, carried an article by Randal Matheny (28-32). There is no disclaimer regarding brother Matheny and those with whom he fellowships. How does this not place brother Highers and those who are associated with *The Spiritual Sword* in a compromising position regarding their fellowship? (Would brother Highers publish an article written by Mac Deaver? If not, why not?). Also in the January 2012 issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, brother Highers ran an article by Ed Wharton (45-47) and simply stated that he

is “a long-time instructor at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas.” How has brother Highers not extended fellowship to Sunset? Yet, Sunset has long been known for their liberalism and for their false views regarding grace and on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. In extending fellowship to this “long-time instructor,” how has he not extended fellowship to those errors? In extending that fellowship to Ed Wharton, how are not all those associated (in fellowship with) *The Spiritual Sword* not tainted with the fellowship compromises that brother Highers has engaged?

Brethren, how long are those faithful soldiers of the cross going to tolerate these fellowship compromises? These brethren can claim to be faithful, sound, conservative brethren all they wish, but they are compromising God’s Word by their fellowship practices. The other question is: where will these compromises end or where will they lead to?

They Have Gone Out from Us

William S. Cline

One of the clearest statements in all the New Testament admonishes us to have no fellowship with those who teach doctrines contrary to the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). It seems to me that too many among us are upholding (encouraging, fellowshiping) those who have already shown that they are not interested in the doctrine of Christ. Many have gone out from us but are still upheld by some of the most influential among us. In the November 30, 1969 issue of *The Challenger*, Johnny Ramsey wrote:

I am tired of it! Liberals, skeptics,

modernists, compromisers and agnostics do not belong in the church of our Lord. The sooner they are out the better for the truth.

Brother Ramsey’s statements are mine. These liberals are seeking to destroy the church from within. We need to mark them as those who have gone out from us.

Just the other day I was talking with brother Guy N. Woods about an incident at the Abilene Preachers’ Workshop. It was there that one preacher derided the church in one of the most outstanding tirades I have ever heard of. Brother Woods

said, “More power to him. Now we know who he is, what he is teaching and we can mark him.” And brethren, that is exactly what we need to do!

One thing that brought about the death of Campus Evangelism was their insistence on using men who taught error. Now that that same organizational trend is surfacing in the Campus Ministries we see that they are following the same format. The Seminar at Gainesville in August, the Colloquium at Tallahassee in October and their upcoming Seminar are all cases in point. At the first

two events they used men who teach error, and have announced plans to use at least one of these men in their Seminar this week. Since they will not select men who are sound in the faith to come to the campuses, we have to look at the entire program with an ultra-inquisitive eye. They are losing support because they are using false teachers and I com-

mend any who stop their support immediately, as did West Hill last Sunday. These brethren have gone out from us and need to be marked and certainly not supported.

This is not a time for tolerance. We know what is being taught. We know their attitude toward the truth and the church. It is time for us to obey the apostles injunction

to mark them and have no fellowship with them (Rom. 16:17). Paul said in Titus 3:10-11: "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.**"

Deceased

"Lord, It Ain't Really My Fault"

Terry Hightower

If you have ever had a wreck in your car and then tried to describe it in as few words as possible for the insurance forms, you will appreciate the following *explanations*:

An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my vehicle and vanished.

I was on the way to the doctor with rear-end trouble when my universal joint gave way, causing me to have an accident.

The pedestrian had no idea which direction to go, so I ran over him.

I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way.

I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment.

I had been shopping for plants and was on my way home. As I reached the intersection, a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision.

The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intentions.

I had been driving my car for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident.

I thought my window was down, but found out it was up when I put my hand through it.

My car was legally parked as it backed into the other vehicle.

In my attempt to kill a fly, I drove into a telephone pole.

Knowing that "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), have you ever seriously contemplated what the reaction to our attempted excuses for disobedience will be by the Omnipotent One? It is not as if He has left us in the dark how He regards our rationalizations why we (1) did the wrong or (2) did not do the right. A careful study of the following Scriptures should help us understand how God looks on excuses for misconduct.

A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come (Luke 14:16-20).

Notice that neither materialism,

nor one's livelihood (farming), nor even domestic duties and obligations exempt us from the supreme obligation to do what God tells us to do to go to heaven. It would be humorous if it were not so tragic to hear all the excuses by men why they either never initially obeyed the Gospel (Acts 22:16) or why they are not at fault for not being faithful (Rev. 2:10).

Just picture yourself before the throne of the Almighty with Jesus as your attorney. Will He have any real, bona fide evidence enabling Him to get forgiveness for you at the final trial? He pleads the merit of His blood, but you must accept His sacrifice and live for Him. He has done His part. Have you done your part?

Unlike an earthly judge presiding over an automobile "finder-bender," the Righteous Judge can only give an eternal sentence to one or the other of two places.

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat (Gen. 3:12-13).

Both Adam and Eve were saying, "Lord, it ain't really my fault," giving us perhaps the classic case of

transference of blame! Lord, if you had just not given me this woman or this snake to have to put up with, I would not have been tempted beyond that which I was humanly able to bear (See 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Pet. 2:9).

Maybe we can better appreciate God's reference to David as "a man after His own heart" when we see that when confronted with his sins, David did not plead extenuating circumstances. He did not offer the feeble excuses about how he happened to be up on his rooftop and through no fault of his happened to see this beautiful, curvaceous creature of God bathing right before him. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD" (2 Sam. 12:13). David begged for God's mercy and sincerely asked from the depths of the heart of one truly guilty, "blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me" (Psa. 51:1-3).

Some of us sitting on the pew refusing to admit (for whatever excuse) personal sin parallel the case of Aaron, who was *peer-pressured* by the Israelites to "make some gods" to lead them (Exo. 32:1). This story would make for hilarious reading if it were not so serious before God!

Aaron has them pull off earrings from which he makes a golden calf. He then builds an altar to it and proclaims a feast day, including *get down* dancing. Then Moses confronts Aaron by saying, "What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" (32:21). The part honesty and part evasion by Moses' right-hand man amazes us:

Let not the anger of my lord wax hot [Translate: I do not want to be properly punished]: thou knowest the people, that they *are set* on mischief [Translate: The people you left me in charge of made me do it!]. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him [Translate: I obeyed men rather than God because you *took a hike* on me, Moses]. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break *it* off. So they gave *it* me: then I cast it into the fire, and **there came out this calf** [Translate: I failed Teleology 101 in school and have a terrible misunderstanding of cause and effect] (32:22-24).

This is like the cartoon where Theoplious approaches his immoral friend and says:

I hear you're living in the sin of adultery." [The man responds:] "Yes—and it's all your fault! You gave me a rod and reel for my birthday that caused me to go fishing where I met

a man who insisted I have a few drinks where I met this babe in a bikini who made me dance with her and forced me to take her away from her husband. Come to think of it—I'm just a victim of my environment.

Tell me, will you let your personal dishonesty and pride keep you from open, public confession of wrong (Acts 8:24)? Will you let stubbornness keep you out of heaven and in a Devil's Hell for eternity? Can you imagine the Lord's righteous reaction when you say, "Lord, it ain't really my fault?"

Vega, TX

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Due to the postage increase that went into effect on January 27, the cost for mailing the Bellview Lectures books has had to increase. The cost of mailing one book will now be \$3.50. This will affect the hardcover books and the 2012 soft-cover book. The postage chart for the 2010 book is listed below.

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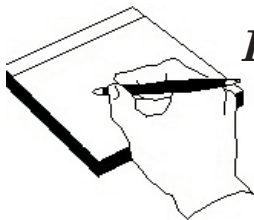
Jack H. Jones

I see in the F. F. [*Firm Foundation*] of Oct. 23, a short "write up" of the Sherman meeting, by Bro. Chism, in which he makes mention of the discussion that took place on the first proposition, viz, "By what rule shall all matters of religions controversy be decided." In these words, "we agreed that the Bible alone should be the rule; but some difference as to the how." Bro. Wilmeth took the old rut of precept, example, and *necessary inference*. The writer next followed, accepting, the precept and example, but denying the right of any man to make an inference at all." Now so far as the "old rut" is concerned we desire to say, that Bro. Chism is not the only one in this large state of ours that has a desire to get out of the old "rut"—we might mention Homan, Bush & Co., for example. Bro. Chism certainly does not understand the meaning of the term, inference, else he would not deny any one the privilege of inferring. Mr. Webster says that an inference is a conclusion, deduction, hence Bro. C. denies any one a right of coming to a conclusion regarding the teaching of God's word. He seems to make no distinction between the law of inference or the

law of reasoning from premise to conclusion, and the thing inferred or the conclusion deducted. He seems to regard it as a theological monstrosity which is very dangerous to say the least of it. Bro. C. quotes Phil. 4:9 in proof of his position which reads as follows: "Those things which ye have both learned, and received and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you." And he argues from this, that since nothing is said about inference, we are not to infer any thing. Now Bro. C., I ask you, did you ever learn any thing from Paul by reasoning from premise to premise to conclusion—by inference? I think I can prove to you that you have. But behold, he admits that there were *some cases* of inference brought up during the discussion, but says, "they do not pertain to life and godliness." Who told you so Bro. C.? Will you take the position that a part of the New Testament (where the inferences spoken of were found) does not "pertain to life and godliness?" If so will you please tell us what part pertains unto life and godliness, and what part does, not? Since Paul tells us that "all scripture given by inspiration of God 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) and since you admit that these scriptures contain "some cases of inference;" will you deny that these cases of inference help to "thoroughly furnish us unto all good works?" If so upon what ground? Bro. C. also refers to Deut. 18:20 in search of proof for the correctness of his position; there he finds that we are to preach nothing but what we are *commanded* to preach; if you give the word *command* an unmodified meaning you cut yourself off from the examples, see. Now we will give some of the cases of inference which were brought up during the discussion, and also some others, and the readers of the F. F. can decide within themselves whether they pertain unto life and godliness. 1. Bro. Gibbons quoted Heb. 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Gain," and argued that since Paul says that "*faith* cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God," and since Paul also tells us that Abel offered his sacrifice by faith we must infer, therefore, that God had given him a

Continued on Page 7



Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

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Deaver Update

I wanted to give an update to our readers regarding the proposed debate between Daniel Denham and Mac Deaver. If our readers recall, brother Deaver came to a new, novel idea regarding the Spirit's work on the Christian's heart in his preparation for a debate on the indwelling of the Spirit with Marion Fox. In that debate, Deaver used *supra-literary* regarding the work of the Spirit on the Christian. He stated, "there are some things that the Holy Spirit does for me in a supra-literary fashion." This began to raise some *red flags*, however most brethren gave him the benefit of the doubt. Mac was not content to remain in this first stage of digression. That debate was dealing with **how** the Spirit dwells in the Christian; such had never been a fellowship issue among brethren and is not now. However, Mac went beyond the indwelling to the working of the Spirit upon the Christian. This correctly had been a matter of fellowship among brethren.

Through the years Deaver went beyond his simple statement of "supra-literary" work of the Spirit on the Christian stating more explicitly that the Spirit works in addition to the Word of God on the heart of a Christian. He claimed that the Spirit helps the Christian to overcome sin, live a Christian life, and that the Spirit directly gives the Christian

wisdom, etc. However, Mac was not content to remain teaching such Wesleyan doctrines as these, he continued to progress in his teachings to where he now teaches that all Christians today are baptized with the Holy Spirit.

For several years *Defender* had been exposing Mac Deaver as a false teacher and one with whom we could no longer fellowship as a result of these teaching. After publishing several articles in 2009, Mac Deaver wrote to us challenging us to a debate. I accepted that challenge that either I or a representative of my choosing would debate Mac. I also placed the conditions that the debate be held at the Sherman Drive Church of Christ building in Denton, TX (where Mac Deaver preached at the time), and it be on the subject of Holy Spirit baptism.

Mac and I began negotiations for the debate, but there was a problem as the ungodly elders (Joe Chism—who has since died, Harry Ledbetter, and Randy Morse) at Sherman Drive (the former Pearl Street congregation) refused to allow "certain brethren" in their building. Those brethren were Dub McClish and any who agree with him. Since everyone that would be involved in the debate on our side are in agreement with brother McClish, they would not allow any of us in their building. As a substitute for the Sherman Drive building, Mac said, "We can obtain public facilities for the discussion. Perhaps we could have it at the Denton Civic Center." I then agreed stating, "I do not have a problem with the location being the Denton Civic Center."

Mac and I continued in negotiations and finally signed propositions with Daniel Denham being my representative for the debate (it

had been agreed that I would do all the negotiations with Mac for the debate). However, as we reported before, Mac never contacted the Denton Civic Center, even though that was the location I agreed to accept (not some other location). The Denton Civic actually had a conflict with the dates to which Mac and I had agreed, thus it would have been impossible to have the debate there. Mac, in obtaining a location should have contacted them after I agreed to that location and when it was found out that the debate could not be held there, contacted me to negotiate another location. However, he did not do this. Thus, upon learning of the impossibility of using the Civic Center, we urged Mac to find a location, but he decided to no longer correspond or negotiate with me. We finally placed a time limit upon Mac for negotiating and finding a location for the debate. Mac allowed that time limit to pass, thus cancelling the debate. I dealt with all this in the October 2009 issue of *Defender* and documented everything at that time.

Since Mac sabotaged the debate by failing to negotiate and obtain a location for it, brother Denham began dealing with Deaver's material and book he had written promoting Holy Spirit baptism today. These articles demolishing Deaver's material were published in *Defender*. In response, Deaver brought out a special issue of *Biblical Notes Quarterly* and

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

made a feeble attempt at answering a small portion of what had been dealt with in brother Denham's articles.

However, we continued to hear word that Deaver was wanting the debate, thus in the August 2012 issue of *Defender*, we decided to provide an opportunity for Mac to have the debate. We listed five requirements for us to resume negotiations for the debate. In the fifth requirement, we placed a time limit for obtaining a location for the debate that would be agreeable to me by November 30. That time passed without a word from Mac.

David Brown asked brother Denham to speak on the subject "Christ Confronted Error About the New Birth" at the 2013 Contending For The Faith, Spring Church of Christ lectureship. Brother Denham again dealt with Mac Deaver's false doctrine regarding the new birth of John 3:3, 5 in the lesson (and the chapter in the book which I would encourage all to obtain a copy). Deaver watched part of Daniel's lesson and then ranted in a letter to brother Brown trying to get brother Brown to get brother Denham to debate him. After some discussion, I wrote Mac on March 18, 2013, as follows:

Mac:

This was placed in the August 2012 issue of *Defender* on page 3.

Debate

Since brother Deaver is still longing for a debate, we are willing to resume negotiations for a debate with him. However there are certain requirements we will insist upon before resuming negotiations with Mac. These are requirements, not suggestions, not things to negotiate, but requirements for us to resume negotiations.

1. Mac must repent of sabotaging the original debate arrangements.
2. Mac must repent of lying

about the debate in Biblical Notes Quarterly.

3. Mac must direct all correspondence to me, as he had agreed to do when negotiating previously.

4. Mac must agree to the propositions for the previous debate.

5. Mac must obtain a place in Denton, Texas, for the debate that would be agreeable to me by November 30.

If Mac is willing to do these things, then the debate can still be held and I will enter into negotiations with him again. If he is not willing to abide by these requirements, then everyone will still know that Mac (1) sabotaged the first debate, (2) he is the one who is not willing to do what is necessary to have the debate, (3) there will be no more negotiations with him for a debate, and (4) Mac does not really want to engage in a debate with brother Daniel Denham on Holy Spirit baptism after all.

Since you are still clamoring to some (I read your diatribe to David Brown) about having a debate, even though we believe you still need to take care of the first two points, we are willing to forgo those first two points to get the debate accomplished. We will agree to the propositions that were previously signed along with all the details to which we previously agreed. That will leave only two details to be worked out: the date and the location.

Please send me some dates for us to consider. Additionally, you will need to find a location in the Denton/Fort Worth area that will be agreeable to us by the end of June (if this is too much of a hardship on you, I will be willing to check on a couple of places).

Mac, while I know how much you detest me, these 2 aspects are simple enough to accomplish, so let's get this debate scheduled. We are trying to remove the obstacles to get it done. Now do you really want to have the debate?

We were trying to get the debate accomplished, but also doing so according to the agreements to which Mac had previously agreed. Instead of writing to me and resuming negotiations regarding a location and date for the debate, he instead writes another tirade to brother Brown (dated March 21, 2013). In this letter he steadfastly refuses to negotiate the debate with me. Then he sent a letter directly to brother Denham (dated April 2, 2013) trying to resume negotiations but not keeping his original word that all negotiations would take place with me. Thus, after some discussion and after I received a letter from brother Denham, I again (and for the last time unless he resumes negotiations with me by the timeframe set forth in my March 18 letter) wrote Mac a letter dated April 10, 2013, in which I wrote:

Mac:

I am in possession of your renewed attempt to make an end-run around the agreements you previously made. Brother Denham sent me a letter detailing his views of such skullduggery. I am including brother Denham's letter with this response.

Mac, you still have time to negotiate a date and location for the debate if you really do want to debate brother Daniel, as you claim you do. That timeframe is the end of June. If that date passes and you have not negotiated a date and location with me, then there will never be any debate between you and Daniel. We were willing to remove two of the requirements we had made simply to get the debate done. If you are not willing to negotiate the date and location of the debate with me (and return to all the original terms to which we had previously agreed), then there will be no more attempts, and there will be no debate.

Mac, the ball is in your court. You

can negotiate a date and location with me before the deadline we have imposed, or you can let it pass and never have the debate you claim you want—you might as well, as brother Denham states, “file-thirteen” anything else. Now, what is it going to be: negotiate with me, or never have the debate?

As I stated in the letter, I enclosed Daniel’s letter he wrote to me. I believed it would be profitable for Mac to see how Daniel felt about his letter. That letter is below:

Dear Brother Michael,

Mac adamantly refuses, as if by royal decree, to correspond with you on our side of the issue. But I will only correspond with his highness through the means to which he originally agreed which was based on the fact that he challenged you and the brethren at Bellview, and I am and have been all along simply your representative in this matter. The fact that he refuses to do so illustrates perfectly the truth of the accusations that he is untrustworthy, as he clearly refuses to keep his original word despite being the one who issued the challenge. Thus, one cannot, just as clearly, trust him to keep his word in any future negotiations if there were any even contemplated. As to his sophomoric attempt here to once more do an end-run around what he signed to do originally, he can just file-thirteen them as far as I am concerned. He is and will remain under obligation to keep his word, even if he doesn’t think so. Morality and ethics are not limited to Mac’s feelings in the case. If he had lived in the time of Christ, Mac, as he is now, could not have been accused of being an “Israelite,” like Nathaniel, “in whom is no guile.”

As to the proposition he submitted in his most recent letter, it is fascinating that while he was doing that in writing to me, his minion, Marlin Kilpatrick, was arguing to a brother that all of the original arrangements,

including Mac’s proposition, were now off the table. According to the other party, Marlin claimed that Mac now was no longer obligated to that proposition—never-mind, of course, that we have Mac’s signature affirming belief in it from both 2009 and now. But we also had his signature accepting the terms of the debate and my place simply as your representative, but we see now what real value Mac’s signature really holds. The carrot he attempts to hold out on the proposition here can just as easily be removed as he did his agreement to deal directly with you on the debate details. He has no credibility left to his name. We gave him too much credit. We put more value in his signature than he does.

He also claims that he has been falsely accused of hiding out in Sheffield. But the facts show otherwise, despite his feckless attempt, to which he alludes, to play to the gallery back in 2009, after having refused to keep his word. The facts have indeed not changed. He sabotaged the debate. The emails showing this fact have not disappeared.

Furthermore, even his loyal minion Marlin Kilpatrick has admitted in writing to another brother in a letter currently in my possession that the debate was cancelled **after Mac withdrew from the negotiations** for the original debate agreement in 2009. All of Mac’s posturing since then simply is cover for the fact that he fled from the debate. Furthermore, it is a matter of record that I have been to Texas on at least two occasions (to Spring in particular) to deal with Mac’s heresy almost in his backyard. He had more than sufficient opportunity to confront me on the matter at those venues after I had traveled almost half-way across the country to deal with his teaching. His buddy Marlin refused even to show up to discuss matters at Ocala, which is indeed Marlin’s backyard. Also, I have written numerous arti-

cles on his error, including a lengthy serial consisting of several articles, of which Mac dealt with but part of one and acted as though he had answered everything I have written, when in fact he did not even address everything in **that** article. But such deception seems to have become commonplace with Mac. Mac has also never addressed the two large and well-documented manuscripts refuting his errors published in the Spring lectures. Yet Mac has Marlin running around demanding that others and I answer the supposed “sound arguments” that Mac postulated in the Vick debate. I have pointed out to Marlin that Mac has yet to put forth any genuinely sound arguments. I even noted several things to Marlin that Mac cannot prove and yet must in order to even begin to formulate a sound argument on Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19, much less John 3:5 and Titus 3:5-6. But objective evidence does not seem to play into Marlin’s concept of what constitutes a “sound” argument. I suspect that he really does not know what makes an argument sound. Assertion appears to be sufficient for him right now, especially if Mac is the one making it. If Mac says it, it must be so regardless of how specious and fatuous the claim.

It is also fascinating that Mac admits that he did not read Michael’s letter (or “all of it,” as he now vacuously claims), despite the obvious fact that **he tried clearly to leave the impression with Marlin that he did in fact read all of it**. He got caught in his own deception on the matter, but instead of repenting we see just more alibis from Mac on the matter. He simply refuses now to take responsibility for his own failings here and admit the obvious. Even Marlin at first admitted that Mac had lied to him about the letter. Only after Marlin checked with his new mentor did he change his conclusion. This is the same Marlin who claims to not be taking sides, but whose letter to

Brother Jim Driggers back in February certainly does so without any hesitation.

Marlin also ran to Mac to get his **ex cathedra** declaration on the “in Christ” question, after Marlin had originally answered “true,” to find that the phrase is just not precise in meaning, according to Mac. I have since asked Marlin if one can receive the remission of sins today without being in the spiritual body of Christ. We’ll see how he answers, if he does. One thing, however, is certain; he will run to Mac first to get his **imprimatur** for his answer. In fact, when a good brother asked Marlin about the “in Christ” question, Marlin told him to contact Mac first and he would enlighten the brother on the matter, even as Mac had enlightened him that the phrase was “not precisely stated.” Pity, poor Paul, who used it so repeatedly without Mac’s advice to guide him! Of course, if Mac can teach by implication that Philip, an inspired preacher, messed up in Acts 8, then why doubt that he would implicitly indict Paul, a mere apostle of Jesus Christ, for his “imprecise” statements in Ephesians 1? So, it must now be the case that the Brotherhood has to go to Mac first to get the newest answer on such questions while he is still evolving in his doctrine.

Mac states a number of times in his letter that he is the victim of “false accusations” supposedly made by me, especially in my most recent lecture at Spring. Of course, he has yet to show wherein such has actually occurred as he does not give any specifics. As I was dealing with the **implications** of his doctrine, he needs to address those matters rather than making his own patently false accusation that I falsely accused him. For one so trained in logic, he evidently now has profound problems dealing with the matter of implication when it comes to his theories, as we have seen in our articles abundantly documenting the same. He needs to show that the implications of his doctrine I addressed really

are not entailed by it. As of yet, all he has done is throw dust in the air and rant against my presentation, which he admitted **he had really only seen in part**. (I suspect that he has not bothered at all to look at the manuscript documenting some of his quotes, etc.) Mac has a tendency of operating in such devious ways, as shown back in 2004 wherein the claim was circulating among his followers that I had been challenged by him to debate and was hiding from the same. Of course, Mac had failed to contact me about this supposed debate, and I had to bring it to his attention by letter that no challenge had even been given to me by him or any of his cronies. Yet they were strutting and preening as though they had just put Goliath and the Philistines to flight.

This brings up another salient point. His reference to me as “Goliath” in his letter to David is an interesting comparison in that I am 5 ft. 8 and one half in. in height (maybe 5’9” if I stretch a bit). Barbara got a good laugh out of that one. But, you will recall, David came down and met Goliath on the battlefield where Goliath stood. Well, here I stand (Goliath or not) on the same ground of agreement we all originally made back in 2009 and to which Mac affixed his signature, but where, oh where, is Mac?

Mac claims that throughout his evolution in this doctrine he has had the wisdom of God directly and immediately guiding him all along the way. But we are cause to wonder why the Spirit allowed him to teach what he now claims to be the false doctrine that Spirit baptism does not occur today?! We also pause to wonder why the Spirit did not correct him much earlier on the meaning of John 3:5 and the supposed transitional aspects of Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 pertaining to Spirit baptism as Mac now proclaims?! We scratch our heads in astonishment as to why the Spirit did not tell him early on about Philip’s blunder, Simon’s and Luke’s misperceptions concerning the

laying on of the apostles’ hands, and, now, of course, Paul’s terrible imprecision in the use of the phrase “in Christ”?! Either Mac wasn’t paying very good attention to the proddings, leadings, slappings, pokings, zappings, whammies, or whatever other means the Spirit has supposedly laid upon Mac’s mind in guiding him to his current confusions and contradictions. (At least Todd is trying to be consistent with the new informational insights **he** claims as being from the Spirit!) And how many more such special revelations will come through Mac’s being guided by this wisdom?

I pray that he will repent, and give up his error. The memory of his good father is a precious one to me, and Mac has sullied that memory and his father’s good name. But I believe we are witnessing the beginning of yet another cult, just as with Crossroadism and Kingism. I pray that Mac and his followers will wake up as to where they are headed with this. If he lives ten more years, he will be teaching the full-blown second-work of grace heresy of John Wesley. Already he is teaching things comparable to where Wesley was early on in his speculations on Spirit baptism, which ultimately led to the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Movements. But “there is none so blind as he who will not see!”

Yours in Christ,
Daniel Denham /s/

Brethren, here we stand! If Mac Deaver desires the debate with Daniel Denham, then he can do what is outlined in the letter to him and negotiate with me a date and location (I will even help find a location if he desires) in the Denton/Fort Worth area to hold the debate. He must do this by the end of June. At that time, nothing else will be done regarding any debate with Mac Deaver. This is his last chance—there will be no more. At that time all we will do is to continue to expose his false doctrine.

MH

38th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 7-11, 2013

(Friday – Tuesday)

Innovations

Friday, June 7

7:00 pm Bible Authority Daniel Denham
7:45 pm Silence of the Scriptures Dub McClish

Saturday, June 8

9:00 am Special Services (Easter, Christmas)

10:00 am Logic and the Bible Michael Hatcher
11:00 am Direct Operation of the Spirit Terry Hightower
Johnny Oxendine

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Drama Teams/Puppet Ministry Lee Moses
2:00 pm Disaster Relief Organizations David P. Brown

3:00 pm Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Female Leaders Bruce Stulting
8:00 pm Ecumenism Danny Douglas

Sunday, June 9

9:00 am Praise Teams Ken Chumbley
10:00 am Any-Day, Any-Thing Lord's Supper David Watson

Lunch and Dinner Break

5:00 pm House Church Concept Lynn Parker
6:00 pm Fellowship Innovations Johnny Oxendine
7:00 pm No Eternal Punishment Dub McClish

Monday, June 10

9:00 am Dedicating Babies Danny Douglas
10:00 am Logic and the Bible Terry Hightower
11:00 am Kitchens in the Building? Jess Whitlock

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Modern Translations Daniel Denham
2:00 pm Voting on Elders David Watson

3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Special Ministers Tim Cozad
8:00 pm The Social Gospel Lee Moses

Tuesday, June 11

9:00 am Missionary Societies Ken Chumbley
10:00 am Logic and the Bible Terry Hightower
11:00 am Children's Worship/Divided Assembly Bruce Stulting

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Handclapping Jess Whitlock
2:00 pm Gymnasiums ("Family Life Centers") Tim Cozad

3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Mechanical Instruments of Music David P. Brown
8:00 pm Theistic Evolution Lynn Parker

Bellview Lectures Information

New Dates for the Lectureship

This year's lectureship will start Friday evening and go through Tuesday. Please make note of these new dates.

Housing

The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59.99—single bed and \$69.99—double beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908. **Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.** If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

The ladies of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books

The lectureship book, *Innovations*, will be available for purchase. The price has not yet been determined. The book will contain 26 chapters and will be a soft-cover book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2013) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$37.50. The CD will also include the Defender (1970, 1972-2012), Beacon (1972, 1974-2012), and other material.

View Lectures Live on the Internet

If you cannot attend the lectureship in person, please view them live on the Internet:

www.bellviewcoc.com

Continued from Page 1

law governing him in this obedience, though the Bible nowhere says that he did. Next, Bro. Wilmeth quoted Matt. 3:16, "And Jesus, when he was baptized went straightway out of the water," and argued that since we are told that Jesus came up out of the water, and as we know that a person cannot come up out of something they had not been in; we must infer therefore that Christ went down into the water. Reader, do you think that the example of Christ in *this act*, pertains unto life and godliness, if so can you make the act complete, and correspond with the baptism recorded in Acts 8 chapter, without this inference? I have heard Bro. C. in preaching make the assertion, that in every household conversion recorded in Acts he could find language used in connection with each one, that would absolutely preclude the idea of there being infants in that household. Then on the conversion of Corneilus [sic] and his household would quote Acts 10:48, "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." And argue that since all of Corneilus' [sic] house was baptized, and since the baptized prayed Peter to tarry certain days, and since we knew that it was impossible for infants to pray, we must conclude therefore that there were no infants there. And in the conversion of Lydia and the jailor he would quote Acts 16:31 and 40, applying the same course of reasoning

to each one. Now is the doctrine of infant baptism, soul destroying in its influence? If not why oppose it? If so since these inferences prove it to be false, do they not "pertain" unto life and godliness?

We could present many more cases, but we deem it unnecessary. Now Bro. Chism, if you will quit trying to get out of "old ruts" and accept all true laws of interpretation notwithstanding they may be

other statements. It is man's duty to infer what God has implied.

However, everyone needs to realize that the only way any command in the Bible applies to us is through implication. For example: Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). That does not specify me or anyone else (my name is not mentioned either here or anywhere else in the Bible). I must reason and determine that I am

a *he* in this passage. Since Jesus specified that he that believes and is baptized shall be saved and I am a *he*, then I must believe and be baptized to be saved. God has implied that every accountable being must believe and be baptized to be saved. I then infer that God has implied that since

I am an account-

able being (a *he*) that I must believe and be baptized. While many today follow after the same ones Jack Jones rebukes in this article from 1894, he shows in a clear and understandable way that God does imply certain things and we have an obligation to infer what God has implied. Those things are salvation issues.

Defender Via E-Mail

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old, you will have less trouble along this line. Remember converts to a position, (though old and honorable they may be) does not prove [sic] the truthfulness of the position.

I am yours in the one faith,
Deceased

Editorial comments: This article was published in *Firm Foundation*, December 11, 1894, on pages 6-7. I have reproduced it mistakes and all. Those who proclaim a new hermeneutics today make some of the same arguments that Jack Jones was rebuking. We would change the terminology some but the teaching is the same. God, when He makes an explicit statement, implies certain

Postage Increase

Due to the postage increase that went into effect on January 27, the cost for mailing the Bellview Lectures books has had to increase. The cost of mailing one book will now be \$3.50. This will affect the hardcover books and the 2012-2013 softcover books.

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Modern Translations Daniel Denham
Direct Operation of the Spirit.....Johnny Oxendine
Theistic Evolution Lynn Parker
The Social Gospel..... Lee Moses
Mechanical Instruments of Music..... David P. Brown
Praise Teams.....Ken Chumbley
Any-Day, Any-Thing Lord's Supper David Watson
Drama Teams/Puppet Ministry..... Lee Moses
Handclapping..... Jess Whitlock
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Children's Worship/Divided Assembly..... Bruce Stulting
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Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Diplomacy Or Warfare?

Jerry C. Brewer

Compromise is a fundamental tenet of diplomacy. In compromise, one sacrifices a formerly held position—or a part thereof—for the sake of peace and accepts a form of the opposition's position to achieve a non-combative settlement of differences. While that is a fair assessment of political diplomacy, it also describes a philosophy that has arisen in the Lord's church in the last few years.

The Lord does not call diplomats to His service; He calls soldiers. The imagery of battle is a repeated figure of the Christian's relationship with the world, and when we lay aside the armor of God (Eph. 6:13) in the spirit of diplomacy, we compromise the truth and capitulate to the enemy.

When Gideon answered the call of God to go in his might to deliver Israel from the hand of Midian, he built an altar at the scene of his call and named the place, *Jehovah-shalom*—"The Lord Send Peace." God did send peace. But it was peace through conflict, not compromise. We do not see Gideon calling a "unity meeting" with the Midianites; he did not ascend a knoll, lift up benedictory hands, stretch out spreading arms to Israel's foes and say: "Let us have peace together." He drove the Midianites

out by "the sword of the Lord and Gideon." There are some who seem to think that the Lord has dispensed with the sword, dismantled the armor, and resorted to diplomatic conferences with the powers that be (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., "Jehovah-Nissi—The Lord My Banner," *The Present Truth*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, Ft. Worth, 1977, p. 463).

Brother Wallace wrote those lines in *The Bible Banner* in July 1938. He could well have penned them yesterday. They describe the current attitude of compromise among many in the church who formerly stood as a solid phalanx against error, but now practice diplomacy for a more "balanced" approach to preaching. That approach is antithetical to every principle of New Testament Christianity.

The ideal of modern diplomacy was described by Hans J. Morgenthau in *Politics Among Nations*, as cited in the *Mindscape Complete Reference Library*: "1). Diplomacy must be divested of its crusading spirit; 2). Diplomacy must look at the situation from the point of view of other nations; 3). Nations must be willing to compromise on all issues that aren't vital to them."

Divested of a crusading spirit and imbued with the spirit of compro-

mise for the sake of political prestige and financial considerations, many among us today seem to believe things in the "faith once delivered" fit into the category of "issues that are not vital." Among those are men like Garland Robinson who once feared no one in exposing error within the church. His paper, *Seek The Old Paths* (S.T.O.P.), once sounded warnings against error in no uncertain terms, but has fallen silent in the face of Dave Miller's elder re-evaluation/reaffirmation error. When this issue came to a head in 2005, I wrote an article exposing Miller and Apologetics Press and sent it to Garland. I had sent many articles to him over the years that were printed, and when he received them he always replied to let me know he had them in hand. My submission of that article brought only silence from S.T.O.P. That was eight years ago, and I have never heard a word from him, nor did the article ever appear in S.T.O.P. Indeed, since 2005 S.T.O.P. and its editor have divested themselves of a crusading spirit and embraced diplomacy. Why? I do not know. Are there some things in Holy Writ that he no longer considers "vital"?

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

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Collins And Broussard

We knew it was coming. It did not take a prophet or the son of a prophet to *see* it. Thus, when it came, it should not have been as a surprise to anyone. No doubt some, if not many, do not have any idea what I am talking about. Thus, let me give you the background (and some reading between the lines).

For months the media has clamored that some pro athlete must be ready to come out of the closet and publicly state he is a homosexual. The media set the stage and by their constant barrage of discussion that there are homosexual players in pro athletics and that there must be one who is ready to come out of the closet, they almost demanded someone to do so. Thus, Jason Collins enters the scene. Collins has bounced around six different teams in twelve years in the National Basketball Association. He was playing on the Boston Celtics the past year but in February he was traded to the Washington Wizards, but he is scheduled to become a free agent in July. This relatively obscure player came out in public (as the media was demanding) as being homosexual. It is the cover story for *Sports Illustrated* issue of May 6, 2013, but appeared on their website April 29, 2013. He became the first active (at least at present) male professional

athlete from one of the four major professional sports in the United States that has publicly come out as being a Sodomite (I refuse to call them *gay*).

With the groundwork set by the media and now having their “poster child,” the accolades came swift and sure. He immediately began receiving praise and support for his decision to come out publicly. He received praise from players, the commissioner (David Stern), the President and former President (Obama and Clinton), his corporate sponsor (Nike), and of course the media. Not only was there strong support for this Sodomite but also there was the constant bombardment of tolerance. Everyone must show tolerance—the optimal word of our day. The media, of course, went around to get reactions from others and made sure everyone chimed in with both praise and tolerance.

The Bible is very clear regarding homosexuals and the sin of homosexuality. During the Patriarchal Period, God showed His displeasure with Sodomy by destroying Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain because of their homosexuality. Jude calls upon this when he writes, “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). Under the Law of Moses, God declared, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination” (Lev. 18:22). Again God said, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them” (20:13).

Likewise the New Testament and thus the Christian Dispensation forbids homosexuality. Paul writes, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites...will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10—NKJV). Later he writes, “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind [homosexuals—NASV, practicing homosexuals—NET], for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:9-10). Paul clearly describes the homosexual in Romans 1:24-27 and that the wrath of God is upon such. God makes His views known in each dispensation of time that homosexuality is wrong. Anyone who respects God and His Word should be clear that homosexuality is not something to be praised, but condemned.

Enter Chris Broussard in our story above. Chris Broussard as I write this works for ESPN. He appeared on the show *Outside the Lines* along with an openly homosexual man named LZ Granderson to discuss Sodomites in the locker

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

room and professional sports. During this discussion Broussard stated that he believed homosexuality was a sin and one cannot be a homosexual and a Christian. He did not stop there though; he included all sexual activity outside of marriage. Additionally Broussard, during the show, advocated tolerance toward those who are Sodomites. He referred to his friendship with the openly homosexual Granderson and that they had played sports together, gone out to eat together, laughed, and had good conversations together, yet they are tolerant of each other and did not call each other names. Broussard in the discussion even dared to quote the Bible and state what it says regarding homosexuality.

Obviously, Chris Broussard saying what he did does not set well with the media (although it seems they wanted someone to say such so they could pounce on him). Thus, the media has attacked him viciously. The call for him to be fired began immediately. One magazine called his comments "incendiary." To express an opinion, especially a Biblically-oriented view, that is contrary to the accepted opinion is simply not acceptable to the media and many in society today. One writer, Kate Aurthur, called Broussard, "punitive, unforgiving," and lamented that "Collins' beautiful announcement" had been tarnished by ESPN's "outdated, homophobic pit of its own making." Finally, because of the backlash and hatred spewed by those tolerant loving people, ESPN came out with its apology.

No doubt much more could be written regarding this matter, and no doubt many will chime in, however we as Christians need to realize what has happened in our society. The society we formerly lived

in supported Biblical principles and encouraged people to speak openly about the Bible and its principles. Things have changed in our nation today. Those advocating tolerance desire tolerance for everyone except those who do not agree with their position. Consider the situation with Broussard, everyone was proclaiming tolerance for Collins, yet when they perceived that Broussard was not accepting Collins lifestyle they strongly condemned Broussard. You see, the liberals wanted tolerance for Collins, but they do not want tolerance for Broussard since he did not present a view that was identical with their view. They wish to make sure that what Broussard says is squelched (just look at the terms used to describe what he said: incendiary, punitive, unforgiving, etc.) and that those who express the Biblical viewpoint are eliminated. This attitude has always existed among some, but now the pundits are more numerous and vocal.

There are also those who have a hatred of God and everything spiritual in nature. They realize that God has established an ethic they do not wish to live by. God's ethic would not allow them the sexual freedom they desire, thus they hate Him. With that hatred comes a desire to stamp out Christianity altogether.

No doubt there are additional elements that enter into this discussion, however we as Christians need to be aware that we are entering into a time where there is not only opposition to us, but there is quickly coming a time where there will be open hostility toward Christians. Our duty will continue to be the same: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2). Then

when the persecution comes we are to endure it patiently.

Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Mat. 5:10-12).

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:19-21). Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf (1 Pet. 4:12-16).

MH

Continued from Page 1

Is he looking at “the situation from the point of view of other nations” (Miller and his apologists)? Only he can answer those questions.

From 2005 onward, Dave Miller’s apologists—among whom are Keith Mosher, Curtis Cates, Bobby Liddell, Robert Taylor, B. J. Clarke, Garland Elkins, and a host of others—have chosen diplomatic compromise by calling his clarification “For Honorable Brethren Who Want To Know” “a letter of repentance.” It matters not to them that *repent* or *repentance* is not found in it. It matters not to them that his statement that, “I do not believe that elders should be temporarily appointed and their ‘terms’ continued on the basis of an arbitrary vote of the membership” is **not** what faithful brethren accused him of advocating. Nothing matters to Miller’s apologists unless it affects interests—political or financial—that

they deem “vital.” Since they do not deem it “vital” to oppose Miller’s errors, they have sheathed the sword of the Spirit, unbuckled their armor, laid aside the shield of faith, and slunk down to the Plains of Ono, to compromise with the enemies of Truth. They are divested of a crusading spirit, look at the situation from the point of view of others rather than God, and compromise on any and all issues that are not vital to their own interests.

In his “clarification letter,” Miller wrote, “It is astounding that an event that occurred 15 years ago—an event that I have neither repeated nor promoted since—should cause such a stir!” So, according to Miller, his participation in, and promotion of, false doctrine should not be held against him because so much time has passed since then. Agag could have said the same thing—and had a much stronger case—if the passage

of time covers sin. More than 400 years passed from the time Amalek fought against Israel until Saul was sent to utterly destroy them (Exo. 17:8; 1 Sam. 15:3). Today’s former soldiers of the cross-turned-diplomats are willing to grant Miller absolution despite the fact that God does not forget sin, though a thousand years should intervene. Will they grant the same to Mac Deaver, Rubel Shelly, and Max Lucado without any repentance on their parts? To be **consistent** diplomats, they would have to answer, “yes.”

The church has been at war with the forces of Satan since the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and until the last trumpet sounds, God will never commission a “peace process” with her enemies. Jesus Christ calls soldiers to His cause, not diplomats (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

Elk City, OK

God’s Definition of a Christian—Acts 11:26

Franklin Camp

There are various definitions given of a Christian. The only one that is worthwhile is God’s definition. The only kind of Christian worthwhile is the one as defined by God. The reason for saying this is God’s definition of a Christian is because of the meaning of *chrematizo*, translated “called.” It is not a nickname as is claimed by some. “And it was in Antioch that the disciples first received the name Christian” (*Weymouth*).

The Greek word rendered *called* implies a divine source. It is “to be divinely instructed, to receive a warning or revelation from God” (*Green’s Greek-English Lexicon*). “To give a response to those consulting an oracle, to give divine command or admonition,

to teach from heaven; to be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed, to be the mouth-piece of divine revelations, to promulgate the commands God” (*Thayer*).

The word is found nine times in the New Testament (Mat. 2:12, 22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25; Rom. 7:3; Acts 11:26). In all of these instances it has reference to divine revelation, unless Acts 11:26 is an exception. The meaning of the word fits Isaiah 62:2: “Which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.” Compare Romans 7:3: “She shall be called an adulteress.” Who calls her an adulteress? Compare “defer not, for thine own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name” (Dan. 9:19). In

Israel, we have the root of *Elolam*, the Hebrew name for God that supplies an explanation for the statement, “Thy people are called by thy name.” Amos 9:12 and Acts 15:17 are equivalents. Thus the subject: “God’s Definition of a Christian.”

Why was not this name given at Pentecost? We may not know, but I can think of a reason. Christian is the sum of Christianity. Christianity not Jewish, not peculiar to Jews! This is implied in the very fact that the term that most describes Christianity was not given until Gentiles were brought in. Thus, those who think of Christianity offering something yet for Jews in a special way have not properly understood Christianity.

38th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 7-11, 2013

(Friday – Tuesday)

Innovations

Friday, June 7

7:00 pm Bible Authority Daniel Denham
7:45 pm Silence of the Scriptures Dub McClish

Saturday, June 8

9:00 am Special Services (Easter, Christmas)

10:00 am Logic and the Bible Michael Hatcher
11:00 am Direct Operation of the Spirit Terry Hightower
Johnny Oxendine

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Drama Teams/Puppet Ministry Lee Moses
2:00 pm Disaster Relief Organizations David P. Brown

3:00 pm Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Female Leaders Bruce Stulting
8:00 pm Ecumenism Danny Douglas

Sunday, June 9

9:00 am Praise Teams Ken Chumbley
10:00 am Any-Day, Any-Thing Lord's Supper David Watson

Lunch and Dinner Break

5:00 pm House Church Concept Lynn Parker
6:00 pm Fellowship Innovations Johnny Oxendine
7:00 pm No Eternal Punishment Dub McClish

Monday, June 10

9:00 am Dedicating Babies Danny Douglas
10:00 am Logic and the Bible Terry Hightower
11:00 am Kitchens in the Building? Jess Whitlock

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Modern Translations Daniel Denham
2:00 pm Voting on Elders David Watson

3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Special Ministers Tim Cozad
8:00 pm The Social Gospel Lee Moses

Tuesday, June 11

9:00 am Missionary Societies Ken Chumbley
10:00 am Logic and the Bible Terry Hightower
11:00 am Children's Worship/Divided Assembly Bruce Stulting

Lunch Break

1:00 pm Handclapping Jess Whitlock
2:00 pm Gymnasiums ("Family Life Centers") Tim Cozad

3:00 pm Open Forum:

Dinner Break

7:00 pm Mechanical Instruments of Music David P. Brown
8:00 pm Theistic Evolution Lynn Parker

Bellview Lectures Information

New Dates for the Lectureship

This year's lectureship will start Friday evening and go through Tuesday. Please make note of these new dates.

Housing

The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$59.99—single bed and \$69.99—double beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908. Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations. If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

The ladies of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books

The lectureship book, *Innovations*, will be available for purchase. The price of the book is \$11.00 plus \$3.50 shipping charges per book. For those attending the lectures the price will be \$10. The book will contain 26 chapters and will be a soft-cover book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

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The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2013) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$37.50. The CD will also include the Defender (1970, 1972-2012), Beacon (1972, 1974-2012), and other material.

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A Christian is one who heard the Gospel and believed it (Acts 11:19-21). Why were there no Christians in Antioch prior to this time? There were not any that had heard the Gospel and believed before this. Only those that believed the Gospel became Christians. There were no more Christians in Antioch than there were people that believed the Gospel. What was true in Antioch is true in any location.

A Christian is one that is indebted to others (Acts 11:20). Someone had to bring the Gospel to them. If those who came to Antioch had always stayed in Jerusalem, there would have been no church in Antioch. If those who came to Antioch had remained silent, there still would have been no church in Antioch. In every place where there is a congregation, the people that constitute that congregation are indebted to someone somewhere for bringing the Gospel to that community. The people in Antioch should have been, and no doubt were, grateful to those who brought the Gospel to them. We should never forget those who have made it possible for us to have the Gospel.

A Christian is one that wants to teach the Gospel to others (Acts 11:20). This is one of the characteristics of New Testament Christianity. Acts is not really just a book of conversions but a book on sharing redemption. Think who are the main characters? Though the principles of conversion are found in the book, this is because we see the church carrying the Gospel to the lost. We have seen what to do to be saved but not what it means to be saved. One that is not interested in teaching the Gospel to others is not a Christian as defined by God.

A Christian is one that talks the Bible (Acts 11:19). The word translated *preaching* in the KJV is translated *speaking* in the ASV. The idea is that

they simply talked or their conversation was about the Word. We talk about each other, about politics, the weather, but how often do we talk about the Bible? Even Christians when together very seldom discuss the Bible.

A Christian is one that is not concerned about who gets credit for good that is done (Acts 11:19-20). The only name mentioned in this verse is Stephen's, and he was not among those that started the church in Antioch. Who started the church in Antioch? We do not know; no name is given. Yet, this is an outstanding congregation in Acts. Is not the very silence of the Bible as to the names of those that started the church in Antioch a rebuke to preeminence-loving brethren today? What the church needs more today than perhaps anything else is people who will do the work and never care who gets the credit for it. Really, God got the credit for the beginning of the church in Antioch, and He is the One we should be concerned about getting credit anyway. These men may never have written their names in the history books, but they wrote them in the Book of Life.

A Christian is one that is not a quitter (Acts 11:19). They knew the value of being a Christian. It was worth any price. Compare this with what little things will cause Christians to quit today. Then, you could not find anything that would cause them to quit. Now, just about anything will cause them to quit!

A Christian is one with a supreme purpose (Acts 11:23). "That with purpose of heart." That is the meaning of Matthew 6:33; not that one never does anything but attend service but rather everything that he does contributes toward this end. This is the meaning of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2. Everything is related to this overriding motive. "*This one thing I do*" (Phi.

3:13), not that Paul just did one thing, but everything he did was ruled by this principle.

A Christian is one where the grace of God in his life is visible (Acts 11:23). Was there a question in Barnabas' mind as to what effect Christianity had in the lives of the Gentiles? If so, when he saw their lives he was convinced Paul could see the effect of God's grace in the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:1).

A Christian is a good person (Acts 11:24). Barnabas was among those named Christians at Antioch. A mean Christian is a contradiction of terms—there is no such thing. One cannot be a mean father, mother, son, or daughter and be a Christian. One cannot be mean to his brethren and be a Christian. Think of the spirit of the elder brother (Luke 15). Yet, how many treat their brethren about like the elder brother treated his brother and still claim to be Christians.

A Christian is one that assembles (Acts 11:26; Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42). The Christians at Antioch assembled. The Christians in every place assemble. A Christian is one that accepts responsibility (Acts 11:29). Note the words—every man—determined—according to his ability. They did not seek to do as little as they could but as much as they could. Many seem to think today that a Christian is one who does as little as he can. A Christian does not shirk responsibility. A Christian is one in the Lord's church (Acts 11:26). There were no Christians in Antioch that were not members of the church. There were no Christians in Antioch that were members of any *other church*. "I give in mine house and within my walls...a name" (Isa. 56:5). The church is God's house (1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 2:42; Gal. 3:26-27).

Are you a Christian defined by God?

Deceased

Cleansing the Temple

Dub McClish

Jesus twice “cleansed” the temple (actually the court of the temple) in Jerusalem by driving the merchants and money-changers from it. The first time was near the beginning of His work (John 2:14-16) and the second was near its close (Mat. 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46). It is obvious that He strongly disapproved of those practitioners and their practices.

When brethren decide they do not like some activity that is being practiced in the church building they will sometimes say, “We need to cleanse the temple” and cite these examples of the Lord. A case in point is selling good, true-to-the-Bible books, tapes, CDs, and DVDs in the church building. Is this parallel to what the merchants and money-changers were doing? No, and here are some reasons why:

1. Selling at a reasonable price books and audio/video recordings that promote the Gospel is both innocent and honor-

able, whereas the behavior of the temple moneychangers and merchants was neither. Historians say they were charging Passover pilgrims exorbitant prices for necessary sacrificial animals and for changing their foreign money. Their abuse was so great that the Lord called them “thieves” (KJV) or “robbers” (ASV). Selling a five-hundred-page hard-cover book for \$16.00 or a CD for \$5.00 containing several Gospel sermons is hardly exorbitant, much less robbery.

2. One who thinks it is a “defilement of the temple” when such good materials are sold at reasonable prices on church property is greatly confused. The church **building** is not the temple (dwelling place) of God. God dwells not in a building made by men (Acts 7:48; 17:24), but in the people who make up His church (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

3. Since God’s temple is the **church** (not the building), if we would “cleanse

the temple” we must cast out whatever defiles God’s people (e.g., false doctrine, immorality, etc.). If the “temple cleansers” are really earnest about that necessary work, let them join those of us who for some years have been exposing and refuting false teachers and their damnable false doctrines and practices. Let them join us in calling for the scriptural purging of the church of those saints who have yielded to the works of the flesh. Here is the real temple cleansing that needs to be done.

No, selling good, faith-building materials on or in church property desecrates nothing sacred. This is why sound and scholarly brethren have been doing it and allowing it for many years. Making good books, tapes, CDs, and DVDs conveniently available to members of the church actually helps keep the temple (church) undefiled (pure). If anything, we need not less, but more of it.

Denton, TX

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A Request Concerning Fellowship

Gary W. Summers

The Bellview Church of Christ in Pensacola, Florida published an article by Johnny Oxendine (8-24-09) that raises again some important points concerning fellowship. The intriguing title is: "The Hybrid Church and Why It Has a Real Chance to Succeed With Some." He leads off with the following two paragraphs:

The title has probably caused some of you to have a puzzled look or a frown on the brow. What could possibly be meant by this phrase, the hybrid church? Today, we want to introduce you to this phenomenon with the understanding that this is a real amalgamation in the church. The hybrid church is a newcomer in the brotherhood. It is composed of brethren of all stripes who share a common denominator to not pass judgment on the activities, errors, false teaching, or associations (fellowship) of others.

Hybrid means "a thing made by combining two different elements, a mixture"; these newly-combined elements are quickly transforming into a sector that will shortly (if they continue on this path) not resemble the Lord's church at all. There will probably be some identifiable remnants remaining, but what we see in the New Testament will be radi-

cally changed as a result of this new hybrid (or Greek mythology Hydra) church.

He then brings into view "the most recent flyer advertising the Tahoe Family Encampment" (July 2009), and he comments on the names that are listed on it, wondering how it could be that, if they are on the same program, they are not in fellowship with each other. This is a good question, which some Scriptures later in this article touch upon. Are brethren giving thought concerning whom they fellowship? How far does fellowship extend? If one fellowships a man affiliated with a certain work, is he not also fellowshiping it?

The issue of **fellowship** ought to be of concern to all of us, since it is a Biblical topic. It has not been all that long since both preachers and churches agreed concerning what the Bible taught. Now someone looking at us would probably wonder, "What do these people believe?" To demonstrate how things have changed, when I attended the Joplin Unity Summit over 25 years ago, someone asked me (before I had figured out what the true purpose for the occasion was) if I thought

that Carl Ketcherside would be there. My immediate response was, "Not if they want anyone to take this unity effort seriously." Ketcherside, like Leroy Garrett, had a name associated with compromise. Both men emphasized unity at the expense of truth; one wonders if the same thing is not now recurring.

Rubel Shelly decided in the early 1980s that there were Big "F" and little "f" forms of fellowship, which basically resulted in fellowshiping false teachers. Even though Alan Highers wrote a book specifically against that concept and William Woodson wrote against "change agents" in the church, it seems that the idea of a broader fellowship has currently gained ground—even among those who once opposed it. So here is a crucial question:

At what point does association with false teachers and false doctrine constitute sin in the sight of the Lord?

Brethren in most areas of the country need answers to that question. In Orlando, for example, every two years there is a Spiritual Growth Workshop. Are all the speakers flat-out liberals? No, but

Continued on Page 3



Notes From The Editor

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Questions

There are some questions that are simply too difficult for some to answer. In this statement, I am not referring to loaded questions like, "Have you stopped beating your wife?" These are actually complex questions where it is not really one question but two. If one response is given, no matter which question it answers, the other question has an implied answer that may not be true. These questions are often based on a false assumption, which is what sticks in the listeners' mind. However, we are not discussing those types of questions, we are dealing with precisely stated questions that can and should be easily answered.

An example of a question too hard for the atheist to answer is: "Which came first: the chicken or the egg?" Of course, the theist knows the answer to this question by reading Genesis 1. In reading what God says, we learn that God created the animals and in doing so He created them with an age appearance. (Even though they might have been 1 minute old, they were created full grown and an appearance of age.) Thus, the one who believes in God answers the question with the chicken came first.

The atheist, however, has a difficult time answering this question and will often simply ridicule the question without ever answering such. The reason they must ridicule

the question is because they cannot answer it. In denying God, they must take evolution hypothesis as to origins. When asked which came first, the chicken or the egg, it makes the evolutionist decide on a mechanism for evolution. They have two choices: Natural Selection or Random Genetic Mutations. If they answer the question, the chicken came first, they are then arguing for Natural Selection. However, while Natural Selection (also known as "survival of the fittest") can explain the survival of the fittest, it cannot explain how they arrive. Dr. Colin Patterson said in a radio interview: "No one has ever produced a species by mechanisms of natural selection." Thus, they cannot answer that the chicken came first.

If the evolutionist answers that the egg came first, then they are arguing for Random Genetic Mutations (also called Punctuated Equilibrium, Quantum evolution, or the "hopeful monster theory"). Mutations are changes in the genetic code resulting in a change in the organism itself. While mutations do occur within limits, they are random, rarely occur, generally harmful (good ones must be protected and preserved or it will fade into extinction), and they are unable to create anything only change existing structures. Dr. Stephen Jay Gould said, "A mutation doesn't produce major new raw material. You don't make a new species by mutating the species.... That's a common idea people have; that evolution is due to random mutations. A mutation is not the cause of evolutionary change." Thus, they cannot answer that the egg came first. The chicken or the egg is simply too difficult for the atheist and evolutionist to answer.

Another question that is too dif-

ficult for many to answer regards ones salvation. I have asked several this question: "In Mark 16:16 did Jesus put baptism before or after salvation?" Most have simply refused to answer the question, however one person after being pressed to answer it finally gave the answer, "both" (he did not and would not elaborate on his response). The reason this question is so difficult for some to answer is because of the false doctrine to which they are holding. Many religious groups hold that salvation comes prior to baptism. Yet, as recorded in Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Some are quick to respond that Jesus did not say, "but he that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned." For some strange reason, they think that this offsets what Jesus said to be saved. However, when forced to return to the original question whether Jesus placed baptism before or after salvation, they simply have no answer. They refuse to give up their false doctrine regarding salvation coming prior to baptism. Thus, the question as to where Jesus put baptism in Mark 16:16 is too difficult for them to answer.

There are some members of the Lord's church who have decided a question is too difficult to answer. When some are asked: "Did Dave Miller sin in his sermon advocating elder reevaluation/reaffirmation and the practice of such following," some

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

simply cannot answer the question. Some brethren have determined to support Dave Miller (and thus Apologetics Press), no matter what. Initially some denied that it ever took place. Then some denied that brother Miller taught what he did. After brother Miller came out with a statement regarding the events, some said that he had repented, while others stated that he had not done anything for which to repent (and some said both things). I heard a tape of one lectureship in which several men were answering the question about elder reevaluation/reaffirmation; one brother say it was wrong and then another brother get up and say it was a matter of option (and these men are associated with

the same work). The fact is that brother Dave Miller advocated a practice, which practice was acted upon, that has no Bible authority. However, to some, this becomes too difficult to answer because they wish to continue to fellowship and support Dave Miller and Apologetics Press. It is a fact that Dave Miller advocated a practice for which there is no Bible authority and then the Brown Trail congregation implemented the practice. The next question is if brother Miller repented of such. His statement (that some took as a statement of repentance) was not of repentance but it was a statement of explanation. He has refused to repent of the sermon or the actions following the sermon. God, through

the apostle of love, says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, 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 9-11).

Brethren, there are some questions that are not precisely stated as there are some questions that we might not know the answer to. However, when faced with questions like the ones stated here, we need to be honest enough to answer the questions and properly apply Bible principles to such.

MH

Continued from Page 1
many are. For each event they invite men like Randall Harris and John Clayton—both of whom have been well-documented to be unsound with respect to many of their doctrines. Liberals attend this gathering of wolves, but brethren from non-liberal congregations also go! Why is this not fellowship on their part with error and false teaching?

The Jerusalem Spiritual Growth Workshop

Had there been a "workshop" in Jerusalem and a famous Sadducean orator was teaching that there were no angels and no resurrection would Jesus have attended to "learn" from such a person? No. Had He been there at all, it would have been to oppose the doctrine. However, Jesus did not go to their conferences; they came to Him (Mat. 22:23-33).

Consider this foolishness a bit further. Suppose all the groups in Jerusalem "agreed to disagree" and

have an ecumenical forum. A prominent Pharisee could speak on topics such as "The Value of Manmade Traditions," "How to Make Long Prayers and Subtly Disfigure Your Face While Fasting," and "Keeping Oneself Outwardly Pure." The Sadducees could have someone speak on "Is the Rich Man in Torment?" The zealots could have classes on "Organizing Your Own Private Militia," and the Herodians could do "Accepting Without Question Every Government Program."

The Galilee Family Encampment

If such an absurd event ever occurred, would Jesus or His apostles have advised anyone to attend? If not, why not? Perhaps after the destruction of Jerusalem, some brethren hosted a Galilee Family Encampment. Of course, Paul, Peter, and most of the other apostles were already martyred, but what would Paul have thought if he had

seen the apostle John on a program with Hymenaeus and Alexander, who had made shipwreck of the faith and had been withdrawn from (1 Tim. 1:18-20), lecturing on the grace of God? Paul would be no more kindly disposed toward Hymenaeus and Philetus attempting to prove that the resurrection was already past (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

While scheduling this great annual event, no one would want to omit those two-legged dogs of the mutilation (Phi. 3:1-2, 18-19), and would not Peter be surprised to see certain liberty promisers on the program, if he were alive (2 Pet. 2:17-22)? No encampment would be complete without scoffers who insisted that all things had continued the same since the fathers fell asleep (3:1-9). Suggested topics for the Galilee Family Encampment are: "The Pleasures of Carnal Living," "The Earth is Eternal," and "Did You Miss the Resurrection?" What

a great time everyone would have! To make it complete, we just need to add: “What Did Paul Really Mean When He Said to Mark False Teachers?” Perhaps one of these illustrious figures could write a book: *Big F and Little f F(f)alse Teachers*.

Of course, if such an event had actually been scheduled in the first century, everyone would want to know: “Why is the apostle John associated with this endeavor?” Obviously, he would not, since he wrote: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Concerning this same group of men, the disciple whom Jesus loved wrote:

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Defenders of such encampments and workshops often say, “They will not be allowed to teach error here.” Oh! Apparently many of us have not seen that exceptive clause in 2 John 9-11. Which part of the passage is it that warns against encouraging or using false teachers but then supplies the caveat: “But you can greet them and let them speak if they don’t present any error”? Under this logic Hymenaeus and Philetus could be asked to speak on the virgin birth, the Deity of Christ, a few dozen other topics. Of course, if they were used, faithful brethren would assume (erroneously) they were sound men in fellowship with the church.

What Makes Someone a False Teacher?

At this point it might be helpful for several brethren to offer a definition—if it is different from the one following. My philosophy is that a false teacher is one who teaches any specific doctrine that—if believed and followed—would cause someone to lose his salvation.

Teaching that the resurrection was already past was overthrowing the faith of some; therefore, Paul considered it harmful to the well-being of the church. Peter showed the dangers of any doctrine that leads brethren into being carnal rather than spiritual. He also said that convincing brethren that the Lord would not be returning was deadly. For one thing, it would make everyone relax their moral guidelines rather than watch and pray (Mat. 24:42-51). Paul adamantly opposed those who tried to bind circumcision and other parts of the Law of Moses upon Christians. He said those who believed such a thing had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4)! Jesus taught that religion that focused on externals was useless—that faith must be genuine. Any efforts to set aside God’s holy Word He condemned.

In light of these Scriptures, what was brother Oxendine’s complaint? He, like many of us, marveled at the conglomeration of teachings held by those who spoke and fellowshipped at that event. He mentioned Brad Harrub of Focus Press. To my knowledge, no one has ever ascribed a teaching error to this brother. However, he has been associating himself with the other speakers on that program who do.

One of the men who speaks annually is Truitt Adair of the Sunset Bible Institute. Some of Sunset’s

instructors have taught error on divorce and remarriage for decades. Is that something over which a person could lose his soul? Yes! If two people are committing adultery, having been unscripturally divorced and married again (as with Herod and Herodias), then they are in an unlawful situation that will cause them to be lost—unless they repent of it by leaving the situation. What Adair himself believes may be the truth, but the institution he heads has had false teachers in it who have never repented. Would Paul fellowship such a one?

Besides, Adair will not condemn error. The following information may be verified by doing an Internet search of Sunset International Bible Studies. Select the “External Studies Overview” from the list of options. It will be first or near the top. In the bar across the top, select “Resources” and under it “Christian Chronicle Interview.” One year Sunset did not participate in the Tulsa Soul-Winning Workshop (a promoter of just about everything liberal), and the *Christian Chronicle* interviewed Truitt Adair. That year they had scheduled to speak on Friday evening Max Lucado and Bob Russell of the Christian Church. Adair commented thus:

We were told by workshop planners that each evening there would be a speaker to represent the “Church of Christ” and one to represent the “Independent Christian Church.” As with any program of this kind, planners endeavor to select speakers and topics that advance the message they are trying to communicate. Though we would have chosen differently, the program and speakers selected by workshop planners seem to be consistent with the purpose and agenda of this year’s workshop as we have understood them in our conversations.

First, one wonders which of these men was supposed to represent the Lord's church. If the answer is Max Lucado, such is preposterous! Second, Adair could find no fault with the program (which is bizarre in itself)—except he would have chosen different speakers. Third, he says the speakers were consistent with their agenda. In this he is correct; Tulsa's "agenda" for years has been **compromise**. Why is Adair not troubled by that? Can sound brethren fellowship him?

The Sharrod Avenue Church of Christ in Florence, Alabama, which Kerry Williams is part of, lists on their Website links to all "Christian" colleges associated (no matter how loosely) with churches of Christ. Why? Most of us would not recommend Abilene, Pepperdine, or Rochester under any circumstances. Perhaps they could explain why they have links to those institutions who have been leaders of apostasy.

Then there is the Edmond Church in Oklahoma. This congregation is associated with Oklahoma Christian University, the *Christian Chronicle*, and the television program, *In Search of the Lord's Way*. Information regarding the university has been plentiful, and all anyone needs to do is to read the newspaper to know that it should be called the Liberal Christian Chronicle. Phil Sanders has written for conservative publications, such as *Think* and *Spiritual Sword*, but now that he is working with *In Search of the Lord's Way*, how is his name **not** to be associated with the liberal Edmond Church and the *Christian Chronicle*? If someone is not a false teacher, can he fellowship those who are?

World Bible School

Glenn Colley was another speaker at Tahoe. If one goes to the website of the West Huntington (Alabama) Church, they have an entire page that spotlights World Bible School as one of their works. If one then goes to worldbibleschool.net, one finds across the top of the page the fifth heading, "church enrichment." On the left-hand side, there are three menus: the second heading is "Info Menu." Click on "Who Are we?" and be prepared to be amazed. The answer is "the Center for Church Resources," which "operates in association with Abilene Christian University" and is directed by Dr. Ian Fair. Under Web Links are ACU, *Christian Chronicle*, and *Headlight*. Does anybody think Glenn Colley is supportive of ACU? No, but why have fellowship with World Bible School, who thinks they are great?

Apologetics Press

Glenn Colley, Memphis School of Preaching, and many other brethren endorse Apologetics Press. No one has ever expressed any complaints against the work that Apologetics Press does. They have some talented people who work for them, and the materials they produce are of good quality. However, the current head of Apologetics Press is Dave Miller, whose name has become synonymous with two false doctrines—the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders, which he defended and never has admitted to be false, and the "marital intent" doctrine that he used to defend a colleague who "married" a cousin to get into the United States, after which they separated. Many brethren protested Bert Thompson's hiring of brother Miller, but the

protests were waved off.

It is true that he issued a "statement" concerning these things in 2005, but the statement does not include any admission of wrongdoing. One of the elders who oversees Gospel Broadcasting Network asked me: "Even if it were true that Dave taught these doctrines, would it be worth splitting the church over?" Of course, I was shocked by such a question. One of the first departures from God's Word in the second century involved false teaching regarding the eldership. How can one fellowship a brother who teaches that elders can remain or retire according to the results of an approval rating by the congregation? (Another GBN worker wondered in their last bulletin why they do not have their 7,000 monthly contributors yet.)

So now we return to the original question, written in bold on page one. It is a serious question. If anyone holds a different position regarding fellowship than what has been set forth here or can explain the liberal connections that some have, it would be wonderful to hear it. If ours is wrong, then it needs to be corrected. Anyone who wants to write anonymously is free to do so. Many of us would like to concentrate more on love and unity, but we did not originate these false doctrines—and we are not going to fellowship them. Any legitimate rationale would be helpful. Until something changes, we will maintain our current position, **marking** (rather than **fellowshipping**) false teachers (Rom. 16:17-18) and those who fellowship them (2 John 9-11).

Winter Park, FL

Editor's Note: While this article by brother Summers is a few years old, it is still relevant to the events of today.

Old Time Religion—How to Study Bible

J. D. Tant

If you are sick and the doctor tells you to take medicine and fails to tell you the kind to take to benefit your disease, he has done you little good. If you are in trouble and the lawyer tells you that you have violated the law and must suffer the penalty, yet will not tell you the law violated nor the penalty you must suffer, he is not your friend. If the teacher tells you that you must study grammar or arithmetic and does not tell you how to learn the difference between addition and subtraction, or how to tell a noun from a verb, you would consider him a poor instructor.

So it is with the study of the Bible. In medicine, one treatment will be good for small pox, another for fever, and so on throughout all diseases. If a doctor gives only one kind for every disease, he will soon be a failure. Also in law, each crime has its own penalty, and no one will consider that a person must suffer the same penalty for each and every crime. So when I come to the study of the Bible, I must learn that it is a large book, that it has been man's guide for thousands of years, and the things God ordained one man or nation should do are not necessarily applicable to you and me.

God ordained that Noah should build an Ark, that Abraham should sacrifice his son Isaac, that Moses should make a brazen snake, that the Jews should burn animal sacrifice, but never did He ordain that you and I should do these things. Then the great question is: **How must I study the Bible to understand it?**

Divisions of the Old Testament

Taking the Bible as a whole there

are 66 books combined in one. Thirty-nine are in the Old Bible and 27 in the New Testament. When Jesus was on earth, we did not have the New Testament written just the Old Testament. When Jesus referred to the Old Testament, He divided it into three divisions, and said, "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

Thus, the Son of God subdivides the Old Testament into three divisions, and calls one part Law. I ask myself, "What is law?" I find it is a rule of action given from one party to govern another. I then go to the Old Bible and commencing at Genesis I read to Job (seventeen books in all), including the Law of Moses and telling of God's dealings with man during that age. I find that all of these books come under the head of Law. Yet, not one of them tells you and me what we must do to be saved for they were given to different people for different purposes. A man can no more find the plan of salvation in these seventeen books than an American citizen can find out his duty by reading the law of Germany.

Again I take up the second department of the Old Bible that Jesus calls Psalms and find that in the sacred poetry of the Old Bible, or Psalms, there are at least five books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. I read through these five poetical books and find many lessons on moral deportment and how they worshipped God, but not one of them tells me what I must do to be saved. I can no more find the plan of salvation

in these five books than I can find a remedy for snakebite in medicine that is given to cure small pox.

I then read again and find in the third department, Prophets, seventeen books in all commencing with Isaiah and closing with Malachi. Thus I close the Old Bible and no one can any more find the plan of salvation there, for you and me, than you can find out how to get the remedy for small pox out of a snakebite medicine.

Divisions of the New Testament

This brings me then out of the Old Testament into the New Testament to find out the plan of salvation as taught by the Son of God. So I turn to the New Testament and read the first four books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In the 20th chapter and 31st verse of the book of John he tells us, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." So in these four books I learn that a man must believe to be saved.

I find that Acts comes next and this book tells me what people had to do to be saved. So I take this book and turn to Acts 15:7 where Peter says that God made choice of him that the Gentiles should hear the Gospel and believe. I then turn to Acts 16:31, and when the jailer wanted to know what he must do to be saved, Paul told him to believe on the Lord and he would be saved and all his house. Then I turn to Acts 17:30, and Paul teaches that God commands all men to repent. Then I turn to Acts 8:36 and find they had to confess Christ. I then to

Acts 2:38, and Peter told the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. In Acts 22:16, Ananias told Paul to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins calling on the name of the Lord.

So far in Acts of the Apostles we have learned that to be saved men had to:

1. Hear the Gospel (Acts 15:6-9)
2. Believe the Gospel (Acts 16:31)
3. Repent (Acts 17:30)
4. Confess Christ (Acts 8:36-38)
5. Be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38)

These items made them Christians.

Then we turn over and commence with the letter to the church at Rome and continue until we read twenty-one letters of instruction to Christians telling them how they should act, how they should live, how they should worship, and how

they should work to reach heaven or their eternal home after death.

These twenty-one letters bring me down to Revelation, the last book in the New Testament. I can read it and learn many things of the beautiful home God has prepared for those who love Him and find out all sickness, sorrow and death will pass away. In the last chapter and fourteenth verse, I learn if said home is ever mine, I must do His commandments. In the 19th and 20th verses I also learn that I must not add to nor take from the Word of God.

So I find the New Testament a complete guide. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell me what I must believe to be saved. Acts tells me what I must do to be saved, and the next twenty-one letters to church members tell me how I must live after being saved. Revelation tells me of my Eternal Home after the

Judgment.

Deceased

The Apostolic Times, Aug 1948, pp 164-165.

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Due to the postage increase that went into effect on January 27, the cost for mailing the Bellview Lectures books has had to increase. The cost of mailing one book will now be \$3.50. This will affect the hardcover books and the 2012 soft-cover book. The postage chart for the 2010 book is listed below.

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Praying to Jesus—Odd (?) Connections

Johnny Oxendine

Reading through the articles that related to an earlier discussion we began, but stopped, I noticed what is either an odd coincidence or something I had given less attention to in the reading at that time. In Andrew Hallenbeck's book, *Praying to Jesus: An Examination*, there are a number of people that he mentions for the parts they played in making it possible for him to complete his work. He has mentions of praise for his work by Neal Pollard, Wayne Jackson, and two men on the Apologetics Press staff (Eric Lyons and Kyle Butt). Hallenbeck then graciously makes acknowledgements to those who played an active part in the completion of his project: Mark Teske, Wayne Jackson, Weylan Deaver, and Dave Miller. I was then recalling that Miller had recommended Mac Deaver for a debate, and that Pollard had spoken at Weylan Deaver's congregation not long ago. Miller himself had spoken at East Main (Stockton, CA) twice since the 2005 debacle that began with the reshuffling at Apologetics Press. Is there something else afoot that involves a wider acceptance of Deaver's doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism than had been acknowledged,

or is this simply birds of a feather?

In the book titled *When Is An "Example" Binding?*, brother Thomas B. Warren wrote the following:

It is clear that the basic rule of a sound Biblical hermeneutic involves both adequate induction (the gathering of the needed relevant data or evidence) and correct deduction (the drawing only of such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence) (96).

Later, on page 103, brother Warren wrote:

In order to determine whether a specific passage in the Bible can be used to prove a thing to be binding (obligatory) on men today, correct use of logic (the principles of valid reasoning) must be made in connection with the total context (the specific statement under consideration, the immediate context, and the remote context) of all needed relevant passages in the totality of the Bible.

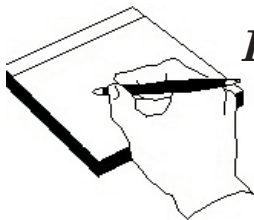
Gary Workman commented on the main passages that many use in advocating praying to Jesus. He shows these passages are misused in their application and do not teach what some want them to say. He writes:

1 Timothy 1:12 has been used to support praying to Jesus since Paul said (in the KJV), "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord." However, this is not a

literal rendering but rather, "I have thanks." The expression speaks of Paul's thankful heart, his feeling of gratitude, rather than the overt action of prayer. Even the KJV rendered the identical expression in Hebrews 12:28 as "having grace," meaning "be thankful." On the other hand, "thanksgiving" rendered "unto God" (1 Thes. 3:9). Jesus is Lord, but we give God our thanks (Rm. 14:6-9).

1 Timothy 2:5 has been adduced as an implication that we might pray to Jesus since He is our Mediator "between God and men." But this does not mean that we speak to Jesus and then ask Him to speak to God. Our Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate, and High Priest said, "Pray to thy Father" (Mt. 6:6). And early Christians understood it. They bowed their knees "unto the Father" (Eph. 3:14) and "lifted up their voice to God" (Acts 4:24). The Old Covenant also had a mediator and high priest (Moses and Aaron), but Jews could pray to neither one. We do not have an inherent right to pray to our Mediator any more than they could pray to theirs. One should no more pray to Jesus as Mediator or Intercessor than he should pray to the Holy Spirit who specifically intercedes for us in prayer (Rm. 8:26-27) (Workman 481).

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

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Hatcher**

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How Long?

In Revelation 6 the souls of those who were under the altar who had been slain for the Word of God “cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (6:10). These saints were told “that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled” (6:11). These saints had been martyred for the cause of Christ and desired justice for what they had suffered. They are told they needed to “rest yet for a little season.” *Rest* comes from a word meaning, “to keep quiet, of calm and patient expectation” (Thayer).

When Paul wrote to the Thesalonians, he reminded them of God’s righteousness regarding the afflictions they were enduring. “So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer” (2 The. 1:4-5). Suffering affliction shows that the Christian is worthy, both of the church and heaven’s home. However, God also wanted these persecuted Christians to realize that He would repay their

afflictions. “Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (1:6-9).

In both of these examples, those faithful saints were desirous of justice. They were being or had been persecuted or afflicted for being a Christian, some having been put to death as a result of their faithfulness (Rev. 2:10). Thus, they wanted, not vengeance, but justice to be served against those who persecuted them. They desired the Judge of all the earth to do right (Gen. 18:25) relating to them and what they had endured. God tells them not to worry and to be patient; He will take vengeance. He will repay those who persecuted with affliction. “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).

There can be no doubt but those souls who were under the altar having been slain for the Word of God wanted God to take vengeance for them, and they desired He do so now. They were tired of waiting on God to repay those who had put them to death. Brethren, are we so much different than they? Brethren have suffered various types of persecution through the years. There are those who have suffered physical violence because of the hatred of the darkness of the light. In our society at this time, we do not generally

suffer physical violence. However, we do suffer today when we live godly lives: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). Thus, we often wonder ourselves, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge” us?

We are surrounded by an evil and adulterous generation. It is difficult to go anywhere today where fornication, adultery, immodesty, drinking, smoking, illegal drugs, and the list can be multiplied many times over. These things are pushed in our faces on a daily basis. In the long ago, Peter said that Lot was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked” (2 Pet. 2:7). Likewise, the righteous today are vexed with the filthy lifestyles of the wicked today. Several decades ago, preachers were making the statements that if things continued as they were in the United States, God would have to destroy us or apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. Things have not improved but only gotten worse. The homosexuality that vexed Lot is on full display in our nation as well. Thus, those trying to live that godly lifestyle and be pleasing to God often cry out, “How long, O Lord?”

Christians are also vexed and troubled by denominationalist. Religions that claim to be of Christ abound. They teach false doctrine and cause the one true church to be troubled. We continue to have to take a stand against all false

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

teaching. We are warned that it will come, and it did. Paul would not give place to the false teaching of his day, “no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:5). We must be like the apostle Paul in this regard in continuing to stand against any and all false doctrine. It continues to trouble us and seemingly gets worse all the time. For example, Peter Ruckman, a Baptist of this area, refers to those of the Lord’s church as being waterdogs because we teach that one must be baptized in water for the remission of their sins to be saved. Another person when asked the question: “Did Jesus place salvation before or after baptism in (Mark 16:16)?” responded by saying, “here we go with satans [sic] favorite verse.” After trying to avoid the force of what Jesus said, this person added, “I know you most likely will not understand this, being some peoples brains are flooded with water.” These are simply a taste of the ridicule and persecution that the Lord’s church has suffered through the years. Thus, the church often cries out to God, “How long, O Lord?”

However, what possibly hurts

more than others is when those of our own will turn against us and persecute us. The sweet singer of Israel, David, wrote of this with prophetic overtones: “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me” (Psa. 41:9). Brethren went through this a few decades ago as liberalism began to spread. Faithful brethren would expose the liberalism and then be attacked by those liberals as being moss-backed, vultures, along with other comments. Faithful brethren even then wondered, “How long, O Lord?”

When certain brethren took a stand for truth and exposed Dave Miller and his false doctrine, many of those who were considered “familiar friend[s]” began a concentrated effort to destroy the faithful. They assassinated the character of the faithful by telling others we were lying, vile, along with other abhorrent comments. There was a concerted effort not to deal with facts in an open aboveboard way, but instead to keep everything secretive and simply gossip and backbite those standing for Truth. Why was this

done? Because according to some, Apologetics Press (of which Dave Miller became executive director) was too important to fail. To these brethren, Apologetics Press became more important than the church itself (this is nothing new as we saw the same thing happening with the “Christian” colleges, then schools of preaching). They did not have facts, so they resorted to character assassination causing the faithful to wonder “How long, O Lord?”

The Lord’s answer to the question remains the same as it was to the souls of those who were under the altar who had been slain for the Word of God. “Rest yet for a little season.” We can have the same confidence as Job in the long ago: “For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26). Faithful brethren, beloved of God, we can take comfort in knowing that at some point God will take vengeance for us and we will stand justified before God.

MH

John Waddey

Ken Chumbley

Today I received in the mail John Waddey’s “Christianity: *then & now*.” While this paper has some good articles that he has written, I find it ironic (given his own situation regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage) that he is unable or unwilling to let the light of the truth shine on his own error that has serious implications for the church and the souls of men and women.

For instance in his front page article: “A Serious Word To Every Man Who Occupies A Pulpit,” he writes concerning some preachers:

They have no courage, no will to stand up and fight the good fight of Jesus. Sin and error can flourish in the [their—K.J.C.] presence and they preach over, under and around it. If they are personally challenged, they will hide and try to avoid the battle, they will sue for peace and of-

fer to compromise, but to stand fast in the faith and fight for Christ’s way (1 Cor. 15:58) is beyond them. This explains some of the difficulties now besetting many of our congregations.

With Waddey, when it comes to being challenged concerning his false teaching and practice regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage, as I, and others, have found, he “will hide and try to avoid the battle.” He will not respond to answer challenges to

his position and you can search his magazine and his web site and you will find he avoids **any** discussion of the topic as if it is not an issue in the church because of numerous errors on the subject.

Later in the article he quotes Martin Luther:

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely the point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, then I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing him. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield beside is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at the point.

Has not the world and the devil attacking, and have been, attacking marriage for some time? Yet, Waddley is as “silent as the tomb” on the topic. At the end of the article, he asks the question: “My brother in Christ, as this war rages, what would your classification be?” Perhaps he needs to look into the mirror and ask himself the same question.

Elsewhere in the paper he writes concerning homosexuality:

Dark clouds hang heavy over the kingdom of Christ. Within traitors and saboteurs work to bring the Lord’s church into conformity with denominationalism. Those who know our history know how de-

structive such false brethren can be. Without, the sinful world is waging war against Christ, his Word and his church. The steady advance of homosexuality will soon be putting direct pressure on the Lord’s church to compromise their faith and accept their deviate lifestyle.

What about false teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage that has been taught over the past few decades? Has not the prevalence of divorce and remarriage in the world been “putting direct pressure on the Lord’s church to compromise their faith”? Clearly, it has and we have seen its destructive work in congregation after congregation where it is now acceptable to have in many congregations those who have divorced and remarried contrary to the Lord’s teaching (Mat. 5:32; 19:9) in fellowship. Thus, elders and preachers, including John Waddey, who have promoted false teaching and the acceptance of those who are in unscriptural marriages, have compromised the Faith. Can Waddey not see that by his compromise of the truth regarding divorce and remarriage, he is leaving himself, as are others, he has opened the way for compromise on the Bible’s teaching against homosexuality and so-called “same-sex marriage.”

A further article, “Abilene’s ‘Bar Church’” deals with the Southern Hills church in Abilene, Texas and its new work in a bar. In that article,

Waddey asks the following:

Will the preacher of the bar church deliver lessons on the Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5:19-21)? If any of the patrons of the bar respond for salvation will he tell them they must first repent (Acts 2:28)? Will he explain that repentance will cause them to turn away from strong drink and the corrupting influence of bars?

Does John Waddey preach lessons on the “Works of the Flesh” such as adultery and fornication (Gal. 5:19-21). If any respond who are in unscriptural, adulterous marriages, “will he tell them they must first repent”? “Will he explain that repentance will cause them to turn away from” those adulterous relationships or will he tell them that they can remain in such marriages? By his own practice, he has shown that he believes that one does not have to come out of such adulterous relationships but that they can remain in them. Thus, what he indicates they should do in the “bar church” he does not practice when it comes to the matter of adultery.

One word seems to fit John Waddey—hypocrite! He sets himself forth as one who is sound in the faith, yet he is not. However, to those who do not know him he comes across as sound and since he does not discuss marriage, divorce and remarriage, many are deceived. John Waddey needs to be exposed as the false teacher and hypocrite that he is.

Belvedere, SC

Continued from Page 1

Previously, he had commented on two other passages, writing:

Acts 7:59 and Revelation 22:20 have Stephen saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” and John exclaiming, “come, Lord Jesus.” If these requests authorize us to pray to Jesus, do requests made to heavenly elders and

angels in Revelation (7:13-14; 10:8-9) authorize us to pray to them? Let us remember that both Stephen and John were inspired men who were caught up in heavenly visions in which Jesus was personally manifested. Therefore, their statements can in no way serve as a pattern for our practice today (Workman 480).

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San Mateo, CA

Editor's Note: Recently several brethren received an email from brother Jerry Brewer. As explained in the email, it came as a result of his receiving the "Polishing The Pulpit" program for 2013. I am reproducing his email with a couple of the comments other brethren made in response.

What A Difference!

What a difference ten years make! Like many of you, I just received this year's program for "Polishing The Pulpit" whose workshop directors are "under the oversight of the elders of the Jacksonville church of Christ." Thus it comes as no surprise that part of the workshop is dedicated to the promotion of "House To House, Heart To Heart" which is published by that church.

The big difference is that of persons speaking and teaching in this workshop who would never have had such fellowship with other speakers ten years ago. Phil Sanders, who has said Independent Christian Church folks are "our brethren," Neal Pollard, Chad Dollahite, Eric Lyons, and others are joined on the program by Robert Taylor, B. J. Clarke, James Meadows, John Moore, and others. I suppose this is a practicum in Richard Melson's topic of, "Making our congregations more multi-cultural."

Other topics include conflict management, depression in children, cancer, lessons from the life of Alexander Campbell, weight loss for a healthier marriage, sex issues (when spouses have different sexual appetites), taking a risk and asking someone out, what you should know about marijuana, understanding sibling rivalry, what you need to know about going to a Christian college, Sexting-flirting gone too far, shopping for clothes on a budget, learning to communicate again like we did when we were courting, home management (topics such as meal planning, organizing toys, planning our day), Nationally Standard-

ized Achievement Tests, How I lost weight and am keeping it off, when a same-sex couple comes to your church services, a Christian response to world overpopulation, and Real world ideas of how to improve our families' physical health through nutrition in an age of fast food.

These are just a sampling of topics to be covered and I must confess that I have never read about any of these in the Bible. In fact, I would have been (and still would be) embarrassed to broach some of these topics, and certainly not from the pulpit! But, I suppose these "brethren" want to be "with it" in a postmodern world and have decided to toss the Bible out the window for these things.

I would just as soon take some fine old shoe polish and smear it on the pulpit at the church building, as to participate in "Polishing The Pulpit's" mix of a psychiatric seminar-home economics class-physical fitness convention-sex education conference.

Yes, what a difference ten years makes. I do not believe some of these people would have even considered participating in such ten years ago. But, then, I may be wrong. They may have just "come out of the closet" on fellowship issues.

Jerry Brewer

P. S. And to feed you all this social gospel pabulum, they will charge you "only" \$215.00 for each adult, and \$100.00 for each teen who is not attending with parents.

Jess Whitlock's Response

I have just read your report and

wow, what a difference! I have not seen the program for this year's "Polishing the Pulpit." They probably expunged my name knowing that I would not be able to afford \$215.00 on this hogwash!

As I looked over some of the topics I could not help but wonder what in the world the speaker would use for a **text**? "Weight loss for a healthier marriage; asking someone out; sexting-flirting; shopping for clothes on a budget [that might be good for Mrs. Obama]; organizing toys [now there is a real Biblical topic if ever I heard one!]; how I lost weight [now that is getting too personal]; when a same-sex couple comes to your church [first of all, I do not have a church, and second I would change the announced topic and address the sin]; and nutrition in an age of fast food."? Who in the world came up with this nonsense and what does it have to do with the Word of the living God?

The names of Phil Sanders, Neal Pollard, Chad Dollahite, and Eric Lyons were not a surprise to me, they have been devoid of the Truth for years! But, I was shocked to see such names as Robert Taylor, B.J. Clarke, and James Meadows. As you noted, 10 years ago they would not have allowed their names to be associated with such inter-denominational topics and sheer stupidity as this!

I would be downright embarrassed to have my name associated with these men and these ludicrous topics. I suspect Billy Graham would be ashamed to speak on most of these things. This pulpit is too

good for fine old-fashioned shoe polish! Maybe it would be all right to invest in some tar and feathers!

The nonsense about charging \$215.00 a head really reveals what this program is all about. When you and I started out as “young preachers” you could attend a lectureship, a Gospel meeting, a preacher’s forum, or whatever and hear the truth and the Lord’s people would not dare to charge a dime for teaching the Truth! But, then it is apparent that “Polishing the Pulpit” is **not** teaching the Truth any longer, so they can charge whatever exorbitant amount they desire.

Lord come quickly,

Jess Whitlock

Dub Mowery’s Response

It is hard to believe that Robert Taylor, Jr. would be involved in such. Yet when he would not back out of continuing to support Apologetic Press when Dave Miller, a false

teacher, became its director, Robert and some other brethren who were once considered sound in the Faith began the journey of compromise. Robert and some others who continued to support Apologetic Press had once spoken out against the Re-evaluation/Reaffirmation of elders. I am not aware of any of them who still speak out against that false teaching and practice. It has happened over and over again; once brethren are willing to compromise on matters of truth, then it evidently becomes easier the next time.

Dub Mowery

Dub McClish’s Response

First, let me state my full agreement with your assessment of both the topics and of the enlarged fellowship practices involved with the speaker variety. Second, my immediate reaction, upon reading the laundry list of social programs, was that it sounds just like ‘The Hills’ (former-

ly Richland Hills) list of programs they have offered the “community” for several years. The PTP guys slipped up, though: They failed to get lecturers on small engine repair to help folks keep their lawn mowers purring and one for single sisters on basic auto maintenance. Maybe you should write Allen Webster these suggestions. It might not be too late for him to add these to the slate.

All of this is beyond sickening and is symptomatic of spiritual heart problems that go much deeper than this program. I believe these brethren who planned and/or who participate in this three-ring religious circus are lost to the Cause we love—and that some of us thought many of these loved before the fateful year of 2005.

Yours in the Cause,

Dub McClish

Characteristics of Man in Sin

Danny Douglas

“Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities” (Jude 8—KJV). “Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries” (Jude 8—NKJV).

“Yet in like manner” identifies the conduct of these to whom the writer alludes with those of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain. “An their dreaming” they (1) defile the flesh, (2) set at naught dominion, and (3) rail at dignities. They lived in a dreamy world of impurity; they defiled the flesh by sins unspeakably vile (cf. Rom. 1:18-32); they exhibited contempt for all authority, whether civil or divine; and they did not hesitate to speak evil of men though they

occupied high places (Guy N. Woods).

They Are “Filthy Dreamers”

“All sinners are spiritually asleep; their carnal activity is as it were a dream (1 Thess 5:6-7)” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown). “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 The. 5:5-6). Indeed, those who are caught up in sin are spiritually asleep and are in a dream world that is out of touch with reality. The truth of the Gospel is that which causes man to wake up, and see his condition before God. Hence, Paul urgently warns men to wake up and come out of sin. “Awake to righteousness, and sin not”

(1 Cor. 15:34). “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. 5:14).

“The Greek word (ἐνυπνιάζω) means *to dream*; and is applied to these persons as holding doctrines and opinions which sustained the same relation to truth which dreams do to good sense. Their doctrines were the fruits of mere imagination, foolish vagaries and fancies” (Albert Barnes). Indeed, the doctrines of men are the fruit of their imaginations, and are not of God. Therefore, they are false. Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees: “But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). To Titus, Paul

spoke of “commandments of men, that turn from the truth” (Tit. 1:14). Paul warned Timothy: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

They “Defile the Flesh”

Those in sin: “Pollute themselves; give indulgence to corrupt passions and appetites” (A. Barnes). They “walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government” (2 Pet. 2:10). The sinful dreamer ceases to reason correctly and to have the proper estimation of his soul’s worth and the seriousness of matters eternal. The Scripture warns concerning children of God who go back into the ways of the flesh:

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

They “Despise Dominion”

To despise dominion means that they “reject authority” (NKJV). They “set at nought dominion” (ASV). In a similar passage, Peter says of these: “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” (2 Pet. 2:10). Disregard for civil authority, ordained by God (Rom. 13:1-7), indicates disrespect for God, which also impacts the home and the church.

It affects the husband-wife relationship when the wife does not respect her husband and submit to him, and also when the husband does not love His wife as Christ loved the church, because of His failure to submit to Christ (Eph. 5:23-25). Furthermore, a host of problems are created when children fail to respect parental authority, as the Lord instructs (6:1-3). Moreover, many problems arise in the local church when members despise the authority that God has invested in the eldership (Heb. 13:17). If people had a proper respect for the authority of elders such false doctrines as the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders would never have been dreamed up.

However, the root problem of those who “despise dominion” is that they lack respect for the authority of God and His Word. Respect for God

is the foundation of all proper forms of respect. The lack of it leads to the doctrines of men and man-made religious organizations, rather than adhering to God’s will. Recently, a man who has been a member of the Lord’s church for many years informed me that he was leaving the church, and that he said he was going to do things “my way.” This sad statement was to let me know that regardless of what the Bible says, he would do what he wanted!

They “Speak Evil of Dignities”

Obviously those who disdain authority would have no problem with exhibiting contempt for those in authority, either civil or divine. This conveys disrespect for Jesus Christ Himself, Who has all authority “in heaven and on earth” (Mat. 28:18—ASV). The rejection of authority gives them license, in their mind, to indulge in all kinds of fleshly appetites without restraint. Yet, one day they will have to stand before the All-Authoritative Son of God and give account (2 Cor. 5:10). The solution to this problem is: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil” (Ecc. 12:13-14).

Mt. Pleasant, TN

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"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Recommended Reading: *Innovations*

Gary W. Summers

Terminology is being heard in churches of Christ that once might have constituted a foreign language, but now many brethren are speaking, as it were, "the language of Ashdod" (Neh. 13:23-27).

Only a few years ago no one had heard of "praise teams," "drama teams," "baby dedications," and other like designations. But times have changed, and such unbiblical phrases are becoming part of brethren's religious vocabulary. *Innovations*, the 2013 Bellview Lectureship Book, contains rich material that will help the child of God evaluate these matters.

The place to begin such a study is with a discussion of "Biblical Authority," and what better verse should start things off than Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, *It is because there is no light in them.*" Brother Daniel Denham assesses our current condition thus:

The surrender of the absolutes of God for the fickle feelings of humanity by brethren in sundry places have silenced so many of our voices against sin and compromised our allegiance to Christ. Bible au-

thority is again the crucial issue of our day upon which virtually every other issue depends among our people! (1-2).

This chapter stresses the importance of Bible authority—what it means and how it works. All students of the Word must know **how** God authorizes. Without an adequate understanding of direct statement, example, and implication, we have no means by which to evaluate what pleases God and what are innovations of men. This material provides everyone a place to begin and even includes a list of books on this subject so the reader can do further study.

The next chapter discusses the "Silence of the Scriptures." Dub McClish discusses the modern origin of the title (although it is a principle set forth throughout the Scriptures). Thomas Campbell had moved from Ireland to the United States; at the time he was "a licensed preacher in the Old-Light, Anti-Burgher, Seceder wing of the Scottish Presbyterian Church" (17). This designation alone shows the sorry state that denomination-ism was in. Even though Campbell was licensed, "Presbyterian au-

thorities closed their pulpits to him because he preached and practiced too much Bible and too little of the Presbyterian creed" (17-18). It was Campbell who suggested that believers follow this rule: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent" (17).

In other words, it was recognized that we must all subscribe to the authority of the Scriptures rather than the creeds of men. The Bible expresses the principle by which we must abide in Colossians 3:17: "And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (NKJV). In other words, "Where is the Divine authority for doing this or that?" (23). Many denominations want to know where the Bible forbids a practice, but the Bible teaches us to ask where the authority is for what we teach and practice. Some excellent quotes are included in this regard, along with applications of the authority principle.

Terry Hightower weighs in next with what is by far the lengthiest section of the book (68 pages).

Continued on Page 3



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

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Reputation

Reputation is “the beliefs opinions that are generally held about someone or something...a widespread belief that someone or something has a particular habit or characteristic.” We often make a distinction in one’s reputation and his character.

Reputation, we say, is the way people view a person while *character* is what he really is. Both one’s character and reputation are important.

We need a good reputation with God. We might be able to fool people into thinking we are one way when, in reality, we are not that way. However, we cannot fool God. Paul reminds us: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). God knows what we truly are. However, we do need to strive to have a good reputation with God. Paul stated, “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men” (Acts 24:16). The only way we can be void of offense toward God is to live according to His Word. We must do everything by His authority, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17). Our conscience is knowledge within, but that knowledge must be trained according to God’s Word. Then if we should violate that knowledge we have of God’s Word, then it should bother us, but it also damages our

reputation with God.

We also need to have a good reputation with those outside of Christ. This is a requirement for one to be an elder in the Lord’s church: “Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Tim. 3:7). This is true because to a certain extent the reputation of the church will depend on the reputation of its leaders. Thus, if the leaders of the congregation have a bad reputation, then the church itself will also have a bad reputation. (We see from this, among other things, the importance of selecting the right type of man for the work of an elder.)

However, just as elders are to have a “good report of them which are without,” all Christians need to have such a good reputation. In Paul’s great chapter on love, one of the characteristics he gives is: “Doth not behave itself unseemly” (1 Cor. 13:5). Paul is saying that one who loves, behaves properly. When a Christian behaves as a Christian should, then the result will be a good report from those of the world. After the establishment of the church, Luke observes the church: “continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:46-47). Christians were behaving as they should with the results that they had favor or grace (as the word is translated in most places) with the people. We also see that people were being saved by God (added to the one church). This was taking place because brethren had a good report

among the people.

Brethren who live like the world put a black spot on the name of Christ and on the church. How many have tried to work with a non-Christian to convert them to Christ, but one of the main obstacles is their knowledge of a “Christian” brother or sister who does not live as they should? We are to live in such a way that we will be an example of the believers (1 Tim. 4:12). Those Christians who live like the world have lost their saltiness: “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Mat. 5:3). Instead of losing our saltiness, we need to be lights in a world of darkness: “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” (5:14-16). Far too many hid their light under a bushel or else parade their bad works for all to see resulting in a bad reputation for them and for the Lord’s church.

However, sometimes living right leads to false accusations. This happened with the Lord’s prophet, Elijah. “And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

unto him, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*” (1 Kin. 18:17). Of course Elijah was not the troubler of Israel but Ahab was, as Elijah pointed out: “And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim” (18:18). This same type of situation took place with Paul at Thessalonica:

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company,

and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things (Acts 17:2-8).

Jesus lived an exemplary life going about doing good (10:38), yet the Jews crucified Him at the hands of the Romans. Thus, we can live a proper life and yet be falsely accused by the enemies of the Truth.

However, I think it is also important to remember that when we are falsely accused and persecuted by others when we are doing right, that we are to rejoice. Jesus said:

Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Mat. 5:10-12).

It is very easy during those types of times to become discouraged and despondent. We can often do damage to our cause by allowing a sour attitude to permeate our life. Let us always be careful to maintain a good reputation by living in an acceptable way to God, and if falsely accused and abused (even by former friends and brethren), make sure that we maintain a demeanor that will appeal to all and bring them to the right way.

MH

Continued from Page 1

However, “Logic and the Bible” is well worth reading. Most churches of Christ once believed that we all have a responsibility to reason correctly with the Scriptures, but now some have fallen in line with a sign in front of a church building that stated the following:

BEWARE OF REASONING ABOUT
THE BIBLE, JUST **DO IT!**
GLORY PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Hightower writes: “Hyper-emotionalism and irrationalism are never good substitutes for thinking,” nor is being allegedly “led by the Spirit” (32). In response to anticipated criticism of cold logic, Hightower advocates: “in ascertaining truth such ‘cold logic’ is exactly the way to go about it! Heartfelt

emotions should follow **after** knowledge of the truth, not the other way around” (33).

The author provides several examples of logic by which we all operate in our daily living. He even includes as an example the song, “Lipstick On Your Collar,” by Connie Francis (a top five hit in 1959). Many are the quotes pertinent to this subject of the Bible’s use of reasoning, but this one by Charles Hodge expresses it well: “Nothing, therefore, *can be more derogatory to the Bible than the assertion that its doctrines are contrary to reason*” (38), which is something that skeptics have often alleged. Giving significant quotes or commenting on the charts in this lengthy section of the book would fill the brief space

available here. The best advice is to buy the book and read it.

Modern Translations

To understand the Bible correctly, one must have a reliable translation; brother Denham shows the difference in philosophy between literal translations and those claiming to give a dynamic equivalence. [For an analysis of the NIV, see this reviewer’s chapter on the Spiritual Perspectives’ website.] Quotes are included from those who used dynamic equivalence in their versions. A quote from Ryken, however, summarizes the philosophy well:

Most readers of dynamic equivalent translations do not have any understanding as to the liberties that they have taken with the words of the original text. What dynamic trans-

lators give us is a translation plus a commentary, but we have no way of knowing where translation ends and the translation committee's commentary begins (102).

Examples of the way these supposed "dynamic equivalences" have botched and twisted various texts are enlightening. Some of those considered are Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 5:17, Mark 16:9-20, Romans 1:17, 1 Corinthians 7:15, and 1 Corinthians 13:10. The readers will find more than a page full of footnotes and nearly another page of sources listed for further study on this subject.

Direct Operation of the Spirit

Surprisingly—and from an unexpected source—the idea that the Holy Spirit directly impacts the Christian has again surfaced, and it has now led to the position that everyone who becomes a Christian is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Johnny Oxendine ably summarizes what is now called the Deaver heresy and sets forth an excellent refutation of this false doctrine.

Theistic Evolution

This new doctrine is older than most of the others covered in the book, but it is relatively recent in that it had no popularity until the last century. Of great interest are the five reasons why some choose to be theistic evolutionists (those who believe both in God and the theory of evolution) (128-29). Lynn Parker puts together some excellent quotes that show this theory contradicts the Scriptures.

The Social Gospel

Lee Moses not only defines what the social gospel is but traces its development from its origin to the present day (there is more than a page full of sources that he con-

sulted). Just one heading provides a clue to the major thesis here: The "social gospel" "Minimizes Sin, Salvation, and Personal Responsibility" (145). Leaders of every church need to read this chapter to avoid falling into this error, which is quite alluring and has claimed many victims.

Mechanical Instruments of Music and Praise Teams

The use of musical instruments in worship is clearly unauthorized and not used by the church (even what became the apostate church) for 1000 years. David Brown shows the lack of authority for their use and why they make worship to God vain; he also examines some of the arguments used to justify them. Ken Chumbley analyzes the arguments that congregations are offering for the use of praise teams (169). He also includes material from one who defends the practice and how he tries to answer objections to praise teams. Anyone who is thinking about using this system should read this chapter first.

The Lord's Supper, Drama Teams, and Handclapping

These three chapters also deal with changes that some brethren are trying to make in worship. Dave Watson discusses the way that many brethren are misusing Romans 14 (in connection with offering the Lord's Supper on other days of the week besides the Lord's day). Lee Moses researched drama teams and puppet ministries very well (he includes another page of source material). His chapter begins with a description of a "Christmas program" put on by alleged brethren. The birth of Jesus is described in words that accompany the tune, "Hotel California"

(187-88). Although the words are clever, the concept lacks any Biblical authority whatsoever. The words to "Bethlehemian Rhapsody" are not included. Not only is the nature of worship discussed here; so is the nature of evangelism. One wonders how brethren can get so far afield.

Jess Whitlock treats the custom of clapping during singing in an interesting way—by using the letters **C**, **L**, **A**, and **P** as the headings for his four-point analysis. Sadly, he reports that at one of "our" churches near a college campus, at the end of prayers, there is often applause, and occasionally a big "whoop" (200)!

Special Services; Children's Worship

Michael Hatcher discusses Christmas and Easter services. Why? More than a decade ago, this writer drove by one of "our" churches in Argyle, Texas, and their sign out front read, "Easter is not about colored eggs; it is about Jesus Christ." No, it is about denominations changing the significance of the Lord's Supper into an annual unauthorized event. Brethren once knew the Bible well enough to know that we do not observe these man-made celebrations, but Brian Jones reports of a survey published by Abilene Christian Press that asked the question: "Is it acceptable for a congregation to observe religious holidays like Christmas and Easter through special worship experiences?" The result was that 38% agreed with the statement while 56% disagreed (207).

What? How can so many "brethren" be *nutso*? A thorough discussion ensues with nearly a page of sources cited. The concept of "Children's Worship" began nearly 50 years ago, but no one has

ever shown such a practice to be authorized in the Scriptures. Bruce Stulting examines the subject and shows that, when brethren met, they all met in one place.

Voting on Elders; Female Leaders

Many congregations, when selecting elders, *vote* on the men put before them. The *winners* often need to have 60% or more of the vote. Dave Watson found a congregation that did precisely that as long ago as the year 2000 (229-30). This procedure is evaluated in light of what the Scriptures teach. For the past four decades, a few congregations have been pushing for women to have unauthorized leadership roles in the church. Bruce Stulting reports on a certain website that lists 45 congregations who have joined in this philosophy (242-43). He then gives a summary of what the Scriptures authorize women to do, as well as discussing roles they cannot have.

Missionary Societies; Disaster Relief

The first of these was a big issue in the 1800s but has not been much regarded since the digression. The history, however, is valuable, and brother Chumbley shows what happened, as well as the arguments for and against the concept. David Brown deals with Disaster Relief Organization, which is of a more recent origin. Members of the church are often hearing about the efforts of brethren out of Nashville who are showing up to help churches in times of emergency. Is what they are doing authorized? He provides their statement of policy and purpose before evaluating the concept by the Scriptures. Many brethren assume that, because an

organization is doing good work, it ought to be supported. More consideration ought to be given that goes beyond the superficial. Valuable information is included for those who might be inclined to join in this endeavor. All should ask first, "Is this authorized?"

Special Ministers and Family Life Centers

Does one need the former to oversee the latter? Hmm. Tim Cozad points out that so many special ministers are in use these days that at least in one congregation there was a minister in charge of all the other ministers! (298). The same writer evaluates some brethren's affinity for athletic facilities. Cozad comments: "One can call a building a Family Life Center, but when you have a basketball court, a weight room, and a volleyball court, it is a gymnasium" (305).

Kitchens, Babies, and House Churches

For a few decades, some brethren have argued against having a kitchen in the church building. They have often erroneously applied 1 Corinthians 11 to the situation; Jess Whitlock examines this passage in great detail. Baby dedications are just another practice borrowed from the denominations, as Danny Douglas points out. Can a Biblical case be made for the practice? This study examines the passages that a few are using to justify their actions.

"House churches," as opposed to Christians who meet in church buildings, have not only been advocated by Viola and Barna (see the *Pagan Christianity* series), certain brethren have also joined the bandwagon. Lynn Parker names John Mark Hicks (a heretic for several

years now, teaching at Lipscomb) and F. LaGard Smith as ones who have written championing the idea. Smith's book, *Radical Restoration*, "calls for house churches as one significant ingredient to restoring primitive, New Testament Christianity" (336).

Ecumenism; No Eternal Punishment

One must first define *ecumenism* before he can decide if it is the unity for which Jesus prayed. Danny Douglas examines the definition and also provides a brief history of ecumenical efforts on the part of a few in the Lord's church. Johnny Oxendine's material on fellowship fits well with the preceding chapter. He demonstrates the breakdown in the Biblical definition of what fellowship is and cites various instances of the problem.

The book concludes with Dub McClish's chapter, titled, "No Eternal Punishment." Although Origen in the third century objected to the Biblical teaching of eternal punishment in hell, that view was discarded for a thousand years (369). The chapter traces its rise again through humanism and some modern religious figures. Among "us" are Edward Fudge, whose book and concept of annihilation are also championed by F. LaGard Smith and John Clayton (also a theistic evolutionist). The chapter contains almost a page of source material and focuses mainly on what the Scriptures teach about the doctrine of eternal torment.

This 382-page book is available at an astonishing price of only \$11.00. One may call 1-850-455-7595 for orders. The material is well worth the price.

Winter Park, FL

"Then And Now"

Jess Whitlock

In my library I have a Bible atlas called, *Then and Now*. On one side it has a map of Bible places as they were in Bible times. The other side of the opening shows what those places are today, and what names they have today. In a movie, "The Commandments" (1961), John Wayne made this statement: "Words are what men live by...words they say and mean." Recently I had some time to reflect on these two things.

In 1998 Bobby Liddell said:

no man has the right to change the God-given borders in any way, not even to move them just one inch. None can, without displeasing God and endangering his eternal welfare, redraw the circle of fellowship. Since God has drawn the circle, no mere mortal can make the circle larger (to include those God does not) or to make it smaller (to exclude any God includes) than God made it.

To this I say: Amen!

In 1998 Curtis Cates said:

Not only must we withdraw from the immoral but also the false teacher. ...The Corinthians were to repent of their sins...(2 Cor. 7:8-10). Not only was Paul not defending the division in Corinth, he rebuked them and pleaded with them to come out of their error. What a contrast this is, though, when one compares (1) the impenitent attitudes of those who have innovations in their worship... What a gross misapplication of Scripture this is, in an attempt to undermine the precious unity which inevitably exists among the obedient! Again, I say: Amen and amen!

In 1998 Keith A. Mosher said:

false teaching can place one's soul in condemnation...(Matt. 15:13-14). Persons who teach error are lost and those who follow error

are lost...(Mark 4:24). **Error condemns: when?** (3) The doctrine transgresses (goes beyond) anything Jesus taught...(2 John 9). (4) The result of the teaching is division...(Rom. 16:17).... (8) The teaching is **not** truth and truth is not really being sought...(John 8:31-32).... (11) The teaching enacts laws God never intended...(Mark 7:7-8). Fellowship cannot be extended to those who make laws for God's people, which laws are not commanded in God's Word... Until one is right with God, one has no fellowship with Deity or another Christian (1 John 1:7; Eph. 5:11; 2 The. 3:6; et al.).

All quotes from the 23rd Annual Bellview Lectures, *Christian Fellowship*, edited by Michael Hatcher (see pp. 137, 353, 355-356, 447-451, and 455).

In July of 1985 Dave Miller wrote:

Ezekiel's divine message was typical of the Hebrew prophets: "Repent!" There was a fellow in the church of Christ at Corinth who was exhibiting unfaithful behavior... The members at Corinth were being "big" about the situation, no doubt thinking their tolerance was the "mature" thing to do... Paul was saying they should have been mourning for this brother because in God's sight, he was *dead!* ...they should have already formally and publicly handed him over to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5)! They should have already "purged" him from the church (1 Cor. 5:7).... how strange such instructions sound in contrast to the general mood prevailing among churches of Christ today! Groups accept the impenitent with open arms without batting an eye, or at most after only a mild bout with conscience.

The Spiritual Sword, July 1985

(Vol. 16, # 4), p. 33. The article is listed as, "Our Ruin—the Toleration of Evil."

In the summer of 2013, Dave Miller is a known, impenitent false teacher! He has publicly espoused the false doctrines of the "reaffirmation of elders," and the strange idea of "a marriage of convenience" concept. The Brown Trail congregation divided twice over this elder-reevaluation nonsense in 1990 and 2002. My daughter and her husband were there in 2002. Do not try to tell me this was just a little misunderstanding. This was a deliberate attempt to remove qualified elders! And it worked. Somehow those modern-day "Diotrophes" came up with the magical number of 75%-required vote to become an elder. We can read of that Scriptural authority in "Titus 5:19"! Why 75%? Would not 77% or 87% or 97% be much better? Dave Miller preached on April 8, 1990 that "conceivably a man could meet the qualifications, brethren, and yet not be perceived by that flock as a shepherd." Last time that I checked, it was God's authority that uttered the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Brethren, if that man meets the qualifications that God's Word has stipulated, then that man is God's elder! Woe be to any congregation that determines they have the right to out-vote God! God will have somewhat to say one day (John 12:48; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5; 1 The. 5:2; Heb. 9:27; 1 Pet. 2:23; 2 Pet. 3:10)!

"Words are what men live by... words they say and mean." Dave Miller is a known, impenitent false teacher. Bobby Liddell said one

thing in 1998, but practices another in 2013. Curtis Cates said one thing in 1998, but practices another in 2013. Keith A. Mosher said one thing in 1998, but practices another in 2013. We have a scenario of:

“Then and now.” It cannot be both ways. It has to be one or the other! So, which is it?

Dave Miller wrote: “the prophet posed a particularly intriguing aim of this penitence: ‘*so iniquity shall not be your ruin*’ (Eze. 18:30).” Amen and amen.

Evant, TX

Editor’s Note: Brother Cutis A. Cates wrote an excellent book copyrighted in 1998 titled *Does The Holy Spirit Operate Directly Upon The Heart Of A Saint?* On pages 69-81 brother Cates dealt specifically with the direct error of brother Mac Deaver and showed the error that brother Deaver was promoting. On

page 150 as brother Cates was summing up his book, he wrote:

It has been pointed out very clearly in this work that the pioneers rejected Calvinistic theology, which included the direct, miraculous work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the child of God “in conjunction with” the Word. The pioneers soundly refuted that fatal, destructive error. They exalted the all-sufficient Word. It has been shown also that, in the last several decades, some have insisted on going back into post-baptismal Calvinism, some even into full-blown Calvinism. Any degree of Calvinism is fatal error. Faithful brethren **can not and will not** fellowship it!

We are in agreement with what brother Cates wrote back in 1998 and in particular regarding fellowship of this “fatal, destructive error.”

However, with such a well-worded statement in 1998, it is surprising to see brethren Barry Grider

and Billy Bland appearing on the 8th Annual Preachers Files Lectures with at least two brethren who hold the same view Mac Deaver did when brother Cates wrote this book. One speaking on the lectureship (Randal Matheny) is a staff writer for *Biblical Notes* (on the website of Biblical Notes) which pushes not only the doctrine brother Cates wrote about but also that when one is baptized they not only are baptized in water but they are also baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Considering what brother Cates wrote in 1998 and what we are seeing with those associated with MSOP now, will brother Cates reprove brethren Grider and Bland (in as public of a way he exposed Mac Deaver and publicized his book) or repudiate his book? The other alternative is to simply compromise the convictions he expressed in 1998.

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Honor to Whom Honor

Michael Hatcher

On the evening of August 27, 2013, brother Frederic William Stancliff passed from this life to go and be with the Lord. Brother Stancliff was born in Jackson, Michigan. He graduated from the University of Florida in 1957 with a BSBA in accounting. While there he met and married his wife of 58 years, Rheba Mathews Stancliff (married November 12, 1954). They have four children, nine grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. He also attended Sunset

School of Preaching, graduating in 1971. After graduation from Sunset, he preached in Florence, South Carolina for three years. In 1974, they moved to Orlando, Florida where he returned to his former work as an auditor for the state of Florida and also preached full-time for a struggling congregation in Lockhart.

Brother Stancliff's work brought him to Pensacola in 1977. He became a member of this congregation and began teaching in the Bible class program along with teaching part-time in the Bellview Preacher



Training School. He was appointed to the eldership of this congregation in 1979 and remained such till he moved to Singapore to teach at Four Seas College for two years in 1991. Following those two years, he moved back to Pensacola in 1993 and received treatment for cancer. In 1994, brother Fred was reappointed to the eldership and continued to serve in that capacity till his death.

Additionally, in his work with the Bellview congregation, he served very faithfully and diligently as the treasurer of the congregation. In all

his work with this congregation as an elder, Jesus' statement accurately reflects his life: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?" (Mat. 24:45). Brother Stancliff was one who was faithful and showed great wisdom in his life and decisions to which he was entrusted.

While an elder here, brother Stancliff and his fellow elders have fought worldliness in all its various forms both in and out of the

Lord's church. Both "Antiism" and "Liberalism" have had devisive effects upon the church, but the eldership stood strong in face of such opposition. False doctrine of various forms have reared its ugly head, but was never allowed to pass.

We are thankful to have had brother Stancliff and his faithful wife Rheba to work with this church through the years and certainly give honor to him as is his due. The Bellview congregation is better because of the strong influence of brother and sister Stancliff.



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

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Shepherds

The prophet Ezekiel spoke about the leaders of Israel under the figure of shepherds in Ezekiel 34. Jehovah tells Ezekiel:

Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because *there is* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I

am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them (34:1-10).

It is difficult for right thinking people to imagine such action from a shepherd with regards to his sheep. These shepherds would make sure they were fed and clothed, but they did not have any care for the sheep (those under their care). These shepherds did not feed the flock and killed the ones that are fed, they did not strengthen those who were diseased, they did not heal the sheep that were sick, or bound up those who were broken. When the sheep were scattered, they did not go out and find the lost. These shepherds instead of caring for the flock ruled them with force and cruelty (violence). Of course God is speaking of the leaders of Israel and their dealing with the children of Israel (those under their care).

Elders are called shepherds (translated pastors) in Ephesians 4:11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." They have the job of shepherding (pastoring, tending, or as it is often translated, feed) the flock of God. Paul charged the Ephesian elders: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). In exhorting elders Peter would say, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind"

(1 Pet. 5:2). They are shepherds under the chief Shepherd: our Lord Jesus Christ (5:4).

So many elders today are simply neglecting their God-given duty regarding the flock of God. They are not feeding the flock the proper nourishment so the flock can grow spiritually. They are often so concerned with numerical growth that the spiritual is ignored. Many elders have turned to fun, games, and entertainment instead of spiritual teaching and growth. One sad aspect is that many elders now equate the physical and the spiritual. They think if they provide the physical (whether food, entertainment, sports, etc.) that people will grow spiritually. They could not be more wrong. Elders have the obligation of making sure God's Word is taught—it is the only nourishment that will bring about spiritual growth.

Elders also have the obligation to protect the flock. After giving the Ephesian elders the admonition to take heed and to feel the church, Paul gives them a warning:

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).

The New Testament is replete

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

with references to false teachers and the Old Testament gives us constant historical references to them. Thus Peter writes, “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” (2 Pet. 2:1). There are false teachers who will try to sneak into the flock (*privily* means “to bring in secretly or craftily”).

To be able to protect the flock, elders must know the Word of God. They must study the Scriptures and be able to use them effectively. For

an elder to hold fast the faithful Word (Tit. 1:9), he must have a good working knowledge of that “faithful word.” This takes years of work and study of the Scriptures. “Study [Give diligence—ASV] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). However, to be able to properly protect the flock, a shepherd must be able to recognize the wolf. Even though they come in sheep’s clothing, the elders must be able to know who they really are. Jesus warned: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening

wolves” (Mat. 7:15). Elders, thus, must know and keep up with what is taking place in the brotherhood. They must know false doctrine and they must also know who are false teachers—the ones pushing and supporting (fellowshipping) the false doctrines.

For those shepherds that are not fulfilling their duties, God is going to bring judgment upon them. However, elders who serve well and faithful will be given a great reward in heaven. Let us hold up the hands of those faithful elders who actually do the work of shepherding the flock of God.

MH

Asked of a Man: Ezekiel 3:16-21

Gene Hill

Introduction

The astute student of the Bible grasps the concept that the church, that religious institution we read about upon the pages of the New Testament, is part of the Divine Scheme of Redemption. Redemption’s scheme as revealed upon the pages of inspiration originates from before creation (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet 1:2, 20-23). This church purchased with God’s own blood (Acts 20:28) as part of that plan, has a designed organization which maturing faithful Christians desire to have established in their local congregation at the earliest opportunity.

Paul, in addressing the church in Philippi, touches on this organization: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phi. 1:1). We see it is all the saints along with the bishops and deacons. It does not take more than a cursory glance at a

concordance to find Paul explaining in detail just what qualities bishops and deacons were to possess (1 Tim 3:1-13). Each of the characteristics of a bishop, with the exception of being a man, desiring the work of a bishop, the husband of one wife, having children in subjection, and not being a novice, are each qualities of Christians who are maturing in the faith. We see that such is the case as we study Paul’s other writings where he discusses each of them. The need for any man seeking to serve as an elder or on who is requested to serve to possess these qualities is readily seen when we understand what he will be doing.

When a congregation of God’s people decides to move on to the next milestone in their congregational development by seeking men to serve as elders, what qualities should those men possess? Let us define some words to help us in our study.

Responsible: a. Legally or ethically

accountable for the care or welfare of another. b. Capable of making moral or rational decisions on one’s own and therefore answerable for one’s behavior. c. Capable of being trusted or depended upon; reliable, based upon or characterized by good judgment or sound thinking, required to render account; answerable: *the elder is responsible for the congregation.*

Responsibility: a. The state, quality, or fact of being responsible. b. Something for which one is responsible; duty, obligation, or burden (*American Heritage Dictionary* 1053).

Watchman: properly, to lean forward, i.e. to peer into the distance; by implication, to observe, await (Strong); b. A man employed to stand guard or keep watch (*American Heritage Dictionary* 1365).

Practically speaking, what are we doing when we ask a man to serve as an elder? We ask him to be a pastor for us. “And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed,

neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD" (Jer. 23:4). "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Pet. 5:2). We ask him to be an example for our imitation. "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* conversation" (Heb. 13:7). We ask him to be a bishop: "(1) an overseer 1a) a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent 1b) the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church" (Thayer 243). What we are doing is charging him with the duty to see that we are right and that we are willing to submit to his judgments in matters of expediency as well as when doctrine is being enforced.

Have we ever given much thought to the great burden that we are asking him (and his family) to allow us to place on his shoulders? "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). This article is a result of a conversation this writer had with a brother concerning a certain congregation's plans and needs for further development and of that congregation's eldership.

What We Expect of an Elder Candidate

We are asking him to be the watchman of our soul (Eze. 3:16-21). "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. 13:17). *Watch* means "(1) to be sleepless, keep awake, watch" (Strong 7) and to be

circumspect, attentive, ready. We are welcoming scrutiny. Why?

Our soul is our most precious possession. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" (Luke 9:25). Note also Luke 12:13-21. What if this prosperous farmer had qualified elders to whom he paid attention watching for his soul? Would we be aware of this man?

Recall the responsibility of being on watch or standing guard duty when in the service, or similar task as a civilian. In the Navy at the time this writer served, one of the General Orders of a Sentry was that all government property within your sight was your responsibility. You were to safeguard all that you saw until such a time you were relieved from duty. Compare this to being a parent of children of any age, at any age. Some of us have grandchildren to add to that group for whom we watch. When we take such a duty seriously, we will do all within our power to make certain all that is in our charge is kept safe from harm and to sound the alarm should danger ever threaten.

We are asking him to be a caretaker for a particular group of souls (Acts 20:28). Moses, at one time, was apparently the sole judge of all things great and small for the whole nation of Israel until he heeded advice from his father-in-law and appointed assistants (Exo. 18:13-27). Review the previous definition for an overseer that he has a charge or duty of ensuring correct action and behavior for all he is assigned. We are asking him to use his life experience and insights to assist us in living the Christian life in preparation for eternity (2 Cor. 5:7, 10).

Furthermore, in asking a man to

serve as an elder, we are asking him to assume the responsibility to direct congregational affairs (Tit. 1:5). How did congregations direct their affairs prior to elders being appointed? How **should** it be done today without elders? How should elders see to the carrying out of congregational affairs? If the use of spiritual gifts in service to the church was to be done decently and in order, then it would surely be the case that the mundane affairs would follow that very same dictum (1 Cor. 14:40).

Elders are not to be lords over God's heritage (1 Pet. 5:3; Luke 22:24-27). These men cannot *make* anybody do anything. What they do is lead through their service and position of servant-hood. We voluntarily asked them to serve as elders and voluntarily submitted to their oversight. Our personal faithfulness and humility ought to be sufficient to cause us to accept their guidance.

Congregational Responsibilities to Elders

What is it we are telling this man in asking him to serve us as one of our elders? What responsibilities to him are we assuming in this requested relationship?

We are telling him we have confidence in his abilities (1 Tim. 3:4-7). By virtue of life's experiences he has the ability to rule and to take care of the church. It is then the case that when he exercises those abilities in care of the congregation and us individually, we will accept what he says. We will express appreciation for his care.

We are telling him that we will be submissive to his direction (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7-8; Jam. 3:13, 17-18). Why would we not listen to good, sound, Scriptural advice and experienced direction and judgment? The presump-

tion here is that the one receiving the attention has provided sufficient information for the appropriate judgment to be made.

We are telling him that we will love him in spite of, and certainly because of, his humanity (1 Cor. 13:4-8). "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17). Just as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses so Israel would prevail (Exo. 17:12), in like manner we hold up the hands of our elders. Do we sincerely and frequently pray for our elders by name and mention specific things in regards to their ministry?

We are telling him that we will defend, support, and back him in the right at all cost, and correct him when he is in need, and do so lovingly (1 Tim. 5:19) but only with two or three witnesses. When a person is right, he is right, assuming Galatians 6:1 is the rule. When he is wrong,

then let us correct what needs correcting, and move on, assuming that the wrong does not otherwise disqualify a man.

Reevaluation and Reaffirmation of Elders

The argument is made that because of turnover of congregational membership and that a great number of elders serve for literally decades, that a current majority of the membership was not present to assist in the appointment of current elders. It is thought that the pastoring needs of the current flock are somehow different. The method that has been used in some places is to pass out grading sheets, tell whether one approves or disapproves of a particular elder's retention and return the sheet. The number of approvals needed for retention is necessarily an arbitrary one and it should be pointed out that it is a one-vote margin that decides it. This is an extremely egregious assault

on the Scripture and good men. The Holy Spirit has told us how to determine a man's worthiness and how to effect his removal. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Tim. 5:19-20). The biggest problem is unqualified men serving in the office of a bishop, but rather the hard hearts of unfaithful Christians.

Conclusion

Christians need to be aware of the consequences of decisions and the actions that flow from them. When right is known by the faithful, the faithful will do right.

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The Authority of Elders

Dub McClish

The problem of authority is always with us. Most of the world does not even recognize the existence of God anymore, much less His authority. There have been those in the church through the years who have sought to destroy the delegated authority God has given to bishops in the local churches, but generally such influences were rather isolated. However, parallel to the "anti-authority," "anti-establishment" philosophy of the past few decades among many worldlings, there has been an ever-louder cry from within the church against the authority of elders: "What authority do elders have over their flock which that flock does not willingly give them? None!";

"Did any of us ever consider where we get New Testament authority for elders making decisions?"; "We are of the opinion that questions are safer in the hands of the 'church' than in the hands of any 'ship'"; "None of the qualities mentioned in either Timothy or Titus have to do with decision making." These and many other such statements are indicative of this trend.

While some opine that the church is suffering from a growing "authority syndrome" it is my judgment that the direct threat is a growing "anti-authority syndrome." I submit that God places a plurality of elders-bishops-pastors over each local church in which men of Scriptural qualifications can be

found. I further submit that these men are charged with keeping their respective churches free from doctrinal error and moral pollution and that they are also charged with making decisions relative to the expedient exercise of the work of the church. Let us consider the Scriptural evidence.

Words Referring to Elders and Their Work

The words chosen by the Holy Spirit to describe elders and their responsibilities are words that indicate the authority God has given them. All of the page numbers following the quotations below refer to *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New*

Testament:

1. *EPISKOPOS* (and kindred forms), translated “bishop,” “overseer,” “oversight” (Acts 20:28; Phi. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2): “An overseer, a man charged with...seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent;...specifically the superintendent, head or overseer of any Christian church” (2-43).

2. *OIKONOMOS*, translated “steward” (Tit. 1:7): “the manager of a household or of household affairs; especially a steward, manager, superintendent...to whom the head of the house or proprietor has intrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures...a bishop (or overseer) is called *oikonomos theou*, of God as the head and master of the Christian theocracy” (440-441). If elders cannot make decisions or set policy, how can they be overseers, superintendents, managers or stewards?

3. *POIMAINO* (and related noun, *poimen*), translated “feed,” “pastor” (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:2): “to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep;...to rule, govern: of rulers,...of the overseers (pastors) of the church,...to furnish pasturage or food; to nourish” (527). When shepherds see one of the flock straying toward a precipice, have they no authority to prevent a fatal fall? When they see a wolf devouring the lambs, must they call all of the flock together before they can decide that he must be stopped and how to stop him (John 10:12)? Notice the use of *poimaino* in Revelation 2:26-27: “to him will I **give authority** [*exousian*] **over** the nations: and he **shall rule** [*poimaino*] them with a rod of iron.” Admittedly, the word includes the element of feeding and tending, but also of **ruling with authority**.

4. *PROISTEMI*, translated “over,” “rule”: “to set or place before; to set

over; to set over; to superintend, preside over, rule: 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thes. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4” (539).

5. *PEITHESTHE*, translated “obey” (Heb. 13:17). The form in this passage is in the middle voice, meaning: “to listen to, obey, yield to; comply with...Heb. 13:17; Jam. 3:3” (497). James 3:3 speaks of the response of the horse to the bridle, a response to authority. The church is to obey its elders.

6. *HEGEOMAI*, translated “rule over” (Heb. 13:17): “to lead, to go before; to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over: a prince, of regal power; a governor, viceroy, chief; leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel;...the overseers or leaders of Christian churches” (276). Admittedly, this word **includes** the persuasion of one’s influence, but it is also translated “governor” (Mat. 27:2; Acts 7:10). It is a word of authority.

7. *HUPEIKO*, translated “submit to” (Heb. 13:17): “to resist no longer, but to give way, yield; to yield to authority and admonition, to submit” (638). This is what saints are to do in relation to their elders instead of trying to overthrow their authority. Each of the foregoing terms is either laden with authority or shows the proper response to the authority which God has given to elders.

Elders and Elders’ Meetings

Some have hinted, while others have openly affirmed, that there is no Scriptural basis for elders to even meet separately from the church to make decisions affecting the church. The first time elders are mentioned in the church is in Acts 11:30. Luke writes that the contribution of the church in Antioch for the brethren in Judea was sent “to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.” It was sent **for** any who had need but sent **to**

the elders. Why? I conclude that they were to properly administer it, which required some decision making.

Some like to use the “Jerusalem Conference” (15:1-29) as an example of a decision reached by the “whole church,” but careful reading proves otherwise. Paul and Barnabas were sent primarily to the “apostles and elders” to settle the question of circumcision (15:2). They first reported on their work to the whole church (15:4), but when the legalists raised the issue of circumcision, Luke states, the “apostles and elders were gathered together to consider of this matter” (15:5-6). This was a separate meeting from that of verse 4. Paul’s record supports this conclusion (Gal. 2:2, 9). Later, “the multitude” again listened to Paul and Barnabas as well as James (Acts 15:12-13) and expressed their agreement with the letter that was to be circulated to Gentile brethren (15:22). Luke describes the letter as “ordained of the apostles and elders” (16:4). Clearly, there was a separate, private meeting involving both elders and apostles in which this matter was decided rather than leaving it to a congregational vote.

As Paul returned from his third preaching trip he stopped at Miletus and called to him the Ephesian elders (20:17). Upon reaching Jerusalem he met with the elders there (21:18). Obviously, it was not an uncommon practice for elders in the early church to meet separately from the church to discuss church business.

Elders and “Church Discipline”

There are three key passages of Scripture that place the responsibility of leadership in discipline in the local church upon elders. Paul warns the Ephesian elders: “grievous wolves... speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Where-

fore watch ye” (20:29-31). A qualification of every elder requires that he know how to rule his own house so he may “take care of the church” (1 Tim. 3:5). Also, in the setting of the qualifications of elders Paul says that elders are to “convict the gainsayers” (unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers) who must be silenced (Tit. 1:9-11). Can responsible elders allow the church to be fed doctrinal poison while they timidly refuse to stop it? Those who would deny the authority of elders deny them the right to protect the flock from such dangers. If the foregoing words do not enjoin elders to lead the church in matters of discipline, giving them the authority to carry out the duty, what words would? How can such great responsibilities be fulfilled without some sober, prayerful, decision-making meetings?

In my judgment, it is most likely that the ones opposing the authority of elders with such zeal are ultimately aiming at their disciplinary leadership. If the authority of elders can be so undermined that they will not attempt discipline where needed or if, when they attempt it, the church has been so conditioned by false teaching that it will not follow the elders in the discipline, then the church is at the mercy of any doctrine or practice that anyone might wish to establish. There is already a great famine of Scriptural discipline among the churches. It is difficult to imagine what sort of worldliness one would have to practice or which false doctrine one would have to promote to draw even the mildest reproof in most churches. I suggest that a major contributing factor to this sad condition has been the gradually rising tide of teaching against the authority of elders. This has caused some elders to be uncertain of their own God-given authority and has caused some members of the

church to reject the authority God has given these men.

Practical Considerations

Churches can function without elders, but they are almost always handicapped and exist in an immature state.

The ideal projected in the New Testament is to have Scripturally qualified elders who function as true spiritual leaders in every church (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5). It is neither practical nor Scriptural to leave the fate of a church in the hands of a “majority vote” arrangement where spiritual neophytes, doctrinal extremists, 12-year-old boys, etc., have as much voice as a loyal, seasoned saint. To prevent this very thing is why the Lord placed the local church under men who met strict qualifications, thereby proving their loyalty to Christ and His Word. However, it is the stated intent of some to allow elders no more authority in a church than that of the newest, weakest, most radical, or youngest member. Should they succeed in their plans, it is very doubtful that any of them would long be content to live with the unscriptural situation they helped create.

Abuses of Authority

Those who reject all authority of elders except that exercised by “influence” often refer us to Peter’s warning: “neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3). The application usually made of this statement is to the effect that since elders are not to “lord it over” the flock, this precludes any exercise of authority. If this verse forbids the very authority that several other passages enjoin, then we have a serious contradiction in Scripture. Contrariwise, there is no conflict at all between this verse and the authority-laden verses

previously considered. The truth taught by Peter concerns the **proper exercise** of authority by elders to keep them aware of the possible temptation to abuse it. Anyone working under several elderships over a period of years will likely encounter an elder with a tyrannical spirit. I certainly have. In spite of the warning against the abuse of authority, it will likely continue because elders are human like the rest of us. However, an **abuse** of authority can never be rightly used to offset the **proper use** of authority. These men must certainly exercise the powerful leadership to be found in being an “ensample” (*tupos*—type, pattern). They are to represent to both the world and the church just what a genuine Christian is, and there is great power in such leadership. However, this power of example does not at all diminish the authority God has given elders.

Conclusion

With these truths before us, it is not difficult to see why the qualifications of elders are so strict and why the saints are commanded to obey them and submit to them. To rebel against them or to incite others to rebel against them out of selfishness, stubbornness, pride, jealousy or any other sinful motive is to rebel against the authority of God (Num. 16:1-35) and Jesus Christ (John 12:48).

Wise elders will counsel with their brethren and weigh their wishes in making decisions about matters of expediency. They will also delegate much of the practical, detailed decision making to deacons and to others. However, the final responsibility for making decisions in the local church in matters of expediting the work and keeping the church true to the Book will always rest upon the church’s elders-bishops-pastors.

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The Christian's Approach to Philosophy

David P. Brown

Paul wrote to the church at Colosse saying, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy" (Col. 2:8). Upon reading the word *philosophy* in this context, some brethren have concluded that any study of or the mere mention of the word is blasphemous. If, however, the rest of the verse is considered, it is obvious that Paul had in mind false philosophies and not the strict meaning of the term. The verse in its entirety reads: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

It is commonly accepted that the letter to the Colossians was written, at least in part, to combat the false doctrine or philosophy of Gnosticism. Thus, Paul, no doubt, had Gnosticism in mind when he penned Colossians 2:8.

The philosophy that is herein condemned is one of: (A) "vain deceit," (B) "after the tradition of men," (C) "after the rudiments of the world" and, therefore, "not after Christ." Hence, the word *philosophy* is, in and of itself alone, no more of a wicked term than is the word *doctrine*.

In fact, a philosopher is "one who seeks wisdom or enlightenment" (*Webster's*). Hence, no person on earth has more of a right to be called a philosopher than a faithful child of God. To love and seek after truth in all areas of life, especially the truth that is "after Christ" (Col. 2:8; Mat. 7:7; John 8:31-32; 3 John 4) is the design and purpose of life on earth (Mat. 6:33; Ecc. 12:13-14). Paul, therefore, could write that love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6).

Because the truth on any subject flows from God, the Christian knows that whether it is the study of any or all branches of the sciences, history, philosophy, religion, or anything else, that truth in any of these fields of study does not contradict truth in any other area—the Bible included. When, therefore, anyone from whatever field of study attacks the existence of God, the Deity of Christ, or the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, the Gospel, the church or anything pertaining to these subjects, the Christian, having a correct understanding of the origin and nature of all truth, knows that such people are wrong.

Why people do **what** they do

and the **way** they do it touches every aspect of one's life. One might say that "philosophy" is someone's personal view, slant, or bias on life as a whole or any aspect of life. In fact, when someone opposes the study of philosophy because they have heard that certain people in the study of philosophy have lost their faith, they have in fact philosophized about the study of philosophy and set forth their philosophy concerning the need to study philosophy. They have, if you please, in reaching their conclusion, practiced what they condemned.

Yes, there is a need to know the views of the people who mold, shape, and guide our world by their thinking (philosophical systems of conduct). The average member of the church (and some not so average) are basically ignorant of how few people and their erroneous thinking greatly influence government, education, the home, and the religion by their philosophies.

We must "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The. 5:21). To comply with this passage there must be a "what" to prove and the knowledge of "how" to prove

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Notes From The Editor

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Safe Conservatives

Several years ago there was a certain controversy among conservative brethren. While some pushed a certain agenda regarding this particular view, others tried to steer a course where all brethren would remain in fellowship (it was not a matter over which brethren should divide). Some, in that attempt, tried to steer clear of the discussion so nothing would inflame the passions regarding it.

There was one lectureship I was speaking on that included a panel discussion—although it was more a question and answer session with several panel members. The questions were turned in beforehand with those on the panel being able to go through the questions prior to the session. Someone in attendance raised this particular question. As the panel members (who themselves were divided over the subject) discussed this, they were making the decision to simply not answer the question (sometimes there was not time to answer all the questions, but this one was going to be deliberately avoided). However, the director of the lectureship stepped in and said that he wanted to deal with the question, and he would like each one on the panel to comment.

When it came time for the session, this question was raised, and just about everyone made comments on the question along with all call-

ing for this to be something that not divide faithful brethren. However, one preacher did not make any comments regarding the question. After the lectureship, I was staying an extra day before returning home so the director and I were talking and he expressed his disappointment at the one preacher who did not comment regarding the question. I asked him why he was surprised and then said his action was predictable. He is not one who would be willing to step out and take a stand on an issue till after the majority of brethren have hashed it out already. Then he will take a strong stand acting like he has been doing so the entire time.

That brother, even though he is well known, is one who I would term a safe conservative. They are not willing to read, study, and come to a conclusion about a subject, but they wait till others decide and then they will come out strongly using the work others have done. These “safe conservatives” are the ones who years ago were described by faithful preachers as wetting their finger, sticking it up in the air, seeing which way the wind was blowing, and then going that way.

We have many who are safe conservatives in the brotherhood today. While there might be numerous reasons, some of them would certainly be as a result of friends, money, power, prestige, pride, etc. Often brethren simply do not have the strength of character to take a stand on a subject and be willing to “let the chips fall where they may.” They are unlike Jesus, who after teaching some “hard sayings” and many of his disciples left Him, would turn to the apostles and ask them: “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67). It did not matter to Jesus if He stood by Himself or not. He was going to do

what was right and teach what was right, no matter what the consequences might be.

We see His attitude culminating in Gethsemane when He knew He would end up alone but continued the course anyway. After stating “But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled,” we learn that “then all the disciples forsook him, and fled” (Mat. 26:56). Also remember that Jesus had told His disciples: “All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad” (26:31) and then told Peter specifically, “Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice” (26:34). Thus, it did not take Jesus by surprise that He was left alone, yet He had the courage to go it on His own.

Yet, there are many today who simply do not have the courage to follow what is right no matter what the consequences might be. There always have and there always will be “issues” that come up among brethren. We must have brethren who are willing to look at the Truth, learn what it says, and then follow the Truth even if they must stand all by themselves. That might mean that some are fired from their preaching jobs, the loss of friends and thus ostracism, the loss of speaking appointments, and other negative responses to the stand one takes.

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

Several years ago we observed this take place when some decided to take a stand for Truth in opposition to the false teacher, Dave Miller. Instead of looking at the evidence (that he taught error regarding elder reevaluation and reaffirmation, and marriage of convenience), some just went on the attack of those who were willing to take a stand. While taking a stand against Dave Miller might have been all right, since he became the executive director of Apologetics Press meant that in taking a stand against brother Miller, one also took a stand against Apologetics Press and this was too much for some. Thus, there were some

who initially took a stand, but after a short time, they decided to change their position (they would never admit to themselves or others they that simply caved in to the pressure of the majority and compromised). They embraced both Miller and Apologetics Press.

Those associated with Memphis School of Preaching also embraced Miller and Apologetics Press, thus anyone who stood against these organizations were severely castigated. It took courage to point out the inconsistency and compromise in which brethren were engaged. Yet, as we continue to see the compromise of those associated with MSOP

(see August 2013 *Defender* to see that two of the instructors, Bland and Grider, will be speaking with those who hold Mac Deaver's views of the direct working of the Spirit in the life of the Christian, and a staff writer for Deaver in his views of Holy Spirit baptism for Christians today). Some brethren will see this and privately complain to a select few, but for far too many the cost of speaking out against the compromises is simply too great. We need brethren today who are unafraid of taking the **right** stand no matter what the consequences might be.

MH

Continued from Page 1
it. Since "all things" are covered in Paul's admonition, life and all that it involves is subject to proper investigation.

Warren C. Young has written: Christian philosophy begins, then, with the assertion of a positive, supernatural, and authoritative message. This message is never to be thought of as a human achievement but always as a divine gift. It is a Word which comes to man from an order beyond [sic] the world of natural experience. It is a Word directed toward the whole man, to his emotions, his intellect, his will, not to any one aspect of personality...

This world-view does not claim that all areas of truth are fully and completely dealt with in the Word which God has given. There are areas of knowledge which have been left for man to investigate and to develop by himself. But this world-view does claim that all areas of human experience can be rightly understood only in the light of the word of God (201-02).

At this point allow me to show

how false philosophies have influenced the church by briefly examining only one subject. Today, some are teaching a view or concept of love that says that one has a right to break God's law regarding theft if "love" demands that for one to keep from starving to death he must steal to obtain food. This view is simply saying that the "love" principle rises higher than the authority principle. But this concept of love is not true. Jesus set forth the Biblical relationship of love to authority when He taught His apostles: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Therefore, the love principle never rises higher than nor sets aside God's law. In every situation, love always leads one to obey God's law.

Where did certain preachers and college professors in the church get such an idea that Biblical love allows for one in certain situations to break God's law? Please consider the following possible source. Joseph Fletcher's widely read book, *Situation Ethics*, sets forth "moral" or "ethi-

cal relativism." Such is defined by Fletcher when he writes: "Anything and everything is right or wrong, according to the situation," depending on whether one acts on the basis of love (*agape*) (124). Hence, per Fletcher (and many others), there is only one absolute objective standard of right and wrong—love, as he defines it.

Fletcher attempts to prove his "situation ethics" by the Bible.

But all the same, love is a "jealous" law to itself. It does not share its power with other kinds of law, either natural or supernatural. It is even capable of "desecrating" the Holy of Holies, the very tabernacle of the altar, if human (personal) hunger cries for help. Jesus left no doubt about love being the solitary commandment when he put his stamp of approval on the translegality of David's action, in the paradigm of the altar bread: "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of Presence; which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only

for the priests?" (Matt. 12:3-4). Thus he left no doubt whatsoever that *the ultimate norm of Christian decisions is love: nothing else* (Moral 17).

The situation of Matthew 12 was this: on the Sabbath day Jesus and His disciples were walking through a field of grain. As they walked they pulled and ate some of the grain. Upon seeing Jesus and His disciples do such, the Pharisees charged them with doing that "which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day" (12:2).

Now the truth of Christ's aforementioned reply to the Pharisees is this: (1) What Jesus and His disciples had done had not broken the law. (2) What Jesus and His disciples actually did was to transgress the traditions of the Pharisees. (3) To expose the Pharisees' unfair bias, Jesus selects David, one whom He knew the Pharisees would never charge with sin. (4) Jesus points out that David ate what "was not lawful for him to eat." (5) Jesus now proves that the law did allow some work

on the Sabbath. He does this by noting that the priests in the temple were required to labor for them to discharge their duties. Hence, all labor, though such appeared to profane the Sabbath, in actuality did not. (6) Verse six makes it clear that as the priests served in the temple, the disciples served Jesus. Jesus is "greater than the temple." Hence, the disciples, in pulling grain for the Lord to eat, were as innocent in their service to Jesus as the priests were in their service in the temple on the Sabbath day. (7) Verse seven reveals that mercy on the hungry disciples was more pleasing to God than the temple sacrifices, and if the Pharisees had understood Hosea 6:6 they would not have condemned the guiltless disciples. (8) In verse eight Jesus emphatically declares His authority and therefore His actions served as the proper example to follow in observing the Sabbath day. (9) Jesus did not practice "situ-

ation ethics," but He did expose the Pharisees' inconsistency and further declared His authority.

So Fletcher fails in trying to find a Scripture that will uphold his ungodly concept of love. Now we know at least one source from whence some get their view that love sets aside obedience to God's law. It is a false philosophy that has permeated religious thinking on love and authority not only in the sectarian religious world but also many in the church of Christ.

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Spring, TX

The Church Needs The Fundamentals

Charles Pogue

Introduction

Almost twenty years ago, when visiting a congregation on a Sunday evening, I preached a sermon on the identifying marks of the church. After the service, the preacher approached me and revealed to me that the teenagers in that congregation needed it because they had never heard a sermon on the subject. In these days of ignorance of the Word of God, every congregation needs to hear, and every individual Christian needs to study, the fundamentals of the faith. While we do not have space to cover all of that material in this article, following is an outline

one could use in such a study.

Authority

Today, people need to be taught that authority in religion is a must. Then, they need to be taught who and what is the authority. God has now spoken through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2). We will be judged by the words of Christ (John 12:48). The only source to which we can go to learn what we must do in order to be saved, is the New Testament (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Need for Salvation

Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:2). Since all have sinned (Rom.

3:23), and since the wages of sin is death (6:23), man needs salvation. God did not predestine man to sin, but He knew that He would. Thus, Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). That means that God had a plan for our redemption all along. That is also what Jesus had in mind when He fulfilled Psalm 78:2. He opened His mouth in parables to utter things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world (Mat. 13:35). Jesus went to the cross and shed His blood to redeem us from sin (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). No one can save himself. Salvation is of

God, and by the plan that He put in place.

Man's Response to God's Plan

If there has ever been a subject in which more error has been propagated than how man must respond to God's plan for man's redemption, I do not know what it would be. Most of the religious world have been taught that all one has to do for salvation is believe Jesus is the Son of God, and accept Him as their personal Savior. This error will no doubt be responsible for the loss of more souls than any other doctrine ever devised by man. When the Calvinist claims that he cannot so sin as to lose his salvation, he is right that he cannot do so, for by denying the necessity of obedience he has never had salvation to lose! The New Testament is very clear that God has chosen to save men by the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). That means one has to hear it. When one hears the Gospel he must believe it, repent of his sins, confess his faith in Christ, and be

baptized for the remission of sins. There is no other way to be saved from sin, because this is the plan that God made. When Jesus died on the cross, He put this plan into place, and the apostles began to execute it when they first preached the Gospel in Acts 2, telling the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. As the old hymn affirms, there is no other way.

The Church

The church is an indispensable part of God's plan. It was there from the beginning (Eph. 3:10-11). When men claim the church is not important, they are saying the blood of Christ is not important. That blood was the purchase price (Acts 20:28)! Jesus died to save His body, the church (Eph. 5:23-25). Christ, not the newly elected son of perdition voted on by Catholic Cardinals, is the head of the church. As the head of the church, Christ has the say in all things to it (Col. 1:18). The worship, work, organization, and

all other things pertaining to the church are found in the plan of God for man's redemption.

The Life That Keeps the Saved Saved

The New Testament tells the child of God how he must live. The description is summed up by Paul to Titus in the trio of words: soberly, righteously, and godly (Tit. 2:12). The child of God is to be zealous in good works (Tit. 2:14). It is the Lord who determines which are the good works (Col. 3:17). How man worships God, and how he conducts himself is determined by God, not by man.

Conclusion

Because of the ignorance that exists in the world, and even in the church, study of these fundamentals is needed badly in our preaching, our Bible classes, our homes, and in our individual lives.

Granby, MO

Denominationalism Is Sinful

E. R. Harper

In the discussion of denominationalism and its evils, I am discussing the question, "Is it possible for one to know for certain when he is in the church the Lord had in mind when He said in Matthew 16:18, 'I will build my church'?" If I can find that church, and how to enter it, then I will have paved the way for the destruction of all denominations, for they will be of no more use in this world.

It is common to hear people say, "How can you know which one is the church the Lord built?" They say, "Since you cannot know

which one He built, then we just get in a branch of the church." The Lord said, "I will build my church." He never said, "I will build branches of my church." Now for one to know that the "branch" of which he is a member is a "branch" of the church the Lord built, he would have to find the church the Lord built. If he could not find the one the Lord built, how could he know that the thing he is in was a "branch" of it? Well, if he found the one the Lord built, then why not just come down out of the limb and get in

that which the Lord said He built?

Now turn with me to Acts 2, and find out just how we become members of the church of the Lord. It is the day of Pentecost. The promise of the Lord to His disciples of the Spirit has been fulfilled (2:33). They are now speaking as moved by the Spirit (2:1-4), Who came to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). That truth is now being spoken. It is from heaven, and not from men.

On that day, Peter told them they had crucified the Lord of Glory, and that they did it by

wicked hands. He brought the Old Testament prophets to witness that the things taking place there that day were the things spoken of by them, that Christ was raised in fulfillment of them, and that He was raised up to sit on the throne of their father, David. He declared that Christ was at that time exalted at the right hand of God, and commanded them to know assuredly that this same Jesus whom they had crucified was then made both Lord and Christ.

They were cut to their hearts by this message. Nothing but faith, or belief, in that message would have cut them to the heart and made them inquire, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Thus, faith comes before repentance, Baptist preachers notwithstanding. Then, guided by the Holy Spirit, Peter answered that question in these words: "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" (2:38). Not a denominational preacher that I know will give that answer and stay with it all the way through. Did you ever hear a Methodist, Baptist, or Presbyterian preacher give that answer? Why do they not give it? It is not the doctrine of denominationalism. The Lord is the author of Peter's answer. Man has made an answer to fit his denomination. God did not build a denomination, branch, or limb of the church, and neither has He given the various doctrines that govern those *limbs*. He built the church and gave the terms of admission into it, and here those terms were given.

How do I know that to believe the Word of the Lord, repent

of sins, and be baptized for the remission of sins are the conditions of membership in the church of the Lord? Hear the Book as it speaks in verse 41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls." Verse 47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Now we have a question or two to ask. The Lord said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." In Acts 2:47 the record says "the Lord added to the church." To which church did the Lord add them? He said He was going to build His church, and here we find Him adding to the church. To ask that question is to answer it. He added them to the church He built. What had they done? Those who believed what Peter preached were told to "Repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). So they were not members of a church that will not preach that same thing. But those who did that back there were members of the church the Lord built, and it looks like all preachers could see this.

Did you know that the Lord did not take 500 of them and add them to the Baptist Church, then add 500 to the Methodist Church, 500 to the Nazarene Church, etc., until He got them all situated? There were no such denominations then. These denominations are the products of error taught in our land, and if all taught today just what Peter taught then, there would be no denominations, and we would all be one. Someone is teaching error, and that is the Church—or Churches—that deny what Peter preached as being

necessary today. If you are in one that will not teach what he did, then you are in the wrong one. It could not even be a "branch" or "limb"—if there were such a thing—for you would have the branch trying to destroy the trunk!

What is the danger in being in that which the Lord did not build? In Matthew 15:13 Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Be it remembered, He never did say, "I will build branches of the church as warring denominations." He said, "I will build my church," and it was one body (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:16).

Now, since He never promised to build "branches" of the church—one teaching one thing and the other denying it—but since He promised, and built His church, and has definitely said He will root up all He has not planted, do you not think you had best be thinking whether you are out on a limb that has no connection with the Lord's building program, or whether you are in that which the Father sent His Son to build?

Friends, get out of denominations now and come to the sermon preached by Peter and obey it, and let the Lord add you to the church, as we of the church of the Lord beg you to do. We have done just what they did on Pentecost. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11), He has added us to the church He built, just as He did those on the day of Pentecost, and will add you to that same church if you will obey Him.

Deceased

The Need for Vigilance

Dub McClish

While guarding against over-suspicion, we must also guard against its opposite extreme. Many problems that beset the church may be traced to this root. Some brethren are hyper-suspicious; perhaps more are hyper-naïve about everybody and everything. Some have chosen the course of a carefully premeditated ignorance concerning what is being taught and/or practiced by various brethren. I deem this course to be even more dangerous than the former, exhibiting both abject practical folly as well as rebellion against God's Word. The statements of Scripture are numerous that urge upon us the spirit of vigilance.

Paul gave **elders** the directive to "watch" (be awake, alert, vigilant) for those who would arise among themselves, speaking perverse things to gain a following (Acts 20:31). Elders are to watch for souls in their care (Heb. 13:17). Many congregations have been stolen by

those who love not the Truth because elders were not vigilant. Some not only refuse to be watchful on their own, but they refuse to heed warnings when indisputable evidence is laid before them.

Paul told Timothy (a **preacher**), "watch thou in all things" (2 Tim. 4:5—KJV). This admonition was in the context of warnings that some would despise the Truth. Paul was not like many modern preachers who pride themselves on their ignorance of "brotherhood issues" and of who is saying what. Had he been like many modern disciples he would have told Chloe that he was so busy in Ephesus that he did not even want to hear about problems in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11).

Many preachers pride themselves in avoiding knowledge of crucial errors and their sources with the flippant excuse: "I don't keep files on the brethren. I let others do that; I just try to mind my

own business." Yet, when one of these problems crosses his threshold, guess who he is most likely to call—one of those "busy-bodies" who has kept some files to help him deal with the problem.

Peter gives the instruction concerning vigilance to **all**: "Be sober, be watchful" (1 Pet. 5:8). Rather than sleeping, we must all "watch and be sober" (1 The. 5:6). We are to "beware" of (observe, keep our eyes open for) false doctrines and philosophies (Mark 8:15; Col. 2:8). Paul felt this need of vigilance so keenly that he had upon him "anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). Let us not be consumed with suspicion, but neither let us foolishly deny the need for vigilance and concern for all of the error and sin that have found their way into the church. Worse, let us never allow or imply endorsement of such by a guilty silence.

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Choices That Lead to Greatness

Danny Douglas

Introduction

To live a life that is pleasing to God is true greatness. "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man" (Ecc. 12:13). This includes being a servant, which Jesus taught is true greatness (Mat. 20:26-28; 23:11-12). This is a greatness we can all achieve, regardless of age, education, financial status, and ability. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phi. 4:13).

A good example of one who rose to greatness is the godly man Joseph, of whom we read in Genesis chapters 37 thru 50. Although he rose to the position of governor in Egypt, this was not the greatest thing about Joseph. It was his obedience and faithfulness to God, whether as a son, a slave, a prisoner, or a ruler. His greatness was a result of many choices that he made in life, in which he put God first. Let us consider a few of them.

The Choice to Be an Obedient Son

In answer to his father's command, he said: "Here *am* I" (Gen. 37:12-14). The principle of honoring father and mother is crucial in learn-

ing to respect God and His authority (Eph. 6:1-4). Isaiah exemplified this attitude toward God (Isa. 6:8). No person will be a success in God's eyes who fails to honor his parents or the will of God. Our attitude should be one of humility and obedience, like Joseph and Isaiah.

The Choice to Practice Love

According to Jesus, man is to love God first, and second is to love his neighbor as himself (Mat. 22:36-40; Mark 12:29-31). Joseph was obedient to God, and refused to sin with Potiphar's wife on the basis of love. He answered her solicitations: "*There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" (Gen. 39:9). Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

The Choice to Resist Temptation and to Remain Pure

He resisted, although Potiphar's wife continued to come at him. He did not wear down and give in (Gen. 39:9-12). He was wise to flee from sin (cf. 39:13; 2 Tim. 2:22; Jam. 4:7-8). "Flee fornication. Every

sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18). Fornication affects man in a way that no other sin does. "Keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22). "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23), and what a great blessing it is to have the blood of Christ to cleanse us in baptism (Acts 22:16), and to keep us cleansed if we live a faithful life (1 John 1:7). Purity and sincerity are well pleasing to God (Mat. 5:8; 18:3; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 John 3:3). Godly decisions do not guarantee a life free of persecution, as Joseph's life proves. However, God will be with the person who lives a godly and holy life (Gen. 39:13-20; 39:21; 1 Pet. 1:16; Tit. 2:12). "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word." (Psa. 119:9).

The Choice to Be Trustworthy

Joseph could be trusted, and entrusted with great responsibility (Gen. 39:20-23). Many are not like this. "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble *is like* a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Pro. 25:19). Can the church depend

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Notes From The Editor

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The Tongue

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me!" That was the little jingle we learned as children when others would say bad things about us. As many times as we said it, we knew it simply was not true. We knew that the tongue had great power. Likewise, James teaches that the tongue is a powerful member of the body (Jam. 3:2-12). He shows that it has both the power to do good, but also the power to do evil.

Profanity

Profanity is a big problem in our society, but the sad thing is that many defend it and others see nothing wrong with it. Some have even said that the attempt to put a stop to profanity (at least on the airways) is an attack on the first amendment. This type of speech was once confined to a few: "cuss like a sailor" or "pardon my 'French.'" Now, however, it is found everywhere, by all people, even little children.

Among the definitions of *profanity* is irreverent speech. Webster defines it: "to treat (something sacred) with abuse, irreverence, or contempt; desecrate." It originated from the idea of being before the temple and dealt with the idea of something that was not holy because it was not consecrated to God's service. While profanity can be used of many types of speech, let us discuss the use of terms relating to God and sacred

things in an irreverent way.

God (and all things related to Him) is to be held in reverence. The Psalmist stated, "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name" (111:9). Our God is a God to be revered. When Israel came to Mount Sinai to receive the Law, there were "thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled" (Exo. 19:16). Then God gave them the Ten Commandments, one being: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (20:7). *Vain* means worthless or empty, thus speech that has no value or is worthless. Thus, when we use God's name in a worthless or empty way, we are taking His name in vain.

In the example prayer, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name" (Mat. 6:9). Instead of using God's name in a worthless way and attaching His name to anything and everything, we need to be reverencing and holding His name in a sacred or holy manner. Yet, as we hear so often today, God's name is put with anything and everything and used in a way that is disrespectful to Him. They attach His holy name down to that which is common and profane.

While many Christians would never have the desire to use God's name in vain, many simply do not think regarding their speech. We have heard the Lord's name taken in vain so often (some phrases have become part of American's normal speech—"O my God") that it has

been incorporated into our speech without our thinking about it. Another problem that many face is the use of euphemism's regarding God's name and spiritual matters. Webster defines *euphemism* as "the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant." Simply because something is a euphemism does not mean that it is bad. Even the Bible uses them, but uses them in a proper manner. For example it speaks of one *knowing* his wife, or one *lay's* with another in dealing with the sexual act. We often use euphemisms in a good way (using passed away instead of died, etc.). The problem comes when we use euphemisms for God's name (and spiritual things) in a common or profane way. Some of the more common euphemisms for God and spiritual things are: "golly" "gosh," "gee," "gee whiz," "darn," "jiminy," "dickens," "good heavens," "for goodness sake," "my Lord," "Lordy," "heck," "shoot," "gracious," "my God," "heavens to Betsy," and "dagnabit." These and other terms are simply a mild way of cursing and using the Lord's name in a vain or profane way. We need to be vigilant about our speech that we do not degrade God and His name by what we say.

Corrupt Speech

Corrupt speech or simply filthy communication is another problem

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

within our society. It seems as if what was once considered unacceptable and wicked in our society has become acceptable and the norm for most people. It seems many revel in speaking in a sexually suggestive way (not really saying it but the undertones are present, the use of double entendres). If you spend time around many young people today, you will find that their language is deplorable. Much of the language of today simply degrades man to the level of an animal. James states, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (Jam. 3:9-10).

Paul teaches us that we are to use our tongue for that which is good and edifying. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). *Corrupt* means unfit for use or what is of poor quality. When we speak, we need to avoid using language that

is unfit for man to be saying. We need to leave it in the gutter where it came from. Paul also writes, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). *Filthy* is language that is obscene or foul. It is language that was once generally considered in poor taste, but, sadly, because of our degrading morality in our nation, it has become almost standard speech. Zodhiates says of *filthy*,

Vile conversation.... It refers to shameful words coming out of the mouth, implying that the person who has been redeemed by Christ (Col. 3:1) should never utter improper or filthy words which he may have uttered in his life of unbelief. A Christian ought to have a changed vocabulary, and the genuineness of one's Christianity can be discerned by his vocabulary.

In actuality, the improper filthy words should not have been uttered even in one's life of unbelief. That type of vocabulary should be avoided by all.

The wise man and wiser still because he was writing by inspiration of

God, Solomon, stated, "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked *speaketh* frowardness" (Pro. 10:31-32). *Froward(ness)* is "what is morally crooked from a standard, often with a focus on words that are perverse" (Swanson HGK9337). If we are going to be wise, then we must not be speaking those morally perverse words and speak that which is acceptable.

Let us make sure that our speech does not degenerate to that unacceptable language of the *sailor* whether cussing or the gutter language that so many have degraded to. Let us use our tongues to build up and edify others.

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Continued from Page 1
on you? Can others depend on you?
Can God depend on you?

The Choice to Give God the Glory

Later, when he was exalted, Joseph gave God the glory (Gen. 40:8; 41:16, 28, 32; 45:8-9). Likewise, we should give God the thanks and the glory. "To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom. 16:27). "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 The. 5:18). To give God the glory and not ourselves is a mark of humility (Jam.

4:6-10; 1 Pet. 5:5-7; Mat. 23:12).

The Choice to Be Patient

No doubt, Joseph suffered many things he did not understand (Gen. 37-40; Psa. 105:17-19). Yet, he never gave up on God. His trials made him stronger. "Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jam. 1:3; cf. 1 Pet. 1:7; Pro. 25:4; Isa. 48:10). "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

The Choice Not to Seek Revenge

Joseph's brethren had treated him

cruelly years earlier (Gen. 37:19-27; 42:21-22). Yet, he saw the purpose and providence of God in the events of his life (45:5-8; 50:20). He did not hold bitterness, or a grudge against them, nor did he seek revenge (50:15-21; cf., Rom. 12:19-21). Joseph was ready to forgive when finally they asked his forgiveness (Gen. 50:16-20). So should we be forgiving (Eph. 4:31-32).

Conclusion

Let us rise to true greatness, by making wise and godly choices like Joseph. To put God first in every-

thing is true success! (Mat. 6:33; 22:36-40).

After many years they finally asked his forgiveness—after Jacob's death (Gen. 50:17-19; Eph. 4:31-32).

The child of God can be forgiven by repentance, confession, and prayer (Acts 8:22-24; 1 John 1:9; Jam. 5:16). The alien sinner can be forgiven when he: hears; believes;

repents; confesses his faith; and is baptized (Acts 2:38; 8:12-13, 32-39; 16:31-34; 18:8; 22:16).

Mt. Pleasant, TN

The Bible's Use of *Deceit*

Gary W. Summers

The serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Clearly, Satan **lied** to the woman, but Paul later writes, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14). Paul is probably referring to the entire process of deception perpetrated upon Eve, which included appeals to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride. Outright lying was a part of the devil's overall attack.

Several forms of *deceit* are used in the Bible; this article will be devoted to looking at several of them before drawing an important conclusion with respect to Mac Deaver's doctrine of "Authorized Ethical Deception" (AED). According to the Blue Letter Bible, the English word *deceit* appears 34 times over 33 verses in the King James Version of the Bible. The first three usages are found in Job and are all used in a negative sense. One of them affords us an excellent prohibition: "My lips shall not speak wickedness, Nor my tongue utter deceit" (Job 27:4; cf. 15:35; 31:5). This verse also includes a parallelism, and *deceit* is interchangeable with *wickedness*.

There are seven verses in Psalms, and *deceit* is associated with several other negative actions such as cursing, fraud, mischief, and vanity (10:7); iniquity (36:3); evil (50:19); wickedness and guile (55:11); violence (72:4); lies (101:7); and

falsehood (119:118). If a person can be known by the company he keeps, so should a concept. *Deceit* certainly walks on the dark side of the street, away from the light, among the deep shadows.

As one might expect, several Proverbs also make statements concerning *deceit's* character, and none of them are flattering. Following are the seven that Solomon wrote:

The thoughts of the righteous *are* right: *But* the counsels of the wicked *are* deceit (12:5).

He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: But a false witness *deceit* (12:17).

Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: But to the counsellors of peace *is* joy. (12:20).

The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way: But the folly of fools *is* deceit (14:8).

Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man; But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel (20:17).

He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, And layeth up deceit within him (26:24).

Whose hatred is covered by deceit, His wickedness shall be shewed before the *whole* congregation (26: 26).

Once again, the reader does not see anything positive in *deceit*. The next Old Testament usage is an important one since it is the prophecy of Jesus in Isaiah 53:9 that is cited by Peter in 1 Peter 2:22, where the English word *guile* is used in place of *deceit*, the two words are synonyms.

In either case, no deceit or guile was found in the mouth of our Lord. Jeremiah includes the word seven times in six verses (5:27; 8:5; 9:8; 14:14; 23:26). The double occurrence is in Jeremiah 9:6, which is part of a lament against his people. The entire passage (9:3-6) is instructive of the way life was:

And they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies: But they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; For they proceed from evil to evil, And they know not me, saith the LORD. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, And trust ye not in any brother: For every brother will utterly supplant, And every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, And will not speak the truth: They have taught their tongue to speak lies, *And* weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation *is* in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.

How could a civilization be more thoroughly acquainted with deceit than this one? They are filled with deceit (Jer. 5:27) as a cage is full of birds. They hold fast to deceit (8:5); that is all their tongues can speak (9:8). The last two references in Jeremiah have to do with some who were prophesying—not the truth—but false visions out of the deceit of their hearts (14:14; 23:26). Hosea talks about Israel (the northern kingdom) being filled with deceit (11:12) at a time previous to Jeremiah, when

Judah had not yet become the way Jeremiah described her.

Two references are made to merchants practicing deceit by using false balances (Hos. 12:7; Amos 8:5). The final mention of *deceit* in the Old Testament is from Zephaniah 1:9, where God promises to punish houses that are full of deceit and violence. Only five times can the English word be found in the New Testament—twice in a list of sins (Mark 7:22; Rom. 1:29). In Romans 3:13, deceit is the equivalent to the poison of asps in their lips. Paul warned brethren not to be spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit (Col. 2:8). In a defense of himself, Paul said that his exhortation to the people was not motivated by deceit (1 The. 2:3).

One cannot miss the fact that everything about “deceit” is negative. Nothing positive is said about it any time that it is recorded. *Deception* appears only three times in the Bible—all with negative connotations (Psa. 38:12; Mat. 27:64; 2 The. 2:10). The question Mac Deaver should be asked and required to answer is: “How can the word *ethical* be attached to *deceit* or *deception*?” Nothing in the Bible indicates that this is ever the case, let alone that it would be authorized by God! To formulate a doctrine called Authorized Ethical Deception is itself a misnomer, since deceit is plainly neither ethical nor authorized.

The Related Words

The two noun forms were examined in detail; lesser consideration shall be given to the verb forms of the word. In the King James, again according to the Blue Letter Bible, *deceive* is used throughout the Bible 27 times in 27 verses, *deceived* is found 34 times in 31 verses,

and *deceiving* appears twice—in 2 Timothy 3:13 and James 1:22. In none of these instances, just as with the nouns, no positive aspect of the words can be found. In several instances we find a warning to Christians to take heed that no one deceive them (Mat. 24:4-5, 11, 24; Mark 13:5-6; Eph. 4:14; 5:6; 2 The. 2:3; 1 John 3:7). Christians are likewise cautioned to avoid self-deception (1 John 1:8).

Jeremiah 4:10

The past tense, *deceived*, is really no different than the present tense in meaning, although in Obadiah 3 the reader may want to note that self-deception can be brought about by pride (cf. Jer. 49:16). There are three verses that assign deception to God, which someone might cite in a misguided effort to establish that on occasion deceit is acceptable. Such could be attempted, however, only by ignoring the context. The first one of these is Jeremiah 4:10, in which the reader is stunned to see the prophet say these words:

Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

Commentators have been baffled by these words. When one studies Jeremiah 4:1-9, it is even more puzzling because these verses contain clear warnings that Judah must repent or be conquered by a nation from the north. The people are urged to genuinely repent. How, then, are the prophet's words to be understood? We know from Jeremiah 14:13 (and other passages) that the false prophets were the ones who proclaimed a message of peace:

Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye

have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place.

Since the false prophets spoke lies while God spoke the truth, then it may be that in Jeremiah 4:10 that Jeremiah is actually lamenting—not that God had deceived the people—but that He **allowed** the false prophets to deceive the people. God, of course can neither sin (1 Pet. 2:22) nor lie (Tit. 1:2). But He can give Satan the liberty to do certain things, as in 1 Kings 22:22. Even then God warned Ahab not to pay heed to the lying spirit. Jeremiah is also present in Judah to tell people the truth to counter-balance those proclaiming peace. Still Jeremiah bemoans the fact that God has allowed the false prophets to deceive the people.

Jeremiah 20:7

O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, Every one mocketh me.

There are three things to keep in mind concerning this verse. First, it is a highly emotional passage, the one in which Jeremiah says he will no longer make mention of God or speak any more in His name, although he could not go through with that intention (20:9). What Jeremiah says here, therefore, comes from frustration and depression; therefore, if the KJV gave us the best translation of the Hebrew term, we could easily understand how that Jeremiah's perspective on things was a little skewed.

Second, what evidence is there that God had, in fact, ever deceived Jeremiah? Third, the word translated “deceive,” can be legitimately so rendered, but according to Gesenius, the verb first means “to persuade anyone,” and he cites as an example

Jeremiah 20:7. He then adds, “especially in a bad sense,” and then mentions “to entice, to seduce, and to deceive” [6601] (696). Probably, for that reason, the New King James translated the first part of the verse: “O LORD, You induced me, and I was persuaded.” The American Standard says similarly, “O Jehovah, thou hast persuaded me and I was persuaded.” Some modern translations have returned to “deceived,” but “persuaded” is definitely the better choice. The *Pulpit Commentary* states that *enticed* is the best rendering and points out that in verse 10 of the same passage, the KJV used precisely that word. As to the meaning of the text, they offer these comments:

Jeremiah refers to the hesitation he originally felt to accepting the prophetic office (ch. I)... In Ezekiel, too, the same case is supposed as possible of Jehovah’s “enticing” a prophet (Ezek. xiv. 9) (11:1:463).

Ezekiel 14:9

Those remarks bring us to the third passage (Eze. 14:9), and the situation here is like that of 1 Kings 22:22. God will, allow the false prophet to say what his heart is inclined to say, but He “will stretch out His hand against him and destroy him also.” God is not verbally lying to such men, He is simply allowing them to do what it is they want to do anyway—just as He allowed Balaam to follow the inclination of his covetous heart. Then He destroyed him (Num. 31:8). This is the same situation as described in 2 Thessalonians 2:11: “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” God cannot lie, but He will not stop someone from believing a lie. He is said to send a strong delusion, but that is only in the sense of

allowing Satan free reign to deceive people who have no love of the truth in the first place (2:10).

None of these three passages have anything to do with using deceit on our fellow man for a supposedly good or ethical purpose. God does not **deceive** any more than He **lies**; He only allows Satan the opportunity to do so upon those who really do not love God or want to be obedient to Him in the first place.

Adjectives and Adverbs

The adjective *deceitful* is found 21 times in 21 verses: eight times in Psalms, six times in Proverbs, once in Jeremiah, four times in the minor prophets, and twice in the New Testament. All instances carry with them the idea of condemnation on the part of the one using deceit. Below are a few examples.

O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man (Psa. 43:1b).

bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days (Psa. 55:23).

Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, And from a deceitful tongue (Psa. 120:2).

A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful *witness* speaketh lies (Pro. 14:25).

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).

For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ (2 Cor. 11:13).

Using deceit is not only negative; in parallelisms it is equated with lying (Psa. 120:2). The adverb *deceitfully* is found 11 times in 11 verses, and none of them have anything positive to say about the use of deceit or suggest that there is anything ethical about it.

Deceivableness appears once—in 2 Thessalonians 2:10. The Greek word *dolos* [1388], translated as

“deceit” twice, is also translated “subtily” (Mat. 26:4; Acts 13:10), “craft” (Mark 14:1), and “guile” (John 1:47-48, 2 Cor. 12:16; 1 The. 2:3; 1 Pet. 2:1; 2:22; 3:10; Rev. 14:5). Two different verbs are translated “beguiled.” One is found in 2 Corinthians 11:13 [1818]; the other is in Colossians 2:4 [2603].

In 2 Corinthians 4:2, Paul writes that, concerning his ministry, he had renounced “the hidden things of dishonesty,” and did not walk in craftiness, nor did he handle “the word of God deceitfully.” If Mac Deaver could have found a verse that praised deceit or put it in a positive light, he would have included it in an article he wrote. Instead, he tried to find some examples which he alleged proves that deceiving others is all right. Perhaps it is deceitful, but not ethical to use the Word of God the way Mac did in his article.

Applications

If Christians bought into Authorized Ethical Deception (which is not a Biblical concept), how would it work? Under what circumstances would a child of God be able to use deception? If someone is perceived to be a spiritual enemy, is it all right to lead him on and give a false impression, such as saying that you will participate in a debate when you have no intention of doing so? Some brethren have promised that they will give a reply to an exposure of their false views only to ignore the issue. One brother assured this writer eight years ago that a response would be forthcoming, but none has been received to date. Was that AED?

If a preacher is fired or threatened with being fired, is it deceptive to write a letter of resignation to avoid problems within the congregation (such as certain members rebelling

against the elders' decision)? Since this is a practice in other fields of endeavor, this writer once believed that it was all right to do so in the Lord's church, but the world is not our model, and he has repented of

having done so.

The Scriptures offer no positive support for deceiving anyone. After Jesus had been crucified and put to death, Peter wrote that He did no sin, neither was guile (deceit) found

in His mouth. Will men be able to say the same of Mac Deaver or anyone else who holds to the false doctrine of Authorized Ethical Deception?

Winter Park, FL

Being Spiritually Minded Includes Understanding Fellowship

Johnny Oxendine

The idea of being spiritually minded certainly extends to the biblical concept of fellowship. How so? Well, if we look into Romans 8:6 we should see that the inference is not necessarily limited to the world as we might think of it. The phrase "carnally minded" literally means "minding the things of the flesh." It is put in contrast to "minding the things of the spirit." There cannot be fellowship between the two, obviously.

We might add that any false doctrine (not abiding in the doctrine of Christ—Gal. 1:6-7; 2 John 9) that is accepted or condoned cannot reasonably separate itself from any other false doctrine (they are all false). This means not only that there is virtually no difference between denominations, but also there is not much difference between a "church of Christ" that uses the instrument (or claims direct working of the Spirit in their life) and a denomination either. One might say that the former includes those who have at least obeyed that form of doctrine (Rom. 6:17), yet to **no longer** abide in the doctrine is to no longer have God (2 John 9).

Would we, as the Lord's body, be comfortable with relationships

(fellowship) that extend beyond the reach of truth—that would embrace/accept false teachers or false doctrine? When we have mentioned congregations that are moving (have moved) beyond that which is written (adding women in positions of leadership, etc.), and see that other congregations are in open fellowship with them, can we dismiss this as autonomy and leave it at that? Free choice? I get it! Everyone can simply do whatever they wish (fellowship) and it should be of little or no concern to others? That is the mindset today in many congregations.

This has put an obvious paradox in play because it means that some do not want to accept biblical fellowship as defined by God—rather, some will mind the things of the flesh. If that puts them at odds with truth, well, only until the complainers/brotherhood policemen shut up! This is exactly why some in the brotherhood disliked Ira Y. Rice: he exposed (and warned of) the advent of Shelly and others like him (Walling, Cope, and Atchely).

Today that means when men like (we will use) "Bradley" speak near San Mateo at a congregation that openly fellowships (or still is listed as involved in Bible camps)

with groups that use women in leadership and worship roles, or when he speaks with people from Sunset on consecutive engagements that include many other liberal speakers we find it astonishing that we are considered too negative. If the congregation where he is speaking had been involved in a camp with Baptists would that have made a difference to the "Cover" brothers? No one wants to look at the associations they have as an important aspect of fellowship. Anyone can make a mistake; they should be acknowledged and dealt with.

The Popes of Bel Air

In the middle of this current mess is an installed base whose pronouncements are that we all need to get past sins (past) and get on with the business of preaching the Gospel. We do need to preach the Gospel, and will continue to do so. However, the Wizards of Oz are hoping that no one sees the men behind the curtain. Their jobs now are to cover for the erring, dismissing evidence, and associations with liberals in an effort to keep the "status quo" (whatever that is now). If they no longer mind their prodigals with Sunset, can Shelly and Walling be behind?

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