

# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

*Volume XXXVII*

*2008*



January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

# Defender

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*Vol. XXXVII*

*January 2008*

*Number 01*

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)

## Water Baptism Not Holy Spirit—is the One Baptism

*Roy Deaver*

In this brief article we confidently affirm that the “one baptism” spoken of by Paul is water baptism—not Holy Spirit baptism.

### **There is One Baptism**

In Ephesians 4:4-6, where Paul discusses the seven basic “ones” of New Testament Christianity, he plainly declares in verses 4 and 5 that “There is...one baptism.” In the New Testament we have reference to: (1) John’s baptism (Mat. 3); (2) the Lord’s baptism of suffering (Mark 10:38-39); (3) baptism in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); (4) baptism in the Holy Spirit (Mat. 3:11; Acts 1:5); (5) baptism in fire (Mat. 3:11); (6) Israel’s baptism “unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor. 10:2); and (7) the doctrine of baptisms (Heb. 6:2). But, when Paul wrote the Ephesian letter in 62 A.D. he emphatically declared: “There is...one baptism,” Regarding less of what there *had been*, and regardless of what *there is going to be*—in 62 A.D. Paul taught that there is the **one** baptism.

### **The Baptism of the Great Commission**

After the Lord had been raised from the dead, and after He had made various appearances to those who loved Him and whom He loved so dearly, He met with His disciples—as He “had appointed them”—upon a mountain of Galilee, and there He gave to them (and by principle and application, to **us**) the Great Commission. Matthew (28:18-20) records this commission as follows: “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world

[the consummation of the age].” Mark records this commission as follows: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mark 16: 15, 16).

Thus, it is clear that in this Great Commission the Lord talked about a baptism—(1) which He Himself authorized, (2) which is involved in making disciples, (3) which brings about one’s transition *into* the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (4) which relates to every creature in the whole world, (5) which is essential to one’s salvation; (6) which is preceded by and which is produced by one’s believing, and (7) which is to be preached and practiced till the end of time.

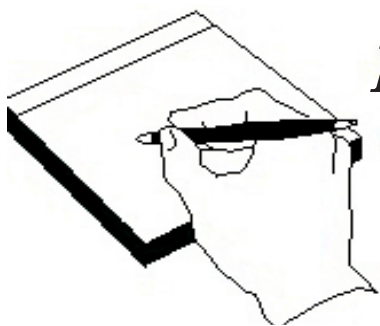
Let it be observed carefully that the baptism of the Great Commission (1) is authorized by the Lord, (2) is essential to one’s salvation, and (3) is to be preached and practiced till the end of the world.

### **Holy Spirit Baptism and Salvation**

The baptism of the Great Commission—to be preached and practiced till the end of the world—is essential to one’s salvation. Holy Spirit baptism is not (and never was) essential to one’s salvation. The New Testament talks about the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. There are two—and only two—recorded instances of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2 we have the record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in connection with the apostles; in Acts 10 we have the record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in connection with Cornelius and his household.

With regard to what happened in Acts 2 may we

*Continued on Page 3*



# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Deaver Revisited

Brother Mac Deaver has written a new book titled, *The Holy Spirit (Center of Controversy—Basis of Unity)*. In 1994 as brother Deaver prepared for a debate with brother Marion Fox on the indwelling of the Spirit, brother Deaver began making changes in his views on the **work** of the Holy Spirit. Faithful brethren have long held that whatever one held concerning the indwelling of the Spirit (personally or representatively), it was not a fellowship matter. However, faithful brethren have long held that the Holy Spirit today works on the heart of man (whether Christian or non-Christian) through the agency of the Word of God. In his debate with Fox, he used the term *superliterary*. Many did not realize the import of that word as brother Deaver made his change (which was a progressive change).

As brother Deaver continued to change, he engaged in other debates (Lockwood and Moffitt) setting forth his novel views. These debates centered more on the **work** of the Spirit and not the indwelling (as in his debate with Fox). He also gained some support from once faithful brethren (Bob Berard, Glenn Jobe, Terry Varner, et al.). He set forth one primary argument which he felt no one could answer, yet it was shown to be false based upon the fallacy of equivocation. Yet, brother Deaver continued to offer his flawed syllogism to the brotherhood as though no one had answered it. Deaver argued that the Spirit directly helped the Christian to live the Christian life along with directly giving the Christian wisdom.

However, brethren quickly realized that brother Deaver's view denigrated the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures (even though brother Deaver denied such). If the Christian needs something in addition to the Word (the Spirit acting directly upon his spirit), then the Word is not sufficient to get the Christian to heaven. Notice with me a few Scriptures which show that the Word is all we

need to attain heaven's home. John wrote, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 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" (John 20:30-31). John wrote to produce belief. Paul tells us: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). John then states that through that faith we have life. While no one should doubt that *life* includes the abundant life in the here-and-now (John 10:10), yet the primary idea is eternal life (John 3:16). If by the Word we can come to have eternal life, then we do not need a direct operation of the Spirit within our life.

Paul wrote to Timothy: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Paul shows that God's Word properly used (i.e., for doctrine or teaching, for reproof which is proving what is right and wrong, for correction when one goes astray, and for instruction in righteousness which is the entirety of teaching of how to be right with God) is what is needed to make one a "man of God." He does not need a direct operation of the Spirit upon his heart to be in that right relationship with God. That Word, used as God intended, will also make one "perfect." *Perfect* is word meaning "complete." One cannot get any more complete than being complete, thus there is no need for the Spirit to act directly upon one's heart to give him aid. Then Paul teaches that the Word will make

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one “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” There are no good works for which the Word will not equip us. Again, there is no need for an additional work or action on the heart of man by the Spirit.

Peter informs us: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:3-4). Through God’s divine power, He has given man the Word as revealed by the Spirit (see John 14:25-26; 16:12-13). Through the Word one can escape the corruption that is in this world. That corruption comes through lust (1 John 2:15-17). Then one through that Word can be a partaker of God’s nature. If one can have the nature of God through the Word, then he does not need a direct operation of the Spirit upon his heart. Last, Peter mentions that the Word is able to give us an entrance into the everlasting kingdom in verse 11: “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” No one needs a direct operation of the Spirit upon their heart to get to heaven. The Word is able to accomplish getting the Christian to heaven.

By teaching that one needs a direct operation of the Spirit to overcome sin and live the Christian life implies that the Word cannot accomplish it. That is a denigration of the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures. However, brother Deaver and those of his followers did not stop there. Brother Glenn Jobe proclaimed that when people are baptized today, they also receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The late brother Berard wrote an article advocating this doctrine also. Brother Berard went so far as to be re-baptized because he did not have that understanding when he was originally baptized. That implies that unless one understands that he is being baptized in the Spirit when he is baptized, he is not really a Christian. To answer this view which brother Deaver now holds and advocates in his book, we are reproducing an article written by his dad, brother Roy Deaver, which appeared in *Spiritual Sword*, April 1974.

While brother Deaver speaks about unity, if he desires the unity of fellowship of faithful brethren, then he needs to give up the false doctrines he began embracing in 1994. When he repents of such false doctrine, he will then find himself in fellowship with faithful brethren.

MH

*Continued from Page 1*

note: (1) The Lord had promised the baptism of the Spirit to the apostles (Mat. 3:11; John 20:22; Acts 1:5), (2) The Lord kept His promise (Acts 2:1-4), (3) It should be observed that the Spirit’s coming upon the apostles in Acts 2 is not—in Acts 2—called a “baptism.” We call this Holy Spirit *baptism* in the light of the Lord’s promise in Acts 1:5: “but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence,” (4) The baptism of the Spirit was essential to apostolic qualification and apostolic work. The Lord had promised these men miraculous power (Mat. 10:18, 19; John 16:7-13), and that this power would come to them *with* the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). We should be careful to note that the *power* was not the Holy Spirit. Rather, the power would come *with* the Holy Spirit. (5) As evidences of their baptism in the Holy Spirit the apostles were enabled to speak in *languages* which they had not learned through study, to make known by miraculous *inspiration* God’s plan for men’s salvation, and to perform *miracles*—many wonders and signs.

With regard to what happened in Acts 10 may we also note certain things. (1) God miraculously instructed Peter to go and preach to Gentiles—to Cornelius and his household. (2) God poured out upon Cornelius and his household the Holy Spirit. (3) When Peter saw that God had given the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his household he said, “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.” What Peter here quotes (in Acts 11:16) is the Lord’s statement recorded in Acts 1:5. If it is in the light of Acts 1:5 that we call what happened on Pentecost a “baptism of the Holy Spirit” then, in the light of the same passage, it is obvious that what happened to Cornelius and his household was a baptism of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10 was: “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” (4) Cornelius did not receive apostolic powers. Holy Spirit baptism did not make him an apostle. It must be kept in mind that there is a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit baptism and the power. Cornelius did not receive apostolic power.

Holy Spirit baptism, in Acts 2 had nothing to do with salvation from sin. The Holy Spirit, in baptismal measure, and as had been promised them, came upon the apostles. These men—the Lord’s apostles—had been selected by the Lord from among those prepared by John the baptizer. It was John’s mission to prepare a people for



the Lord (Luke 1:17). Specifically, one of the apostles was a man named Andrew. In John 1, Andrew is identified as being a disciple of John the baptizer (1:35 and 40). Andrew, a disciple of John, had been baptized by John, and it must be kept in mind that John's baptism was "for" (in order to) remission of sins (Mark 1:4). Andrew, therefore, was one who had been baptized by John, for the remission of sins. We recognize that without the shedding of the Lord's blood there could be no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). Therefore, when Andrew was baptized by John, for the remission of sins, at the time of his baptism he received remission only *potentially*, and *actually* when the Lord shed His blood, and the atonement was completed. Now, consider that Andrew, an apostle, is present on Pentecost of Acts 2. He is one who receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He had been baptized by John, for the remission of sins, and had already received remission of his sins. Obviously, therefore, the Holy Spirit baptism which Andrew received was not for the purpose of remitting his sins!

We conclude, therefore, that Holy Spirit baptism (in Acts 2) didn't have anything to do with the remission of sins. And, we reason that what was true with regard to Andrew was likewise true with regard to the other apostles and all other persons who had been properly prepared by John.

Further, Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10 had nothing to do with salvation from sins. To discuss this thought properly would require more space than is allotted at the present time. Suffice it to say that *after* the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his household, Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (10:48). Verse 47 makes it abundantly clear that baptism "in the name of the Lord" is baptism in *water*, and it is *this* baptism in water which is "unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). We have shown that in relationship to the only two recorded instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament that Holy Spirit baptism had nothing to do with remission of sins. If the baptism of the Great Commission—to be preached and practiced till the end of the world—is essential to one's salvation, and if Holy Spirit baptism is *not* essential to one's salvation, then it is clear that the baptism of the Great Commission is not Holy Spirit baptism.

### **Water Baptism**

The baptism of the Great Commission is the baptism authorized by the Christ. It is to be preached and practiced in His name. In view of all that had taken place in connection with the conversion of Cornelius and his

household, Peter said: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). The next verse says: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Obviously, therefore, baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" is baptism in **water**. But, baptism in the name of Christ is the baptism of the Great Commission. Therefore, the baptism of the Great Commission is baptism in **water**.

Acts 8:26-40 records the conversion of the nobleman of Ethiopia. Philip "preached unto him Jesus" (8:35). "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?... And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing." Obviously, therefore, the baptism which is involved in preaching "Jesus" is baptism in water. According to verse 37 (in the King James reading) Philip inquired of the eunuch about his faith, and the eunuch confessed his faith in Christ. Therefore, the baptism which is related to "faith" is water baptism.

### **From Beginning to End**

Acts 2 is a tremendously important chapter in the story of redemption. It records the establishment of the Lord's church/kingdom upon the earth. Upon this memorable day was preached the first Gospel sermon under the Great Commission. Upon this occasion, Christ was preached and remission of sins was offered in His name. Peter commanded: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "They that gladly received his word were baptized" (2:41). This is the beginning of the preaching of and the practicing of the baptism authorized by the Lord when He gave the Great Commission. It is baptism in water, for the remission of sins. It is to be preached till the end of the world.

Let it be emphasized that it is baptism in **water** that is to be preached and practiced till the end of time—not Holy Spirit baptism. If the baptism of the Great Commission is baptism in water, and if water baptism is to be preached and practiced till the end of time, and if there is **one** baptism—then it is abundantly clear that there is no such thing today as Holy Spirit baptism.

*Continued on Page 6*

# Spring 2008 Lectureship

## “Unity: From God or Man”

February 24 - 27, 2008

Elders: Kenneth Cohn, Buddy Roth, and Jack Stephens

David P. Brown, Director

### Sunday, February 24

9:30 AM “Union in Diversity” Contradicts New Testament Unity  
 10:30 AM Immorality and Unity  
 5:00 PM A History of Unity Movements in the Church of Christ  
 6:00 PM The Lord’s Supper and Unity

David P. Brown  
 Darrell Broking  
 Steve Yeatts  
 John West

### Monday, February 25

9:00 AM The Influence of the Colleges on Scriptural Unity  
 10:00 AM Worship and Unity  
 10:00 AM “How Christian Women Destroy Unity” \*\*  
 11:00 AM The Christian Home and Unity  
 1:30 PM Is the Church in Crises?  
 2:30 PM The Restoration Principle and Unity  
 3:30 PM OPEN FORUM  
 6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 7:00 PM Sound Doctrine and Unity  
 8:00 PM Bible Versions and Unity

Dub Mowery  
 Michael Hatcher  
 Sonya West  
 Wayne Blake  
 Skip Francis  
 Paul Vaughn

Daniel Denham  
 Jess Whitlock

### Tuesday, February 26

9:00 AM The New Hermeneutics and Unity  
 10:00 AM An Informed Membership and Unity  
 10:00 AM “How Christian Women Build Unity” \*\*  
 11:00 AM Causes of Division  
 1:30 PM How Does Repentance Relate to Unity  
 2:30 PM Money and Unity  
 3:30 PM OPEN FORUM  
 6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 7:00 PM God’s Plan for Unity (Ephesians 4)  
 8:00 PM Is the Church of Christ a Sect?

Johnny Oxendine  
 Ken Chumbley  
 Sonya West  
 Geoff Litke  
 Denny Wilson  
 Gene Hill

Danny Douglas  
 Lynn Parker

### Wednesday, February 27

9:00 AM Music in the Worship of God and Unity  
 10:00 AM Gospel Preachers and Unity  
 11:00 AM The Autonomy of the Church and Unity  
 1:30 PM Church Discipline and Unity  
 2:30 PM Godly Fear and Unity  
 3:30 PM OPEN FORUM  
 6:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 7:00 PM Love, the Authority of God’s Word and Unity  
 8:00 PM The Elders and Deacons Responsibility to Keep the “Unity of the Spirit...”

Tim Cozad  
 David Watson  
 Gary Summers  
 Paul Middlebrooks  
 Bruce Stulting

Lee Moses  
 Dub McClish

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### Summary

If it is the case that there is **one** baptism, and if it is the case that the baptism of the Great Commission is **water** baptism, and if it is the case that the baptism of the Great Commission is for all time—from Pentecost of Acts 2 to the end of time—then (1) it is the case that the one baptism (of Eph. 4:5) is **water** baptism, and (2) it is the case that there is now no such thing as Holy Spirit baptism.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Regardless of how many baptisms there had been or would be, how many baptisms were there when

Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5?

2. Discuss the purpose of the baptism of the Great Commission.

3. How long was the baptism of the Great Commission to be practiced?

4. Discuss the two baptisms of the Holy Spirit and show that it was not for the purpose of remission of sins.

5. How do we know that water baptism is the one baptism that is to be preached and practiced till the end of time?

6. Show why it is not possible for Holy Spirit baptism to be in effect today since there is only one baptism and that baptism is water baptism.

*Deceased*

## Form over Substance and Hypocrisy Thrown in to Boot

*David P. Brown*

Country Western singer Blaine Larsen sings a popular country song titled, *I Don't Know What She Said*. The song is about a young man enamored with an Hispanic girl who only speaks Spanish, while the young man only speaks English. When she speaks to the young man, he cannot understand a word she says to him, but his infatuation with her is so great he exclaims, "I don't know what she said, but he sure like the way she said it." The lyrics of Larsen's song set to the right kind of music makes for a hit country song. However, in dealing with the realities of life, the message of the previous quote from Larsen's song all too often describes the way some people deal with the various and diverse events in life. Rather than base their decisions on the substance (facts, truth) of a matter, they more times than not base their judgments concerning whether someone or thing is right or wrong on how (form, style, method, or appearance) it was done, or how a person approached a matter. Facts and truth are not their first concern. Such an approach to life has given rise to the following well-used phrase that describes this wrong headed approach in discerning right from wrong; that phrase is form over substance.

At times, disgruntled members of the church feel the thrust of the Sword of the Spirit in their hearts (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). With some when the sharp prick of the Spirit's Sword is felt, their first reaction is to complain that the presentation of the information to them was too harsh, hateful, mean, uncaring, and unloving. Such remarks are usually reserved for sermons that hit home, but they have been and are directed at the remarks of Godly elders, teachers, or any other spiritual church members who were and are concerned enough about living, teaching, and defending the Gospel of Christ that with unvarnished words they dealt and deal with certain brethren's sins.

When such members are asked if they are upset at the

preacher, elder, or whatever faithful church member it is because they have taught false doctrine or in some way propagated a falsehood in the message conveyed to them, or they are living an ungodly life, the reply from the growling church members sometimes is, "It's not what he/she said but how he/she said it." It is not unusual for such complaints to come from persons wherein the what (facts and truth) of a comment, a sermon, or a message to them are secondary (or further down such a persons' list of what is important in a sermon).

They are interested more in *how* the one delivering the message sounds, looks, and/or acts in his/her presentation of the same. The real concern of such people is that **they do not want anyone to point their sins out to them in such a way that will not convict them of their sins**. Thus, such wretched characters at times attack the form and not the substance of the comment, message, and/or sermon (of course this does not mean that the substance of a message is never attacked). Moreover, such persons reserve for themselves and their bosom friends the exclusive right to make any and all derogatory and slanderous remarks about their brethren, along with looking and sounding anyway they see fit to look or sound as they gossip, tale-bear, and backbite all over the place. Then when their inconsistent and vile comments about and conduct toward their brethren are called to their attention and rebuked, they become highly offended that anyone would expose them for what they in actuality are—slanderers and hypocrites.

There seems to be no fear of God before such persons' eyes. In some way or the other they have deceived themselves into thinking that they can say or do anything no matter how far it is from what the New Testament teaches concerning Godly living and conversation. They are so self-deluded in their high estimate of themselves that they seemingly think that God will *passover* them when it comes to Him holding

them personally accountable to Him for their ungodly comments, accusations, and actions. But such blinded characters fully expect God to deal justly with everyone—*justly* being defined by them to mean that God will take vengeance on everyone that did not discern everything according to their own likes and dislikes. What a terrible and horrible surprise awaits such self-deluded and false brethren when they step into eternity.

Over and over again through over 41 years of preaching, on numerous occasions we have witnessed church members approach problems and seek their solutions with the previously noted mind-set well in place—**form or style over substance and an attitude that allows them to say all manner of evil against their brethren without, it seems, any need realized on their part to prove their ungodly charges and, seemingly, their consciences prick them not at all.**

Jesus plainly told us to “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24; Psa. 119:172). Discerning matters by judging righteously simply means to make one’s decisions solely on the basis of the truth pertaining thereto as it is applied to the relevant facts in whatever case is under investigation. Furthermore, the inspired apostle Paul obligated all of us to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21). In those Scriptures “written for our learning” (Rom. 15:4), Moses gave instructions regarding carrying out an investigation, which investigation is to

determine the truth or falsity of a matter. Moses wrote:

Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword” (Deu. 13:14-15).

For emphasis sake we will enumerate Moses’ directions found in verse 14 regarding how to investigate charges, that if proven, under Moses’ Law meant the death penalty for all described in verse 15. Moses instructed the Israelites to: (1) **inquire**, (2) **make search**, (3) **ask diligently**, (4) **if it be true**, and (5) **the thing certain**. Only then should one be judged guilty and executed (13:6, 15;

17:6). Add to these directions Deuteronomy 17:6, Numbers 35:30, and Matthew 18:16 and what mere mortal can come up with a better and more thorough approach for investigating a case? However, **we are considered wicked and vile by some if we seek to follow the inspired instructions previously noted in investigating anything. Because we refuse to be content with unsubstantiated charges and slanderous remarks, that certain brethren will not take the first step to prove, it seems that these same spiritually besotted brethren think that we will be placated with form over substance also. What a sad surprise awaits them.**

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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# Defender

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Vol. XXXVII

February 2008

Number 02

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



*Voices from the past:*

*This article appeared in "Defender" July 1973*

## Controversy

*George E. Darling, Sr.*

No man has ever accomplished anything of importance in shaping the destiny of the world unless he exhibited a great deal of **combativeness**. The truth of this proposition will not be questioned we presume, by any well-informed person. Yet the popular idea is that combativeness is no longer a virtue in the pulpit. Some actually prefer a preacher who studiously avoids controversy, believing that the interests of the church are best served by such a course.

In this we should let Christ and the apostles, with the reformers of every age, be our example rather than those "qualified, called, and sent" whose mission seems to be the popularizing of sectarianism by floating with the current of worldly opinion and catering to the fashionable follies and perverted tastes of a fickle, covetous generation, forever whining and whimpering about the sinfulness of controversy while availing themselves of every opportunity to slander their neighbors, and peddle their garbage and stale nonsense against those they do not understand, and whose arguments they have never heard nor read. Until people shall conclude to "walk by the same rule, to mind the same things" there will and there **ought to be** conflict—a comparison of views and positions. That rule ought to be the Bible.

### **Jesus Was Combative**

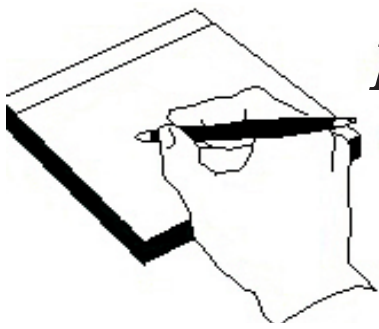
Jesus began His controversial career with the doctors of the law when He was but twelve years of age. In prosecuting the work His Father had given Him to do, the foundations of time-honored superstitions were

torn up, false doctrines pierced with the arrows of truth, hypocrites exposed, and vain Rabbis and self-confident lawyers and doctors were silenced and put to shame in the presence of astonished multitudes. No man approached Him for discussion and went away empty. He proved to be more than a conqueror of the learning, philosophy and theology of His age, until His fame as a disputant became such that "No man dared to ask him a question." You may say, "Yes, but we can't hope to succeed because He did." Well, that depends on circumstances. If we preach what He taught and **nothing else**, we can succeed in spite of all opposition. We may lose our lives, as He lost His, but the truth will triumph.

### **The Apostles**

The apostle who says, "I labored more abundantly than they all" was in constant controversy with all the theories, subversive to the Gospel then in existence. And to this fact we refer for a solution of the question, "Why are we more indebted to Paul than to any other apostle for our knowledge of Christianity?" With Paul it mattered little whether reasoning of a "judgment to come" until Felix trembled, or reproving the Athenian senators for their ignorance of the God that made them, or stilling the excited rabble at Jerusalem with a "wave of the hand," or exposing the evil designs of Judaizing teachers, or withstanding Peter to his face "because he was to be blamed." He was ever the willing advocate of that truth by which he had been made free—a **trium-**

*Continued on Page 4*



# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Both

Our Lord and Savior left heaven's home and equality with the Father to come to this world for the purpose of saving souls. Paul writes, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phi. 2:6-8). To save souls, Jesus had to die on the cross. Jesus expressed that purpose when He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)

With the Lord's intent to save souls, He gave us a commission to take His saving message to a lost world. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mat. 28:19-20). Mark records this commission when he writes, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). While this charge was originally given to the apostles, it is just as applicable to us as it was to them. This is why when the early church was scattered abroad at the persecution led by Saul, as they went, they preached the Word (Acts 8:4). Each Christian realized an individual responsibility and obligation to preach God's Word to those with whom they came in contact. Paul taught a good lesson to his "son in the faith" Timothy when he taught: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). We see a continued progression of teaching the Word to others: Paul to Timothy to faith-

ful men to others (who are also to be faithful and teach others).

We often hear brethren bemoaning the fact that the church today is not growing. Sound congregations are generally having difficulty converting the lost to Christ. If we give in to the fun and games philosophy it becomes much easier to get others into the door, but all one has won them to is fun and games and not Christ. One of the possible reasons for our lack of growth may be that many brethren have lost their evangelistic zeal. Far too many brethren have become complacent in teaching their friends, neighbors, work associates, and those with whom they come in contact. Brethren, converting the lost is the life-blood of any congregation. Some congregations swell because they steal members from other congregations, but that is not growth (even though it increases numbers). We need to get the same zeal the early church possessed in teaching others the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord and Savior also expects those who are Christians to defend the Truth of God's Word. Since truth saves, error will only condemn. Jesus said, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Later to these same ones, Jesus says, "Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:43-44). The devil did not abide in the Truth, and those today who do not abide in the Truth are followers of him. Jesus also taught that there would be false teachers: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. 7:15). While speaking directly concerning the destruction of Jerusalem the principle is valid for all times: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Mat. 24:24). Peter stated: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:

whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Pet. 2:1-3). John 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).

These admonitions are not optional. They are not something which we can decide to do or not do as it pleases us. Nor is it something which we can pick and choose (like a cafeteria) what false teachers we will oppose and which ones we will let by. We must oppose false doctrine. Some today wish to oppose false doctrine in such a way that no one will know of whom they are speaking. Recently I read an article on "New' Anti-ism" in which the author made several good points. Yet, the author had someone in mind but would not state about whom he was talking. It is a good thing that Paul did not have that attitude when he wrote to Timothy: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:19-20). Or, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes... And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17-18). We should not leave out the apostle of love as he writes about Diotrephes: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church" (3 John 9-10). Could it possibly be that some want to be known as a defender of the faith, but do not really want to be called into question by those they write about?

When brethren stand strongly in opposition to error, they are often attacked in different ways. One of these attacks is simply to call names. Thus, watchdog, heretic detectors, and other such loving terms are used for those who regularly expose error. They cannot prove that the one exposing the error is wrong, so they simply attack the person and not deal with the sin.

Another favorite attack is to accuse the person of not being evangelistic. They seem to think that if one exposes error he **cannot** be teaching the lost. They seem to think that these two commands are mutually exclusive. How-

ever, that simply is not true. A person can be evangelistic and also be a great defender of the Faith.

One of the greatest defenders of Truth and opposers of false doctrine is also one of the greatest evangelist who has lived. As one examines the life of the great apostle Paul, he sees one who fought strongly against error. Luke records that "Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with" the Judiazing teachers (Acts 15:2) Paul stated of himself concerning these men: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). One only has to look at the writings of Paul to see his opposition to false teachers. In addition to staunchly fighting against false teachers (some might have called him a heretic hunter, or a brotherhood watchdog, or other such terms, and some of the false teachers might have called him vile, liar, and other loving terms), Paul was also a great evangelist. Luke details three great evangelist tours which Paul along with others made (Luke 13-21). Through his efforts, the Gospel was spread to many areas and cities. He recognized the need to both evangelize and to stand strongly against false doctrine.

Closer to our day, brother Ira Rice has been an excellent example of one doing both. Most know of brother Rice through his efforts in *Contending For The Faith* (a paper we recommend all to subscribe to and read). Brother Rice did a marvelous job in exposing error and defending Truth. Yet, many who know of his work with *Contending For The Faith*, never knew of his work in spreading the boarders of the kingdom. Brother Rice spent years serving as a missionary to the Far East and making mission trips all over the world. He encouraged numerous others to go into the mission field and work.

Brother Rice was able to do both, even as the apostle Paul was able to do both. Other brethren could also be used as examples of doing both. It seems that the charge continually comes up when one exposes error in another that he should be out evangelizing instead of exposing the error as if one is mutually exclusive from the other. The truth of the matter is that every Christian should be doing both: exposing error and false teaching as well as evangelizing the lost.

MH



**phant controversialist.** He shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.

### **Uninspired Men**

Martin Luther was perhaps the most combative man who has lived since the apostle Paul, hence he became the prince of the reformers. By controversy he roused Catholicism from her lethargy—shook the minds of thousands of slaves, and left the imprint of his character on half the world.

What would some of our modern preachers, who are afraid of “hurting someone’s feelings” if they exposed the errors of their neighbors’ religion in **plain** language do if they were placed where Luther was. I will tell you—**nothing!** Why did Philip Melancthon, the urban, eloquent, and learned compeer of Luther fail to lead the people as Luther led them when he became his successor? He was afraid of “hurting somebody’s feelings.” These are representative men, they stand at the head of two classes. Melancthon proved himself incompetent to wield the sword of Luther. Why? He was the equal, some might say superior, to Luther in every trait save one—**combative-ness**. A good man without combativeness is like a dog without teeth or a fighting bull without horns—disposed to compromise.

“I like that word compromise, it sounds charitable” says a group of my brethren who have the backbone of a jellyfish. But not so fast gentlemen! Compromise is alright when you argue with your wives, but in religion Jesus speaks, we obey. The truth knows no compromise with error.

### **Alexander Campbell**

How did Alexander Campbell accomplish his grand work? By “letting other peoples doctrines alone?” Don’t you believe it. “Oh, we can’t all be Campbells” you say. That is true, but we can all “fight on the same line.” And we must do it or fail in our grand design of restoring New Testament Christianity.

Opposed to controversy, are you? We are indebted to it more than any other moving cause for our civil and religious liberties. Protestantism was the child of controversy, and Protestantism gave birth to American freedom. Not only this, but we are indebted to the controversial teachings and writings of Campbell, Stone, Scott, and many others for our present position in light and knowledge. We do not depend on “the natural increase of baptized children” or any other human invention, but upon the Word of God that is “sharper than a two edge sword.” No

man can faithfully proclaim that Word without bringing it “as a fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock to pieces,” to bear on the corrupters which rear their ugly heads, professing to be followers of Christ. Jesus foresaw it and said, “I came not to bring peace on earth, but a sword.” The man who seeks peace with the advocates of error, by concession of the truth, is not a friend of Christ. He who expects to gain anything by debate does not hesitate to engage in it, while he who fears the light of the truth shrinks from it like a cockroach does to a spotlight.

### **Let Them Alone**

Our sectarian neighbor inquires, “Why don’t you just preach the Gospel and let others alone?” Well, the fact is we cannot do this. Can the sectarian preacher do it? No, and he does not do it. Watch this: Is Presbyterianism the Gospel? If it is the Baptist preacher does not preach it. Can a Lutheran preach his doctrine and let the Methodist, Episcopalian, et. at., alone? Why certainly not. If Lutheranism is the Gospel then all preachers are bound to preach what is called Lutheranism. But do all preachers preach it? If each particular sect were to preach the Gospel and nothing but the Gospel, there would be no cause for contention. They may **all** teach **some** Gospel, but in addition they preach something else and it is this **something else** that the Christian objects to, and finds fault with.

If it is possible for a man to preach the Gospel and let others alone, how will he go about doing it? What kind of a Gospel will he preach? Certainly not the Gospel of Christ for that was not designed to leave any responsible creature alone. It is essentially aggressive. It knows no compromise. It recognizes no flag of truce. It demands an unconditional surrender.

Was it a rosy, milk and honey Gospel that the apostles preached? Did the Gospel in their hands please sectarians and infidels? What about the mobs, the murders, the exiles and confiscation that marked the apostolic era? What was said of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica? “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.” They openly attacked the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the idolaters and the heretical church members. The consequence was that Christians were soon distinguished as “the sect that is everywhere spoken against.” Why was it that the Romans who were troublesome to no nation on account of their religion, and who allowed the Jews to live under their own laws and follow their own method of worship, treated the Christians alone with such severity? Simply because Christians denounced the state religion of



Imperial Rome.

We do not delight in controversy merely for the sake of controversy. In fact, we are anxious that it cease. We have gained ground in our struggles, yet we desire to make a Proposition for Peace. Here is our proposition: **If they will leave our affairs alone, we will leave them alone.** They say that we are always fighting them—we never preach a sermon without abusing them and that our publications are filled with articles assailing them. Perhaps they fail to understand our intentions. We have no right to assail them or to interfere with their affairs as long as we are left at peace to perform our own work—which is to preach the Gospel of Christ and if we have any controversy with them, it must be because **they interfere in some way** with our work.

I say again, if they will leave us alone we will leave them alone. I think we have a right to demand that they shall not assail the things we hold sacred or misquote our authors. For instance, we believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and should be so regarded by all men. We regard ourselves as being assailed when our religious neighbors call it a “dead letter,” “the mere word” and other slighting and opprobrious names. When it is rudely and violently dealt with, they ought not to wonder that we feel hurt.

And they misquote our authors. We hold the apostle Paul in high esteem and we have often been grieved to hear him misquoted and misrepresented—as in Romans 1:16—“I am not ashamed of **religion**,” or 5:1—“Therefore being justified by faith **only**”—or Mark 16:16—“He that believeth shall be saved.” We consider this as an offensive stab at us, since it attacks the constitution of the Lord’s church, and misrepresents one of its fundamental laws.

#### **Matthew 15:14**

The Savior Himself says, “Let them alone,” and He says it in reference to the Pharisees. If we should leave the sectarians and false teachers (liberals, etc.) alone, we would conclude that better people than the Pharisees should, by all means, be left alone. If we can determine in which we should leave them alone, we will understand our whole duty in the premises. The Lord’s own example should serve us well. Jesus was teaching that we should “let alone” those who are determined and persistent in following error and in His own words: “If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch.” In other words, leave them to the fate that awaits them. Being religious teachers whose teaching was not authorized by the Word of God, their influence was destined to utter destruc-

tion. Being blind leaders, both they and those they were leading would be destroyed. Thus, we can see the error of those who conclude that if a man is a blind leader or a blind follower of a blind leader, that his blindness will save him from the ditch.

The Pharisees were to be left to their fate; but whether the meaning is that they were not to be annoyed by telling them of their sins and their coming destruction, or that no further effort was to be made to save them from it, or whether they were to be let alone in some other way, we cannot scripturally say unless we look further into the context. The statement of Jesus was spoken in response to the remark: “Knowest not that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?” Instead of being permitted to appease the wrath of the Pharisees the disciples are told to let them alone, and another statement is made, which, if it comes to the ears of the Pharisees will but make them more angry. The letting alone consists of neither doing nor saying anything to atone for the offence which had been taken.

We can justly appreciate this case when we consider the saying of Jesus, at which the Pharisees had taken offence. It is this: “Ye hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophecy of you, saying, This people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.” What kind of letting alone was this? Not the kind that is urged today. It is not what we understand by letting people alone is it? Very few false teachers want to be left alone this way. He was simply telling His disciples to let them alone when they were inclined to make some apology for what He had said that offended the Pharisees. The lesson then is this—that when men become offended at the truth, they should be left unmolested to all the enjoyment they can find in their ill-humor. Of course, this is only when the rebuke is just. You do not have to insult a man to teach him the Truth. Jesus did not rebuke the Pharisees every time He saw them, nor did He always rebuke them as severely as on this occasion. Their false teaching He sometimes refuted by calmly exhibiting the truth, and some times, without an attempt at refutation, He denounced it in tones of thunder.

When the good of the people, the defense of the truth, the exposure of false teaching, can be best accomplished with all fearlessness, and if men become offended—let them alone. The same sword is still on its mission. **Preach** the Word, brother.

*Deceased*

# The Ways of a False Teacher

Roelf L. Ruffner

In the apostle Peter's second epistle, he does not mince words in his denunciation and description of the false teachers/false prophets of his day. "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (2 Pet. 2:12). Whether it was the "Judaizers" who were trying to bind the Law of Moses on the Christians (Acts 15:1) or the "proto-Gnostics" who were beginning to deny that Jesus had a physical body (2 John 7), Peter and the Holy Spirit are reminding us of the destructive way taken by those who depart from New Testament Christianity.

Like a modern day microscope, the Bible reveals to us the way of depravity of the false teacher. The Word of God is as revealing today concerning false teachers as it was 2,000 years ago. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

## **The Way of the False Teacher Is the Way of the Irrational**

God sees false teachers as they truly are, "as natural brute beasts" (2 Pet. 2:12). He sees them as irrational creatures that "speak evil of the things that they understand not." Christianity is a rational, objective religion of absolute truth. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The. 5:21). False doctrine is basically irrational. For example, the falsity of "faith-only" salvation is readily apparent to the honest reader of the Bible. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jam. 2:24).

## **The Way of the False Teacher Is the Way of a Spiritual Bum**

The false teacher is basically a sensualist who seeks to live in luxury at the expense of others (2 Pet. 2:13). For example, many *televangelists* are just professional beggars who either live off "love offerings" of the naive or seek to peddle their books at Wal-Mart to gullible buyers. Behind their masks of piety are lust and covetousness.

False teachers have a "a heart trained in covetous practices" (2 Pet. 2:14—NKJV). In fact, their downfall is often either financial or sexually immoral in nature.

These spiritual bums live off other's weaknesses.

"For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts" (2 Tim. 3:6). The dividend or "reward of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:13) of the false teacher will be eternal damnation.

## **The False Teacher's Way Is to Forsake the Right Way**

"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray" (2 Pet. 2:15). That "right way" Peter mentions is the "living way" (Heb. 10:20) or "the way" (John 14:6) of Jesus Christ—the teachings of New Testament Christianity.

In this life there is a spiritual choice to be made: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mat. 7:13-14). That "strait gate" is salvation through Jesus Christ. The "wide gate" leads away from God toward Hell. False teachers opt for the wrong way by forsaking the right way.

That wrong way is also the "way of Balaam" (2 Pet. 2:15). Like Balaam the false teacher forsakes God's Word for money. Even though rebuked by the Angel of the Lord for his lawlessness, Balaam followed money rather than the Word of God (cf. Num. 22:32; 1 Tim. 6:10). Likewise modern false teachers forsake the right way by not teaching the necessity of baptism for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) to make themselves acceptable to the denominational world. Compromising the truth of the Gospel also sells more books and merchandise. Peter describes such a departure as "madness" (2 Pet. 2:16).

## **The False Teacher's Way Is One of Empty, Inflated Rhetoric**

False teachers are "wells without water" (2:17) who "speak great swelling *words* of vanity" (2:18). Their false doctrines make them spiritual wells of lies and deceit. Their teachings are Satan's bait to lure an unwary soul into his trap. They often mask their treachery in flowery language and emotional appeals. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the

simple” (Rom. 16:18).

Contrast this with the “living water” (John 4:10) of Jesus Christ—the Gospel which is simple and easily understood. Those who truly proclaim it have no hidden agenda of covetousness. “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” (Col. 2:8).

### **The Way of the False Teacher Is the Way of Slavery**

To those trying to escape sin, the false teacher promises “liberty” (2 Pet. 2:19) or a supposed license to sin. Whenever we devalue the necessity of living a morally upright life, we pervert the Gospel. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

Today some false teachers preach a *grace-only* salvation that says that there is nothing we can do to gain salvation, thereby excluding obedience to God. This is merely “cheap grace.” True liberty is the freedom to do God’s will—not serve our own selfishness. “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22).

### **The Way of the False Teacher Is the Way of Regression**

Peter pictures the false teacher as someone who has left “the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ” (2 Pet. 2:20) and “turn[ed] from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2:21). In other words, they know the truth of the Gospel but have regressed to false doctrine. False doctrine takes a soul backward, not forward to Heaven. “Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 8-9—ASV). The false teacher goes beyond what the Scriptures teach.

Peter sums up God’s revulsion for false teachers and their pernicious doctrines in a proverb. “The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet. 2:22). God does not want us to have anything to do with false teachers and we should try to get others involved with them out of their grasp. Souls are at stake.

Does the church you attend preach and practice the doctrines found in the New Testament? If not, you are being fed false doctrine and are in fellowship with false teachers (Eph. 5:11). Flee that situation as if your life was in danger and find the church of the New Testament—the church that Jesus built. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17).

5211 Timberline Rd; Cheyenne, WY 82009

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Pensacola, FL 32526**



# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

Vol. XXXVII

March 2008

Number 03

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Can You Blush?

*Alton W. Fonville*

What does a "blush" and "airplane gauges" have in common? Probably, you have never thought of the two in relation with each other. Gauges, whether in airplanes, automobiles, or anywhere else are there for the purpose of indicating information which can be discerned from observation. Then the information can be translated into action as the situation dictates.

A *blush* is a physical reaction to some stimulus, "a reddening of the face, due to modesty or confusion." It is associated with our conscience. As our conscience has been *taught*, so we react to the things around us. Most of us can probably remember from our young school days statements made about us like: "You blushed when your girlfriend smiled at you." Or you can remember statements like: "She was the most beautiful blushing bride I have ever seen." We do not hear that one as often as we used to, and it is so sad.

There are few things more beautiful than a virgin being presented for marriage at the altar. Beauty radiates from within her, and it is obvious to all. She has kept herself pure for the day of her marriage. She wants to instill in her husband the utmost confidence in her. However, there are few things more distasteful than seeing a woman who has defiled herself come to the altar of marriage. How distasteful to see one who has been *known* by everyone, and possibly has two or three children by different fathers. Her conscience has been *untaught* or has become *seared* as with a hot iron. She cannot blush. Lest the men reading this get too smug, the same things can be said of men.

Now, for a practical application within the church today. We have read from God's Word that He wants us to be a "peculiar" people, separate from the world (2 Cor. 6:14-18). We cannot love the world and love the Father (1 John 2:15). We know that God is a "jealous" God, and from a careful study of history, we can see that denominationalism is "of the world." God hates a mixed allegiance with other gods. We cannot join hands with them, or pray for their *well-being*. All denominationalism is a result of

man's leaving God and joining himself to another. The Bible describes this as "fornication." We do not have to read very far in the Old Testament to get the full impact of it if we will only listen. But, will we listen and learn? (Rom. 15:4).

God's chosen people went after strange gods and served them which provoked God to very great anger—to the point He would **not repent** and change his mind from destroying them. He was "weary with repenting" (Jer. 15:6). It is said of those people: "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, **neither could they blush**: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD" (Jer. 6:15; 8:12).

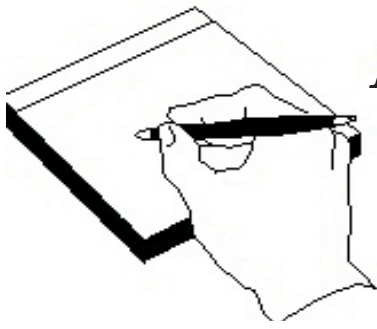
They had reached a point that the bad things which they did were of no real concern, and their consciences had been seared over. The people suffered a bitter overthrow and captivity because of their unfaithfulness to God. It happens today the same way. People say: "What sin?" "What wrong have we done?" (Jer. 16:10-12). Their hearts were hardened; they could not blush, and today it is the same.

Ezra demonstrated the proper example. When it was told him about the corruption of mixed marriages (how they had mingled themselves with the people of the lands), he assembled all "who trembled at the words of God." He said: "O my God, I am **ashamed and blush** to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens" (Ezra 9:6). The things which needed changing were then changed. They "put away" all their *illegal* mates as God had directed (Ezra 10).

Today, we must also *put away* all our illicit relationships with denominationalism and serve God in Heaven, **and Him only**. We must get back to the point where we can blush. **Can you blush?**

337 Madison 4605; St. Paul, AR 72760





# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Email Response

I recently received an email from a Patricia Clark. Below is both her email and my response. Because of our printing, I am not able to put my remarks in red ink so I will be indenting my response and also using a different font. I have not changed her email to me except the formatting to better fit here.

Ms Clark:

My response will be made within the email you sent it. I will go through the article which you sent me for it is filled with errors and misunderstandings. To make it easier, I will make my remarks in the article itself using red type.

Dear Pastor,

Your church teaches that water baptism is needed for salvation. I understand the Bible to teach faith alone in Christ results in salvation. Enclosed is a good explanation of this subject from the Bible.

First, I am not a *pastor*; I am a Gospel preacher working with and supported by the Bellview Church of Christ. I realize that the denominational world does not care about God's Word and using Bible terms in Bible ways, however the Bible never uses *pastor* for a preacher.

Second, I do not have a church. I am a member of the Lord's church. I know that there are other *churches* set up in opposition to the Lord's church, but I am not a member of any of those man-made organizations (denominations) but simply a New Testament Christian. I am simply a member of the church (singular) which the Lord established.

Third, we do teach that water baptism is needed for salvation because the Bible teaches that water baptism is needed for salvation.

### Salvation and Water Baptism

1. The Bible teaches that to be saved a person must "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

The Bible teaches that one must believe that

God is and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6), that one must believe in Christ as God's Son (John 14:1) and in the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16). This is what the Bible teaches therefore we teach the necessity of belief to be saved.

In Acts 16:30 the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas this crucial question: "What must I do to be saved?" What answer did these men give to this needy jailer? Did they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and thou shalt be saved"? If baptism is necessary for salvation, then why is nothing said about baptism in Acts 16:31? It's true that this man was baptized (verse 33), and yet this does not change the fact that Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." If water baptism was a condition of salvation, then this would have been the perfect place for Paul to have said so.

To use the Philippian jailer in such a way is to misuse both the situation and the passage. First, notice when the jailer comes in, Paul and Silas do not know if he believes or not, and since belief is necessary and the first thing which one must do before he can do anything else, it is only reasonable to tell the jailer that he must believe. The author of the article passes over the rest of the account far too easily. Since one must be taught of God to come to Christ (Mat. 28:19-20; John 6:44-45), Paul and Silas teach the Word of God to him (Acts 16:32). In teaching the Word of God to him they obviously taught the need to be baptized because he and all his were baptized immediately (16:33). If water baptism is not a condition of salvation (per this false teacher) then why the need to be baptized immediately? However, note further that only after baptism takes place does the jailer "rejoice" and only after baptism is the jailer called a believer (16:34). One can only be a true believer after he is baptized, not before. This fact alone shows that baptism is a necessary condition of salvation.

2. The Bible teaches throughout the New Testament that FAITH and FAITH ALONE is necessary for salvation.

This is simply as **false as false could be**. Read every passage below and see if you can find even one of them that says "faith alone." You will fail because the Bible does not teach such. In fact, the Bible says exactly the opposite. But this writer falls into the same category (because he follows the leading of) as Satan. The devil added to what God said in Genesis 3:4 when he added "not" to what God said. The author of this article added "alone" to what God said—just like the devil did.

The Bible does not use "faith alone" but it does

use “faith only.” Alone and only mean the same thing. The Bible uses “faith only” one time and only one time. While the author of this article (and you also) says that “faith alone [only] is necessary for salvation” the Bible says exactly the opposite. The Bible says, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” You and the writer of this article say that faith alone is necessary for salvation, and the Bible says faith only (alone) will not save (justify) us. I think I will stick with the Bible, and not this one who followed the devil’s lead in adding something to God’s Word.

I would urge you to read carefully and prayerfully the following verses of Scripture:

I don’t plan to comment on each verse listed here, but will on some. However, none of them teach what you want them to teach. The Bible clearly teaches that belief is an absolute necessity for salvation. What you must find is a passage teaching that belief is all that is necessary. This you cannot do because it is not there (in fact the Bible says just the opposite as shown previously).

John 1:12-13

This verse contradicts the position you are taking of salvation by faith alone. This verse very clearly states that once one believes he has the right or power to become a child of God. You teach that once one believes he is a child of God. He becomes a child a God by being born of God.

John 3:15          John 3:16          John 3:18

These three verses all have their context as the discussion with Nicodemus. I would direct your attention to verses 3 and 5 of the new birth. This new birth is a birth of water and the Spirit. The Spirit gives His instructions in the Word of God which produces faith (Rom. 10:17) and in those instructions he teaches us to be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. This is the context of these three verses. Thus the use of these to try and teach salvation by faith alone is to violate the context when Jesus has already taught that to enter the kingdom (the church) one must be baptized in water.

John 3:36

His use of this verse is strange indeed. I am not sure what version you are using, I personally use the King James which says that the one who believes on the Son has everlasting life and the one who does not believe will not see life. However, the majority of versions which I have looked at has that one who does not obey (or disobeys) will not see life. John writes that the one who believes (a form of the Greek pisteuo) has everlasting life but the one who does not believe (a form of the Greek apeitheo). John equates the two Greek words pis-

teuo and peitheo (with the negative alpha). Peitheo has reference to one who is able to be persuaded and thus to obey. Thus John (and this is true for the rest of the verses found in John’s writing) equates belief and obedience (or unbelief and disobedience). The only way one can have eternal life is to believe or obey; if one does not obey or does not believe he will not have life. You want it to be “faith alone” however the Bible clearly teaches here that it is not “faith alone” but obedience that is necessary.

John 5:24

John 6:35

John 6:40

John 6:47

John 7:38-39

John 11:25-26

John 20:31

Acts 2:21

Again there is a total lack of context taken into account with this verse. First you say that it is salvation by “faith alone,” yet here it says one must call on the name of the Lord. So which is it? It is salvation by “faith alone” as you teach or something in addition to “faith **alone**” which would be calling on the Lord’s name as you list here?

However, consider the context. This is a quote from Joel in answer to the events which had been taking place. He then continues to establish that Jesus is the Christ. We are told that those who heard him were cut through the heart (Acts 2:37). (This, by the way, shows they believed in that one whom Peter was preaching about.) They then ask what they needed to do. What they needed to do about what? About the sin Peter had just convicted them of committing—crucifying the Son of God. Thus, we have people who believe and yet have not had their sins removed, thus still in a lost state. As one reads the verses, we see Peter’s response to their question. Your answer would have to be nothing because they already had their sins forgiven. But, Peter had already told them what they needed to do—call on the name of the Lord. But they wanted to know what they had to do—call on the name of the Lord. Peter tells them how to call on the name of the Lord when he responds, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” That is how one calls on the name of the Lord. (This also answers the passages from Romans 10.)

Acts 10:43

This passage again is taken out of its context to try and teach something Peter never intended. I would simply point out that Peter commands them to be baptized (Acts 10:48). Why command this if it has nothing to do with one’s salvation? Why would the purpose of this command be any different than other times in which it was commanded and the purposes given on those occasions—for the

remission of sins (2:38)?

Acts 11:17

Acts 13:38-39

Acts 15:11

Acts 16:31

Acts 20:21

Romans 1:16

Regarding the passages in Romans (those in chapter 10 have already been dealt with), notice how that Paul defines the type of belief he is discussing. It is not the type of "faith alone" which you would have us to accept, instead it is an obedient faith. He does this by starting out with a clear statement to it and ending with it also. It is the "obedience to the faith" (1:5) and "for the obedience of faith" (16:26). Paul's faith is one that is obedient.

Romans 3:22

Romans 3:26

Romans 3:28

Romans 3:30

Romans 5:1

Romans 10:9

Romans 10:11

Romans 10:13

1 Corinthians 15:1-2

Notice that Paul had preached the Gospel to them, they had received the Gospel, they stood in the Gospel and were going to be saved by the Gospel. What is this Gospel? It is how that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose the third day. That is what Paul delivered to them. However, notice what Paul writes to the Romans concerning what he delivered: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18). It is that doctrine (death, burial, and resurrection) which will make us free from sin and servants of righteousness. However, we are only made free from sin and servants of righteousness upon our obedience to that Gospel. How do we obey that Gospel? Look back a few verses: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (6:3-4). The way to obey and thus be free from sin is by that act of baptism—which you reject.

Galatians 2:16

Galatians 3:2-9

Galatians 3:14

Galatians 3:14

Galatians 3:24

Galatians 3:26

These verses are again a surprise to see in a list to attempt to prove salvation by faith alone. This states that one is a child of God based upon the (although not translated it is in the original) faith. The faith is not one's personal faith, but the entirety of the New Testament teaching. Again the author ignores the next verse which begins with "for" which is the Greek *gar* which is a conjunction of explanation and show how one becomes a child of God. How does Paul state one becomes a child of God? By being baptized into Christ. This again

shows the necessity of baptism in water for salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9

First, I would point out the Ephesians conversion. Their conversion included baptism (Acts 19). Thus, the faith spoken of here includes baptism. Second, notice later in this book Paul has a parallel thought to this verse in speaking about the church: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26). Saved and cleanse refer to the same thing; they are equivalent. Cleansing is accomplished by "the washing of water" which is a reference to water baptism. Thus, salvation by grace through faith here embraces water baptism or the "washing of water in Ephesians 5:26.

2 Thessalonians 2:10

2 Thessalonians 2:12

1 Timothy 4:10

2 Timothy 3:15

Titus 3:8

1 John 5:1

1 John 5:11-13

In all of these passages FAITH is mentioned as being essential for salvation. In none of these passages is water baptism mentioned. If baptism is a necessary part or an essential part of salvation, then why is nothing said about baptism in these passages? If a man must be baptized to be saved, then why do all these verses fail to say so? For example, in Acts 10:43 why didn't Peter say, "whosoever believeth in Him and is baptized shall receive remission (forgiveness) of sins"?

I do not know anyone who denies that faith is essential for salvation. However, as I have shown, several of the passages do mention water baptism and shows that water baptism is necessary for salvation also. In the passage he uses for an example, he totally ignores the context so he can wrest the Scriptures to his own destruction. As was already noted that a few verses later he commands them to be baptized. (1) It would be the height of foolishness to say that because verse 48 does have Peter commanding them to believe and be baptized that belief is not necessary for salvation. Yet, that is exactly what this writer has done with verse 43. (2) Why command individuals to do something that is not necessary? Again it would be foolish for Peter to command them to do something and that action is not even necessary.

3. EPHESIANS 2:8-9 is a passage which God has given to answer this key question: HOW IS A PERSON SAVED? This important doctrinal verse says nothing about water baptism.

As was shown previously: (1) the Ephesians were baptized, (2) Paul later in the book parallels this verse and shows that baptism is necessary to be cleansed or to be saved. (3) Why is this a passage showing "how is a person saved" when it is



speaking to those who are already saved?

How is a person saved? “For by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.” Why is there no mention made of baptism? Why didn’t Paul say, “For by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH AND BAPTISM . . .”?

Here we see another one of your problems with the way you *interpret* the Bible. You seem to think because baptism is not specifically mentioned in a verse that you call upon, that it is excluded from what is necessary to save man. Using this perverted way of *interpreting* the Bible, why could I not go to passages that do not specifically mention faith (belief) and conclude that belief is not necessary for salvation? Doing it either way is wrong. One must take all of what the Bible teaches on a subject and draw conclusions which are harmonious to the whole. You continually violate this basic principle of Bible interpretation. As I have pointed out, faith does not exclude baptism, but Paul actually shows that baptism is a part of the faith that saves.

A quick study of *faith* or *belief* shows that the Bible uses it in different ways. *Faith* is used as simply mental assent that God exists and that Jesus is His Son. This is the way James uses it in chapter 2. This also corresponds closely to the demons believing (Mat. 8:29 et al.). This would also be the type of faith the chief rulers possessed when they believed on Jesus but refused to confess Him (Mat. 10:32-33) for fear they would be put out of the synagogue because they loved the praises of men more than God (John 12:42-43). It is also how it is used by Jesus in giving the great commission in Mark 16:16. It is also used this way in Acts 18:8 where many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

Faith is also used in a general way representing man’s response to God in all its facets. This type of faith is the faith that is mentioned in Acts 16:34 when the jailor is called a believer after he shows his repentance by washing their strips and then is baptized. Another example of this is found in Acts 2:44 where it refers to those who believed, yet the context of believe are those who have repented and were baptized (2:38-41). The entire Christian life is described as faith when Paul says “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7) and when Peter says that we receive “the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:9). The way in which Paul is using faith in Ephesians 2 is in a way that involves the entire response of man to God. That is the faith that saves.

4. Water baptism is a WORK (something that man does to please God), and yet the Bible teaches again and

again that a person is not saved by works.

First, who says baptism is a work? Second, where does one get this definition of work? Yet, if one looks at *faith* (belief), Jesus explicitly states that faith is a work. The Jews asked Jesus, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” Jesus response was: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” (John 6:28-29). Thus, Jesus explicitly states that belief is “the work of God.” The writer of this states “that a person is not saved by works.” Thus, according to this writer “a person is not saved by” faith. However, it is false to say that one is not saved by faith because faith does save. Thus, the statement of this writer that “the Bible teaches again and again that a person is not saved by works” is false. In fact, the Bible also teaches we are saved by works. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified [saved], and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:24).

The question is answered when we realize that *work* is used in different ways in the Bible. It is used for one’s occupation. Then there are works of the devil (John 8:41; 1 John 3:8). Those certainly would not save. There are also works of the Law of Moses (some of the ones in this list fall under this category). The Law of Moses was never intended to save anyone. It was to reveal sin and bring people to Christ who could save. Another way *work* is used is for meritorious works or works that would earn salvation (again some of these passages fall into this category). Then there are works of God or works that God has set forth for man to do and that will save him (John 6:28-29 is such an instance). These are works of obedience which man must do to be saved.

Your faith alone doctrine eliminates obedience but God does not. Notice a couple of passages: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9). Those who are going to be saved are those who obey. Notice what Paul writes: “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). They were made free from sin: When? When they obeyed. However, you state that they were made free from sin without obeying! Obviously, Paul is right and you are wrong. We can add here the question: What did they obey? Paul says they obeyed “that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” First, what is that doctrine. Paul answers that question in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 as being that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again



the third day. Second, what is that “form of doctrine”? He has already given that answer as being baptism. When we are baptized we are baptized into His death, we are buried with Him in baptism, and raised with Him out of the waters of baptism. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4). Thus we see that baptism is essential to being saved.

Here are some examples:

Titus 3:5—“Not by WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS which WE HAVE DONE, but according to His mercy He saved us.”

First it is interesting that the author did not put in the entire verse. Maybe why will be seen as we continue. Second, the part he did include does not help him much. The second phrase he places in all caps shows the type of works Paul is discussing. They are works by which we would merit or earn salvation. Those type of works will not save. We are saved by God’s mercy (where is your doctrine of faith alone in this?). Notice the next word: by or through. How does God’s mercy save us? Here is how God’s mercy saves, through the washing of the new birth. The washing of “regeneration” (the new birth) is baptism. Baptism is set in contrast to “works of righteousness which we have done” and thus human merit. Baptism is not a work of human merit, it is how God saves us through His mercy or it is a work which is commanded of God and saves us.

2 Timothy 1:9—“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS.”

This is another passage that is dealing with “our works” or works of human merit. Notice that the point Paul is making is that God saves us and we cannot save ourselves by human merit—we cannot earn our way to heaven. However, notice also that God called us. How did God call us? Paul answers that for us: “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 The. 2:14). God calls us by the Gospel. Paul defines the Gospel for us as being the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4) which must be obeyed if we are going to be saved (Rom. 6:17-18; 2 The. 1:6-9). We obey that Gospel in the act of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4).

Ephesians 2:8-9—“For by grace are ye saved THROUGH FAITH and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should

boast.”

Since we have noticed this before, I will not spend much time except Paul again specifies the type of work he is dealing with. It is works by which man can boast. That is, he could stand before God and declare that he has earned his salvation by the works which he has done. Thus, Paul is discussing meritorious works, or works by which we earn our salvation. He is not dealing with works of obedience to God.

Romans 3:28—“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith WITHOUT THE DEEDS OF THE LAW.”

Here we have “deeds of the law.” Paul again specifies the type of works (deeds) that he is discussing. These are works of the law or the Law of Moses. One of the purposes of Romans is to show that the Law of Christ (the Gospel) has the power to save while the Law of Moses cannot save anyone. In Romans 1:16, Paul shows that the Gospel is God’s power to save. Then in the rest of chapter 1 and going through chapter 3, he shows man’s need for the Gospel because of his sin. He shows that we cannot be saved (justified) by the Law of Moses and the rest of the verse indicates one of the purposes of the Law of Moses. Paul continued to say, “for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” One of the purposes of the Law of Moses was to reveal sin but it was never intended to remove sin. That only came through the Gospel.

Romans 4:5—“But to him that WORKETH NOT, but BELIEVETH on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

This passage is dealing with Abraham and how he was made righteous before God. Paul is showing that Abraham was not made righteous by meritorious works (by bringing God into his debt). If he had been able to do that he would have been able to glory, but he could not (4:2). He could not be justified by the Law as he lived before the Law came into existence. His belief when told by God that his seed would be as numerous as the stars was counted to him for righteousness (4:3). However, at this time, Abraham had already been obedient to God in everything God had commanded him. Now God makes a promise to him and Abraham believes it (there is no action relating to the promise at this time). He again mentions that one who works (meritorious, or works whereby one might glory) then what he receives is something he earned and not based upon grace (4:4). Salvation cannot be earned; we cannot put God in our debt (man cannot sinlessly keep God’s law; 3:23). How does salvation come? Through faith. What type of faith is this? Is it the faith alone type that this writer

desires? No! It is an “obedience to the faith” (1:5) or “obedience of faith” (16:26). So the works under consideration are works whereby one could merit justification.

In other words, salvation is not DOING something; it is KNOWING someone (John 17:3). Salvation is not based on what we might do; it is based on what Christ has ALREADY DONE (John 19:30). Salvation is not TRYING; it is TRUSTING (John 6:47). If salvation could be earned by anything we do, then Christ’s death was a waste (Galatians 2:21). Salvation is not WORKING; it is RESTING on the WORK of Another (Romans 4:5). Good works are not what a man DOES in order to be SAVED; good works are what a SAVED MAN DOES (Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-8). God’s holiness utterly condemns the best man (Romans 3:10-23); God’s grace freely justifies the worst (1 Timothy 1:15)!

It is true that we must know God and His Son to be saved, but how can you know God without doing what He says? While the basis of salvation is God’s grace in having Christ die for us on the cross, that does not alleviate man’s obedient response to God’s grace (Eph. 2:8; saved by grace [God’s part] through faith [man’s part]). While I do not know of anyone who argues that salvation can be earned, yet that does not eliminate our obedience to God and His requirements (Rom. 6:17-18; Heb. 5:8-9; 2 The. 1:6-9 et al.). What this author would have is universal salvation because God’s grace that saves is for all men (Tit. 2:11) and Christ died for every man (Heb. 2:9). Yet, not everyone is going to

be saved and in fact the majority will be lost (Mat. 7:13-14). Yet, Christ died for both! The difference is that it takes man’s obedience to be saved. If salvation is only based upon what Christ has already done, then there is no need for the trusting or the good works that “a saved man does.” With these statements the author has also eliminated what he began with that we are saved by faith alone. While good works must be continued after one is saved, good works (being obedient to God) must be done to be saved also (as has been seen in other passages of Scripture). Also if one eliminates good works being done to be saved, then one eliminates faith from the salvation process (John 6:28-29).

The truth of the matter is that we are saved by God’s grace when we in obedient faith respond to God’s conditions of pardon which are: faith that God is and is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6) and faith that Jesus died for our sins (John 14:1), they then repent of their sins (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30), they are to confess their faith in Jesus as God’s Son (Rom. 10:10), and then are baptized in water to “be saved” (Mark 16:16) “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), to “wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16), to get into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), to have “the washing of regeneration” (Tit. 3:5), or to save us (1 Pet. 3:21). I cannot think of any other way that God could have expressed it to show that baptism is a necessary part of being saved from past sins than the way He did.

Michael Hatcher

Darrel Clark

## Newly Updated CD

The 1988-2005, 2007 books, all Defender issues of 1970, 1972-2006, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$75 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25 (total is \$76.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than \$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Pensacola, FL 32526**

# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

Vol. XXXVII

April 2008

Number 04

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



*Voices from the past: This article appeared in "Defender" June 1973*

## Anxiety for the Church

*George E. Darling, Sr.*

In Paul's catalogue of experiences which had troubled him, including all the physical persecutions he had suffered, he named the anxiety which was in his heart for the churches and his brethren (2 Cor. 11:28).

Those who wound or hurt the church, also wound the body of Jesus Christ, as did the soldiers who put him to death. The man of the world who hurls a charge at the church will surely be dealt with by the Lord in his own good way and time. Let him not think that he can insult the children in God's family and get away with it without answering to the Father. The church has Jesus Christ as its head. If the church is a group of narrow-minded bigots, then Christ is a narrow-minded bigot for he is its mind.

But the man of the world with all his slurs, will not hurt the church so much as the unconcerned, lukewarm, and indifferent members of the church. False teachers of the world can never lead away as many as can the false teachers within the church.

A wolf, clothed as a sheep, can slip into the flock and destroy the entire fold. And he will begin his destruction among the lambs. God warns of this and has ordained that elders are to guard against such. However, in many places, the elders seem to be incapable of distinguishing between wolves and sheep.

This is why the members of the church should be concerned, anxious and jealous about the church and its welfare. This is why every man and woman in it should be measured, not by their place in the world, or by their formal education, or by how much wealth they possess, but by their love and faithfulness to truth and righteousness. Teachers need to be exhorted to "speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1).

Any member of the church should be so anxious to preserve the welfare of the Lord's church, that he would diligently study God's Word to see that all that is taught and practiced in the congregation where he holds membership is in complete harmony with the truth of the Scriptures. If it is not, he should either cause an uproar or move his membership, not before he has done all within his power to correct the error, but after having done all he can do to correct it.

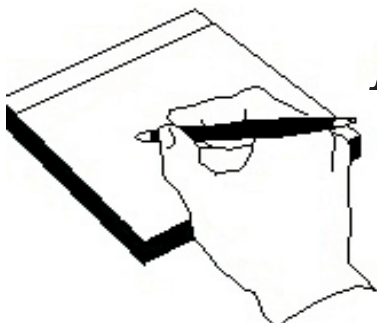
He does not care for the church who shuts his ears to the warnings that come to the church about sin, error, false teaching, and unscriptural practices in the lives of its members. He does not love the church, who will not confess his sins and repent of his actions that have injured God's family. The preacher who is called in to conduct the "Big Day" programs for a congregation that is known to uphold false doctrine, ungodly elders, adulterous deacons and preachers, on the pretense that he is only interested in raising money for a "just cause" does not care for the church. He is too *yellow-bellied* to point out the sins and wrong doings. No sir, that preacher does not love the church and is too ignorant to see that they have called him only as a matter of endorsement.

"Brother 'So and So' was our speaker for our 'Big Day' program, and no one could doubt his firm stand for the faith, why he is known throughout our brotherhood. No one can call us in question since he appeared on our program. If Brother So and So endorses us, and he does, or else he would have had no part with us, how can anyone fail to do so?"

Brethren, let us anxiously strive to keep the church clean, both from within and without; for ourselves and for others who will follow after us.

*Deceased*





# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Recent Events

### Keith Mosher

There are several recent events which need to be brought out for the knowledge of everyone. First, I want to revisit something we brought up first in the August 2007 issue of *Defender* and then mentioned it again in the October 2007 issue. In that issue brother Jess Whitlock quoted from what Keith Mosher stated at the open forum of the West Kentucky Bible Lectures in 2006 at the Sunny Slope congregation in Paducah, KY. Brother Mosher stated: “these people are as vile a group, and I do mean vile as I have ever read after in my life. I have never seen the kind of attitude they have” in speaking of those who have opposed brother Dave Miller and his elder reevaluation/reaffirmation (hereafter abbreviated r/r) doctrine and his marriage intent doctrine. He went on to say: “If you’re going to believe some of these publications you’re going to have a problem because those brethren are lying to you.” In that issue we challenged brother Mosher to “**prove** the accusations.” I went on to state: “I am presenting a challenge to brother Mosher to **document** and **prove** any lies *Defender* has printed about Dave Miller!” In the October issue, I pointed out that brother Mosher had made “no effort to produce any lies.” I then asked: “Why would that be, brethren?” Brother Mosher, nor anyone else (such as those associated and those in charge of the West Kentucky Lectureship), still have not made any attempt to document and prove any lies (whether in *Defender* or any other publication) printed about Dave Miller.

This is not to say that brother Mosher did not email me. His first email to me was dated August 13, 2007, in which he simply stated: “I see that you still have the same attituded [sic] toward me. I am truly amazed.” After I responded to this email, he emailed me back saying: “I did not say you were vile, I said that the attacks were.” However,

as I pointed out to brother Mosher, he did not state “these attacks” but said “these people.” At the Spring lectures, this claim by brother Mosher—that he did not state that the people were vile but only the attacks—was brought up. Brother Mosher can **claim** that he said the attacks were vile, but the record states that he did not say the attacks were vile, he said “these people.” Now, if brother Mosher wishes to correct his statement, that is fine, however he still needs to **prove** his claim that any of “these publications” have lied.

### Memphis School of Preaching

Closely associated with the previous, and the reason brother Mosher was commenting about this situation was because of a question posed to the panel concerning the stance of the leadership of MSOP regarding Dave Miller and his elder r/r doctrine. Brother Curtis Cates said that he opposed elder r/r “as the liberals practice it” and also stated they (MSOP) were opposed to it, that brother Bobby Liddell has preached against it of which brother Cates said amen to it, that he had spoken against it, and that they have taught against it and shall teach against it as long as he had anything to do with MSOP. These are certainly good and right sentiments. However, it causes us to wonder why they would preach against it so and yet openly fellowship and support Dave Miller who taught it and led Brown Trail in the practice of it?

There is another question that comes to mind when we hear brother Cates say that MSOP will teach against this practice as long as he had anything to do with the school. Brother B. J. Clarke (one of the instructors at MSOP) is also on record as stating that elder r/r is a matter of option. Brother Clarke, in speaking during the 2006 open forum in Farmington, Missouri, stated that it was a matter of expediency.

Surely we all know for something to be an expedient, it must first be authorized by God. When an action is authorized by God, and one preaches to do such action is sinful, then they are binding something upon others God has not bound. This has been the classic definition of anti-ism. Brother Clarke says elder r/r is authorized by God (he might say that it is not expedient, but when he places it in the category of expediency he is saying it is authorized by God), and brother Cates says they preach against it, then (according to brother Clarke’s position) they are preaching against something God authorizes, or brother Clarke is loosing something which God did not authorize. So the question is certainly appropriate: “Which will be taught at MSOP?” Will they be preaching against this practice or will they be teaching that this practice is an expediency and thus authorized by God?



## Joshua Day and Tri-Cities School of Preaching

Closely associated with the previous, is the debate challenge I received from brother Joshua Day. After the Mountain City Unity Forum, brother Day contacted me with a question that if he were an elder and decided to ask each member of the congregation if he was doing a good job as an elder, and he decided that if he did not get enough positive responses that he would step down, would this be sinful? After stating that his scenario had nothing to do with what took place at Brown Trail, I went on to explain that an elder is to lead and what he had was the elder following.

After some following exchanges, brother Day sent me a challenge to debate the subject in a written debate. His proposition stated: "The process of reevaluating the elders as taught at the Brown Trail church of Christ by Dave Miller in his sermon dated April 8, 1990 is scriptural." In response, I stated: "I do not have the time nor the inclination to engage in a written debate. This debate would need to be a 4 night oral public debate and held at the Stoney Creek Church of Christ. (It being an oral 4 night public debate held at the Stoney Creek building would not be negotiable). Other aspects of the debate can be negotiated if there is agreement with these non-negotiables." I also suggested the propositions: "Resolved: The Scriptures [do not] teach the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders as taught by Dave Miller and practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990." I believe that it is important to add the practice which resulted from the sermon to the debate propositions.

Because Joshua demanded a written debate and I demanded an oral debate, we were at a standstill. I asked brother Daniel Denham if he would be interested in a written debate on this subject, to which he agreed and took up negotiations at that point. Brother Day is one of the preachers for the Stoney Creek congregation in Elizabethton, TN where Wesley Simons is a preacher and elder (brother Day is also a graduate of the third year program at Tri-Cities School of Preaching and now a teacher in the school). In responding on the CFTF list (an internet e-mail list), brother Day stated that brother Simons and the Stoney Creek eldership agreed with him on his position concerning elder r/r. Thus in the negotiations for a written debate, brother Denham insisted that brother Day "have the open endorsement in writing of the Stoney Creek elders, including one Wesley Simons, for his position." Brother Day said that getting their endorsement would be no problem (since he had already talked to them and they had agreed with his position).

However, a problem did arise regarding the proposition and the letter of endorsement from the Stoney Creek elders. Brother Day did not want anything included relating to the actual practice which took place at the Brown Trail congregation. Listen to his nonsensical statement:

The only qualms I have with including the scenario as practiced by Brown Trail is that I cannot speak for everything that was practiced in its broadest scope. By that I mean that if the propositions and/or the letter from the elders were to include a statement such as "The practice of the Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990 with regards to its review, installation, and removal of elders is scriptural," it could be made to include things that are not initially apparent or even relevant to the issue of Dave Miller's teaching, but that are technically relevant to "the practice of Brown Trail."

Now in case you might not know what brother Day means by the above statement, he gives an example of what he means.

A most pointed example: a poor attitude by one or more of the elders could have affected the practice and made it in God's eyes very much unscriptural, for one can make an otherwise scriptural act unscriptural by the attitude with which it is done.

Notice some points that brother Denham made in response to this quibble.

The opposition to Dave Miller over the eldership r/r doctrine has included everything involved in the teaching and practice.... What was practiced at Brown Trail in 1990 in their implementation of eldership r/r was the embodiment of Miller's sermon. I am not going to permit you to twist what was actually taught by your willfully ignoring its immediate background and the visual demonstrations of its meaning "in living color," and then have the gall to say that this is what eldership r/r really is, what Dave Miller really meant, and you support that!... What was done at Brown Trail fully exegetes in the most vivid way the meaning of Miller's sermon. THIS is what it's all about, and, what's more, I'm also persuaded that you know that to be the case. And that's why you (nor certain among your elders) don't want to have to deal with it.

I am going to reproduce my entire response to the nonsense brother Day stated:

Jesus in giving the apostles the great commission, was setting forth the terms that was necessary to receive the blessings which He had to offer (salvation from sins). When one reads the accounts of the great commission (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47), he sees that Jesus said one must believe, repent, and be baptized to have the remission of sins or salvation. How does one know that this is correct understanding? He sees how the apostles applied what Jesus said. How does one do that? Since it was to begin at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46ff), we go to Jerusalem which is Acts 2.

When we see Peter instill faith in the Jews (faith that Jesus was the Son of God) in Acts 2:14-36 and see their faith in their question of Acts 2:37. We then see Peter tell them to repent and be baptized (2:38) and their response of being baptized (2:41). We, because we see how the apostles applied what Jesus said can now understand that our conclusions about what Jesus said in the great commission is correct.

Jesus teaches that one must be born again to enter the kingdom and that new birth involves water and the Spirit. Since the kingdom is the church, when I see what they had to do to enter the church, I then know what the new birth involves. Again going to Acts 2, one sees that upon hearing the Word of God, they were baptized in water and upon that baptism the Lord added them to the church. Now I know what Jesus meant when He said one must be born again.

Other examples might be used, but these show that you see what one means by the application of what he says. Dave Miller preached a sermon regarding elder r/r. He preached that sermon specifically for the Brown Trail congregation and their practicing such. How does one know what Dave Miller meant? You see what Brown Trail practiced. You cannot separate the practice from the sermon in spite of what Joshua Day is foolishly attempting to do. This is why I included the practice of Brown Trail in the counter-proposal I made as for as a proposition. I would not have accepted any debate without the practice of Brown Trail being a part of the proposition for the above stated reasons.

Another thought regarding what Joshua wrote in response: how does one know if someone has “a poor attitude”? Yet, this is the “most pointed example” that brother Day can use to try and exclude the action related to the lesson!?!? Additionally, how could the poor attitude of one elder (if brother Day could even prove that such existed) affect the practice that was set up by the eldership and proclaimed by Dave Miller?

One last observation: It is simply amazing to me the lengths that some will go to defend a false teacher—Dave Miller. However, it would seem to show as much about the defenders of the false teacher as the false teacher himself.

Brother Day responded to brother Denham (he did not respond to what I wrote). He wrote in part:

I have not removed the practice from consideration, I have simply considered it in a way that will be acceptable in debate. In a formal debate you are stating that you KNOW something to be the case. When it comes to Brown Trail, I very firmly BELIEVE the practice to be scriptural, but because of the aforementioned reasons (the fact that I cannot know the hearts of the men involved) I cannot say that I KNOW it was.... If you are unsatisfied with what I suggested, then propose something that does not force me to have an omnipotent knowledge of the hearts of men. I have made it perfectly clear that I am not afraid to debate the veracity of PRACTICING what Dave Miller taught, yet all

you reply is that I refuse to do such.

In responding to brother Day, brother Denham pointed out:

How would anyone necessarily know the condition of the heart of any individual engaging in any given religious practice? That is not at issue. I can observe the practice of someone singing ostensibly in worship to Almighty God in accompaniment with mechanical instrumental music and condemn the practice without having to know one thing about the condition of that individual's heart, because the action itself has no sanction in Holy Writ. Your excuse just won't wash. Either the practice is scriptural or it is not.

In another response brother Denham showed:

Given his new doctrine on the inability to know whether or not a particular act or procedure is pleasing to the Lord without one knowing the complete condition of each person's heart who may be involved in the particular act or procedure, Joshua Day now holds a view that makes it utterly impossible for him ever to know—

- 1) That any act of corporate worship and, subsequently, any worship service is acceptable with the Lord;
- 2) That any work or effort or program involving others is acceptable with the Lord;
- 3) That any fellowship meal is acceptable with the Lord;
- 4) That any group singing to cheer the heart of a sick saint or any group visitation of the same is acceptable with the Lord;
- 5) That any Gospel meeting or youth rally/devotional or mission effort is acceptable with the Lord;
- 6) That even his actions in marriage, assuming he is married, are acceptable with the Lord; and
- 7) That also his own conversion is acceptable with the Lord, because he has implied that a given act can be tainted by the attitude of others involved despite the attitude of all others. Thus, he cannot know that he is even a Christian, a child of God who has had his sins cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, because someone present at the time may have had a wrongful attitude toward the act or something else for that matter. Where can he reasonably now draw the line on being certain of anything involving more than himself?

Notice a part of brother Day's response to these salient points brother Denham made:

The example you gave concerning an individual singing makes my point perfectly. Yes, if he is singing with the accompaniment of an instrument, you would know he was not singing scripturally regardless of his heart. But consider for a moment if I were standing beside you singing praises to God without an instrument, and for all appearances doing so in a scriptural manner, but my mind is on the pot roast waiting for me at home. The only way you could know for certain whether I was singing scripturally or not is to know what was in my heart. That is exactly my point concerning your insistence on including the specific actions of

# Preaching From The Major Prophets

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures

### June 7 - 11, 2008

#### Saturday, June 7

7:00 PM	God's Commission to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10)	Dub McClish
7:45 PM	Ask for the Old Paths (Jeremiah 6:16)	David Hartbarger

#### Sunday, June 8

9:00 AM	Nonconformity (Daniel 1)	Brad Green
10:00 AM	"If...But...Will" (Daniel 3)	Roelf Ruffner
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	The Man: Jeremiah	Tim Cozad
3:00 PM	The Man: Daniel	Jess Whitlock
<i>Dinner Break</i>		

7:00 PM	Inability to Blush (Jeremiah 6:15)	Dennis "Skip" Francis
7:45 PM	Will They Know There Is a Prophet (Ezekiel 2:5)	John West

#### Monday, June 9

9:00 AM	The New Name (Isaiah 62:2)	Michael Hatcher
10:00 AM	The Writing on the Wall (Daniel 5)	Wayne Blake
11:00 AM	Perpetual Backsliding (Jeremiah 8)	Lester Kamp

#### *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM	The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)	Paul Vaughn
2:30 PM	The Man: Ezekiel	Dave Watson
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM	

#### *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM	Peace When There Is No Peace (Jeremiah 6:14)	David Brown
7:45 PM	Jeremiah's Gethsemane (Jeremiah 20:9)	Darrell Broking

#### Tuesday, June 10

9:00 AM	The Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53)	Danny Douglas
10:00 AM	Broken Cisterns (Jeremiah 2:13)	Tim Smith
11:00 AM	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Daniel 2, 7)	Ken Chumbley

#### *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM	The Man: Isaiah	Gene Hill
2:30 PM	God's Watchmen (Ezekiel 33)	Bruce Stulting
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM	

#### *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM	God Rules (Daniel 4)	Stacey Grant
7:45 PM	A View of Pentecost (Isaiah 2:2-4)	Harrell Davidson

#### Wednesday, June 11

9:00 AM	The Glory of the Lord in Chebar (Ezekiel 3:23)	Geoff Litke
10:00 AM	The Virgin Birth (Isaiah 7:14)	Daniel Denham
11:00 AM	Jehoiakim's Penknife (Jeremiah 36)	Dub Mowery

#### *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM	Strength from the Lord (Isaiah 40)	Sherman Offord
2:30 PM	The Good News of Salvation (Isaiah 61)	Loy Hardesty
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM	

#### *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM	Turn and Live (Ezekiel 33:10)	Lee Moses
7:45 PM	The False Prophets (Ezekiel 13)	Lynn Parker

## Bellview Lectures Information

### Housing

The Days Inn (6501 Pensacola Boulevard; Pensacola, FL 32505) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$55—1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-7200. 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 women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

### Books

The lectureship book, *Preaching From The Major Prophets* will be available to those attending the Bellview Lectures at a reduced rate of \$12. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$14 prior to June 30, 2008, or afterwards at the regular price of \$16 (plus \$3 per book for postage). It will contain 29 chapters and approximately 425 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007) are available on CD in Adobe PDF format for \$75 plus \$2.25 postage. The full CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2007), *Beacon* (1974-2007), and other material. The cost of the 2008 book is \$5 plus postage on a separate CD. If you have a previous CD contact our office for the cost of an update.

### DVDs

All lectures will be recorded on DVDs. They may be purchased during the Bellview Lectures or by mail order afterwards. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

### Transportation

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



the Brown Trail elders in a proposition. It cannot be done for I do not know their hearts!... Brother, even if we were to assume that what Dave Miller taught is the most scriptural and righteous act that could be practiced by mortal man, the proposition you have suggested would be impossible to prove because it demands that the proponent know what only God can know—the inward thoughts of a man's heart....I pray that honest discussion will yet prevail.

Brother Day continued and chided us with the words:

“If you are willing to condemn a brother to Hell for a belief or practice, you ought to be willing to defend your position.”

In response to this, I wrote:

This is amazingly amazing. If someone calls into Wesley Simons radio program and asks Wesley if the worship at Stoney Creek is Scriptural, Wesley must say that he cannot defend their worship (according to the view of brother Day)!!! What if the caller asks if the church at Stoney Creek is organized Scripturally, again Wesley cannot defend the organization of the congregation where he is an elder (according to what brother Day has stated)!!! If brother Simons should try and defend Stoney Creek in these matters (and others) then he had better hope that the caller does not have access to the things which brother Day has written here.

However, consider this: The Tri-Cities School of Preaching is Scriptural. Now brethren, brother Day is a teacher in said school and is also a graduate of said school, yet, if pressed on this matter, he cannot state that the Tri-Cities School of Preaching is Scriptural (based upon what he wrote in refusing this debate). Why should anyone send any money to a school where the school cannot even defend that they are Scriptural? Also, why would anyone send and/or recommend anyone to go to such a school? Additionally, if this is the sort of teaching that is being done at Tri-Cities School of Preaching, they should close their doors and cease to exist.

He makes some additional statements at the end which need to be considered. He says that he is open to debate “any who are willing to commit to an honest discussion.” The problem is that he is not willing to have an “honest discussion” about the issue (as has been pointed out several times). He then chides us as if we are not “willing to defend your position.” Now just who has not been willing to defend their position? Spring Church of Christ invited all involved to an open discussion of these issues. Who showed up? We were there, where were they? The offer was made for them to set up an open discussion of these issues and we would come. We are still waiting on them to set it up. Mountain City set up an forum to discuss these matters and invited all to come. We were there! Where were they? Word had been sent out by the (as one called him) Pope of East TN for them not to come so they all followed his orders. However, brother Day did show up. Not to speak but to listen. Opportunities were given to anyone to ask questions, to make comments, or

even to disagree. Now you know that brother Day spoke up and defended Dave Miller's sermon (said tongue in cheek)! Brother Day did not open his mouth. Now does that sound like someone who is “willing to defend [his] position”? This is not even to mention the numerous debate challenges sent to Dave Miller to defend what he taught and practiced. (We are still waiting on responses to those challenges also.) The reality of the matter is that brother Day has been running from this debate since he issued the challenge.

The whole matter is extremely heartbreaking brethren. This issue has divided brethren and congregations throughout the brotherhood. We have been open and honest in our opposition (we can be because we have the truth). They continue to refuse to come to open honest discussions of the matters that trouble us. Yet, here is one who issues a challenge and then runs from it. The problem is that in running from it, he threw the baby out also. He based upon what he has written cannot defend the truth as preached and practiced by the church. Men who should have known better should have sat him down and stopped him before he took such actions.

In conclusion to these matters, listen to the important points brother Denham makes concerning brother Day's remarks.

I don't see, given this new position by Joshua Day and Wesley Simons (because surely the young man did not just go out to concoct and promote this dumb position on his own), how Tri-Cities School of Preaching and Christian Development and the Stoney Creek church of Christ have credibility now to oppose anything ever! If one must be absolutely knowledgeable about the condition of the hearts of all participants in any event, practice, and action to be certain that it pleases the Lord and is therefore scriptural. I also wonder why this new found “principle” does not also apply to the teaching that one may even do on a situation. After all, can Joshua Day say for certain that the condition of heart of Dave Miller was right at the time that he preached his sermon? If it was not, then doesn't that mean that the preaching of the sermon was sinful? If so, then how could Joshua Day defend the sermon as preached by Dave Miller? The very act of the validity of the preaching in the eyes of the Lord would have to be in doubt, according to this error! And also, since Joshua would most certainly have to admit that he cannot read the heart of Dave Miller on that occasion, he cannot therefore be certain of the very intent of any word, phrase, clause, sentence, or paragraph of its text. He has taken a position that logically says that he can now no longer defend any teaching or any practice nor can he logically oppose any teaching or practice.

### **Rodriguez's**

During the open forum at Spring this year, the first two days (Monday and Tuesday) were spent dealing with

the Rodriguez family (Edilfonso, Israel, and Joshua). This is not intended to review the forum and all the discussion which took place at that time. I am going to center upon one aspect of the discussion (others might want to write about other aspects of the forum). Just over an hour into the first day brother Ken Cohn was questioning Israel Rodriguez (the one they designated to be their spokesman). The discussion centered around a meeting the Rodriguez's had with Joseph Meador in which he quelled their fears about his gestalt therapy and his yoga teachings. Brother Cohn asked: "During the meeting with Joseph Meador, did the subject of David Miller [sic] ever come up?" Israel answered: "We asked—brother Meador—a question, about Dave Miller, yes." Brother Cohn said: "So the answer is yes," to which brother Rodriguez said, "yes." At that time brother Cohn asked him: "And you do the CD about David Miller?" Brother Rodriguez answered: "Which CD? The one that brother Hatcher put together?" to which brother Cohn responded: "Yeah." Brother Rodriguez then made the accusation in the form of a question: "The one that has incomplete letters? The one that's unprofessionally produced?" He continued (speaking over brother Cohn and brother Brown) and again said: "The one that has incomplete letters? Yes. I have," when brother Cohn said: "You have that one." Brother Rodriguez continued: "I have the one that, that has issues in it that are non-coherent."

The matter as to the CD being unprofessionally produced matters not. They also said that it has issues that are "non-coherent." This is the first I have heard about any

of it being "non-coherent." Those who have said anything regarding that have always said it was easy to use and understand. Possibly the problem lay in the Rodriguez family and not in the CD. While they were able to pronounce that there was nothing wrong with Joseph Meador by having one meeting with him, they have not been able to determine if Dave Miller taught false doctrine in 1990. They have had the information for over two years and in all that time have not been able to determine anything about it.

Those charges are not that important to me, but the accusation that the CD contained "incomplete letters" is a concern. That is an accusation which basically charges me with being unethical in compiling the CD by leaving out or not providing all of the letters which were written. Thus, on Tuesday when given the opportunity, I stepped to the microphone and asked the Rodriguez' to produce any original letter which was "incomplete" on the CD. I added that if they could not produce any "incomplete letters," then they needed to repent of their false allegation. The Rodriguez' were asked not to come back on Wednesday (a decision which everyone except the Rodriguez' agreed with), so I waited to see if they would send or produce any "incomplete letter." As I write this (about one and a half months later), they have not made any attempt (to my knowledge) to produce any "incomplete letter" much less "letters." Nor have these men offered any apology or repentance. It is past time for these men to prove their charges against me in putting out a CD with "incomplete letters," or to retract their charges and repent of their sins of charging me falsely.

MH

## Newly Updated CD

The 1988-2005, 2007 books, all Defender issues of 1970, 1972-2006, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$75 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25 (total is \$76.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than \$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Pensacola, FL 32526**

# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

Vol. XXXVII

May 2008

Number 05

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## The New Wesley Simons and His New Doctrine: A Call to Defend a Penurious Position

*Darrell Broking*

Wesley Simons has been known for his skill and ability as a debater and a contender for the faith. When I debated Patrick Donahue and Thomas Thrasher in Galax, VA, in 2002, I was honored to have Wesley Simons as my moderator. The skill and personal instruction imparted to me by Wesley will always be cherished. I am saddened that the once stalwart brother Simons (who has an earned M.A. in apologetics) made the decision to use his keen cognitive abilities to hinder the Gospel of Christ. What drove brother Simons to radically change his doctrinal correctness as abruptly as he did? We may never know the answer to that question, but what we can and do know is that Wesley Simons (elder of the Stoney Creek Church of Christ and director of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development) has made shipwreck of the faith and is now using his influence to hinder those who strive for doctrinal purity.

### **Wesley in Transition**

In 2005, Wesley Simons, like many of us who love the church, was opposed to extending fellowship to Dave Miller because brother Miller is a known false teacher. On August 16, 2005, Wesley sent Tommy Hicks an email in which he removed himself from the up-coming Lubbock Lectures because of the fellowship problems pertaining to Miller. Simons wrote:

I will be looking forward to how the board and TGJ will be dealing with the David Miller & AP issue. I pray that the right thing will be done. There is also the M-D-R issue which must be addressed. I pray to God that all these things can be resolved scripturally. I love all who are in-

volved in this issue on both sides. I would to God that all would get on God's side (Simons 2005).

To further emphasize the point, in fact, notice the following email that was sent to a number of brethren (myself included) on August 17, 2005:

Brethren,

I am going to call Dave Miller. I hope to do all I can to fix a terrible situation. I wish to be fair, but get to the point. The problems I wish to address are these; (1) The marriage issue which involves (I believe his name is Erick); (2) The elder reevaluation/reaffirmation issue; (3) The Calhoun Ga. issue.

Do you know of others. What questions would you ask? I need documentation on these issues. I know where I can find some of the material.

Please send me web-sites, etc. I need any material that you have. This is not a witch hunt. I truly want to be of service to our great brotherhood. This problem has gone on too long. I realize that Dave and Dave only can fix it. I am going to try to get him to do that!

Pray that this effort will be successful.

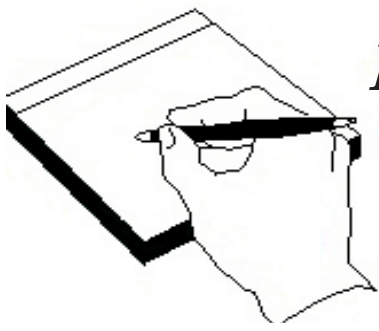
In Christian love, Wesley (Simons 2005).

In August 2005, Wesley Simons was clearly opposed to extending fellowship to Dave Miller and he was working toward a biblical resolution to the fellowship problems created by Miller.

The dark cloud of October 30, 2005, still hangs over the brotherhood. It was on that day that the Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, GA, withdrew fellowship from the elders of the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, GA (Elders 2007). This controversy

*Continued on Page 3*





# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Ask Counsel of God

Moses had instructed the Israelites: "And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them" (Deu. 7:2). The reason they were to destroy all the nations and make no covenant with them is because they would turn Israel's heart from God. "For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (7:4). An additional reason is that Israel was the instrument of God's wrath against these nations because their iniquity was now full (Gen. 15:16).

After Israel began taking the land, they had a group of men come to them. These men were dressed in ragged clothing, torn up shoes, and had dry and moldy food. From all appearances, these men seemed to be from a far off country. Additionally, these men said: "We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us" (Jos. 9:6). The Israelites questioned them: "Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you ...And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?" (9:7-8). They insisted:

We are thy servants.... From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: And these bottles of wine, which we filled,

were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey (9:7-13).

As a result of their persistence, "the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them" (9:14-15). God was not pleased with Israel for making a league with these Gibeonites. If they had gone to Him, they would have known not to make this agreement. There are many lessons we learn from this incident.

We learn of the power of God and His people. The Gibeonites knew that God was with Israel and they would be destroyed. Notice what was quoted previously, they knew of God, what He did in Egypt, and to other nations. They knew destruction awaited them if they did not do something. Thus, they devised this plan. The faithful today need to remember that as long as we are with God and on His side, then we are the most powerful force in the world. John wrote: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). We need not fear what all the forces of evil might do to us. We must remember: "for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6). Let us keep fighting the good fight of the Faith and not be weary in well-doing.

We also know the forces of evil will fight against us. They did against Israel as they went in to take the land. "And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord" (Jos. 9:1-2). Even those who are enemies of one another will join together to fight against God and His people. They did against our Lord; Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Israelites are listed by Peter in Acts 4:27-28. Likewise, Satan is going to *muster* all his forces against us today. He will try to destroy the faithful, both from without (as one would expect), and from within. Satan gathers his forces of temptation from without, such as worldliness, materialism, hedonism, etc. We know these are coming our way and are generally prepared for them (although we do not always overcome them).

Many times we are not prepared for the obstacles which Satan places in our way from within. We should not be surprised by the false teachers because we are warned too many times about them (Mat. 7:15; Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim. 4:1; et al.). There are also erroneous practices which many are following after. We have seen *brethren* perverting the worship of the church (e.g., bringing in mechanical instrumental music, partaking of the Lord's Supper on days other than the first day of the week), the plan of salvation (e.g., salvation by grace alone or faith alone), the organization of the church (e.g., elders have no authority, one man rule, elder reevaluation/reaffirmation), work of the church (e.g., recreation, political, social reforms). Additionally, there are false fellowship practices that are abounding in the church today. We see some fellowshipping denominational people and brethren, we once thought were sound, willing to fellowship false teachers within the church. Then those who are softening their stand for Truth, will ridicule, persecute, falsely accuse, and do just about anything else to try and destroy those who are taking a firm stand on Bible truth.

We must be prepared for all the forces of evil to join together to fight against the faithful. When we go to God's Word (ask counsel of God), we can be prepared for the false teachings and practices.

In this episode of Israel's history, we also learn that the forces of evil will practice deception, which is a powerful tool of Satan. The Gibeonites set out to deceive the Israelites and they lied to accomplish it. Likewise, Satan, and his associates, will lie to accomplish his purposes. Jesus stated: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). Paul writes, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18). *Simple* is one who is free from evil and implies those who fear no evil from others or distrusts no one. In this context it applies to one who is naïve or easily deceived.

There are numerous ones who are trying to deceive us today. All false doctrine ultimately is deceptive. For example those who would teach the church is nothing but a denomination among denominations are deceiving both brethren and those in the world because the Lord's

church is not a denomination and is opposed to any and all denominations. There are those who teach that we are saved by grace alone or faith alone, which will allow some to go to eternal destruction in comfort. All the doctrines listed previously and others are ways in which Satan and his forces are trying to deceive brethren today.

However, we see other types of deception being used today. When someone is called in question about a doctrine or practice, many times instead of answering and giving defense of what they have said or done, they attack the one who questions them. It matters not if these attacks are true or false, they are attempting to deceive brethren and divert attention away from themselves. When called upon to **prove** their attacks, they become as quiet as a mouse.

This ties in with the last point of this article—believing a lie is just as bad and produces the same result as willful disobedience. When Adam and Eve were tempted, Satan lied to them (Gen. 3:4-5) and Eve believed that lie. If they had totally been rebelling against God or simply believing Satan's lie, the results would be the same. It resulted in sin and separation from God either way. Many today fall for Satan's lie that it does not matter what one believes as long as he is sincere. While those in the Lord's church have shown the error of this view, it seems as if many in the church today will act as though they believe this doctrine. The only way anyone can attain heaven's home is by his obedience to the truth. When one believes the lies and deception of Satan, he is on his way to spending eternity with him. Israel made a sinful alliance with the Gibeonites which helped to lead to their destruction. Let us make sure we never make sinful alliances but follow truth and only the truth.

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*Continued from Page 1*

centered on Highland's fellowship with and promotion of Dave Miller. As noted by Gary Summers:

When the elders at Highland in Dalton withdrew fellowship from the Northside elders in Calhoun, in effect they withdrew from all of us who stand with the Northside elders in opposing Dave Miller until he repents and repudiates the errors he has committed (Summers 2006).

When Highland drew their proverbial line in the sand, it put Wesley in-between *a rock and a hard place*. Highland was using some of Wesley's World Video Bible School materials on the Gospel Broadcast Network (GBN). Additionally, GBN was also featuring Biblical Viewpoints and T.V. Sunday School, both of which are

produced at the C-Street church of Christ in Elizabethton, TN. Many of Wesley's friends in the Tri-Cities area were deeply involved with GBN in October 2005. Wesley had also been a great friend to the Northside Church of Christ and was complementary of their stand for the truth.

As this tremendous fellowship problem intensified, Wesley's efforts to resolve this problem intensified. It was during this process when Wesley began to reposition himself doctrinally. By 2006, Wesley must have been frantic over this mess in which he was in. An 11<sup>th</sup> hour attempt to repair the ruptured

fellowship between those who fellowship Dave Miller and those who do not fellowship him was concocted by Wesley. Brother Simons prepared a set of unity letters in which he attempted to have the Northside

elders assume responsibility for the damaged fellowship with Highland and to sue for peace. The unity letters (the words of which are Wesley Simons and approved by the Highland elders) follow:

**Letter #1—From the Northside elders  
to the Highland elders:**

To the Highland elders,

Brethren, we would like to say that we did not mean to cause any division or problems in releasing the correspondence between the two congregations. We felt that some people were confused because they were hearing conflicting stories. We thought that the best way to solve this problem was to let each congregation speak for its self. It was our view that the writings of each congregation did that.

However, since you say this caused division and trouble, we would like to say we are sorry for that. We certainly were not trying to do that. We love you as brethren. We pray that Biblical unity can be enjoyed by the two congregations. We plan to do our part in this effort.

Elders of the Northside church of Christ

**Letter #2—From the Highland elders  
to the Northside elders:**

To the elders at Northside,

We have received your statement and accept it. We also want Biblical unity. We know that some thought that we withdrew fellowship too quickly. We want you to know

that we, too, are sorry if you felt by our withdrawal that we were trying to abuse or mistreat the Northside elders. This was not our aim or goal. We rejoice because this problem has been solved. Thank you for helping to resolve this problem. We hope that we can move forward to the glory of God.

Elders of the Highland church of Christ

**Letter #3—From the Highland elders  
to the brotherhood:**

Dear brethren,

We are writing to inform you that fellowship between the

Northside elders and Highland elders has been restored. We ask that you extend full fellowship to both the Northside elders and the congregation. We are thrilled that this problem has been resolved. Please, send this information far and wide so that all will know that we

are in fellowship with the Northside elders. Please support them in any and every way you possibly can. We love and respect them very much.

The Highland elders (Hall and York 2006).

The aforementioned letters do not need a lot of commentary. Even the blind can see that the fellowship issue created by Dave Miller and his error was totally ignored and the blame was shifted to the Northside elders. By late 2007, Simon's transition was finally complete. Verification of this fact lies within an email that Joshua Day sent to the CFTF discussion list on February 11, 2008. Day was attempting to affirm the elder reevaluation/reaffirmation error by seeking a written debate with Michael Hatcher. As questions began to arise about Stoney Creek's support of Day's error (Day labors with the Stoney Creek Church of Christ where Wesley Simons also serves as a preacher, elder, and director of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development), Joshua was quick to answer:

I have spoken candidly with Wesley Simons about my discussions with Brother Hatcher, my position regarding what Dave Miller taught, and my challenge to Brother Hatcher. After I read Brother Miller's sermon of April 8, 1990, and concluded that he had taught nothing unscriptural with regards to their process of reevaluating the elders, I called Brother Simons and asked if he agreed with me (this was at the end of last year, shortly before the Mountain City Unity Forum). He said that he did. He has agreed

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be sure and watch live on the internet.

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# Preaching From The Major Prophets

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures

### June 7 - 11, 2008

#### Saturday, June 7

7:00 PM	God's Commission to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10)	Dub McClish
7:45 PM	Ask for the Old Paths (Jeremiah 6:16)	David Hartbarger

#### Sunday, June 8

9:00 AM	Nonconformity (Daniel 1)	Brad Green
10:00 AM	"If...But...Will" (Daniel 3)	Roelf Ruffner
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	The Man: Jeremiah	Tim Cozad
3:00 PM	The Man: Daniel	Jess Whitlock
<i>Dinner Break</i>		

7:00 PM	Inability to Blush (Jeremiah 6:15)	Dennis "Skip" Francis
7:45 PM	Will They Know There Is a Prophet (Ezekiel 2:5)	John West

#### Monday, June 9

9:00 AM	The New Name (Isaiah 62:2)	Michael Hatcher
10:00 AM	The Writing on the Wall (Daniel 5)	Wayne Blake
11:00 AM	Perpetual Backsliding (Jeremiah 8)	Lester Kamp
<i>Lunch Break</i>		

1:30 PM	The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)	Paul Vaughn
2:30 PM	The Man: Ezekiel	Dave Watson
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM	
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	Peace When There Is No Peace (Jeremiah 6:14)	David Brown
7:45 PM	Jeremiah's Gethsemane (Jeremiah 20:9)	Darrell Broking

#### Tuesday, June 10

9:00 AM	The Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53)	Danny Douglas
10:00 AM	Broken Cisterns (Jeremiah 2:13)	Tim Smith
11:00 AM	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Daniel 2, 7)	Ken Chumbley

#### *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM	The Man: Isaiah	Gene Hill
2:30 PM	God's Watchmen (Ezekiel 33)	Bruce Stulting
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM	

#### *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM	God Rules (Daniel 4)	Stacey Grant
7:45 PM	A View of Pentecost (Isaiah 2:2-4)	Harrell Davidson

#### Wednesday, June 11

9:00 AM	The Glory of the Lord in Chebar (Ezekiel 3:23)	Geoff Litke
10:00 AM	The Virgin Birth (Isaiah 7:14)	Daniel Denham
11:00 AM	Jehoiakim's Penknife (Jeremiah 36)	Dub Mowery

#### *Lunch Break*

1:30 PM	Strength from the Lord (Isaiah 40)	Sherman Offord
2:30 PM	The Good News of Salvation (Isaiah 61)	Loy Hardesty
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM	

#### *Dinner Break*

7:00 PM	Turn and Live (Ezekiel 33:10)	Lee Moses
7:45 PM	The False Prophets (Ezekiel 13)	Lynn Parker

## Bellview Lectures Information

### Housing

The Days Inn (6501 Pensacola Boulevard; Pensacola, FL 32505) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$55—1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-7200. 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 women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

### Books

The lectureship book, *Preaching From The Major Prophets* will be available to those attending the Bellview Lectures at a reduced rate of \$12. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$14 prior to June 30, 2008, or afterwards at the regular price of \$16 (plus \$3 per book for postage). It will contain 29 chapters and approximately 425 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007) are available on CD in Adobe PDF format for \$75 plus \$2.25 postage. The full CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2007), *Beacon* (1974-2007), and other material. The cost of the 2008 book is \$5 plus postage on a separate CD. If you have a previous CD contact our office for the cost of an update.

### DVDs

All lectures will be recorded on DVDs. They may be purchased during the Bellview Lectures or by mail order afterwards. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

### Transportation

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

with me throughout our discussions. If you wish to know further what he believes, contact him. Not one elder of the church nor one instructor of the school have asked me to retract my statements, nor my challenge (Day 2008).

Thus the transition that began toward the end of 2005 was completed within a two-year span.

### **The New Wesley Simons**

The new Wesley Simons uses his apologetic skill to destroy those who stand exactly where he did in August 2005. The reason that Wesley Simons has been a ringleader in the assault against the Mountain City Church of Christ is because the Mountain City elders are firm in their resolve against Miller. Simons justifies his antagonism by alleging that the Mountain City elders are not qualified to serve. Is this an evolution of the Elder reevaluation/raffirmation doctrine Wesley now affirms? Has Wesley gone so far from the truth that he is now blessed with the keen insight to reevaluate the elders of a neighboring church and refuse to reaffirm them?

Recently, the new Wesley Simons preached at the Lenoir City Church of Christ near Knoxville, TN. Kent Bailey and Brad Green formerly preached at the church in Lenoir City. Because of problems with liberalism, the church in Lenoir City was divided. Kent Bailey moved on to work with the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, GA, and Brad Green was asked to preach for a new congregation that grew out of that division. Brad Green, in my judgment, is the best preacher to come out of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development (T-CSOP&CD). He is sincere and faithful to king Jesus. Brad even remembers the day that Wesley opposed Dave Miller in classes that he took at the T-CSOP&CD. Typical of the New Simons, the liberals at Lenoir City were bid Godspeed while Brad Green and Kent Bailey were branded as the source of the division.

One of the amazing things about the new Wesley Simons is his *public* silence. Until Joshua Day tested the waters earlier this year, Wesley refused to allow his new doctrinal stance to be placed before the public eye. Wesley Simons has been as timid as a white-tipped Sicklebills. In 2001, Wesley was primed and ready to debate Malcolm Hill on the issue of consistency in fellowship. In the January 2002 issue of *Defender*, Michael Hatcher asked Malcolm Hill the following questions because of Hill's refusal to debate Simons.

Why will brother Hill not debate brother Simons? Is there something that brother Hill does not want us to find out? Is there something that brother Simons knows about brother Hill that he does not want revealed? Brother Hill, what are you hiding? Brother Hill, come forth and accept the debate challenge to do exactly what you have

challenged the "entire brotherhood" to do? Stop being a coward! (Hatcher 2002).

The time has come to ask similar questions of Wesley Simons. Why does Simons refuse to defend what he now affirms to be the truth? If Wesley now knows the truth and can present that truth with his apologetic skill, why will he not step forth and teach the brotherhood about his new found hope (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15)? If Wesley really loves the brotherhood and brethren on both sides of this issue, why does he bury his keen exegetical talent in the sand and allow this division to harden? What is it that we know about Wesley Simons that he wants to keep hidden? Wesley tried to fix this problem for the entire brotherhood through an unscriptural compromise—now he claims to have new truth on the subject but he wants to keep it hidden. Wesley, where are you and why are you hiding? Wesley are you ready to heal this ugly division? Please sign the following:

Resolved: The Scriptures teach the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders as taught by Dave Miller and practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990.

Affirm: Will you sign this Wesley?

Deny: Signed/Darrell Broking

Resolved: The Scriptures do not teach the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders as taught by Dave Miller and practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990.

Affirm: Signed/Darrell Broking

Deny: Will you sign this Wesley?

When will the new Wesley Simons love the brotherhood enough to unveil his new doctrine and help the church to heal from the current division?

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512 S. Church St; Mountain City, TN 37683

# Out of the “Dark Ages”

*Lynn Parker*

At the nearby Home Depot, a young man—early twenties—was loading building material onto my truck. I extended an invitation to attend worship services with us. His eyes brightened when I mentioned “church of Christ,” and he enthusiastically exclaimed that he, too, was a member of the church of Christ. During the short conversation, I learned that he was from west Texas and had recently moved to the Houston area to attend college. He volunteered that his home congregation was different from many other congregations in that they looked at doctrinal matters with a more open approach and that he wanted to find a similar congregation here. That piqued my interest and in answer to my questions, this young man said that “back home,” they had come “out of the dark ages” and no longer thought “they were the only denomination going to heaven.” As he was completing his job, our conversation was cut short, but I did give him my phone number and ask if we could study the Bible. He promised to visit, but I have not seen him yet.

From this short episode, we can draw several lessons. First, we must be ever vigilant for opportunities to teach the truth. The old fisherman’s question: “You gonna cut bait or fish?” might be applied here. After all the talk about efforts to convert the lost dies down, after all the planning is done, teaching others still involves personal action on my part and yours. Opportunities do not come whistling along each day—they are made! Seize them! They are all around you. Do not be timid and do not neglect the golden moments that are placed on your plate every morning. Too soon, they will be gone. “Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16).

Second, never roll your eyes at the preaching of

truth, and do not mutter: “Wish they’d talk about something else”—even though you have heard it before. There are always new generations that need to hear the same great, old Gospel truths. Paul commanded, “And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Perhaps this young man is the product of a congregation that once told its preachers: “Don’t preach against fellowship with denominations—we don’t have that problem here.” **They do now.** Human memory is fleeting at best, and even the most fundamental teachings deserve repetition and emphasis on a regular basis (2 Pet. 1:13-15).

Last, our children are not glued to their home towns, nor their “home” congregations. They eventually grow up, test their wings, and leave the nest. This young man is out on his own, without a solid Bible foundation. Somebody—maybe lots of “somebodys”—failed to impart the truth that leads to heaven to a precious soul. Timothy knew from childhood the Scriptures which make one “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15) but this young man does not. Let every parent who remains in an increasingly liberal, spineless, stand-for-nothing, Bible-compromising, error-breeding, sin-loving, congregation—one that marches persistently toward hell while refusing the truth—explain in 20 years what good that did for their children. Moreover, let them face judgment and have to admit: “I thought I’d try to stick it out at congregation ‘X’ but I lost my children in the process.”

The tragedy of it all is seen in a young man who thinks he has come out of the “dark ages” into the light of day; but, in truth, he was walking a poorly lit path to perdition. It could have been different and should have been.

*1650 Gander Slough Rd; Kingsbury, TX 78638*

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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



# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

Vol. XXXVII

June 2008

Number 06

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Bellview Lectures

*David P. Brown*

Yesterday afternoon (Wed.) I returned from the thirty-third annual Bellview Church of Christ Lectureship, Pensacola, Florida. The theme of the 2008 lectures was "Preaching From The Major Prophets." We strongly recommend the oral lectures and the lectureship book. Michael Hatcher is the faithful director of the lectures and editor of the book. He is also the editor of *Defender* and has preached for the Bellview church since about mid-1994.

We commend the Bellview elders, Paul Brantley and Fred Stancliff for their faithful work in the Lord. Our prayer is that they continue their faithful efforts in all things they strive to do and that the Bellview church will grow spiritually as well as numerically in this difficult time for the church of our Lord.

If in a few words we can describe this year's lectures it would be as follows. The Old Testament prophets spoke only the whole council of God to the people to whom God sent them. They did not shrink from their task, though the people to whom they were sent in most cases did not receive their God-ordained message. To the contrary they rejected it. In many instances the prophets were persecuted because they told the people the unvarnished truth. They truly were to "comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable" in Zion. This they did faithfully while all the time teaching of the coming Messiah.

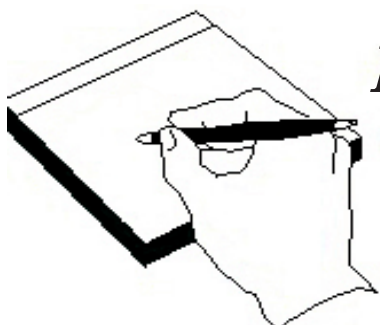
If brethren want to know what God's view of "balanced preaching" is, they should not stay long away from the prophets of the Old Testament. Being that the Old Testament was written afore time for our learning (Rom. 15:4), then one should not find it difficult to understand that Gospel preachers should learn from

the Old Testament prophets much about "balanced preaching." It is interesting to note the preaching of John the Baptizer, the forerunner of the Lord, Jesus' Himself, our Lord's apostles and the early evangelists. Compare and contrast these of the New Testament with the prophets of the Old Testament. You cannot help but notice how much they resemble one another in the preaching of the Truth, the exposure of error and the refutation of false teachers. What balanced preaching they did and it is a far cry from what some of our "super spiritual" preachers engage in today whether orally or in print.

What an example is found in the faithful prophets of old for Gospel preachers to follow today in their efforts to preach the Gospel. We too are to preach only what God has given us to preach—the New Testament of Christ—without addition, subtraction or any kind of alteration—and without apology for it. In so doing we are to, as the prophets of old did, reprove, rebuke and exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine, while all the time pointing people to the end of time when the Lord will return to destroy the world and judge all men in righteousness. He will then open the gates of Heaven to the righteous and consign the wicked to eternal torment in Hell.

This lectureship was truly a preaching lectureship. It was not an "I'm okay, you're okay" affair. It truly followed in the steps of the prophets in their approach to addressing sin and salvation. There was no effort to gloss over sin. False teachers' names were called and their errors' exposed and refuted. On all topics the Truth of God's Word was proclaimed and magnified.

*Continued on Page 4*



# Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## 2 John 9-11

John writes, “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). This passage is an important passage in dealing with fellowship. It seems that today this passage is becoming one of those ignored passages by brethren. Let us take an intensive look at this passage.

First we need to consider the words of the passage. *Transgresseth* means “to take or lead...to move ahead or in front of, go before, lead the way, precede...anyone who goes too far and does not remain in the teaching 2J 9” (BDAG). It is someone who goes beyond or goes onward from what they are allowed to go. There is a boundary which has been set and they go beyond it. *Abideth* is to “remain, dwell, continue, or to stay.” Here it is to stay or remain in the doctrine of Christ. *Doctrine* means “the activity of teaching, teaching, instruction...the content of teaching, teaching” (BDAG), or “in an active sense it means the act of teaching, instructing, tutoring...in a passive sense, teaching which is given, that which anyone teaches, the manner or character of one’s teaching” (Zodhiates).

*Receive* means “to take in whatever manner...to actively take, and partially in the passive sense, to receive” (Zodhiates). Swanson lists sixteen different definitions for *receive*, thus it has a variety of meanings but the previous is the basic meaning of the word. *God speed* can mean “to be in a state of happiness and well-being, rejoice, be glad” (BDAG). However, it is often used as “a formalized greeting wishing one well, also in indicative, to use such

a greeting (in effect, to express that one is on good terms with the other)” (BDAG). The way John is using this is in that way to express that one is on good terms with the other. *Partaker* the normal word translated “fellowship” and means “an associate, partaker. With a dative [as it is here—mh] of things: to communicate, participate in, be a partaker of” (Zodhiates), or “do together with, participate in” (Swanson).

With a study of the words, we can understand what John said. If someone/anyone goes too far and does not remain or dwell within the teaching of Christ, that one does not have God. However if one remains or abides in that teaching, then they do have God. If a person comes to us and does not bring this teaching, then we are not to receive or take him into our house. While we are not to receive him into our house additionally we are not to do anything that would indicate we are on “good terms” with him. The reason given is that if we do, then we are participating in his evil deeds. Brethren, this is not difficult to understand. However, it is often ignored by brethren. Some brethren regularly engage in activities which can only be understood in light of their being on “good terms with” the false teacher. They then act as though they have not done anything wrong, should never be called into question for their actions, and expect all the faithful to continue to fellowship them.

However on occasion someone will bring up that the “doctrine of Christ” only refers to the doctrine about Him—His deity and that He had come in the flesh (this is an objective genitive). Others believe it has reference to that which He taught or of that teaching of which He is the author (this would be the totality of the New Testament teaching and is called a subjective genitive). Since the phrase is used twice, whatever it means in the first part of the verse is what it means in the latter part. I believe that when one studies the passage there is only one conclusion which one can derive—it is subjective genitive. It is my opinion that the main reason that one argues for an objective genitive is because they have a desire to loosen the bonds of fellowship which God has establish. Let us look at five reasons I believe “doctrine of Christ” refers to the totality of the New Testament teaching (subjective genitive).

### Context

This is a hotly debated item with those who wish to make this objective genitive going back to verse seven as their basis that *doctrine of Christ* only refers to His deity. In verse seven John mentions the Gnostics who teach that Christ did not come in the flesh. In limiting the context

to verse seven, they ignore the total context of the letter.

Poetry was an important aspect of Bible writers. The poetry of the Bible is parallelism. While we generally think of it as one line then another line, it is often one section then another section. This is how John writes and 2 John is written using synonymous parallelism only in sections as opposed to lines. Notice how John does this through the book. In verses 1-4 John uses *truth* as the main idea and emphasis "love in the truth... known the truth; for the truth's sake...in truth and love... walking in truth." In verse 4 he changes from truth to *commandment(s)* through verse 6: "received a commandment...wrote a new commandment...walk after his commandments.... This is the commandment." The next section deals with *doctrine* and is in verses 9-10: "doctrine of Christ...doctrine of Christ...this doctrine." The three terms used are saying the same thing using different words. Thus, throughout the book John is discussing the whole of the teaching which originates in Christ of which the Gnostic heresy was simply one.

### John's Emphasis

John is often spoken of as "the apostle of love" because of the emphasis he gives to love. However, John also gives emphasis in his writing to keeping the commandments. Notice a few of the things he writes concerning commandment keeping:

If ye love me, keep my commandments.... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.... Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me (John 14:15, 21, 23-24).

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:2-3).

These show John's emphasis on keeping God's law which is in harmony with what he says in all through 2 John and thus would be in harmony with verse 9 of the need to remain within the commandments or doctrine of Christ.

### Grammar

*Doctrine of Christ* is in the genitive case. From looking at just this phrase, it could be either way (objective or subjective genitive). However, there is another time in this letter where we find a similar phrase using the geni-

tive case. When we go back to verse 6, John says, "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." "His commandments" is also a genitive construction which could be translated "the commandments of him." No one would consider thinking that this has reference to the commandments **about** Christ. Instead it refers to the commandments which originate with Him. Why not bring that same understanding to verse 9 where we have "the doctrine of Christ" or as the construction was translated in verse 6, "Christ's doctrine"? While I realize that both types of genitive might be used within the same context, when one considers the overall emphasis of this letter and the parallelism with which John wrote, it seems more likely that the phrase in verse 9 is the same as in verse 6.

### Parallel Passages

There are also some passages in the New Testament which parallel what we find in 2 John 9 concerning their construction. After the Pharisees and Sadducees asked Jesus for a sign from heaven and He showed their hypocrisy and told them that they would receive no sign but the sign of Jonah, He and the apostles go to the other side of the sea. The apostles had forgotten to take bread and "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Mat. 16:6). They did not understand and in explaining what He said, He states: "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Mat. 16:12). Here we have "doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" which is the same type of construction as "doctrine of Christ." Surely we would not understand that "doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" as being the doctrine about them. Christ is warning the apostles about the doctrine which they taught or which originated with them.

Another passage which shows this same type of usage is Luke's record of the early church. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Here we have the "apostles' doctrine" which is the same construction as "doctrine of Christ" and could rightfully be translated "doctrine of the apostles." Again no one would think that "apostles' doctrine" had reference to the doctrine about the apostles (objective genitive). It obviously has reference to the teaching which came from the apostles (which doctrine they received by inspiration of God). This would be subjective genitive in nature. These



are the same construction with “doctrine of” being used in all three places. Since it is clearly evident that both Matthew 16:12 and Acts 2:42 are subjective genitive, why would we not also apply this to 2 John 9?

### **New Testament Teaching**

When one studies the totality of the teaching concerning fellowship as set forth in the New Testament, understanding 2 John 9 as subjective genitive is in harmony with the whole of what is taught. The nature of this article precludes any detailed study of the totality of New Testament teaching concerning fellowship; however, let us notice a few things. Fellowship is based upon God’s Word (John 12:48-50; Rom. 16:17; 2 The. 3:6, 14). Through that Word and our obedience to it, we have fellowship with God (1 John 1:3-7). When all obey that Word, then there is unity and fellowship and the type which God approves (1 Cor. 1-4). However, when one does not obey that Word of God (walk in the light; 1 John 1:7), then it is sinful to have fellowship with the one walking in darkness (Eph. 5:11). This is why God will condemn fellowship with certain ones (Rev. 2:13-16, 20; 18:4). Among those with whom we are not to fellowship are false teachers (Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 1:3, 19-20; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; Tit. 1:9-11; et al.). There are other categories of individuals who we are not to fellowship, but an easy summary is that anyone does not continue to walk according to God’s Word. When one no longer walks according to God’s Word, he no longer has fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-6), thus we must not fellowship him.

### **Conclusion**

When we view all these matters, I think the case is clear that the “doctrine of Christ” is that teaching which

comes from Him (originates with Him), and thus those who bring some other doctrine must not be received. We must not do anything which would cause someone to think we might be in agreement or on “good terms” with him. Brethren, there are far too many who are violating what John records here. When we do, we are just as guilty as the person who does not abide in Christ’s doctrine.

*MH*

*Continued from Page 1*

Great emphasis was given to the need of evangelism as we labor to keep the church pure. Certain lectureships at one time were known for their soundness in proclaiming the whole council of God without fear or favor, while also exposing all error and those who propagate it. They did this consistently while teaching the Truth on all subjects without favor and respect of persons. Such lectureships as MSOP, Schertz, TX, Southwest Lectures, Southside Lectures, Lubbock, TX, Power Lectures, East TN School of Preaching, Florida School of Preaching to name a some, have given up dealing with issues that trouble the church. Each year such lectureships more and more mimic the lectureships of the universities operated by weak and unfaithful brethren. They are insipid and weak as water (with our apologies to the water). To put it bluntly, “They have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage and warmed over denominational soup.” But this was not the case with the Bellview Church of Christ Lectures.

To order books, CDs of the books, or DVDs you may contact the Bellview congregation.

*PO Box 39; Spring, TX 77383*

## **The Ways of a False Teacher**

*Roelf Ruffner*

In the apostle Peter’s second epistle, chapter two, he does not mince words in his denunciation and description of the false teachers/false prophets of his day. “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption” (2 Pet. 2:12). Whether it was the Judaizers who were trying to bind the Law of Moses on the Christians (Acts 15:1) or the proto-Gnostics who were beginning to deny that Jesus had a physical body (2 John 7), Peter and the Holy Spirit are reminding us of the destructive way taken by those who depart from New Testament Christianity.

Like a modern day microscope, the Bible reveals to us the way of depravity of the false teacher. The Word of God is as revealing today concerning false teachers as it was 2,000 years ago. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

### **The Way of the False Teacher Is the Way of the Irrational**

God sees false teachers as they truly are: “natural brute beasts” (2 Pet. 2:12). He sees them as irrational creatures that “speak evil of the things that they under-

stand not.” Christianity is a rational, objective religion of absolute truth. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21). False doctrine is basically irrational. For example, the falsity of “faith-only” salvation is readily apparent to the honest reader of the Bible. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:24).

### **The Way of a False Teacher Is the Way of a Spiritual Bum**

The false teacher is basically a sensualist who seeks to live in luxury at the expense of others (2 Pet. 2:13). For example, many so-called “televangelists” are just professional beggars who either live off “love offerings” of the naïve or seek to peddle their books at Wal-Mart to gullible buyers. Behind their masks of piety are lust and covetousness.

False teachers have “a heart trained in covetous practices” (2:14—NKJV). In fact their downfall is often either financial or sexually immoral in nature.

These spiritual bums live off others’ weaknesses. “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts” (2 Tim. 3:6). The dividend or “reward of unrighteousness” (2 Pet. 2:13) of the false teacher will be eternal damnation.

### **The False Teacher’s Way Is to Forsake the Right Way**

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray” (2 Pet. 2:15). That *right way* Peter mentions is the “living way” (Heb. 10:20) or “the way” (John 14:6) of Jesus Christ—the teachings of New Testament Christianity.

In this life there is a spiritual choice to be made. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:13-14). That “strait gate” is salvation through Jesus Christ. The “wide gate” leads away from God toward Hell. False teachers opt for the wrong way by forsaking the right way.

That wrong way is also the “way of Balaam” (2 Pet. 2:15). Like Balaam the false teacher forsakes God’s Word for money. Even though rebuked by the Angel of the Lord for his lawlessness, Balaam followed money rather than the Word of God (cf. Num. 22:32; 1 Tim. 6:10). Likewise modern false teachers forsake the right way by not teaching the necessity of baptism for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) to make themselves accept-

able to the denominational world. Compromising the truth of the Gospel also sells more books and merchandise. Peter describes such a departure as “madness” (2 Pet. 2:16).

### **The False Teacher’s Way Is One of Empty, Inflated Rhetoric**

False teachers are “wells without water” (2 Pet. 2:17) who “speak great swelling *words* of vanity (2:18). Their false doctrines make them spiritual wells of lies and deceit. Their teachings are Satan’s bait to lure an unwary soul into his trap. They often mask their treachery in flowery language and emotional appeals. “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18).

### **The Way of the False Teacher Is the Way of Slavery**

To those trying to escape sin, the false teacher promises “liberty” (2 Pet. 2:19) or a supposed license to sin. Whenever we devalue the necessity of living a morally upright life, we pervert the Gospel. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

Today, some false teachers preach a “grace-only” salvation that says that there is nothing we can do to gain salvation, thereby excluding obedience to God. This is merely “cheap grace.” True liberty is the freedom to do God’s will—not serve our own selfishness. “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22).

### **The Way of the False Teacher Is the Way of Regression**

Peter pictures the false teacher as someone who has left “the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 2:20) and turned “from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2:21). In other words, they know the truth of the Gospel but have regressed to false doctrine. False doctrine takes a soul backward, not forward to Heaven. “Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 8-9—ASV). The false teacher goes beyond what the Scriptures teach.

Peter sums up God’s revulsion for false teachers and their pernicious doctrines in a proverb: “The dog

is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet. 2:22). This is the only time in the New Testament we find *vomit*, *sow*, and *mire*. God does not want us to have anything to do with false teachers, and we should try to get others involved with them out of their grasp. Souls are at stake.

Does the church you attend preach and practice the doctrines found in the New Testament? If not, you are

being fed false doctrine and are in fellowship with false teachers (Eph. 5:11). Flee that situation as if your life was in danger and find the church of the New Testament—the church that Jesus built. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17).

5211 Timberline Rd; Cheyenne, WY 82009

*Voices from the past:*

## God's Law Vetoed

*G. K. Wallace*

Theologians refuse to admit or approve the law of God. They think they have the right to set aside what God says for how they feel or believe. We have lost our Bible. Most people in America own and often carry a Bible, but it is nullified in various ways. The Word of God is vetoed or set aside in the following ways:

### **Claims to Special and New Revelations**

The Bible teaches that the Word of God is complete. (2 Tim. 3:17). The Word of God furnishes the man of God completely unto every good work. Any work not authorized by the Bible is not a good work.

God's divine power has granted us everything that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Paul says in Ephesians 4:13 that we have “the unity of the faith.” That means that when the New Testament was finished we had **all** the faith. Any claim to a new or extra revelation other than what the apostles taught incurs the wrath of God. Paul says, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema” (Gal. 1:8). The curse of God rests on all who claim to have messages that were not received and preached by the apostles. Claims to new revelations veto the Word of God.

### **Men Veto the Word of God by Their Consciences**

Some allow the Word of God to be set aside in favor of their consciences. Conscience cannot be a safe guide because it may be mistaken.

Paul's conscience was clear while he persecuted the church. (Acts 23:1). Paul thought he should do things contrary to the will of God, but he was wrong (Acts 26:9). Conscience may be hardened (1 Tim. 4:2) or it may be weak and defiled (Tit. 1:15). Conscience is a creature of education. It approves what we believe to be right and disapproves what we believe to be wrong. It is not **believing**

that saves, but what you believe. “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

### **Experiences and Feelings Veto the Word of God**

Many are heard to say, “I don't care what the Bible says, I know how I feel.” Feeling is not an act of obedience, but the result of a viewpoint. The new birth is an act that takes one out of the realm of Satan and into the kingdom of God. A change of state is an act and not a sentiment or feeling. One feels good because he has done what he believes to be right. If what he does is not right, feeling good will not make it right.

Those who rely upon feelings rely upon their own judgment. The final decision is upon man's judgment and not the Word of God. If feelings are placed above the Word of God, then anything can be considered the will of God.

Ignoring the Word of God for feelings or what is called “the obedience to the Spirit,” spells anarchy. This is true because there are as many “inner spirits” as there are “outer bodies.” To reject the Word of God is to reject God. There is no such thing as “accepting Christ” while at the same time rejecting His revealed will.

### **So-called Personal Encounters Veto God's Word**

When religious services are made up of personal testimonies, these testimonials relate how Jesus or the Holy Ghost came to them and spoke peace or gave directions. These testimonials ignore the fact that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Too, those who testify veto God's law about the operation of God's power to save. Jesus Christ is forbidden to speak directly to mankind. When Jesus wanted Saul to be an apostle, He appeared to him on the Damascus highway (1 Cor. 15:8). However, He told Saul to go to Damascus to learn what to do to be saved (Acts 9:6). The Holy Spirit cannot



tell a man what to do to be saved except through the revealed will of God. God's will for man is revealed and thus no one has a personal encounter with Him.

Some years ago I was preaching in a certain city and staying in a hotel near the meeting house. On the way there, a person stopped me and asked, "Are you a Christian?" I replied, "Yes, I am a Christian and a Gospel preacher. Come and go with me to the service at the meeting house." He replied, "Sir, I am sorry but the Holy Ghost spoke to me and told me to ask you that." I replied, "That is odd as the Holy Ghost knows that I am a Christian, as I was baptized in His name. There is a ghost after you and he is not Holy."

In the last days there will be "seducing spirits" to lead men astray (1 Tim. 4:1). If you have had some personal encounter, it was with some spirit other than the Holy Spirit. So-called "testimonials" are not only misleading, but they are outlawed by the Word of God. Paul says we are not to preach ourselves (2 Cor. 4:5). When one is testifying, he is preaching himself. If you wish to tell us what God says, say on. If you wish to preach yourself, please excuse me as I have something better to do than listen to revelations from evil spirits.

Internal authority leads to self-worship. Modern-

ists tell us that our conception of God comes not from revelation, but intuition. Paul said man made God in His own image (Rom. 1:23). The sin of setting self-will above the will of God is that which caused the downfall of the human race (Gen. 3). Religious worshipers have no way

of knowing what God wants except through what God says. To accept any source of internal authority is a denial of God. "*It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jer. 10:23). Those who accept special revelation, inner light, and personal encounters reject the Word of God as a "dead letter" and depend wholly upon their own feelings. In so doing, they veto the Word of God.

There is only one source of authority. This authority is in Jesus Christ; He has all authority (Mat. 28:18-19). The source of this authority is God Who gave it to Christ. God and Christ have revealed Themselves through the Holy Spirit, in the Bible. The Bible is the revelation of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Does God speak to man directly or through the Word of God? The answer is clear. Deity speaks through the Word of God. When men accept the Bible as the full and complete will of God, they are not far from the kingdom of God.

*Deceased*

## Books-On-CD

The 1988-2005, 2007-2008 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2007, and the weekly bulletin *Beacon* 1974-2007, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$80 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.75 (total is \$80.75) in which you receive all the lectureship books (\$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. If you would like only the 2008 book, it can be purchased for \$6.75 which includes postage. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

Vol. XXXVII

July 2008

Number 07

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## The Thirty-Third Annual Bellview Lectures

*Danny Douglas*

*Preaching From The Major Prophets* was the theme of the Thirty-Third Annual Bellview Lectures, which took place from June 7 through June 11, 2008, at the facility of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, Florida. This outstanding lectureship was directed by Bellview's sound and capable preacher, brother Michael Hatcher, and overseen by her faithful elders: brother Paul Brantley and brother Fred Stancliff.

These days we hear a lot about "balance," which is used by some brethren as justification for compromise. However, the 2008 Bellview Lectures were balanced, according to the Word of God and without compromise. Each message exemplified the truth spoken in love and boldness, as well as warning against wrong and upholding the right.

Listeners were challenged to stand unwaveringly for the truth and against evil, with modern applications, from such messages as: "Nonconformity" and "The Writing on the Wall" in Daniel, and "Inability to Blush" and "Peace When There Is No Peace" in Jeremiah. In like manner, words of hope and warning were presented in "The Good News of Salvation" from Isaiah, and in "Turn and Live; Ezekiel 33:10" and "The Glory of the Lord in Chebar," from Ezekiel. Moreover, God's work in justifying sinful man through the suffering Christ was expounded in a message on "The Suffering Servant; Isaiah 53," and the declaration of His new way was considered in a message on "The New Covenant; Jeremiah 31:31-34."

Many things were spoken which should be a great strength and example to Gospel preachers, elders, and all of God's faithful in these perilous times, such as:

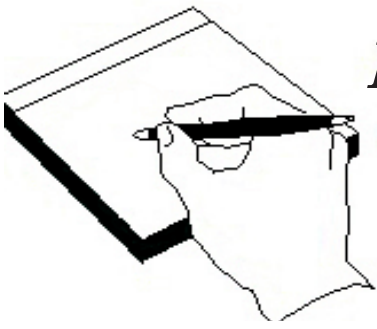
"The Man: Isaiah," "Strength from the Lord; Isaiah 40," "The Man: Jeremiah," "God's Commission to Jeremiah; Jeremiah 1:4-10," "The Man: Ezekiel," and "The Man: Daniel." Strength from God and for His Word in times of persecution was powerfully expounded in "Jeremiah's Gethsemane; Jeremiah 20:9."

The people of God were also challenged to rise up and stand against sin and error and for the truth by lectures from Ezekiel: "Will They Know There is a Prophet?; Ezekiel 2:5," "The False Prophets; Ezekiel 13," and "God's Watchmen; Ezekiel 33." Moreover, strong urging to stay with God and His Word and to shun from departing from it were presented from the lamenting prophet in "Jehoiakim's Penknife; Jeremiah 36" and "Broken Cisterns; Jeremiah 2:13."

Reminders of important prophecies and eternal truths were presented in: "A View Toward Pentecost; Isaiah 2:2-4," "The Virgin Birth; Isaiah 7:14," "The New Name; Isaiah 62:2," and "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream; Daniel 2, 7." Furthermore, the crucial theme of the sovereignty of God was emphasized in "God Rules; Daniel 4." An exhortation to greater courage and strength against opposition was given in "If...But...Will; Daniel 3." Moreover, specific and needed applications were also cited from Jeremiah in "Ask for the Old Paths; Jeremiah 6:16," and a perpetual problem among God's people was considered in "Perpetual Backsliding; Jeremiah 8."

In addition to the lecture presentations, there were three open forum sessions in which questions were dealt with. The moderators are to be commended for the excellent job they did, as well as the many fine com-

*Continued on Page 3*



# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Be Strong and Courageous

Moses had led the children of Israel for forty years. It was near the time of his death. He goes to Israel and reminds them that God would be with them and “go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee” (Deu. 31:3). He then tells them: “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (31:6). No doubt he also remembered back to the time before the wilderness wanderings when the Israelites were persuaded by the ten spies who brought back an evil report. Thus, at this time he knows they need encouragement.

Moses next turns to Joshua and says, “And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it” (31:7). This charge to be strong and courageous is again given to Joshua by Moses: “And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee” (31:23).

After the death of Moses, Jehovah speaks to Joshua and He reminds him: “Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them” (Jos. 1:6). He then states it again: “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (1:9). Then, after Joshua commands the officers of the people to prepare them to

go over Jordan, in their response they state: “Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage” (1:18).

It becomes apparent that Joshua needed the encouragement and reminder to “be strong and of a good courage.” No doubt it was unsettling to have the leader of the people die. Then the Israelites were about to go into battle as they would go in to possess the land which God was giving them. The people in the land had built cities and fortified them. Remember the report of the spies:

the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.... We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.... The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. (Nun. 13:28, 31-33).

While God had given the Israelites the land, they still had to go into the land and take it. Joshua’s charge was to lead God’s people into battle and possess the land. Thus, there was the need for encouragement to be strong.

When we become a Christian today, we enter a spiritual battle. Paul writes, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:10-12). The entirety of the Christian life is one of battle. Paul indicates this regarding his own life when he writes, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). Only when death comes can we lay our armor down and rest. “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, 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). Till that time, we have a battle to fight.

There is the battle with the world. The world is controlled by Satan and seems to be getting worse all the time. There seems to be more open hostility toward God, the Bible, and Christians. The evolutionist have seemingly won the battle in the public schools and eliminated



creationism out of the school and are able to teach the bad hypothesis of evolution as fact. This view has helped lead to the moral decay of our society. With the proliferation of temptation around us (and it is continuing to get more explicit all the time), we are in a constant battle to remain pure and holy.

There is the battle with the denominational world. The denominations seem so strong. They have numbers, money, power, and such like. Yet, they continue to spew forth their false doctrines to lead men astray. Years ago they engaged in open combat with the faithful. However, they soon learned that open combat was not the way to go. We are now in a period where they are trying to get us to compromise the truth and be allies with them. They want us to join them in certain battles (such as the fight against abortion along with some other moral issues) and from there they know it will be easier to get us to join them in other areas. Sadly there is a spirit of compromise by many within the Lord's church today, so this tactic has worked with many. However, we are in a life and death struggle with denominationalism.

There is the battle with apostate brethren. Many Christians expect to have to battle the world and with the denominational world, but many do not expect to have to battle among our own brethren. This should not be a surprise to brethren, but it is. Jesus warned: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. 7:15). These are false prophets, but they come in the appearance of sheep (faithful brethren). Paul told the Ephesian elders: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). We always need to remember that Paul tells us that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Thus, we should not be surprised that we are going to have to continually fight those who are total apostates clinging onto the church, but also those who are slowly drifting off.

As we continue in the fight, we often need the encouragement which Moses, God, and the officers of Israel gave to Joshua to "be strong and of a good courage." The fight is long, hard and sometimes emotionally draining. This leads to the fight we have with discouragement. As the Israelites went into the land, they were supposed

to utterly destroy all the inhabitants. Yet, for whatever reason they failed to continue the battle in destroying all the people from the land. Those faithful today face a very real battle with discouragement. The majority are opposed to us (cf. Mat. 7:13-14). Brethren who at one time would have stood shoulder to shoulder with us in the fight are now opposed to us and will ridicule, mock, ignore, and just about anything else in their opposition to us. We are now having to fight them, and it is discouraging. However, the reward for faithfully fighting to the end is certainly worth all the effort we will put forth. We must remember: "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). We, like the apostles have the promise: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Mat. 10:22).

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*Continued from Page 1*

ments which were made from the floor.

The Thirty-Third Annual Bellview Lectures were truly outstanding. For one thing, preaching from the prophets is always relevant, and in this case, the lessons were presented and written particularly well. Furthermore, the writers and speakers made many powerful and appropriate applications, which show that the human nature has not changed; neither has the nature of sin and its consequences. In addition, the love and grace of God was beautifully expressed in these studies, with powerful challenges to obedience and faithfulness.

The lectureship book is truly outstanding. It offers a wealth of material for preaching and Bible school material, and that which will be spiritually beneficially for all who enter into a reading and study thereof. In addition to chapters on the themes named above, a good foundation for the study of the Major Prophets is found in the lectureship book, titled: "Introduction to the Prophets." This volume will prove to be an asset to anyone's library. We would encourage everyone to order copies of the lectureship book through the office of the Bellview Church of Christ, or recordings of the lectures (which also may be seen in archive format on the Bellview website). Sister Denise Mowery, the church secretary, is also to be com-

mended for her efficiency and tireless work in this and other areas of the Lord's work at Bellview.

The Bellview elders, preacher, deacons, their wives, as well as the entire congregation are to be highly commended. The meals and hospitality, the involvement of many members in various areas, and the overall cooperative effort displayed was truly an example of Christians working together for the cause of Christ. All who took an active part are appreciated.

It is noteworthy that in these perilous times when many once faithful elderships, preachers, lectureships, and congregations have turned aside into compromise and error, Bellview has not. The fact that this faithful congregation continues, after all these decades, to be sound in the faith, and to have held thirty-three sound lectureships is truly remarkable. In Bellview, we are reminded of Paul's words to the church at Rome: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8). Thanks and glory be to God for this, our prayer is that, with His help, this may continue on.

Another observation is in order and that is the fact that the men involved represent a wide age range. It is good to know that not only is the brotherhood blessed with a number of well-seasoned brethren, but that we also have a group of capable and godly young men who are dedicated to standing in the "old paths." Thankfully, we still have a number of men who are faithfully standing for the Word of God and that not all have: "bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (cf. Rom. 11:4; 1 Kin. 19:18).

The 2008 Bellview Lectureship was well attended. However, we were saddened that brother Ken Chumbley and brother Roelf Ruffner were unable to be present and to deliver their lectures. Brother Barney Ruffner, a faithful servant of the Lord and the father of Roelf, passed away just before the start of the lectures, and brother Chumbley had to travel to England at the passing of brother Graham Moulton, who was a faithful servant and Gospel preacher in England.

The powerful messages and their many applications are proof positive that faithful brethren are not going to lay down and be silent regarding the new "unity in diversity" movement and current controversies in the brotherhood. Some who have a name for soundness have compromised the faith, but a name is all they have, even as the church in Sardis had only a reputation for being alive, as Jesus said: "thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (cf. Rev. 3:1). Faithful men of God will not sound retreat, nor go silently off into their respective corners. Indeed, the compromisers have failed in their efforts to silence faithful brethren by crying: "peace, peace, when there is no peace." It continues to be our God-given duty to warn precious souls, as God commanded Isaiah: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1).

Through Him Who was "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities," we may be justified, and enter into the house of the Lord. Yet, we must continue to walk in the old paths of God and not play the harlot. If we turn to God and from sin, we can live because it is not the will of God that we perish. For those who do so: "though our sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow." What a privilege it is to be in the kingdom which the God of heaven has set up and which shall stand forever. We need watchmen on the wall like Ezekiel, and men like Jeremiah who cannot hold back the Word of God because it is as a fire in their bones. We must be people of faith, courage, and prayer, like Daniel—who refused to bow down to men and their idols and men could not stop him from bowing to the Lord God Almighty. We must be people of truth like Isaiah, who said: "Hear the word of the Lord," and "let us walk in the light of the Lord." Surely, we can grow and be strengthened by the true prophets of God: "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).

*517 Gaylord St; Dresden, TN 38225*

Be making your plans now to attend:

## 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Bellview Lectureship

### June 13-17, 2009

# Preaching from the Minor Prophets

# The Re-Evaluation/Reaffirmation Of Elders

*Dub Mowery*

Even while the apostles were still living there were warnings given concerning those who would depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:17). Mankind has the tendency to pursue whatever each individual deems to be right in his own eyes (Jud. 17:6; 21:25). Since this is true, numerous innovations have not only been introduced by denominations but also by some within the church of our Lord. In fact, this is exactly how digression came about in the past.

In recent years, innovations such as baby dedications and the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders have been introduced into the church of Christ. It is the unauthorized use of the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders that will now be addressed. Just what is meant by that terminology? It is a process of determining whether or not a congregation's elders will continue to serve as its overseers. Someone might be inclined to ask, "Well, what is wrong with that?" The answer: there is not any scriptural authority for the reevaluation/reaffirmation process of determining as to whether or not men will continue to serve in the eldership.

The qualifications essential for a person to be selected as an elder (also referred to as bishops and shepherds) are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Only men who meet the specific qualifications stated in those two passages may scripturally serve as elders. Who are to appoint men to serve in the eldership of a local congregation? There is no higher office on earth than the local congregation of the Lord's church which will appoint men as elders. The inspired Word provides the stipulations necessary to be qualified. Therefore, when men are selected as the bishops of a local congregation who meet the qualifications then those brethren are Holy Spirit ordained (appointed) elders. In Acts 6:1-6 is recorded a need that came up in the church at Jerusalem for men to oversee the daily distribution of the essentials of life. The apostles instructed the entire congregation to look out among themselves for men who met the stated qualifications given by them. When a congregation goes through the process of selecting from among its own membership men to serve as elders or deacons then the entire congregation should be involved in the process.

Some hold the erroneous concept that once a man is appointed as an elder he is always an elder. However, the New Testament does not uphold that concept. There are

several possible reasons why an individual could not continue to serve as an elder of a local church of Christ. Some of these include: First, if a man who is serving as an elder for one congregation moves away to a different locality, then he can no longer oversee the congregation that appointed him. Also, he is not an elder over the local church in the new locality when he places membership with it. That brother may later be appointed by the later congregation after he has proved himself unto those brethren.

Second, it would be unscriptural for only one man to serve as the bishop of a congregation. The Scriptures only authorize a plurality of qualified men to serve as its elders (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5; Phi. 1:1; Acts 15:4-6). Therefore, when a congregation has only two men serving as elders and one of the men ceases to serve in the eldership (regardless of the reason) then the other brother is no longer an elder. He may be re-appointed by that congregation later when he along with at least one other brother has proven themselves qualified to serve in the eldership.

Third, a man who is serving as an elder may have personal reasons such as failing health that would hinder him from continuing to serve as an overseer. Usually, a brother who realizes that he can no longer serve effectively as an elder will graciously resign as an overseer.

Fourth, a man may cease to meet the qualifications for an elder and should therefore resign. However, many in that situation refuse to resign! What is a congregation to do under such circumstances? The Apostle Paul gives instructions of how a congregation is to handle a situation when an elder ceases to be qualified and/or has some accusations against him. He states, "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). Also, the Son of God provides instructions that would be applicable to a brother who has committed a personal offense against another, including elders of a congregation. Our Lord and Savior declared: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man



and a publican” (Mat. 18:15-17).

The congregation that appointed a man to be one of its overseers has the right to reject him as such when he ceases to be qualified and proves himself as being unworthy to serve in that capacity. However, the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders is an unscriptural and unwarranted process of determining as to whether or not men serving as elders will continue to do so. That process is little more than a popularity contest.

In the first place, men are scripturally selected to serve as elders according to the qualifications given by the apostle Paul. Often men are selected as elders who are no more qualified than a recent convert. If a congregation will carefully follow the inspired Word given by the Holy Spirit concerning this matter, then unqualified men will not be selected. The same qualifications essential to become an elder can disqualify him when he ceases to meet those qualifications. Thus, the congregation is obligated to reject him as one of their elders. Passages of Scripture such as 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and Matthew 18:15-17 should be adhered to in determining whether or not an elder remains qualified.

The reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders is a method deemed by uninspired men in deciding whether or not a congregation wants those serving in the eldership to continue as their elders. As stated above, it becomes little more than a popularity contest. Such an unauthorized procedure has many potential dangers in its use. Even if the eldership obtains a 100% approval it is still flawed. The criteria of determining whether or not men serving as elders or to continue to do so, under the reevaluation/

reaffirmation of elders, may be based on the personal likes and dislikes of the individual members of the congregation. If for example, those influenced by change agents might vote out faithful qualified elders. The words of the prophet Jeremiah comes to my mind; he said, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). The reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders has a pre-determined abstract percentage of approval for men to continue to serve as elders. Question: who has the authority to set a certain percentage for approval? Answer: since it is an unscriptural procedure, no one has the authority to do so. Within one congregation that used this unscriptural method, each elder had to have a 75% approval of the congregation to remain as an elder. In other words, a minority of only 26% of disgruntled members could be responsible of ousting an elder out of the eldership. Such a man-made method can be the devil’s means of splitting a congregation.

Faithful brethren will continue to speak out against such innovations as the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders. We are to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). The apostle Paul exhorted, “Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple [innocent]” (Rom. 16:17-18).

*160 Gage Rd; Big Sandy, TX 75755*

## A Noble Vine

*Alton W. Fonville*

How much grief and rebellion can a Father stand before he puts an end to it? People continue to *feel* that our heavenly Father will just “turn the other cheek” and overlook their backslidings and outright rebellion against His spoken Word. Church leaders and individuals alike flaunt God’s Word about as an “ensign for the people,” but hypocritically. They continue to say and defend the notion that there are “faithful,” “knowledgeable” Christians making up all denominations. Blessings are asked of God for their works to continue and prosper. I ask: “If they are part of the Lord’s church and have been added to it by the Lord, why are we

wasting our time and efforts trying to convert them?” However, by a careful and fearful examination of God’s Word, it shows that God did not plant denominations and will **not** tolerate them.

In the study of Jeremiah, a realization of God’s longsuffering and patience does have an end. During the writing of the book, Jerusalem and the priests and prophets boasted of their “worship” to God and of their pride in the place of worship—the temple. Through deep anguish, God told Jeremiah to tell his people what was to happen to them because of their sinful and rebellious conditions. Listen to a hurting Father:

Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? (Jer. 2:19-21).

Have you ever been called “a degenerate”? That was one of the most distasteful names a person could be called as we grew up. Israel had been planted as truly a noble vine from pure seed, but now had gone so far from God, they could not be recognized as the same. Can we be following in the footsteps of Israel of old? The Lord did build only one body which is His church. He bought it with His own blood. It is His only bride which He has promised to save. It is to be a peculiar body, separate from the world, a royal priesthood without spot or wrinkle. Its members came up out of the waters of baptism pure and white, having been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. Denominations are the result of degenerate vines claiming to be part of the body of Christ; yet, they have not obeyed the simple terms of entrance into it. They do not fear God and have rebelled against His divine instructions, saying, “It doesn’t matter—there are many ways to heaven as long

as you are sincere and call God Father.” Jesus taught us that He was “the way.”

In spite of the pleadings of God for Israel and Judah to repent of their hypocrisy and their wickedness in so many different ways, it prevailed not. Jerusalem was destroyed just as God had warned. The beautiful temple, where God had placed His name there for worship, was totally destroyed along with the rest of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The people would not listen nor receive any correction. It seems like the same thing today. When you point out what God said, people let it go in one ear and out the other without giving heed to it. Yes, it seems as though we are following very closely in the footsteps of our rebellious forefathers, and will no doubt suffer the consequences like they did—except we repent. A very important lesson is seen in these events. Many churches take great pleasure in the name “church of Christ” on their buildings, and claim to be the people of God. Like the physical temple of old, which was destroyed because of their sin, the candlestick can and surely will be removed from a degenerate congregation of the Lord—except they repent (Rev. 2:5).

Why not prevent the inevitable? “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:17).

337 Madison 4605; St. Paul, AR 72760

## Books-On-CD

The 1988-2005, 2007-2008 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2007, and the weekly bulletin *Beacon* 1974-2007, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$80 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.75 (total is \$81.75) in which you receive all the lectureship books (\$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. If you would like only the 2008 book, it can be purchased for \$6.75 which includes postage. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

Vol. XXXVI

August 2008

Number 08

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## Recommended Reading: *Preaching From The Major Prophets*

*Gary W. Summers*

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures were conducted June 7-11, 2008, and this outstanding book was published in connection with them. The thirty chapters spread themselves out over 438 pages, and the material is well worth reading and meditating upon, as much of it draws out rich material from the major prophets. In addition to the Introduction are four chapters dealing with the four individuals whose names the books bear, and then several sections from Isaiah (6), Jeremiah (9), Ezekiel (5), and Daniel (5).

The book is not intended to be a verse by verse commentary; rather a verse, several verses, or a chapter of a prophetic book is examined. The introduction offers an explanation for the reason this material is often neglected in churches today (1) and then discusses the work of the prophets (2-6). Next, the context of the times in which each man prophesied is provided (6-10), and finally some of the highlights and gems recorded in the Sacred Text are discussed (10-23).

Passages examined from Isaiah are: the prophecy of the church fulfilled on Pentecost (2:2-4); the virgin birth of the Lord (7:14); strength from the Lord (40); the suffering servant (53); the good news of salvation (61); and the new name God's people would be given (62:2).

The texts in Jeremiah include: Jeremiah's calling (1:4-10); "broken cisterns" (2:13); those who kept on saying peace, "when there was no peace" (6:14); the inability to blush (6:15); asking for the old paths (6:16); perpetual backsliding (8); "Jeremiah's Gethsemane" (20:9); "the new covenant" (31:31-34); and Jehoiakim's penknife (36).

The texts covered from Ezekiel are: "yet they will know that a prophet has been among them" (2:5); the glory of the Lord (3:23); the false prophets (13); God's watchmen (33); and "turn and live" (33:10).

The texts from Daniel are all chapters: "Nonconformity" (1); important dreams (2, 7); the three young men who refused to compromise (3); God's rule (4); and the handwriting on the wall (5). Many other texts could have been included, and volumes could have been written, but these are sufficient to provide a host of principles for the reader to meditate upon and whet his appetite for further study.

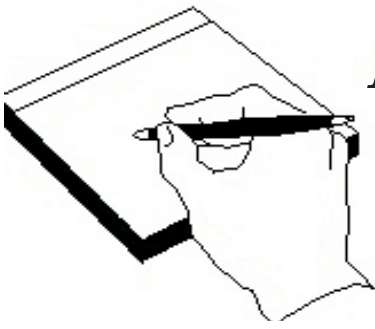
### **The Value of the Book**

One reason that the Bellview lectureship books have been so valuable year after year is that the elders who oversee this effort, as well as the director, Michael Hatcher, and those invited to participate, all have respect for the Word of God—a respect not held by King Jehoiakim or many of his modern-day children (262-63). Various attempts have been made over the years to destroy God's Word. Some have actually ordered copies of the Scriptures burned or destroyed. Some translators have inserted the doctrine of men into it, and many have perverted it by the way they misrepresented what it says. Our Christian schools are cited as being among the perverted. Who would have ever thought that one of *our* universities would have hired non-Christians and then allow them to teach evolution (268)?

During the past four weeks we reviewed a book written by two "doctors," which promoted compromise

*Continued on Page 3*





# Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Truth And Presentation

Mr. Z is one who is searching for the Truth. He has been studying his Bible some and knows that he needs to get his life right with God. To that end, Mr. Z began asking some about God's Word. Thus Mr. A sat down to talk to him. Mr. A is kind and loving as he talks to Mr. Z. He showed great interest in Mr. Z and tried to help him in any way that he could. While Mr. A presented his material in a loving disposition, what Mr. A presented was not true to God's Word.

Brother B then goes to teach Mr. Z. Brother B, however, does not possess the proper attitude of heart. He is rude, hateful, and by his actions and speech one would be led to believe that brother B does not love Mr. Z, but, in fact, hates him. However, brother B teaches the truth of God's Word. He teaches Mr. Z what it takes to become a Christian and to remain a Christian and everything he says is according to what God commands.

Now, what should Mr. Z do? Should he follow what Mr. A taught because of the superior way in which he presented his material? Should he reject what brother B taught because brother B was so *vile* in his method and actions? If Mr. Z should accept what Mr. A taught and reject what brother B taught because of each one's demeanor, will that save Mr. Z on the day of judgment? Surely, we all know the answers to these questions (and more that could be presented about the scenario). Paul writes, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple [innocent—ASV]" (Rom. 16:17-18). In this imaginary case, Mr. Z was deceived by the

good words and fair speeches of Mr. A. Of course, Mr. Z should obey the Truth even if brother B was the vilest person who ever lived and ever talked to him. Only by obedience to the Truth, which was presented by brother B, will Mr. Z ever have a chance of being saved eternally.

The apostle Paul discussed this when he wrote:

"And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phi. 1:14-18). In the discussion here, the Truth is being preached (later in the letter he deals with error being preached but that is not the discussion here). Paul knows (because he in writing by inspiration of God who knows man's heart) some were preaching the Gospel with an improper motive; they were preaching it out of "envy and strife" and not sincerely. The question is: Should those who heard the ones preaching with an improper motive reject what they were preaching? To reject the message because of the attitude of heart of the proclaimers would be to reject the Gospel—the only message able to save them. Those rejecting the message because of the one proclaiming it, in this case, would be to the eternal damnation of their soul. To accept the message in spite of the one proclaiming it, in this case, would be to their eternal salvation. Thus, Paul would rejoice that Christ was preached even though some were doing so out of contention and not sincerely. He knew the attitude of the presenter did not change or alter the facts of what was presented. The hearers needed to make sure of the truthfulness of what was presented and act accordingly (either in obedience if true, or rejection if false). The way in which it was presented and/or the attitude of the one presenting the material has no bearing on the truthfulness of what is presented.

Brethren, we need to remember these facts. We have many today who *poison the well* by attacking those who will present material to them. For example: brother Keith Mosher in responding to a question concerning Memphis School of Preaching and their support of Dave Miller stated: "these people are as *vile* a group, and I do mean *vile* as I have ever read after in my life. I have never seen the kind of attitude they have. They want to destroy about nine good works in the brotherhood just to prove

a point.” He went on to say, “If you’re going to believe some of these publications you’re going to have a problem because those brethren are lying to you.” First, when challenged to produce any lies *Defender* has printed about Dave Miller, brother Mosher was as silent as a tomb. However, he stated that we are vile! What if we have been and are “as vile a group, and I do mean vile, as I have ever read after in my life.” (I do deny that we are vile and/or that the way in which we have presented the material concerning Dave Miller has been vile.) Even if we have been vile, it does not change the truthfulness or falsity of the material that has been published. Brethren, calling those of us “radical,” “brotherhood watchdogs,” “minority element,” “anti,” “new-anti,” that we are “spoiling for a fight,” “pugilist,” “prompted by envy and jealousy and/or a struggle for perceived power” along with numerous other loving and kind epitaphs does not change the truthfulness of what has been stated and written concerning Dave Miller.

Additionally, when we expose Dave Miller as a false teacher and teach that others should not fellowship him (which would also include the organization he directs) is that sending out “dictums demanding that the brotherhood fall in line with the decisions they have ‘voted on’ (in principle, if not in fact).” I wonder if the brethren who make such charges against us were sending out “dictums demanding that the brotherhood fall in line with the decisions they have ‘voted on’ (in principle, if not in fact)” when they preach and teach against mechanical instruments of music in worship being sin and those who use such should not be fellowshiped. (Many other such positions could be questioned.) Does stating these things and calling us such names prove that Dave Miller is not a false teacher? **Absolutely not!** Could the reason they stoop to such verbiage be because they cannot deal with the facts and the evidence? Could it be that the reason they have refused to accept any invitation to discuss these matters be because they do not have the evidence to prove their position? Brethren, even if all these accusations were true (and I certainly deny they are true), it does not change the **facts** that Dave Miller is a false teacher and those who fellowship him are a “partaker of his evil deeds” and likewise should not be fellowshiped. Remember what courageous Jehu said to king Jehoshaphat: “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD” (2 Chr. 19:2).

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*Continued from Page 1*

and unity over truth. The reader will not be surprised that the authors of that book had nothing kind to say about the lectures held at Bellview or those once conducted by the Pearl Street Church of Christ in Denton Texas. They complained that even “the lectures on the books of the Bible deal primarily with departures from the faith” (Holloway and Foster 127). They were so unfamiliar with these lectures that they did not realize that Bellview has always done topics rather than books. The writers and speakers do uphold truth and denounce error.

It is precisely that reverence for God’s Word that makes these books worth having. No one will be so confused by ambiguous speech to the point that he wonders, “Do these men believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God?” One can sense that such is the case by the emphasis on the Scriptures from beginning to end.

### Highlights

Among other things, this year’s lectures contain the following items.

- A list of ten things required of shepherds (20-21)
- A list of six sins from Isaiah 5:8-23 (29-31)
- The history of Pentecost (41-44)
- Analysis of “young woman” versus “virgin” (52-59)
- A list of five consequences of the virgin birth (59-61)
- Discussion of the greatness of God (69-71)
- Discussion of: “What is the new name?” (110-11)
- Suggestions for elders to stop liberalism (157-58)
- Instances of brethren exhibiting modernism (159-61)
- Five reasons why false teachers succeed (179-80)
- A definition of balanced preaching (184-85)
- An illustration involving Eddie Rickenbacker (185-86)
- The political state of affairs at the time of Jeremiah (207-209)
- The causes of perpetual backsliding (223-32)
- A definition of hematohidrosis (246)
- Two responsibilities of the preacher today (290-97)
- A discussion of “misplaced glory” (310-14)
- The theme of “watching” in the New Testament (336)

- The biblical definition of grace (346-47)
- Ways in which Christians should be nonconformists (378-79)
- Two pictures of the image in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as interpreted by pre-millennialists (385-86)
- 7 consequences of the kingdom **not** being established in the first century (391)
- The first-century, moral climate of Rome (422-23)
- A description of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (425-36)

In addition to these intriguing and edifying features are two articles of great interest. The first is an article written by Bill Jackson: "Lost—While Preaching the Truth" (317-19). The title alone implies what the article concerns. The thesis is not only accurate; preachers and congregations all over the country today sorely need it. The biblical principles stated here may just serve as the wake-up call that many need.

The second and lengthier article quoted is from an apostate member of the Lord's church (212-17). It is a fascinating study of the rationale of someone who has justified herself and the immoral actions of others to herself. Even though the reader is hearing only one side of the story, it is clearly the prejudiced side. One does not even need to ask the others involved what their take on it was; the woman's arrogance permeates all that she writes. She is much more articulate than clever, since she cannot resist making derogatory comments about the Lord's church and what the Word of God teaches. She exhibits a stubbornness of will and pride that is reminiscent of Pharaoh, mixed with the philosophy of doing what is right in her own eyes (Jud. 21:25).

These are not the only items of interest in *Preaching From The Major Prophets*; there are many other scriptural lessons with great practical value for today. The Word of God is always relevant. The book may be ordered from the Bellview Church of Christ for \$16.00 (plus \$3.00 for postage); call (850) 455-7595 to order.

5410 Lake Howell Rd; Winter Park, FL 32792

## A Little Lesson Fellowship, Apologetics Press, etc. *Tim Smith*

The New Testament teaches that those who are teaching things contrary to the truth are not to be fellowshiped. I have found this to be a simple principle. It is not hard to understand. The Scriptures are plain: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18). "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).

Note first that the duty rests with the faithful: "mark them." This requires that a judgment be made and then action follows. It is not wrong to make a judgment as to the soundness of another. It is wrong to not make a judgment as to the soundness of another. If we find a man

to be causing "divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine" we must mark and avoid them. They are in sin and for us to "receive them" or "bid them God speed" is for us to be "partaker of his evil deeds."

Now, let us apply the lesson. Apologetics Press in Montgomery, Alabama has, for many years, pursued a fellowship policy that is contrary to the passages at which we just looked. They have gone to congregations harboring false teachers and have knowingly plied their trade in congregations practicing error. (They argue that they only teach the truth on evolution/creation etc. However, what good does it do to teach a man the truth on creation while he continues to be lost for a dozen more reasons? Will he then be in a less hot section of hell?) They should have been marked and avoided for that alone.

But it did not stop there. I suppose we should not be surprised that they hired Dave Miller, a noted false teacher, to be the director when disgraced former director Bert Thompson had to leave the business. Brother Miller has long been known as a false teacher with



respect to marriage intent and the novel false teaching known now as elder reevaluation/reaffirmation. They knew these things about him when they hired him on as an associate, or immediately thereafter. They knew these things when he was promoted to director.

Now their sin has involved many others in sin. Curtis Cates, former director of the Memphis School of Preaching, along with many others (many who will receive and hopefully read these lines) signed a statement of support and endorsement for Apologetics Press. It was common knowledge that they would fellowship *anything for a buck* when the statement was signed. It was common knowledge that brother Miller was on the staff when the statement was signed. It was common knowledge that brother Miller was a false teacher when the statement was signed.

Instead of being forthright and honest about it, we find that those involved in the signing of the statement and supporting Apologetics Press refuse to answer questions about their behavior. Why? If what they did was right (and we have shown that it was not), why not openly defend their actions?

To those of you who continue to support Apologetics Press, and those who support them (including Memphis School of Preaching and Gospel Broadcasting Network), please demand that truth prevail. If it does not, please be strong enough and dedicated to the Lord enough to withhold your money until the ones in error have repented. Please pray for those caught up in this error—some of them have done much good in the kingdom over the years but are now endangering their soul and the souls of many others.

171 Radford Circle Dothan, AL 36301

## “The Whole Problem Is Based on a Difference in Personalities”

David Brown

Time and time again over my preaching career I have heard brethren say something such as the sentiment expressed in the title of this article. Other faithful members of the church have experienced the same thing in their work among the brethren. This is not to say that personalities at times do not clash. However, it is a favorite criticism among those who do not desire to admit that something is a doctrinal problem. Thus, they have less than honorable intentions.

### What Do They Mean?

Allow me to reveal how this view is used more times than not as a “catch all” phrase to protest what the user of the sentence **personally does not like**. Indeed, many such persons are guilty of the very action they are seeking to oppose and of which they accuse others.

Such comments as “personality clashes” or “personality differences” and like sentiments mean about whatever the person using them wants them to mean. These terms are very subjective. Thus, it is next to impossible to get those employing such verbiage to precisely define their terms in an objective manner. I challenge those who are always applying such terminology to others with the following statement. Write down precisely what you mean when you use these ambiguous terms. This they will seldom attempt to do, but in their refusal to do so, they reveal their own dishonesty. Why is this the case? The answer is simple. **To speak plainly is to be found out**. Also, though such persons are under biblical obligation to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21), they have

very little if any compunction of conscience to do it regarding what is and what is not a “personality difference.” Moreover, they rejoice in their vagueness.

### Sinful or Not?

About the only thing that one may determine from the people who bandy about such terms of endearment is found in the following statement. **They are trying to say that whatever the problem is, it has nothing to do with whether a thing is sinful or not sinful**. Thus, for many of those who are *quick on the trigger* to use such terms, it is just a clash over people’s personal likes and dislikes, or which person will finally get his own way.

In most cases, the subject matter over which there is disagreement really means nothing at all to them. They are simply trying to take advantage of differences among and between brethren to push themselves forward and carry out their own agenda. They are “self-willed” and their greatest enemy is unity among and between the elders, preachers, and the faithful of the Lord’s church. In fact, such characters will actually criticize the unity existing between the elders and preachers. Indeed, is it not a terrible thing to have the elders, preachers, and others working together in unity and harmony based solely on a “thus saith the Lord”? Hence, never out in the open, but behind the scenes among the ones that they think they can influence the most, they begin to spin their tales to accomplish their own designs.

### A Case in Point

Sometimes such conduct evidences itself in Bible classes,

business meetings, or the like. I actually experienced the following. This happened over 25 years ago while I was preaching for a church in Arkansas. The account would be highly amusing if it were not so sinful and sad. The brother of whom I am speaking wanted to be an elder so bad he could taste it. Due to his marriage situation, he knew he could never serve in that capacity. On one occasion while he was visiting with me, he revealed that he very seldom said anything of a controversial nature in a business meeting. He said he did not have to do it. The reason he gave me for not doing so was because of two older men who were forever criticizing everything and everyone. I never will forget how this brother smiled as he explained to me how he accomplished his work. He said that when he wanted to get something critical and controversial out in the business meeting, he met with one or both of those old soured cranks. He would make his case with them. They would then get worked up over what he presented to them. By the time of the next business meeting, the two old rascals were fit to be tied. This brother was happy as a lark when he reported to me that in the meeting he just listened with his mouth sealed while those silly old contentious men acted as his mouthpiece. Of course, they took much of the blame for being unreasonable and contentious. They should have, for they were contentious old gripes. However, they were worse than that, for they were this man's pawns. Knowing the two old brethren as I did, I know that they never realized how they were duped and used by this deceitful brother.

What did I do with this conniving brother's boastful confessions? I went straight to the elders, told them of his conduct, and in time he was no longer a problem in that church.

When controversy is underway (it does not make any difference what the subject is) many times one can identify the dupes in the class, business meeting, or whatever the kind of assembly. You can tell they have been duped by the questions asked or statements made and who asked or made them. They do not realize that they are mouthpieces for someone else. And, just as the bragging brother in Arkansas was sitting nearby with his mouth zipped while the dupes do his dirty work, the same modern day Diotrephes sit by as silent as an oyster in their own conceit. No doubt, they are thinking how brilliant and wise they are in their control of others. After all, that is what they are seeking to accomplish in the first place. Just think, in all of this they think they are being Christ-like.

### **Their Modus Operandi**

Why do such people operate in this fashion? Often it is because of personal friendship, family preference, favorit-

ism, or respect of persons. Other unscriptural motives such as jealousy and envy are many times present in their minds. One may add to those sinful thoughts, hurt feelings and bitterness at not being treated as they thought they should be. Combine all these previously mentioned ingredients with a self-willed and boastful spirit, and presto, you have *hell's cake from the devil's kitchen*. Thus, when there are problems, such persons are motivated by the aforementioned sinful dispositions than by the truth of the Bible in determining their stand. Of course, if such persons admit that the problem is a matter of truth or error, they may find themselves having to oppose their favorite person or family member. This would mean that they would have to squelch their own sinful attitudes and stand with a person they do not necessarily like. Of course, they are not about to do that.

We have, therefore, discovered and identified at least some of the sinful motivating factors behind certain church members' mode of operation. Hence, their standard of conduct is far from a rightly divided Bible. Moreover, it is sad but true that most of these folks will stop at nothing to get what they want.

### **Evil Surmising**

Those who practice favoritism and all the other bad character traits we have noted do not conceive of someone acting on the basis of any other motivation than what moves them. Therefore, they automatically transfer to everyone else their own mode of operation.

When people live this way, they reveal far more about themselves than they ever realize. They reveal their ignorance of the Bible. They also prove their own lack of spiritual maturity. By this I mean their lack of love for the truth. They also show their lack of love for the brethren and their own determination to have their ways at the expense of others. Thus, there is a general repudiation of the "Golden Rule"—doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. They just do not conduct themselves as Christians.

### **Does the Bible Address Personal Differences?**

Of course, problems between people may or may not be over personal preferences (opinions, likes, or dislikes), but if such were the case, the Bible still addresses how brethren are to deal with these differences and not sin. Listen to Paul as he wrote to the Romans: "*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another*" (Rom. 12:10). To the Philippians, Paul wrote, "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves*" (Phi. 2:3). Later he called the names of two women who were at odds with one another and begged them to be of the same mind (4:2).

You will find that those who are quick to relegate problems existing between other persons as “personality differences” rarely think about applying the previous verses to themselves. However, before they classify other’s problems as “personality clashes” they should question how “kindly affectioned” they are toward their own brethren when they seek to make certain problems between others matters of differences in personality when such is not the case. If they think they have applied them, then they have a strange way of practicing “esteeming others better than themselves.” I have yet to see such characters think that any one is better than they are. If with the mouth they say they are, then let them bring their actions into harmony with their words. Jesus said, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Mat. 7:18-20).

### **Was Paul’s Withstanding of Peter to the Face a “Clash of Personalities”?**

Paul withstood Peter to the face because of Peter’s sin (Gal. 2:11). This was not a “personality clash.” In facing Peter with his sins, Paul did not violate what he wrote to the Romans and Philippians in the previous passages. It was a matter of sinful conduct on the part of Peter that caused the problem (Gal. 2:13-14). Paul had a scriptural obligation to do his part in correcting the matter (2:5-6). I can almost hear someone of that day saying that Paul and Peter’s differences were only a matter of “personality conflicts.” I say that because human nature has not changed. Thus, I know that in all probability such could have been said by certain

prejudicial brethren with sinful motives, especially those Jews who had it in for Paul in the first place.

Notice that Paul had no problem coming to Peter’s face with his charges and the associated rebuke. How is it that persons can perceive of themselves as faithful to the cause of Christ and engage in backbiting and tale bearing is beyond me? Why do they not follow Paul’s conduct in handling such matters? Did he not teach us to follow him as he followed Christ (2 The. 3:7)? Have they seared their consciences to the point where they can practice sin and not have them pricked? Too often, I fear that the answer is yes.

### **Mote Pickers, but Not Beam Pullers**

“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). It has been my sad experience that those who have the tendency to relegate other people’s problems to “personality differences” very rarely are willing to say that their problems with others are because of “personality clashes.” The problems they have with preachers, elders, or church members in general are never “personality clashes.” No, indeed, their problems with others always involve sin in the other person’s life. The one who dares to suggest that their problems with others are simply “personality clashes” will find himself in hot water immediately. Yea, verily, what they are quick to assign to others, they very seldom if ever apply to themselves. By their duplicity, such characters shed much light on their motives and reasons for their words about and actions regarding others.

25403 Lancewood; Spring, TX 77373

## **Books-On-CD**

The 1988-2005, 2007-2008 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2007, and the weekly bulletin *Beacon* 1974-2007, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$80 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.75 (total is \$81.75) in which you receive all the lectureship books (\$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. If you would like only the 2008 book, it can be purchased for \$6.75 which includes postage. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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4850 Sauflay Field Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526**



# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*



Vol. XXXVI

September 2008

Number 09

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)

## An Open Letter to Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School Of Preaching Board

*Terry M. Hightower*  
August 25, 2008

Beloved Jackie and Board of the Florida School of Preaching:

I pray that this Open Letter will be received with the recognition of my love for you and the school not as some hostile critic, but as one who has been privileged to teach for eight years part-time and two wonderful years (84-86) full-time at Florida School Of Preaching (hereafter FSOP), as one who has encouraged many persons over the years to contribute financially to this much-loved and valuable institution begun so many years ago by brother B. C. Carr, and as one who has even fairly recently encouraged a young man to move from Texas to central Florida to attend classes with you. Surely through your request that I write chapters for and return to speak at numerous FSOP lectureships you have implied and recognized my high regard for you and the school you oversee. Thus, you know that my attitude toward you is that of Paul's when he wrote to the Galatian brethren: "So then am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).

First, I have three questions to ask you concerning the doctrinal views you hold and/or teach:

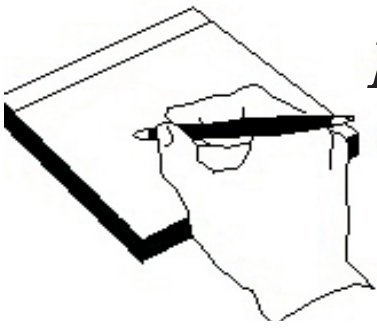
1. T or F: We at the Florida School of Preaching hold and support the Scripturalness of "Elder Reevaluation and Reaffirmation" as taught and practiced by Dave Miller, Director of Apologetics Press (Montgomery AL), and the Brown Trail eldership (Hurst TX). (These are not *trick* questions at all—my answer would have been during my teaching years with you

and still is: "False"!)

Ought we to retract our teaching (as in the Jule Miller filmstrips I used all over central Florida!) that in regard to ancient apostasy, "The first major change was made in the manner in which the local churches were governed.... The change was gradual but by 150 A.D. history shows a definite change from God's original pattern of church government. However, a few Christians continued faithful to God and His Word" (Visualized Bible Study Series, Filmstrip 5, Slide 41). Yea, verily—it is happening again by means of this eldership reevaluation and reaffirmation apostasy! Your publication in 2001 of the supplementary chapter by Dub McClish (which included a requested section on eldership reaffirmation and which detailed Brown Trail's actions) further affirms that you at one time upheld the falsity of this heresy.

2. T or F: We at the Florida School of Preaching hold and support the Scripturalness of "mental intent" in regard to commitment in marriage with its subsequent implications for divorce and remarriage as taught and practiced by Dave Miller, Director of Apologetics Press (Montgomery AL), and the Brown Trail eldership (Hurst TX). (My answer would have been during my teaching years with you and still is: "False"!)
3. T or F: Along with Dave Miller, Director of

*Continued on Page 3*



# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Elderships

I, along with several others, have been in an e-mail exchange with Richard Powell (a deacon at the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, TX). There is far too much material than could possibly be dealt with in this publication (several hundred e-mails). I did want to discuss one aspect regarding the view of the eldership which brother Powell exemplified. To do this, I simply wish to discuss the eldership in some general ways and then concentrate on the work of elders.

God has ordained that a plurality of men who each meet the qualifications established by the Holy Spirit serve in the work of the elders. Paul sets forth those qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. A great deal can be learned about these men by looking at the three major terms which the Bible uses to describe them—elders or presbyters, pastors or shepherds, and overseers or bishops. *Elder* (or presbyter) is from a Greek word meaning older. This concerns his age and maturity. For one to meet the qualifications, he must not be a young man but one who is older and has the wisdom and maturity to meet the demands of the work. *Pastor* (or shepherd) deals more with how they do their work. They tend their flock as a shepherd would his sheep. *Bishop* (or overseer) is the work they are to do. They have the oversight of the congregation.

Let us center our attention on the last of these, the oversight they are to perform. Paul, in speaking to the elders of Ephesus, said, “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 those qualifications, one is that he must rule his own house well, then Paul makes the parenthetical

statement: “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 3:5). Overseer has the meaning “one who has the responsibility of safeguarding or seeing to it that something is done in the correct way, guardian...frequently refers to one who has a definite function or fixed office of guardianship and related activity within a group” (BDAG 379). The elders have the obligation to make sure the congregation is doing what God has established.

In the discussion with brother Powell, his view of the eldership extended to the idea that they decide doctrine. In dealing with the subject of unity and how we can have that unity, Richard asked, “show the solution to the problem of division in the church?” He went on to write, “We have a problem in the church with division... develop a statement of problem that could help solve this problem...what I mean is that since we know the church is divided, what is God’s answer to the problem?” The entirety of my response was “1 Cor. 1:10.” Richard’s response to this (given in its entirety and exactly as he sent it):

So, WHAT group of FALLIBLE men has GOD CHOSEN to make sure THEY issue a DIRECTIVE at the UNIVERSAL CHURCH so we can do this? Do I start getting a glimpse of a HIERARCHY in the church? I believe ELDERS are the HIGHEST authority. Michael, the ANTIS would quote the same verse. How do you know we all should not listen to THEM and THEN we would all have unity. OR I guess we could INFORM ELDERSHIPS not to study and pray feed the flock UNTIL they CHECK with those INVOLVED with CFTF BEFORE they attempt to FEED the flock so they would knowFOR CERTAIN what they should BELIEVE. IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT, SO WE COULD ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING? Yours in Christ, Richard

It becomes apparent that brother Powell has several problems. In one of my last e-mails on this subject, I wrote:

Your problem is that you are agnostic. You either do not believe there is an objective truth or you do not believe that man is able to know that truth. Thus, you have to ultimately have elders determine doctrine (they are the ultimate authority in the church, so you said). Even your statements here show you do not believe the truth can be known concerning the anti’s and their error. Thus, you wrongly think that there is so [sic] “group of men” (who you never stated who they were; remember the questions I asked you that you never answered) trying to run the church somehow. The fact is, those “group of men” that you imagine are trying to run the church are simply call-

ing men back to the Bible and that objective truth. When one leaves that objective truth, they should be given time to repent, and if they fail to repent, then mark and avoid them (that is what we are commanded to do and also answers the majority of your questions because it is what God does and we simply follow His actions and commands in this regard).

Brother Powell recognizes the authority of elders and their right to oversee the congregation and their responsibility to “Feed the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet. 5:2). However, he takes their responsibility too far. While elders have the obligation to oversee the local congregation and feed the flock, just how far does that oversight extend?

First, they do not have oversight in deciding or establishing doctrine. Christ is the head of the church. Paul wrote, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). As the head of the church, Christ is the one who sets forth His Law. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd with elders serving as under-shepherds: “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:4). Sadly, this is where brother Powell implied their authority existed. He presented, with his anti argument, when there are contradictory doctrines being taught (the anti doctrine as opposed to the truth), then the elders determine what is right for their own congregation. The elders do not have that right. God’s Word establishes what is right for every congregation. It is our duty to make sure that we learn the truth and follow it. As I pointed out, there is an objective truth and we can know the truth. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). If I know the truth and you know the truth, then we know the same doctrine. When someone brings another doctrine (false doctrine), the elders have the obligation to stop the false teacher’s mouth. However, they do not have the right (nor does anyone else) to determine truth.

If they do not have oversight in doctrine, then where is their realm of oversight? God sets doctrine; the elders expedite what God established. They make the decisions regarding their flock as to how best to carry out what God has authorized. God has authorized the taking care of orphans (in spite of what the antis say). The providing of a home (orphan’s home) is one way to care for orphans. Which home is the congregation going to support financially to do what God authorized. The elders are going to oversee, make the decisions, relating to the carrying

out of what God authorized. God has authorized us to preach the Gospel to every creature. In the local situation there are many avenues whereby a congregation can fulfill this command of God. They could choose to have newspaper articles, radio, television, knock doors, along with other choices, or a combination of ways. It is the elders in overseeing the congregation who makes decisions as to how they are going to carry out God’s commands. However, they do not have the right to decide what God commanded—that is God’s prerogative and our duty to preach, support, and defend it. Every Christians also has the obligation to mark those who transgress the Truth and avoid them (that would be whether it is an individual, group of individuals, or a congregation).

MH

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*Continued from Page 1*

Apologetics Press (Montgomery AL), we at the Florida School of Preaching hold and support the Scripturalness of fellowshipping false teachers (like Mac Deaver of Denton, TX) who teach the **direct operation** of the Spirit and/or the **present-day baptism of the Spirit**. (My answer would have been during my teaching years with you and still is: “False”!)

Second, I would like to ask what possible reason could you have in refusing to answer such simple, straightforward Bible questions? Jackie, you, Gene Burgett, and Brian Kenyon all know that I, and others formerly connected with the school (e.g. Dave Watson and Gene Hill) have tried to find out answers to such questions as these—all to no avail! In times past, you three men along with others whom I know on the Board, could and would have readily answered sincere questions like these and further contributed to the doctrinal reliability we have known from you in the past. I am confident that if B. C. Carr were still alive, he would answer them and answer them just as I did! Why won’t you? Has the school changed? Have you changed? If so, then why?

Third, if your answers are also identical with mine, then why have you continued to support men like Tom Holland, Earl Edwards, and Jody Apple—all of whom signed the infamous and unqualified Apologetics Press “Statement of Support” issued in June 2005? The statement read:

We, the undersigned, wish to announce that we have complete confidence that Apologetics Press is on a firm footing that will insure its continued work of excellence.



We commend AP to the brotherhood and recommend that it continue to be the recipient of financial and moral support.

My brethren, are these men so “high and mighty” in influence that you feel justified in ignoring 2 John 9-11, and their clear violation of it? Jackie, have Dave Miller, AP, and their supporters/defenders become the *sacred cows*, about which you so rightly and forcefully wrote in *Do You Understand Fellowship?* (533-39)? By the way, another of your speakers, Freddie Clayton, is a defender of the para-church organization “Church of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, Inc.” headquartered in Nashville—which is parallel to the missionary society in its basic structure. Has FSOP changed its position on such things as the American Christian Missionary Society? When I taught Restoration History there, I assure you that I opposed such unauthorized institutions! Do we simply ignore this error since Florida has lots of hurricanes?

Fourth, Jackie, I wrote to you, Brian, and Gene, back on September 1, 2006, and said in part:

Is brother Dave [Miller] unlike the rest of us mortals and “above the fray”?...To go back over my FSOP lecture on when one should or should not speak at various opportunities is to see that one need not be “radical” in asking the AP letter-signers to explain how they can uphold AP while allegedly not upholding Dave Miller and his errors at the same time. In my view, if these folks do not repent of such support, then they are not worthy of use any more. Dave will not even respond to my carefully written plea to him to repent of his false doctrines, and it has been many months since I wrote to him! To others who have managed to get him on the phone, he is adamant about his gross errors on the eldership, saying he would “do it all over again.”

I wrote you men as friends once again on Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> and said in part:

To endorse Apologetics Press is to endorse Dave [Miller] just as much as endorsing Gospel Enterprises is to endorse Olan Hicks! Who can imagine that dozens of formerly sound brethren would think they could endorse Gospel Enterprises in Searcy AR WITHOUT any repercussions from the rest of us! Would we be wrong to call for such brethren to repent of so doing? My beloved brethren, have we reached the point that some conservative brothers have “fellowship tenureship” or “disfellowship immunity” because of Seniority? I dearly love these brothers, but that is exactly why I must show them their error. Some of us have “paid the price” in the past (cf. TB Warren) and are not going to place the “WHO” above God’s “WHAT” this close to eternity now. Gal. 4:16.

Jackie, through the years of our friendship you have

quite affectionately referred to me as “Boy” or “The Boy,” but do you realize that I am now 59 years old? We are both way too close to eternity to falter now in maintaining our love for and consistency with the Truth. I love you, Gene, Brian, and every member of the Board—enough to ask you to explain your actions. Will you? (If not, will you Board members please have the courage and honesty to explain what my old friends Jackie, Gene, and Brian have ignored? If not, then why not? You surely know I am not an enemy of the School.)

Fifth, I respectfully ask the Board to consider the following: I was truly shocked, dismayed, and disheartened to discover recently that my friend of over 36 years—brother Jackie—spoke alongside Dave Miller in 2007 at Ryan Roark’s Cold Harbor Road Lectureship in Mechanicsville VA (see [www.cold-harbor-road.org/Lect.htm](http://www.cold-harbor-road.org/Lect.htm)). Ironically, Dave spoke on a topic on which he truly ought to be an expert: “Character Study: The Scoffer” (he has scoffed at any and all who—including myself—would attempt to correct his false doctrines and practices on several subjects). I am truly saddened that Jackie and his son David (whom I have known most of his life) are scheduled to speak alongside Dave Miller during the coming November 6-9, Cold Harbor Lecture series titled “Sing.” Dave is to address the topic: “Are Mechanical Instruments of Music A Non-Issue?” Given brother Miller’s failure regarding the eldership, marriage intent, and Deaverism (see above), I would truly be afraid to rely on him to determine an “issue” from a “non-issue”!

What is next brethren? Will you have brother Miller come down to Lakeland to promote his heresies? If Apologetics Press publishes his views on the 3 subjects listed above, will you promote such by stocking them in the FSOP book room? What has happened to the Jackie, Gene, Brian, and Board of yesteryear? Why have you 3 men refused once again to give answer concerning the hope that is within you when I wrote you recently about this? I know from your own personal criticisms in the past of other schools, that you Gene, and you Brian, recognize you are accountable to the **Lord** in these matters and **not** just to Jackie and the Board’s attempted containment policies (have you men been ordered not to respond to our questions in order to keep your jobs?). You know that a “You’ll-have-to-ask-the-FSOP-Board-about-that” or a “You’ll-have-to-ask-Jackie-about-that” *referral* is quite insufficient as there is a Higher Standard (1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:15)! At least two or three instructors conscientiously resigned at Brown Trail when they could not get that situation resolved according to the Scriptures! Has

that type of fortitude now vanished from FSOP?

Sixth, although such is not decisive biblically, in view of brother Carr's handwritten April 23, 1999 letter (still available!) regarding Dave Miller's involvement in a situation which occurred in north Georgia that year, you surely would want to honor his memory and reputation for soundness in at least acknowledging his studied opinion in this matter. Brother Miller, though forewarned weeks in advance and supplied with ample documentation by faithful brethren, nevertheless bade Godspeed to the apostate Calhoun church by holding a meeting for them in October 1999. After reading the same exact information, brother Carr advised a concerned Calhoun member to leave this church and to identify with the group who left (i.e., the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun).

Seventh, Jackie, I know that not too long ago you knew the meaning of *fellowship* and you recognized the implications of the Biblical doctrine of fellowship as it relates to speaking on lectureships with false teachers. At almost the last minute, you, along with the FSOP Board, pulled Gene Burgett off the Schertz, TX program because of their preacher, Stan Crowley. As you well know, you pulled him off because at the time you knew (many others did not realize it at that time) bro. Crowley teaches

(among an assortment of strange doctrines) marriage, divorce, and remarriage error regarding the right of remarriage by the innocent party unjustly put away (i.e., by civil law) whose former mate then commits adultery (which was incidentally, my entrusted topic for your lectureship in 1996). As you also know, Stan Crowley was also the primary cause of Tim Kidwell's demise as preacher for the Buda/Kyle (TX) congregation. Since we know that Dave Miller teaches marriage, divorce, and remarriage error, too, then why is it that you can fellowship him but not Stan Crowley? "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (Rom. 2:21). How can this possibly *mesh* with the Jackie I once knew?

Beloved Jackie and FSOP Board, you surely know that I love you all and wish you nothing but good before our Lord Jesus Christ. I long for and pray earnestly for the day when you will again stand with brother Carr, myself, and where **every one of you** at one time stood—together and united in the truth. If anyone needs the documented proof of these matters that has been set forth over the past three years, we can provide such just for the asking.

In the love of Christ,

P.O. Box 244; Vega TX 79092; 806.267.0355

## Is Hand Clapping at Baptisms and/or in Worship Scriptural?

*Danny Douglas*

First of all, hand clapping is performed to applaud a performance or a performer. This is totally out of character as to the nature of true worship, and is equally out of character in relation to the baptizing of a soul into Jesus Christ. We are to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). True worship is directed to God, and is focused on praising and offering homage to Him, and not man. For example, the man who is leading the prayer is going before the throne of God in behalf of the entire congregation. In prayer, there is to be reverence and adoration for God and Christ (cf. Eph. 5:20). Jesus taught man to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.... For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (cf. Mat. 6:9, 13). Therefore, in prayer, as in any other act of worship, the Christian's homage is to be directed toward God in heaven. Far from a performance, when Christians assemble for worship, they are to do so for the purpose of pleasing and worshipping God, and not entertainment or putting on

some kind of performance. Another example would be in regard to preaching, which is very much a part of the worship of the New Testament church (cf. Acts 2:42; 20:7). The preacher is not a performer on a stage to be applauded for putting on a good performance, but he is to be God's man proclaiming the message of heaven to men. So far from receiving praise and applause, his purpose is to exalt Jesus Christ and to declare the saving message of the Gospel of Christ (cf. Rom. 1:16). In fact, he is under a Divine charge before God and Christ to "preach the word" (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1-2). Therefore, he is not to preach himself or any other man, or any doctrine of men, but only Christ and His Word, as Paul said: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

This also applies to the singing. The song leader is not a performer, nor is he a choir director with the congregation as his choir. He is simply one who has been selected to lead the congregation in singing praises to God, and in

teaching and admonishing one another. Neither his ability to sing nor that of the congregation is to be the focal point, but the worship of the true and living God in song (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In regard to Christ, Hebrews 13:15 states: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name."

These same principles are also applicable to taking the Lord's Supper, and to those who pray or serve during the communion of Christ. We are to remember Christ and the sacrifice of His body and blood and to examine ourselves (cf. Mat. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-25). If one partakes thereof in an unworthy manner, then he: "eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:29b).

In like manner, the contribution or offering is also an act of worship unto God. Many seem not to realize this in that they do not give as they have prospered (cf. 1 Cor. 16:2). Yet, we do not clap for those who give the most or for those passing the plate. We do honor God though when we give sincerely, sacrificially, and cheerfully unto Him and to His blood-bought church (cf. Acts 20:28; 2 Cor. 9:6). "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

It is certainly in order to commend those who have led our Worship unto God in a fine way, but this is a far cry from hand clapping. The Bible instructs us to exhort and edify one another (cf. Heb. 3:13; 1 The. 5:11). God has given us this way to commend a fellow Christian or a new soul in Christ who has just been baptized, but not by hand clapping or applauding!

When a soul is baptized into Jesus Christ, it is indeed a glorious and joyful occasion (cf. Acts 8:32-39; 16:25-34; Luke 15). No doubt, the emotions overflow as

a soul is saved and added to the church. A new brother or sister in Christ has been born again into the house of God (cf. John 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 2:38-47). It is a time when we want to express our love and appreciation to the new convert. We can inform him that we will be praying for him, and that we are there for him. We can drop him a line through the mail or make an effort to talk with him. As well, we want to thank God for salvation in Christ because of His wonderful love and grace. All this being said, God has given us a way to praise and thank Him for all that He has done for us. We do this through the acts of worship authorized by the New Testament. We have the avenue of prayer and singing, whereby we may praise God and offer thanksgiving unto Him (cf. Heb. 13:15; Acts 4:24-30; 16:25; Phi. 4:6; Col. 3:15; 4:2; 1 The. 5:18). At a baptism, a brother may present a message from God's Word to exalt Him and His only begotten Son for salvation and for all the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (cf. Eph. 1:3, 7; 2:13; 3:8; 2 Tim. 2:10; 3:15).

Yet, there is never a place in worship unto God or during a baptism, when a soul is cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, for applauding. These should never be the occasion for entertainment or applause. All should be done in a way that glorifies God and which is according to His Word. There is no New Testament example, direct statement, or implication, for hand clapping to be practiced during worship or at baptisms. We must "*do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus" or by His authority in order to please Him (cf. Mat. 28:18; Col. 3:17). The silence of the Scriptures demands that we leave off hand clapping on Sacred occasions or any other actions unauthorized by the Word of God (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11; Rev. 22:18-19). Let us do all things in a way pleasing unto God as His Word directs (cf. John 8:29; 14:15)!

*517 Gaylord St.; Dresden TN 38225-1411*

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# The Good Confession

Jess Whitlock

In 1 Timothy 6:12 the Record reads: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." The Greek word rendered *confess*, is found 23 times in the New Testament. Two times it is rendered with the English word *profess*. The ASV (1901) in 1 Timothy 6:12 reads: "didst **confess** the good **confession**."

One time the word is translated *profess* in the Authorized Version is Titus 1:16: "They **profess** that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." What does it mean to profess to know God? It is a wonderful thing to know God and to know that we know Him. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Again, 1 John 2:3 states: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." We know Him if we keep His commands. If one professes to know God, and does not keep God's commands, then that individual does not really know God!

The other time we find *profess* in the King James Version is Matthew 7:23: "And then will I **profess** unto them,

I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." These sad, sorrowful, sullen words are spoken to those who would not confess Christ as Lord in full obedience to His will. Romans 10:10 teaches: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." One must believe (Mark 16:16), one must repent (2 Pet. 3:9), one must confess Christ (Acts 8:7), one must be baptized into Christ for (unto) the remission of sin (Acts 2:38), and one must live faithful until the end of life's journey (1 Cor. 15:58). Do you not get it? If one fails to confess faith in Christ as God's Son, or if one fails to continue to "walk in the light as He is in the light," that one has ceased to advance toward eternal salvation!

We must do more than merely profess to know God? Remember, what you go after here will determine where you go in the hereafter. Let us not forget Christ's own admonition: "Whosoever therefore shall **confess** me before men, him will I **confess** also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 10:32-33). Let us never be ashamed nor afraid to teach the necessity and loveliness of the **good confession**.

270 W. Brooks St.; Evant, TX 76525

## Books-On-CD

The 1988-2005, 2007-2008 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2007, and the weekly bulletin *Beacon* 1974-2007, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$80 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.75 (total is \$81.75) in which you receive all the lectureship books (\$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. If you would like only the 2008 book, it can be purchased for \$6.75 which includes postage. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*

Vol. XXXVI

October 2008

Number 10

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



## *Voices from The Past*

This article appeared in *Gospel Advocate* Jan. 2, 1936

## Onward, Christian Soldiers

*C. D. Plum*

Christian soldiers are Christ's soldiers. Christ's soldiers compose Christ's army. Christ's army is like other armies in a certain sense: it has a banner, a captain, and a camping place.

I did not say, neither do I mean, that Christ's soldiers have a literal flag or banner. But in a figurative sense, a spiritual sense, Christ's army has a banner. The banner of which I speak is spoken of in different ways. Sometimes it is called the "banner of Prince Immanuel," and sometimes it is called the "blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ." I do not mean that the Bible thus speaks in so many words concerning this banner, but Christians often so speak. The prophet said: "Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain" (Isa. 13: 2). Certainly, to Christians, the banner of Christ should mean more than any other to them. It should be exalted in our minds high above all other banners.

But the Christian army has a Captain. The Scriptures so speak in positive words: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). That Jesus is here referred to as the "captain" there can be no doubt. Evidence that He is may be gleaned by a comparison of the above Scripture with Heb. 5:8-9. And where, may I ask, could be found a better captain than the Christ? Who is a better leader than He?

Christian soldiers have a camping place. Do you ask where it is? The Christian soldiers' camping place is the very place where they live. But why call our dwelling place a camping place? Simply because our dwelling

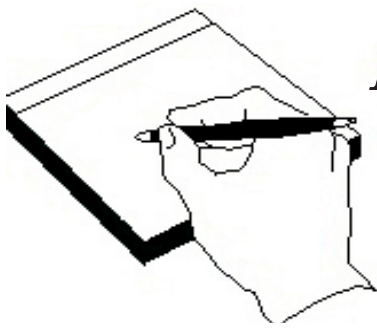
place on earth is only a temporary abode. The Scripture bears out this assertion. It declares: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14). As soldiers fighting for any nation on the field of battle abide in tents, a temporary affair, easy to leave, even so the houses of Christians are only temporary affairs, in a temporary world. We sometimes carelessly talk about making our permanent home in a certain house, in a certain place. But, do not forget, "here have we no continuing city." Such is impossible.

### **Duties of Christian Soldiers**

What are the various duties of a Christian soldier? To fully answer this question is impossible in such a small space. However, we can tell some of the important duties of a Christian soldier, and that we hope to do.

1. All will doubtless admit that an important duty of a Christian soldier is to "go forward." By way of an illustration may we say that God always wanted His soldiers to move forward. When Israel, after having escaped from Egypt, was pursued by Pharaoh's host and was surrounded on one side by the Red Sea and on the other side by Pharaoh's army, Moses said to fearing Israel: "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exo. 14:14). This seemed in a measure to disgust the Lord, so He said unto Moses: "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that **they go forward**" (Exo. 14:15). So, after all, victory is not totally up to God; God's people must move forward. The apostle says to the Hebrew brethren: "Let

*Continued on Page 3*



# Notes From The Editor

Michael  
Hatcher

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Richard's Syllogism

In the September issue, I wrote about Richard Powell, a deacon of the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, Texas, and the hundreds of email exchanges between brother Powell and several preaching brethren. In our exchanges, brother Powell set forth a syllogism he thought proved his position that it was wrong to mark and withdraw from a congregation.

He had written under auspices of getting information concerning Dave Miller, however as the discussion wore on we found he was angry at David Brown and anyone connected with *Contending for the Faith* claiming they/we are a group of men who are *kicking people out of the church*. He continued to rail against men he perceived would mark and withdraw from a congregation. For example notice how he states: "Have you shown me that any man or group of men have been given the authority to police the church at large?" as if marking and withdrawing from a congregation is a group of men policing the church at large. However, when asked specifically (1) who had argued for such a group of men, (2) where they were located, (3) who comprised this group, and (4) the names of the individuals who comprised this group; Richard repeatedly refused to answer. All he would say is that he would not fall into that trap, yet continued to argue for such a group of men even though I denied (and still do) such a group of men existed. This lays enough background for introducing his syllogism.

He argued those who withdraw fellowship from a congregation are causing disunity. (He failed to realize those who teach false doctrine are the ones causing division, not the ones who expose the false teachers. ) To attempt to prove it is wrong to withdraw fellowship from a congregation, Richard offered this syllogism:

Major premise: Only God knows when a candlestick is removed.

Minor premise: Man is not God.

Conclusion: Man cannot know when a candlestick is removed.

When one deals with Aristotelian syllogistic logic, there are two aspects to the syllogism that must be determined. First, there is the actual form of the syllogism (whether the syllogism is valid). The second aspect is whether or not the premises are true (referred to as sound). If a proposition is valid and is sound, then the conclusion **must** follow. Regarding Richard's syllogism, it is in a valid form. If the syllogism was sound the conclusion must follow. However, it is **not** sound. The minor premise that man is not God is obviously true. However the major premise is simply false.

The established principle that which proves too much proves nothing is certainly applicable here. Individual Christians are told to let their light shine (Mat. 5:16; Eph. 5:8; Phi. 2:15; et al.). Yet, if a Christian sins, the church is to withdraw fellowship from that Christian (1 Cor. 5; 2 The. 3:6, 14; et al.). According to the previous syllogism, only God would know when their candlestick (light) is removed, therefore man cannot withdraw fellowship from any wayward Christian.

Additionally, given Richard's syllogism an individual Christian cannot really know if God ever removes his light (candlestick). Given this syllogism, I could never determine if I have fellowship with God or if I am out of fellowship with God. If man cannot determine if he departs from God's fellowship (which is what Richard's syllogism implies), then how can God be just in punishing one (or a group of people) who falls out of fellowship with Him? Richard's syllogism eventually impugns the justice of God.

Does God reveal Himself to man, and can man know the mind of God? Notice what Paul writes: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:12-13). Paul shows the apostles knew the things (the mind of God) that God gave them through the Spirit. The apostles spoke what the Spirit revealed to them (which was "the deep things of God"—2:10). Now notice we can know those "deep things of God": "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in



few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:3-5). When we read the words written down by the "holy apostles and prophets" as the Spirit guided them, then we have the same understanding they possessed.

God does reveal to man (through the Spirit) who is in fellowship with Him and who is not in fellowship with Him. Consider what the Spirit through John says, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7). God makes it clear; one cannot have fellowship with God and walk in darkness (which represents sin). Equally clear is the fact that one who is walking in the light (representing righteousness) is in fellowship with God. If a person or group of people stop walking in the light, God removes their candlestick (light).

John records Jesus' statement to the apostles concerning who has fellowship with the Father and Son in John 15. Jesus' teaching is the one who abides in Him as He is the vine and His followers are the branches. The one who abides in Christ will bring forth fruit (Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:5-8). This, however, does not tell us how we abide in Christ. Jesus does answer how we abide in Him. First, He equates abiding in Him and His words abiding in us: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). He then adds, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (15:9-10). Then He adds, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (15:14). The emphasis by Jesus to remain in fellowship with the Father and Him is obedience to the commands of God. Therefore, we know that when one (or a group of people—a congregation) stops obeying God's Word, then they no longer have fellowship with Him and "he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (15:6). How could anyone believe if God casts forth one from Him, and we continue to fellowship the one cast forth that we would be

abiding in Christ? Instead, we must recognize what God has done in casting them from Him (withdrawing His fellowship or removing their candlestick) and likewise withdraw our fellowship.

The passage from which brother Powell took his argument was Revelation 2:1-7 and especially verse 6. He argued that no one knows when or even if God ever removed the Ephesians candlestick. Are we left in the dark about God removing their candlestick? The answer is no. We are simply introduced to another aspect of God's nature; God does not want anyone to be lost, therefore He gives man time to repent (2 Pet. 3:9). With the Ephesians, we are not informed if they repented or did not repent. However, we **know** (because we know God's Word is true) if they did not repent, God removed their candlestick. When did He remove it? When they failed to repent. If the Ephesians repented, then we **know** God did not remove their candlestick.

When brethren (whether it be an individual Christian or a congregation) do not continue to abide in Christ's Words, then God removes their candlestick—He no longer fellowships them. When God removes their light, then we must recognize what God has done, and we must withdraw our fellowship. What we are seeing so many times today is there are brethren who want to be known as sound yet will not withdraw their fellowship from those who God has removed their candlestick (such as those who continue to fellowship Dave Miller). Those who continue to fellowship those whom God has removed their candlestick, are themselves no longer in fellowship with God because they are living contrary to His Word. Brethren, we must (to be faithful to God) respect God's fellowship laws.

*Continued from Page 1*

us **go on**" (Heb. 6:1.) Paul said of himself as a soldier: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phi. 3:14). Most assuredly "onward" is the command. Are you moving forward?

2. Another duty of Christian soldiers is to "enlist others." Again we use a lesson from the Old Testament to illustrate this point. Moses was making an earnest request to enlist Hobab, his father-in-law, to join Israel in their triumphant march to Canaan land. He said to him: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel" (Num. 10:29). Have you ever invited sinners to obey the Lord? Have you lived so well and worked so faithfully

that lost souls watching you have felt constrained to serve the same Christ you are serving? Have you ever entered the highways and invited people to enlist in the Lord's army (Mat. 22:9)? Have you ever read the terms of enlistment to sinners from the Captain's book? Have you ever told people who have believed and repented that they should confess Christ and be baptized for the remission of sins? Have you ever told them that three thousand enlisted the first day in this way (Acts 2: 38-41)? If you have not, you are not doing your duty.

3. Obedience to God or Christ is another duty of a Christian soldier. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him (Heb. 5: 8-9). When the apostles, the soldiers of Christ, in the long ago were told to do that which was wrong, they said: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Is it not just as much our duty to obey God as it was theirs? Of course when we are obeying God we are also obeying Christ.

4. Christian soldiers must "endure hardships." Paul exhorted Timothy in the following way: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). I have often heard soldiers say that they have slept on the bare ground with a rock for a pillow, and that in the morning their cover was a blanket of snow. They almost famished for food and water. Many people will do this to save their country, but how many will endure these things to save their souls?

5. Christian soldiers must "be alert." Truly, truly, we must watch and pray. The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38). Never forget, dear brother soldier, that the King's business demands haste (1 Sam.

21:8).

6. One of the outstanding duties of Christian soldiers is to be "strong and courageous." When God selected Joshua as a leader after the death of Moses, He told him that He would be with him, even as He was with Moses. He, moreover, told him to be "strong and very courageous," and turn neither to the right nor to the left (Jos. 1:6-8). Even as Joshua was to go straight, without wavering, so must we. Are we not told to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10)?

7. Then, too, Christian soldiers should not so live and so fight as to be a "hindrance." When soldiers disobey God, they become stained with sin, and thus the progress of the army is hindered and many times entirely defeated. The sin of one soldier may affect others even as it did in the case of Achan. Achan "perished not alone in his iniquity" (Jos. 22:20). Until Achan's sin was found out and punished, God's army suffered defeat. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Each soldier has an influence either for good or evil, depending upon his deeds. A bad life gives a bad influence, and thereby hinders. David's outlandish sin was forgiven when he sought mercy, but the influence of that sin upon others for evil was still present. Because of his evil deed he gave "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12:12-14).

Let us as Christian soldiers don the complete Christian armor (Eph. 6:11), lead a pure life (1 Tim. 5:22), fight a clean fight (1 Tim. 6:12-13), and win the victor's crown (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

*Deceased*

## Doctrinally Sound Men Do Not Endorse False Doctrines!

*Jess Whitlock*

Doctrinally sound men do not endorse false doctrines!... Question One: Do *doctrinally sound* elders, preachers, and teachers in schools of preaching endorse and help in the spread of *false doctrines*? NO! (1 Tim. 4:1-6, 16; Titus 1: 9-13; Rom. 16:17; Eph. 5:11). It is wrong, sinful for anyone, even if he disagrees with a false teacher and the false teachers' doctrines to give encouragement to the false teacher and, in any way, aid him in spreading his false doctrine. "*For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*" (2 John 11)..... Doctrinally sound men do not endorse and help to spread false doctrines. ("Sunset School of Preaching and Terry Rush." *Seek the Old Paths* 9.5 (May 1998): 1, 4-5).

October 12-16, 2008, the Southside Church of Christ will host their annual lectures in Lubbock, Texas. Please re-read the above statement and ask whether or not you agree with that sentiment? Among the 35 speakers scheduled to appear in Lubbock are listed: Ronnie Hayes, James Meadows, Paul Sain, Robert Taylor, and Allen Webster. These are among the 60 names that have signed this statement: "We, the undersigned, wish to announce that we have complete confidence that Apologetics Press is on a firm footing that will insure its continued work of excellence. We commend AP to the brotherhood and recommend that it continue to be the recipient of finan-

cial and moral support.” Do you know who the director of Apologetics Press happens to be? Dave Miller, known false teacher who still refuses to repent of his false doctrines. Compare this with what John writes: “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). “Doctrinally sound men do not endorse false doctrines”!

Tommy Hicks (director), and Ken Ratcliff (speaker), will both be taking part in these lectures. Both of these men served the Original Gospel Journal as board members. They helped in the ousting of brethren Dub McClish and Dave Watson. Ken Ratcliff serves as an elder and associate minister to a known false teacher—Stan Crowley. Crowley’s strange doctrine of divorce and remarriage has been widely exposed. Ken Ratcliff continues to support him as elder and as his associate. “Doctrinally sound men do not endorse false doctrines”! Instead, elders are to be “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit. 1:9-13).

Over a dozen speakers for this lectureship are associated with or in support of Memphis School of Preaching. MSOP is on record as being in full support of Dave Miller and his false doctrines. Those who have dared to mark and expose his false doctrines have been called “vile” by Keith Mosher (instructor at MSOP). Several of the

slated speakers give their support and allegiance to Gospel Broadcasting Network (GBN), which also endorses Dave Miller. “Doctrinally sound men do not endorse false doctrines”! (Rom. 16:17-18).

Eddie Rodriquez is a name well-known. I have had personal dealings with his sons. Many have had dealings with the “Rodriquez clan” (i.e., the lectures in Spring, Texas, this past February). This group advocates that if you sing a song of praise to Jesus Christ, and address Him in first person, then the song is a prayer and cannot be sung. Some lists I have seen eliminate one-hundred or more songs. “Doctrinally sound men do not endorse false doctrines”! (Eph. 5:11).

Allen Webster, of “Polishing the Pulpit” fame, frequently uses Dave Miller on those programs. He is also a big supporter of AP and GBN. He also endorses MSOP. “Doctrinally sound men do not endorse false doctrines”! (1 Tim. 4:16).

Therefore, 35 of the 35 speakers scheduled to speak at Lubbock this October, are supporters of Dave Miller and his false doctrines. Now, go back and re-read the first paragraph of this treatise. I neglected to give proper credit to the author of those true and scriptural sayings. The author was Tommy Hicks! Would that be the same Tommy Hicks that has assembled these men—supporters of Dave Miller, and his false doctrines? **Yes!** “Doctrinally sound men do not endorse and help to spread false doctrines”! (1 Tim. 4:1-6).

“It is wrong, sinful for anyone, even if he disagrees with a false teacher and the false teacher’s doctrines to give encouragement to the false teacher and, in any way, aid him in spreading his false doctrine” (Tommy Hicks).

270 West Brooks St; Evant, TX 76525

The West End congregation in Conway, Arkansas is searching for a man who is sound in all areas to work with them. They are small in number but with a desire to grow. They can only supply partial support at this time. Anyone interested can contact Denny Durigan by email (denny-d@conwaycorp.net) or phone (501-336-8121).

Be making your plans now to attend:

## 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Bellview Lectureship

### June 13-17, 2009

# Preaching from the Minor Prophets



# The Strictness of God's Law

*Roy J. Hearn*

It is significant that nothing in the Bible is emphasized more than the demand to respect and obey the commands of God. In both Old and New Testaments it is significant that when people obeyed God they were blessed, but when disobedient and incorrigible, they were punished. To the apostles, Jesus said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (Mat. 10:40). Conversely, Luke 10:16 states: "He that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."

Observe in John 16:13-15 that God gave the Word to Christ, who in turn sent the Holy Spirit, who gave it to the apostles. This is the source of all authority in religion—God to Christ to the Spirit to the apostles through whom the Word was first revealed and now recorded for the world to obey and abide by to serve God and be saved eternally. In the above quotes, our Lord simply meant that those who received the Word received the Godhead, and those who rejected the Word rejected God, Christ, and the Spirit. So it is now. When one rejects the authority of the Bible, he is rejecting the Godhead.

In view of the widespread attitude that God's Word is not binding, that it is not necessary to be so concerned about God's Word as law, it is in order that we are reminded that nobody presumptuously sets it aside without guilt. God's laws are not given according to human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-31), and God demands that His Word be respected. Things written aforetime in the Old Testament were written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), and can make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). Wherefore, note:

## **SOME APPARENTLY FOOLISH LAWS OF GOD**

### **The Passover**

Unquestionably, God could have saved Israel from Egypt without any conditions, but in preparation for their departure He ordered the placing of the blood of a lamb upon the door posts and lintels of the houses, otherwise the firstborn in every house would be destroyed if not so protected. To fail was folly. God kept His Word and at the appointed time He passed over and the death of the firstborn resulted. Present-day preachers would have rationalized that such an arrangement was foolishness and would have sought to set aside that which became law to Israel on this occasion. Read Exodus 12 and note the results.

### **The Brazen Serpent**

Israel sinned against God by rebelling and complaining

(Num. 21:4-9). Fiery serpents were sent among them. Many were bitten and vast numbers died. When Moses asked for mercy, the Lord instructed him to make a serpent of brass, place it on a pole in the midst of the camp, and those who would look upon it would live. This was highly contrary to human wisdom, but not the results. Those who looked in exercise of faith lived, others died. It was strict, but no amount of rationalization could set it aside.

### **Naaman Healed of Leprosy**

This captain of the host of the king of Assyria was a great man, but afflicted with that dreaded disease. After a series of mistakes, he finally found his way to the house of Elisha the prophet. Naaman was instructed to go wash in the Jordan seven times for healing. As with so many today, when God commands, he thought that such was unnecessary and that God's law could be set aside by substitution of prayer and miracle without doing anything himself. But God did not change His Word to satisfy the whims of Naaman. He could obey and be healed, or he could reject God's provision and rot. Read 2 Kings 5 and get the picture.

Other examples could be given, but these suffice to show that God does not order His own ways or design His laws according to human wisdom, but demands compliance, regardless of what man thinks.

## **EXAMPLES OF GOD'S STRICTNESS**

### **Cain and Abel**

Genesis 4:1-8 gives the first record of worship. God bore witness that Abel was righteous (Heb. 11:4). This testimony was based upon Abel's faithful obedience. Cain's offering was rejected. Why? Cain was a liberal. He felt it unnecessary to abide within the limits of God's law. He seemed to think because he had faith—some kind of faith—that he ought to be accepted. He was not accepted, and should serve as a warning to us today. God is not now pleased with some faith, or some kind of faith, but demands that we stay within the bounds of "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

### **Strange Fire**

Nadab and Abihu offered incense in the tabernacle service, using fire from an unauthorized source (Lev. 10:1-2). The incense burned and the odor ascended, but they were destroyed. They took undue liberty with God's law. The fire they used was not consecrated by the sacrifices upon the altar. When Jehovah tells us what to do and how to do it, that eliminates all else. No act of worship, unauthorized by

the New Testament, reaches the throne of God. "Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Pro. 30:6).

### **Uzzah's Innocent Act**

In being removed from the house of Abinadab, the Ark of the Covenant was hauled on a new cart driven by Uzzah and Ahio. When the ark was shaken, Uzzah spontaneously put forth his hand to steady it, and when he touched it, "The anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God" (2 Sam. 6:1-7). Why? Was he not honest? Was his heart not right? Perhaps. But he violated a positive command of God: "neither shall ye touch it lest ye die" (Gen. 3:3).

The liberties taken by the denominational world, and many of our brethren to copy their ways, cannot be classified as innocent as this act by Uzzah. Such departures from God's Word are generally presumptuous. Upon what ground, therefore, can anyone justify sectarian practices? How can anyone conclude that God does not mean what He says, that one can do as he pleases as long as he is sincere? This is nothing short of perversion and draws the wrath of God (Gal. 1:6-9).

### **THE LAW OF CHRIST IS STRICTER THAN MOSES' LAW**

Seeing that every transgression under Moses' law received a just recompense of reward, the question is asked: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:1-4). Reference is made to that spoken by the Lord.

There is no escape! Every soul that will not hear (obey) the voice of Christ will be destroyed (Acts 3:22-23).

To take undue liberty with God's Word is to despise it. Those who despised Moses' law died without mercy (Heb. 10:28). The punishment for those who despise the law of Christ will be greater (Heb. 10:29). What can be greater than physical death as punishment? The punishment being greater, we can see that the law of Christ is stricter than the Old Testament law.

The Word of Christ is unalterable and indestructible (Mat. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23). Everyone shall meet it at the judgment (John 12:48-50; Acts 17:30-31). To merely call Christ "Lord" is insufficient (Luke 6:46). To be saved, one must **obey** the will of Christ (Mat. 7:21; Rev. 22:14). Jesus showed that the difference between the wise and the foolish is determined by whether one obeys the Word of Christ (Mat. 7:24-27).

From the examples given herein (which could be multiplied), nothing is more plainly taught in the Word of God than that nobody is allowed the privilege of taking liberties with it. God has always forbidden addition, subtraction, or substitution in any way (Deu. 4:2; 5:32; Gal. 3:15; Rev. 22:18-19).

Those who are inclined to liberalism—in or out of the church—should take another look at what God has commanded and what He requires now. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Pro. 28:26).

*Deceased*

## **Books-On-CD**

The 1988-2005, 2007-2008 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2007, and the weekly bulletin *Beacon* 1974-2007, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$80 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.75 (total is \$81.75) in which you receive all the lectureship books (\$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. If you would like only the 2008 book, it can be purchased for \$6.75 which includes postage. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender

*"I am set for the defense of the gospel"*



Vol. XXXVI

November 2008

Number 11

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

Email: [bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)

## *Voices from the past:*

*This article appeared in "Gospel Advocate," Jan 14, 1932*

## The Sin of Dividing a Church

*H. Leo Boles*

Among the sins that may be catalogued against members of the church may be found the sin of dividing a church. No sin is more severely condemned or denounced with greater emphasis as having such fatal effects on the churches of Christ than that of dividing the church. Preachers of the Gospel, who are supposed to teach the congregation love and unity, are often found leading in the sin of division. Elders of the church, who are exhorted to promote harmony and peace among the people of God, are sometimes found fomenting strife and advocating open division in the congregation. Members of the church, who have been given the instruction to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," are often found agitating those things which divide the church. It is distressing to learn of so much division among the churches of Christ. Many of these divisions are bold and open, inviting the censure and condemnation of the world, and other divisions are kept under cover and destroy the spirit and work of the church. Something should be done; something must be done.

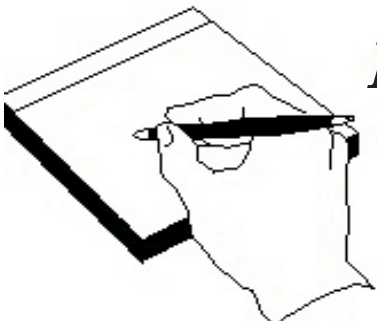
Every sin of dividing a church is a sin against the prayer that Jesus prayed when He said, "that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:22-23). Our Savior deprecated in the most earnest agony of prayer, in view of His early death on the cross, division among His disciples. He even prayed for them that believe on

Him through the words of the apostles, that they who so believe might be one, even as He and the Father are one. It is a fearful thing to wear the name of Christ and live contrary to this prayer which Jesus prayed. Let every preacher, elder, or member of the church of Christ who has led in the division of a church or who has encouraged division in a church be fearfully warned that all who have done so are under the fearful condemnation of God. It is fearful to be responsible for the people of God not being one as Christ and the Father are one. The same teaching on unity which we find in the prayer of our Savior has been elaborated upon and applied in the teachings of the Holy Spirit through the apostles and other Spirit-guided writers of the New Testament. In view of this prayer, the apostles were careful to keep down strife and promote unity among the people of God.

The letter to the church at Rome has rebuke for strife and division between Jew and Gentile Christians in the church there. Paul, the writer, admonished them and said: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:5-6). No member of the church at Rome could encourage division without violating the same Scripture and bringing himself under the same condemnation. Again, the two letters to the church at Corinth embodied the same instruction to the church

*Continued on Page 3*





# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:  
mhatcher@gmail.com

## Just Do Right

Many times elders and preachers are asked by people what they should do. The simple answer and correct one is to just do what is right. However, *right* first means there is a right. For there to be a “right,” there must be a way to establish right and wrong. God is the ultimate source of morality and what is moral and immoral; we must look to Him to determine what is right. However, God does not speak directly to anyone today. Thus, we must look to what He has said as written down for us by the apostles and holy prophets as the Holy Spirit guided them. When we read, study, and learn what they wrote, we then can know the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:9-13; Eph. 3:1-5). In knowing the mind of God, we can then know what is right and what is wrong. Thus, in answering to just do what is right, we are saying to do what the Bible teaches us to do. This will always be the safe way—the right way.

When it comes to the plan of salvation, we have attempted to get our friends and neighbors in the religious world to “just do right.” Instead of teaching and practicing their doctrines of men (grace only, faith only, et al.) to teach and practice what is right—the Bible’s teaching (upon one’s faith, he repents of his sins, makes a confession of his faith in Jesus as God’s Son, and is baptized in water for the forgiveness of his sins). Instead of teaching and practicing one is baptized to show he has been saved (as so many in the denominational world teach) to instead do (and teach) what is right. Sadly, even those of our own number have begun to teach denominational doctrines regarding how we are saved.

We certainly have a problem with language in our society. Many have forgotten (or ignored) that we will be judged by what we say. Jesus said, “But I say unto you,

That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Mat. 12:36-37). God’s name is always to be held in reverence and respect and should never be used in a profane way. Yet, profanity laced speech is commonly heard today, and sometimes those using the profanity are professed Christians. Many Christians who would never think of using profanity think nothing of using euphemisms (a euphemism is one word taking the place of another) in the place of the profanity. Slowly we have been conditioned by the movies, television, and society to accept and use gutter language. While this type of crass language is not taking the Lord’s name in vain, it is still just as wrong. Paul wrote, “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). It is our obligation to speak what is true and right. Again Paul writes, “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6). In our speaking, “just do right.”

We should always do what is right regarding our worship. We have the responsibility to gather together in worship to God. Elders have set certain times for us to fulfill this responsibility. When those times come around, we need to “just do right.” That is, we need to be with the saints worshipping God. When it comes to those acts through which we worship God (yes, God authorizes the acts of worship contrary to what some believe and teach and they are just as important as is the heart or attitude of the worshiper), when someone tries to change and alter them, we need to “just do right.” There are those who have added mechanical instruments of music to what God authorized, we must not use them and we must oppose them. Some not going so far as to add mechanical instruments to our worship have changed from singing (which God authorized) to humming, clapping, using one’s voice as an instruments, using praise teams, and other such innovations, we must “just do right” and refuse to engage in such actions and oppose them. The same could be said of every aspect of our worship to God. There are those who will try to pervert what God has authorized, but we must “just do right” and oppose those who make unauthorized changes to the God established worship.

We need to stand for the one church that Christ established and of which He is the head. Denominations have long attacked the one true church (which we expect). There are those within the church who no longer

understand the uniqueness of the Lord's church and they fail to recognize His headship. Many have tried to make the Lord's church simply another denomination (which it is not and never will be). Each and every Christian should stand against those who would so attack the church; it is the right thing to do.

Denominationalism has also altered what God established regarding the organization of the church. They haggled to the point they set up a universal bishop claiming he, instead of Christ, was the head of the church. The protestant movement was not much better in they simply made each congregation a one-man rule. God established a plurality of men in each congregation to oversee the affairs of the local congregation. There are those who practice things contrary to that oversight God established (refusing to submit to the bishops, one-man rule in the eldership, elder reevaluation/reaffirmation, et al.). We need to "just do right" regarding those bishops of the local congregation and our submission to them.

Fellowship was a problem in the first century. There were those who refused fellowship to those whom they should have been fellowshiping (3 John 9-10), and fellowshiping those whom they should not have fellowshiped (1 Cor. 5). We face the same type of problems today in the church. We are to fellowship those who are in fellowship with God and refuse fellowship to those who are not in fellowship with Him. We are going to be faced with individuals who are not in fellowship with God (based upon God's Word), we must simply "just do right." The influence, power, money, or no other reason is worth fellowshiping someone who is not in fellowship with God. In view of eternity, it is not worth it so "just do right."

MH

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*Continued from Page 1*

there. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). Here we have an earnest, pathetic appeal for unity and oneness in the church. The Holy Spirit urges the people of God here to "be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." No member of the church at Corinth could encourage division without going contrary to this plain and positive admonition of the Holy Spirit. No member of any church of Christ today can violate this Scripture without bring-

ing condemnation upon himself. No member of the church can promote division without going contrary to this instruction.

We are taught that the church is the body of Christ; that every member must promote the unity of the body. To cause division is to cause the members to be opposed to each other and to destroy the peace and harmony of the body. Any preacher that would lead a faction in a church to violate the unity of the body brings upon himself the condemnation of Heaven and should have the just rebuke of all who love the Lord. Divided counsel in a church is confusion; division in a church is death. The one who helps or encourages division is producing confusion and is responsible for spiritual death in the congregation. Surely no one who knows this teaching of the New Testament will be guilty of the sin of dividing a church.

The same instruction was repeated to the church at Ephesus, and each member was given the instruction to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The argument for union was enforced by all the high consideration of the oneness of God the Father, Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, the one body, one faith, one hope, and one baptism. These are mentioned to the church at Ephesus to promote the unity in purpose and action of the church. It was repeated again to the church at Philippi. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded... let us walk by the same rule" (Phi. 3:15-16). We see the application that the Holy Spirit made with the principle taught in the prayer of Jesus. Almost every church addressed in the New Testament was warned against division and encouraged to maintain unity. It is difficult to see how any one, with these teachings of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of the Son of God, can claim to be a servant of God and advise division and promote strife in a congregation. It is difficult to see how anyone can advise members of the body of Christ to act contrary to all of these Scriptures which teach, urge, and persuade the people of God to be one in Christ.

The man who causes division or encourages division on the part of others defiles the temple of God, destroys its peace and happiness, paralyzes its power for good, and brings it into shame and reproach before the world. The man who encourages division among the people of God tramples under foot the teachings of the Holy Spirit and destroys the unity of the institution which has been cemented by the blood of Christ. To work for division is to destroy all harmony and activity in the church of God and to bring the just condemnation of Heaven upon one.

*Deceased*

# Looking into the Liar's Lair: Why Won't Al Maxey Tell the Truth?

*Darrell Broking*

The recent Broking-Maxey debate on the New Testament pattern revealed much about the teaching and heart of Al Maxey and the effects of postmodernism on the church. Al Maxey presents himself as a wonderful and compassionate Christian whose duty it is to free the church from the shackles of patternism, i.e., the idea that the New Testament is a pattern for salvation and fellowship. It is of interest to note that before the debate began, Al Maxey promised to thoroughly embarrass me in the debate and as the debate began to unfold Maxey declared victory. So confident was Maxey that in one of his *Reflections* he wrote the following lie:

The enslaved are finding freedom; the walls are beginning to crumble, and are being breached. I think you will also find this happening very dramatically as a result of the current debate I am having with **Darrell Broking**. Through an unprecedented move, some of the key leaders of the legalistic patternists have opened the gates of their walled enclosures and allowed me a platform from which to speak. I have no doubt that this is a miscalculation on their part, and these doors will be slammed shut (and all trace of my words quickly obliterated) as soon as they realize what they have done, but until that happens I intend to take advantage of this God-given opportunity to reach their captives with the Truth of God's grace and His professed freedom in Jesus. For some, it will be the first time they have ever heard it, and certainly the first time they have seen the tenets of their traditional teaching being *seriously challenged*. There are going to be some eyes opened, Lord willing, and some will flee to freedom (#361).

The miscalculation was on the part of Al Maxey who was deceived to think that his tactics were unknown to some of us. I proved early on in the debate that Maxey falsified documentation to support his teaching. Maxey, as a postmodernist, will twist source material and lie about it to make it teach Maxey's opinions. This is exactly what Maxey did when he wrote *Down But Not Out*, which has been proven by Daniel Denham's exhaustive research on the book.

The great patternist slayer Al Maxey refused to meet Daniel Denham in debate and defend his error. The bold and fierce Al Maxey chose rather to hide out as a liar in his New Mexico lair, rather than to allow Daniel Denham to show the brotherhood the truth about his

teaching. In my final negative post in the Broking-Maxey debate, I used some of Denham's evidence in an appendix to further support the fact, as I noted in the debate, that Maxey will lie to support his teachings. An additional appendix in the debate dealt with Al Maxey's involvement with gossip and lies as he often does to try to intimidate his opposition. This material too was discussed in the debate by both participants. In order to keep this material from getting into the hands of Maxey's cyber audience, Al deleted it from my post before posting it on his web site, and then he slithered again to the comfort and fortitude of his New Mexican liar's lair. Brethren, do not be deceived about how liberal and dangerous Al Maxey is. He worked with others (Wesley Simons, Clifford Newell, Bill Haywood, Eddy Craft, Joe Galloway, et, al.) to destroy the Lord's work in Mountain City, Tennessee, and he will work to destroy as many good works as he can in his anti-pattern campaign. Al Maxey is a self-proclaimed reformer of the church of Christ. If you are interested in all of the material presented in the Broking-Maxey debate go to [www.aboutalmaxeysteaching.com](http://www.aboutalmaxeysteaching.com) or [www.churchesofchrist.com](http://www.churchesofchrist.com) and look for yourself into the liar's lair.

4852 Saufley Field Rd; Pensacola, FL 32526

*(Editor's note: This shows the depth of depravity some will go to retain the credibility they believe they have. When the evidence is considered, it is clear Al Maxey falsified his material. Then to intentionally and unilaterally delete your opponent's material in your debate is stooping to the lowest levels of humanity (no doubt he did this to prevent exposure of his deceit). Al Maxey is out to destroy the church of the New Testament and for once faithful brethren to join hands with him will cause them to lose their souls in an everlasting destruction. (Yes, it is sad that the once faithful preachers of the tri-cities area in Tennessee joined hands with Al Maxey to try and destroy brother Broking.) We pray they will repent, as we do for Al Maxey, before it is too late. Knowing Mr. Maxey's lies and self-delusions of grandeur, we cannot expect him to be honest with the material. However, the complete material is available and should be studied. The debate challenge to meet brother Denham in an oral debate is still before Mr. Maxey even though with the falsification of his material now known, we do not expect Al Maxey to accept it.)*



# The Silencing of God

*Michael Hatcher*

The letter reproduced below from brother Roelf Ruffner to the West Huntsville Church of Christ has not been answered by the West Huntsville elders as of this date. These elders undertook a massive campaign to send out these DVDs of Dave Miller presenting material on “the moral and spiritual underpinnings of American civilization.” Read brother Ruffner’s kind letter to the West Huntsville elders and ask yourself why they would not respond to such a kindly worded letter of concern.

September 19, 2008

Roelf L. Ruffner  
5211 Timberline Road  
Cheyenne, WY 82009  
(307) 514-3394

The Elders  
West Huntsville church of Christ  
1303 Evangel Drive, NW  
Huntsville, AL 35816

Dear Brethren:

I preach for the High Plains church of Christ in Cheyenne. We recently received your DVD—“The Silencing of God.” I could tell that you had gone to a lot of time and expense to produce and mail this DVD. The subject is certainly timely. Our nation is in a moral and spiritual crisis. I often find myself praying to God to help our nation turn back to the Bible. I wonder sometimes if we have gone too far down the road of secularism.

That said, I cannot conscientiously recommend that our congregation view or promote this video. My reason is because this would be in violation of 2 John 9-11 and Romans 16:17. We would be fellowshiping a marked false teacher—Dave Miller.

I have known brother Miller for almost twenty years. He was one of my teachers at the Brown Trail School of Preaching. Dave holds to two false doctrines:

(1) Elder Revaluation/ Reaffirmation—there is no scriptural authority for this practice which would make the eldership into a political football.

(2) Marriage Intent Doctrine—this dishonors the

three way covenant of marriage and also has no scriptural authority.

I do not say this lightly. I have read about and studied these issues. I even attempted to ask Dave about them in the lobby of Houston’s George Bush International Airport in 2006. But my questions were brushed aside as he walked away from me. My last words were, “I am praying for you, Dave.” I have talked with others who have been treated the same way. The few that have gotten through to him have received conflicting answers to their questions. He issued a rather strange statement since then about these issues but it was certainly no declaration of repentance.

Brethren, I assume you are in contact with him. Has he publicly refuted these false doctrines and repented? I can assure you that if he did I would be the first to rejoice with tears. But until that day comes I cannot recommend this DVD to our congregation or anyone else.

Sincerely,  
Roelf L. Ruffner  
Gospel preacher

The points brother Ruffner brings out are exactly correct. Recently I asked a young preacher if he would hand out material written by Billy Graham if the specific material did not contain error. He stated he would never do such. I pointed out handing out material written by Dave Miller (or Apologetics Press and the support of the same) would be parallel to handing out the Graham material. Billy Graham is wrong concerning many doctrinal issues while Dave Miller is wrong concerning the doctrinal issues mentioned by brother Ruffner. Even though we might agree with the contents of the DVD “The Silencing of God,” to recommend or promote the DVD is to make oneself a partaker of Dave Miller’s false doctrines. (By false doctrines, I mean doctrines if believed and acted upon will result in one’s being lost eternally.) Sadly, the West Huntsville leaders have decided to be a partaker of false doctrine. We must continue to pray and teach these (and other) brethren the error of their ways before it is everlastingly too late.

*4852 Sauflay Field Rd; Pensacola, FL 32526*

## 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Bellview Lectureship

### June 13-17, 2009

## Preaching from the Minor Prophets

# On Bidding God Speed

*Dub McClish*

John wrote words of stern warning in 2 John 11: “For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” John was warning about our attitude toward those who advocate error. To offer support, in word or deed, to those who have compromised the Truth is to become their “partner in crime.” This principle also includes churches or schools that have abandoned the faith.

In light of this passage, many are bidding God speed to those who propagate error. They are, in fact, practicing a form of “Unity in Diversity.” I do not have in mind those who are themselves liberals (no less could be expected from them). Tragically, some otherwise good, solid, conservative brethren and congregations are doing it also. One may see evidence of this repeatedly in their church bulletins. Their behavior amounts to a strange contradiction in which they are tearing down the very thing they are otherwise trying to build up.

**The articles they reprint in their bulletins** demonstrate this phenomenon. I am amazed at the carelessness with which bulletin articles of liberal brethren are borrowed and reprinted, and I plead with my sound brethren to use more care. I fully realize that a given article by a false teacher may teach the Truth and no error and may do it in an effective and forceful way. However, it is nonetheless dangerous and harmful to Truth to use such.

At least three damaging results occur when faithful brethren publish articles by liberal brethren: (1) They inescapably imply endorsement of the writer beyond merely his article, (2) they give him a platform, notoriety, and credibility that should be denied him, and (3) they encourage naive and ignorant readers to listen to him when he teaches error.

Occasionally a good brother will innocently run such an article, not knowing the real direction of its author. (This fact underscores the need for us all [especially preachers and elders] to make it a point to keep up with “who” is saying and doing “what.”) However, I see this in some bulletins with such frequency that it can hardly be mere oversight. It appears that the editor knows the article he is running is by a false teacher, but he sees nothing wrong with thereby endorsing him and giving him a forum anyway.

If such careless behavior is not bidding God speed to a false teacher, I know not what to call it. Again, I call upon sound brethren everywhere to cease contributing to the doctrinal confusion so rampant among the saints, which they do by publishing articles by unsound, compromising brethren. May we all remember that we are known as much by who/

what we commend as by who/what we condemn.

Congregations also participate in error when they **publicize activities of liberals and apostates** in their church bulletins (including such things as lectureships conducted by “Christian” universities). Occasionally, even careful editors do this due to ignorance of the source, sponsors, or implications of an event. Sometimes a liberal member of a local congregation will even sneak something into a bulletin when the preacher, who would not have allowed it, is out of town. However, when one consistently sees such things in the same bulletin it is evident that the editor considers them harmless. It seems almost as if some churches feel somehow obligated to print every announcement they receive, regardless of its source or content.

When a sound church announces (by bulletin, from the pulpit, on the bulletin board, or otherwise) activities of congregations or schools that are known for their apostasy or programs that feature liberal brethren, **it is promoting liberalism**. It thereby gives its implicit approval to said activities and brethren. It encourages sheep to visit the dens of wolves. Do not these brethren see that, at the very best, this practice is sending terribly confused signals to the members of the congregation and to all others (including the liberals) on their mailing lists? Sometimes the same bulletin will oppose one error while promoting another. Preacher “A” in a given congregation may take a strong stand on page 1 against the “Change Agent” movement, while on page 4 preacher “B” (the “youth director”) is urging folks (young and old) to participate in a giant “youth rally” sponsored by and featuring liberal brethren.

The liberals expect their cohorts to help them publicize their activities. They must engage in much laughing behind our backs when they see bulletins of sound churches helping them advance their cause by publicizing (and thereby endorsing) their activities.

We are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (whether moral or doctrinal) (Eph. 5:11a), and encouraging people to attend the activities of apostates is inescapably a form of fellowship. Rather than encouraging people to attend the programs of apostates (and thus engage in fellowship with them), we are commanded, “but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11b). May we be careful always to promote only those activities among brethren that support and advance the Truth. May we always oppose all activities among brethren that are otherwise.

*908 Imperial Dr; Denton, TX 76201*

# Eternal Vigilance

*Alton W. Fonville*

Someone has said: “*Eternal vigilance* is the price we must pay for freedom.” Many people do not seem to really understand this or even care. The recent happenings around the world and the incident in China should be as a red flag to alert us to the real meaning of the above phrase. “Battles don’t stay fought—Victories don’t stay won.” Memorial Day recently, with all its stories from veterans, brought to mind some very graphic details of what our enemy does to its prisoners. Whether we are considering world affairs or spiritual affairs concerning the Lord’s church and His Word, the answer is the same. We do not want bad history to repeat.

Peter sternly warned: “Be sober, be **vigilant**; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). God wants us to “watch.” He inspired Paul to write, “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5). Many times, Jesus also warned of watching. Consider what He said in Mark 13: 35-37: “what I say unto you I say unto **all**, **Watch.**”

Now that it has been established it is God’s will for us to watch, for what are we to watch? One of the more common departures from “the faith” is the notion so many have is that we must fellowship the denominational world to win them. They say not to speak harshly of denominational beliefs and practices—just accept them as they are. As a result of this thinking, many in the Lord’s church are now in full fellowship with the denominations, even praying for their success. They even consider them to be

“Christians.” Joint participation with them in various ventures is common. It is excused by saying: “Look at the good it is doing,” never considering what God has said. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Naturally, we do not have to face the persecutions and ridicule if we never speak out against their unbelief and practices. We can live “at peace” in the community and everyone will speak well of us. Jesus warned about that also (Luke 6:26).

Long ago, when **Israel and Judah** were divided, King Jehoshaphat of Judah heard a stern warning from God through the mouth of Jehu after he joined himself to Ahab the wicked king of Israel as recorded in 2 Chronicles 18 and 19. Listen to Jehu as he speaks for God: “Shouldst thou help **the ungodly**, and love them that **hate the LORD**? therefore *is* wrath upon thee from before the LORD” (19:2). (**Both were “God’s people.”**) If you have not read that story recently, it is quite revealing, and we recommended you read it.

Years ago, many church battles were fought about our fellowship with denominations and it was generally understood that the denominations were not a part of “the Lord’s church.” But battles do not stay fought and victories do not stay won. We must forever be on the alert and watchful, and take the necessary action regardless of the consequences, even as Ezra did and commanded (Ezra 9:14, 10:4). **Do it.**

*337 Madison 4605; St. Paul, AR 72760*

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

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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Pensacola, FL 32526**