

# *Defender*



*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

*Volume XXV*

*1996*

January

April

July

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# Defender



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

Volume XXV

January 1996

Number 1

## SINGING

*Tim Smith*

It shall be our purpose in this article to study the teaching of the New Testament concerning singing in the church. We shall endeavor to set forth positively what we are to do when we sing, and then notice what we are forbidden to do as well.

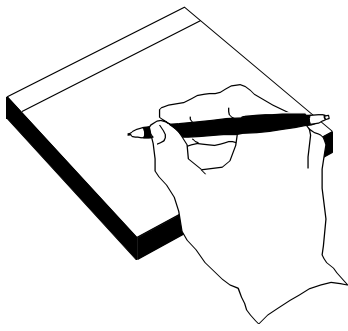
The following are the passages of Scripture wherein the music of the New Testament church is mentioned: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Rom. 15:9). "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15). "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12). "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (Jam. 5:13).

From these passages we see that singing is definitely a biblical subject. There are other references to singing in the New Testament, but some deal with what happened before the establishment of the church and others deal with what takes place in the future, in heaven. These comprise the teachings on singing in the

time or period of the church.

Among other things, we see from these passages that singing is to be used as a means of teaching. As the prisoners listened to Paul and Silas when they sang, so those in our midst listen to us when we sing. It is important that we are aware of what we are singing, as Paul instructed "with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15). We cannot worship God properly if we do not know what we are singing as we sing. The songs should be filled with truth, as we are "teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. 3:16). The question of humming is an important one, for when we hum we do not sing words whereby one might be taught or admonished. There is no understanding for either the singer or the hearer in humming. There is no authority in the New Testament for this practice, and therefore it should not be practiced. We are told what kind of music God wants, and we should offer to Him that kind, and that kind alone. Humming is not speaking, and we are commanded to speak in Ephesians 5:19. Even though some songs in various books do call for humming, if we are to follow the New Testament we will have to omit that practice and replace the unintelligible sounds with the words of the hymn. When we hum, the hearers will not know if we are trying to sing a spiritual song or a secular song, and they will not in any way be edified or taught or admonished. One may argue that it sounds good, but such an argument is not a biblical one, and does not justify a practice which changes the kind of music authorized in the Scriptures.

The question of mechanical instruments of music  
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# **Notes From The Editor**

**Michael  
Hatcher**

## **Authority**

Recently I was speaking to an individual who attends a liberal congregation. They spoke about the practice of humming and clapping of hands during the worship service. This individual said they would not engage in these practices, but did not believe they could prove them wrong (I can, but that is not the purpose of this article). Finally, I got to insert that they have missed the concept of the Bible and God's dealings with man. I pointed out that I do not have to prove anything is sinful, what I (or anyone else) must prove is that God has authorized the action. If God has not authorized the action, then it is sinful. This point is true no matter what the subject. It is certainly true concerning our worship to God (see John 4:23-24 that we must worship in truth, or as God has directed in His Word). However, this principle is true in every aspect of our lives.

Paul, by inspiration of God, wrote "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). Notice the phrase "in the name of." This phrase means by His authority. We understand this from its usage by the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:7. They asked Peter and John, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" They were asking the authority Peter and John had for what they had done (healing and preaching). We recognize this phrase in our society. A police officer, in carrying out his duty as a law officer, states to stop in the name of the law. He is stating by the authority of the law, you are to stop. Applying this understanding to the passage above we see, whatever we do must be done by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Jesus also teaches this principle in Matthew 21:23-27.

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Jesus recognized the question as a valid question. He also shows the origin of all actions. Religious actions either come from God (heaven) or they come from man. Jesus applied this to the baptism of John. The Jews also recognized that authority for our actions either come from God or man, otherwise they would have mentioned another source if they could. There is no other authority.

When our actions only come from the authority of man then those actions are sinful. Jesus expressed this in relation to our worship. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat. 15:9). When our worship is according to the authority of God and done with the proper attitude, then it is true or acceptable with God. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).

Jesus said He has all authority. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18). The means by which that authority is executed today is the Word of God, the New Testament. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50; see also Rev. 20:12; Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible authorizes in three ways: (1) Direct statements, (2) Implication, and (3) Examples. Within that which the Bible authorizes there are areas of

expediency which God authorizes to expedite and carry out that which He authorizes. If we do something without establishing Bible authority in one of these ways, then it is sinful.

In the conversation above, I expected, and got, the following response. "We do many things that the Bible does not authorize." Then the examples of air conditioning in the building, and pews were used. I stated at that time and do again that I can prove the Bible authorizes these things (and others like them). For these items, the Bible authorizes us to gather together upon the first day of the week to worship God. This command necessarily involves a place to gather together. Thus, to expedite and carry out what God has authorized, we can meet in a building (buy, rent or build), in a house, under a tree or some other place. What goes into that building is also a matter of human judgment (pews, song books, air conditioning and heating, etc.), as long as it does not violate the principles of Bible authority.

The question the chief priest and elders asked Jesus is still a good question. We need to ask "by what authority" do we do what we do today? "By what authority" do we sing songs of praise to God? "By what authority" do we partake of the Lord's Supper in worship to God. "By what authority" do we pray, preach, etc.? If we cannot find Bible authority for our actions, then we must stop those actions for they are sinful.

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

is one with which the religious world has contended for many years. It should be noted, that in every reference concerning the music of the church singing was either practiced or commanded; and in no passages of the New Testament do we find authority for the use of the mechanical instrument. Paul authorized "singing and making melody in your [our] heart" (Eph. 5:19). The command is to sing and make melody in the heart, and to do more than that is to go beyond what God has commanded, or transgress the biblical teaching, and that is sin (2 John 9-11). We do not find, anywhere in the New Testament, where the church on earth was either commanded, practiced, or allowed to use the mechanical instrument to accompany their singing. In each reference, the only noise that was made was that of singing. If Ephesians 5:19 authorizes the use of the mechanical instrument, then it commands it for everyone in the church, for the command to sing and the command to make melody are inseparable. What was

commanded for one was commanded for all. One might argue that the piano is merely an aid to singing much like a song book. However, the difference is this: A song book changes in no way the sound or kind of music practiced, whereas a piano changes both the kind and sound. When we use a piano we are no longer remaining within the faith (which comes by hearing God's Word; Romans 10:17), but are adding to the New Testament that which God intentionally omitted. Singing is one kind of music, playing is another. If we were commanded to travel to a given location, we might be at liberty to walk or ride in a car. If we were commanded to walk to a certain place, we would have to walk in order to obey the command. If we used a cane to aid us in walking, we would still be obeying the command to walk, with the use of an aid that in no way changes the walking, but only aids us as we do it. One could not argue that riding is an aid to walking, but rather, we see that riding is another kind of travel. In just this way, we see that a song book is an aid to singing, a piano is another kind of music. One might argue that the mechanical instrument is to be considered in the realm of opinion, something to be taken or left at the option of the person singing. However, when God commands specifically that a thing be done, and then tells us how to do it, there is no room left for our opinions. If we are to obey the New Testament, we will sing with the mouth, forming words that will teach and admonish, and make melody in our hearts; nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

The question of solos or specials or quartets in the worship assembly is another question worthy of our consideration. Are we authorized to practice this kind of thing in the worship assemble? Notice that the book of Ephesians was addressed "to the saints" (1:1), and that the book of Colossians was addressed "To the saints and faithful brethren" (1:2). All Christians were the recipients of the commands of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, and in order for us to be obedient to the commands given therein all Christians must sing. We have no authority for one or more to sing while the others listen.

To hum, play a mechanical instrument, or have "specials" is wrong and sinful because they come from men not God. God nowhere authorized their use or practice in the worship, and therefore the only authority we may turn to for their justification is from men. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat. 15:9). If it

can be shown that they come from God in the New Testament, they may be practiced, if not, they must be rejected.

To hum, play a mechanical instrument, or have “specials” is wrong and sinful because they are not of faith. “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). “But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*” (Heb. 11:6). “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). Since faith comes by hearing God’s Word, and since these practices do not, we may not acceptably engage in them in worship to God.

To hum, play a mechanical instrument, or have

“specials” is wrong and sinful because they are not according to truth. We are commanded to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). Congregational singing is according to the truth (Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16). Humming, playing a mechanical instrument, and “specials” are not. Therefore, they are not according to truth and must be rejected as being wrong and sinful additions to that which was authorized by God.

God has authorized the kind of music with which He is pleased, we may offer to Him that kind, and that kind only.

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## CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

*Robin W. Haley*

The question has been asked, “Can congregations be disfellowshipped, or only individuals?” That various congregations of the Lord’s church enjoyed and engaged in fellowship within the Bible is without question. Fellowship is first recognized as existing between an individual and God through Jesus. Collectively therefore, fellowship will exist between a congregation of God’s people and God Himself through Christ. This is the “vertical” direction of fellowship. There is also “horizontal” fellowship that exists between fellow believers, IF each one first has fellowship with the Father through the Son. Correspondingly, there will be “horizontal” fellowship between congregations of God’s people IF AND ONLY IF each congregation enjoys fellowship with the Father by “walking in the light.”

The difficulty of the question above is seen in the use of the word “disfellowshipped.” Some contend that we cannot disfellowship any, whether it be an individual or congregation. This is false. Some say we cannot disfellowship a congregation because each is autonomous (self-governing). This too is false in that the extending or withholding of fellowship, either to individuals or congregations has nothing to do with the authority one may exercise over the one in question. “Fellowship” is “joint participation” or “to have things in common.” Actually, the term “disfellowship” does not appear in Scripture. Better would be the term Paul uses, which helps to clear up the confusion. He said “withdraw” which means to withhold fellowship from those who do not deserve it. Who is this? Within a congregation, this is the brother or sister who is in sin and will not repent. Within the church universal, this

would certainly refer to one congregation WITHHOLDING fellowship from a sister congregation who does not deserve fellowship because of her error, whatever that may be.

Please know: WITHIN a congregation, the leaders have authority to discipline the wayward member. WITHOUT a congregation, there is no authority to legislate to another congregation. But, when a sister congregation is not “walking in the light,” those faithful congregations not only have the authority to WITHHOLD fellowship, but the obligation to do so. Else, they too will be in error.

This brings in another related question that was put in: Is one congregation “obligated to try to reprove or correct (another congregation in the same city) that teaches and practices error?” Our answer: ABSOLUTELY! The question goes on to ask: “If so, how?” Answer: By reminding them (by letter or visits to the leaders by the faithful church’s leaders) of what the Lord has said regarding the doctrine or practice in question.

If they listen, there will be fellowship between sister congregations. If they refuse to listen, how can the faithful “continue to walk with them?” They, as with any who teach error, must be marked and withdrawn from. That is, the local church must be informed as to the error of the sister church, and fellowship is to be withheld until they will repent.

Finally, the question: “Why have not all the well-known false teachers been disfellowshipped and their congregations?” They have! Those who are faithful and informed have long ago marked the “well-known” false

teachers and their congregations. The problem is that many uninformed brethren, and those who would rather not be informed do not or will not listen. Some in fact, become angry or even defensive of error when they are informed. This is a pity. Sadly, by this attitude and

action, they themselves become subject to discipline and withdrawal of fellowship by the faithful if they will not listen.

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## THE LEWIS-WEATHERLY DEBATE

*Gary W. Summers*

On Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, I was able to attend the second night of the debate between John T. Lewis, a graduate of Brown Trail, and Jason Weatherly, who resides in Beebe, Arkansas. Brother Lewis, from Lone Grove, Oklahoma, the town in which the debate was held, refuted the idea that either Holy Spirit baptism or miracles are part and parcel of the New Testament Church today; Mr. Weatherly affirmed that they were.

The focus of attention was partly on Ephesians 4:11-16. Brother Lewis argued that the use of miraculous gifts was given **for** the equipping of the saints **till** we all come to the unity of **the** faith **in order that** we can fight against false doctrine. Obviously, if we still have apostles and prophets, who yet reveal the will of God (and who will continue to do so until the second coming), then we will not arrive at the unity of **the** faith until this world ends. Such an interpretation leaves us with an unsavory dilemma: either we become totally equipped to fight false doctrine when it no longer exists, or there will be false doctrine in heaven to fight against.

Mr. Weatherly responded by trying to weaken the force of the passage. He tried to bypass the duration expressed in verse 13 altogether, but also held that we can fight false doctrine with incomplete revelation today by asserting that if Paul could do so without the entire New Testament, so could we. The flaw in this theory is that he can not prove that Paul did not know the entire body of New Testament teaching. Just because he did not write it all down at one particular point in time does not mean that he had not been divinely taught it or that he had not revealed it orally.

In his next affirmative speech, brother Lewis concentrated on the purpose of the miracles as stated in the New Testament: to reveal truth, and to confirm the truth. The Word of God having been completely revealed, no need has existed for miracles since the end of the first century. Weatherly countered by mentioning that there was still a need for non-doctrinal matters to be prophesied of, such as the famine mentioned by Agabus in Acts 11:28. This is not a bad explanation, but

it carries with it a tremendous risk—the possibility of being asked for some of these types of prophecies. Wouldn't it be nice for Christians to know ahead of time of upcoming famines, or earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, etc.? But who has foretold such things? Not Jason Weatherly, nor Don Finto, nor anyone else claiming to be a latter-day apostle or prophet. It is not cruel to insist on examples of these kinds of prophecies; they are found in the Bible; they should be found today among those claiming these powers. They cannot duplicate what is in the Bible because they are not apostles, prophets, or divinely inspired.

### FAILURE TO END THE DEBATE

Brother Lewis chided Mr. Weatherly for coming in word only and not in power, also. He showed a chart listing past debates that brethren have held with Pentecostals. Not once in all those occasions has a single miracle been performed which would effectively and conclusively ended the discussion. After all, if one disputant is denying that miracles are occurring today, and the other one heals a man born blind (for example), what more can anyone say? The debate would be over by virtue of the demonstration of such power. Even Pharaoh's talented magicians finally had to conclude of the things Moses did, "This is the finger of God" (Exo. 8:19).

Brother Lewis challenged Mr. Weatherly to end the debate as Paul had effectively done with Elymas (Bar-Jesus) by striking him blind (Acts 13:6-12). The Pentecostal's response was weak—he declined to do what Paul did on the grounds that he did not want Lewis to be blind; he wanted him to see. Does he not think Elymas' spiritual vision improved dramatically after Paul performed a miracle on him? Yes, he undoubtedly saw better in his blindness than he ever had with physical sight.

This passage in Acts 13 is devastating to the old Pentecostal argument that one must have faith before a miracle can be performed on him. No, that was exactly

Elymas' problem—he had no more faith than the fig tree that Jesus cursed, which withered immediately. Yet this faithless adversary of the gospel received a miracle. To teach that Christians today possess the same powers as the apostles and prophets but then refuse to demonstrate such only proves that they, in fact, lack the powers they claim after all.

In his closing remarks, Jason Weatherly thanked Harding College for giving him access to their library so that he could prepare for the debate. And he did display a knowledge about many of the doctrines we teach. But if he believes that the Holy Spirit works today as He did in the first century, why did he find it necessary to **prepare** for this debate? The disciples were promised “a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist” (Luke 21:15). Those

who hold his view of the Bible should not have to spend hours in diligent preparation; the Holy Spirit should provide wisdom.

Brother Lewis conducted himself well. His opponent talked throughout much of his first speech (to his moderator) and violated the “spirit” of the rules by insinuating that brother Lewis was a liar. Furthermore, Weatherly's moderator challenged brother Lewis' quotation from a tract which made their position seem preposterous. The fact is, however, that they had sent him the tract to help him understand their views so that he could use it to prepare for the debate. Their behavior was at times tacky. Some good questions were raised on both sides, which should provoke further study.

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## IF WORSHIP WERE SIN

*Burt Jones*

Suppose through some phenomenon we awoke one morning to discover that the very act of worshiping our Lord had somehow become sin. Suppose that there had been a total reversal of how we had earlier perceived worship as an act of glorifying God and expressing our deep love for Him. Instead, this worship, either in the assembly or in our personal communion with our Heavenly Father, had become a transgression of God's law.

Can we even begin to fathom the ramifications of this extraordinary occurrence? Worship is now something that will separate us from God—Worship now separates us from heaven. Worship will cause God to close His ears to our petitions. You begin to question whether or not those small gatherings at your neighbors' home are for parties, or are they, in fact, clandestine meetings for the purpose of committing that heinous sin of worship. Had that building just off the square downtown really been purchased for innocent purposes or did you see what appeared to be suspicious looking thick black books under the arms of some of those entering this building?

As you arrive at work Monday morning there are whispered remarks between some of the employees with accompanying snickers and winks as you catch an occasional word—WORSHIP—PRAYER—LORD'S SUPPER.

Brethren, have I made my point? I am convinced that IF worship were sin, and, following the logic that

we live in a lost and dying world that “loveth sin and hateth the creator,” our auditoriums would be full. There would be an abundance of family devotions and covert, “backstairs” praying, and sneaky, cryptic acts of benevolence. Why? For NO other reason than the fact that **WORSHIP had become SIN!** Because there are those, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:32).

All of us have known those who obviously delight in making a show of sin purely for shock value. The very nature of worldliness is suggested in Philippians 3:19 by those, “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

If worship were sin, I am as certain as the rising of the sun in the east that it would be added to immorality and materialism as another fiery dart in the quiver of the wicked (Eph. 6:16).

If worship were sin there would be those who “only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly” (Psa. 62:4). Worship, dear reader, can be thought of as opening the doors, of the church building and through association with your brethren; walking into the heart of God. It refreshes the soul as sleep refreshes the body.

The word “worship” is found 190 times in the

Bible, but in none of the passages in which this word is found, has God given man the **direct** command to worship (Mat. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:9). In the above passages there is not a specific command to worship, but a command to make the God of heaven the true OBJECT of our worship.

Worship, true worship, must be prompted by the right motive, actuated by the highest purpose, and with a deep desire to meet heaven's approval through obedience to His gospel. Worship is an attitude of mind as well as a physical act (John 4:23-24). The "ingredients" of this worship are a broken spirit and sacrifices of praise. It is not the service of external form in an outward "sanctuary" as so many of us who came into the Lord's church from denominationalism can attest. It is not the presentation of slain animals but the service of a faithful life: "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1). It does not consist of material sacrifices but spiritual; your **reasonable** service, not the service of an altar of stone or wood. Pure religion is "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (Jam. 1:27); not the splendor and sensationalism of ornate auditoriums and colorful robes, or of the sound of trumpets or organs or pianos or "vocal" bands, but in hallowing His name (Mat. 6:9).

Before we can put our sins behind us we must face them. If sin becomes the rule of your life—if, indeed, your sin becomes the object of worship in your daily existence, do not be surprised when it turns on you and betrays you when you least expect it. The deceiver becomes the deceived.

If worship were sin, no longer could our Savior say, "My blood, shed here, has washed those sins away." No longer could He say, "There remaineth not the least dark spot, not any memory of them, and, so, should you remember sins which God forgot?"

Of course, this is only if Worship were sin.

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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"Romans"

We want to thank those who sent cards, letters and money during the past year. We thank you for the kind comments and encouragement of this great work. All money sent goes into the publication of *Defender*. While this is a work of the Bellview Church of Christ, all donations are gratefully accepted and needed. A special thank you for all those who send articles for publication. Without your help, this paper would not be able to continue. Please keep the articles coming.

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# Defender



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

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## WELL, NOW I'VE HEARD IT ALL

Gary L. Grizzell

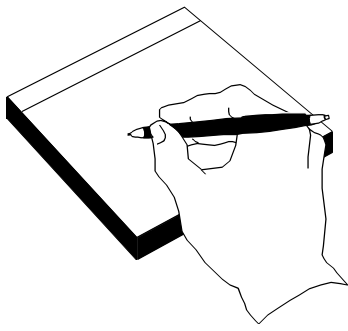
**"You messed up!"** These were the words which a big name preacher, whatever that is, spoke to a faithful gospel preacher when he discovered that he had (a number of years ago) lost salary and favor with some as a result of preaching the truth and standing for the truth on fellowship (2 John 9-11). What I am about to say may offend some but from my personal experience some of those "who seem to be somewhat" (Gal. 2:6) in our brotherhood should wise up and begin to practice what they so eloquently preach. While the individual mentioned above stated in his opinion that the preacher had gotten in over his head while fighting some liberals (and he conceded they *were* "liberals" to use his very own word) the brother had supposedly "messed up" since the controversy backfired into a greater degree of persecution than he thought a preacher should experience in our day. My question for him and his kind is, why preach *one* standard of faithfulness for a gospel preacher and then turn around and unhesitatingly apply a totally *different* standard to preachers in our generation? On one hand, this type of preacher will preach that New Testament preachers are to be bold, willing to sacrifice and willing to take the lumps of persecution like the first century preachers in the Book of Acts, but then absolutely refuse to say and do the necessary thing if it appears it might bring on a great degree of persecution. Also, after preaching the true standard of evaluation turn around and condemn, possibly because of political expediency and protection of cherished career goals, the faithful preacher who dares to take a strong stand for truth. To this type of "preacher" may I say, **Brother, just because you are unwilling to do your duty this**

**does not give you the right to condemn the brother who is willing to do his.**

### When Will This Lip Service Cease?

This faulty evaluation of faithfulness is of the devil. It is characteristic of the hireling preacher and keep in mind that one doesn't have to preach error in the pulpit to be a professional hireling. Many times it is what is left **unsaid** that reveals the true identity of the hireling preacher.

The matter of **"You messed up!"** is a false accusation that gauls any *faithful* elder, deacon, member and gospel preacher when understood in its full context and import. The reason it boils my blood is because it implies a humanly devised standard of judgment which establishes an unscriptural cut off level in regard to persecution (don't we all wish this could be true?). The philosophy says that a preacher *must* preach the unadulterated gospel at all costs, but at the same time refuse to stand strong on an issue if a *great* degree of persecution is inevitable. This contradictory, unscriptural thinking is arrogantly depicted as wisdom and longsuffering. Evidently, according to this false concept, the Holy Spirit's admonition to "Be thou faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10) no longer applies. *Who* is to decide just what constitutes the proper degree of persecution to be rightfully suffered and the proper degree of persecution to be avoided lest one "*mess up*?" Based on this unwritten law seemingly burned into the thinking of those who are like the Judaizing teachers in Galatia, our Lord Himself was in error since He "*got in over His head*" while fighting those liberals of His day (the reader may  
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# Notes From The Editor

**Michael  
Hatcher**

## Marriage

The Holy Spirit wrote, “Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). The word “honourable” refers to something that is precious, valuable, of great price, thus it is held in honor and to be esteemed. While today marriage is ridiculed by many, Christians should realize the greatness of this wonderful relationship. In the beginning of time God recognized that it was not good for a man to be alone (Gen. 2:18). Thus, He made Eve—woman—for Adam—man. God, then, brings Eve to Adam instituting the first marriage. God places His stamp of approval upon the marriage relationship. “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:4-6). With the leaving and cleaving mentioned by God, we begin seeing the great importance of the marriage relationship in a person’s life. Thus, there is a need for us to study this great decision of life.

The first consideration is what constitutes marriage, or how does one become married? First, there must be the decision by both parties (man and woman) to live together as husband and wife, to be married to each other. They must have the intention of being married to each other. A “shotgun” wedding would not be recognized as a marriage. Adam accepted Eve as his wife when God brought her to him. “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one

flesh” (Gen. 2:23-24). Another requirement is that both parties must be eligible for marriage. They must meet the requirements God established to be married. We will consider this separately next month. Last, the couple must meet the requirements that the state demands for entering the marriage relationship (see Rom. 13 and 1 Pet. 2:13-14) as long as those requirements are harmonious with God’s law (cf. Acts 5:29). God then joins those two into the holy union of matrimony, and “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:6).

In consideration of this last point, meeting the requirements of the state, let us notice what Jesus says to the Samaritan woman in John 4:18: “For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.” The Samaritan woman had five husbands (five men who met the requirements of the state). The man she was now with was not her husband (they had not met the requirements of the state). Within those requirement, as in our society, there will be certain regulations that one must meet before the state recognizes a couple as married. They might be required to get a license, possibly take a blood test, have a wedding ceremony where an official of the state pronounces the couple married. The state can require anything it wishes, as long as it does not conflict with God’s law.

Some have erroneously concluded (from 1 Cor. 6:16-17) that cohabitation must take place before a couple are married or that cohabitation constitutes the marriage relationship. The sexual union does not join a man and woman in marriage. If this was necessary, then the couple must commit fornication to become married. Jesus would have erred when He told the Samaritan woman, “he whom thou now hast is not thy husband” for he would have been by virtue of the cohabitation. Likewise, the sexual union does not have to take place for one to be married. Joseph and Mary were married long before they come together in the sexual union. The angel of the Lord told Joseph to, “fear not to take unto thee **Mary thy wife**: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” (Mat. 1:20). Then we learn that Joseph, “took unto him his wife” (Mat. 1:24). Thus Joseph and Mary were married. Yet, we find that Joseph “knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son” (Mat. 1:25). Joseph and Mary were married, she was his wife, yet, they did not have sexual relations until after the birth of Jesus. Brother Roy Deaver has correctly observed that, “The physical union is a *blessing* which comes as a *result* of marriage. It is *not* what constitutes the marriage.”

MH

(Continued from Page 1)

recall that the Judaizers of Paul's day behaved in a convenient manner lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; Gal. 6:12-13). Yes, he must have "messed up" (to use the expression of our brother). After all, if Jesus had just been "wise" like some who preach today, He could have avoided *messing up* and getting killed. **God forbid such a pragmatic mentality!** According to this standard the apostle Paul "*messed up*." If he had just played his cards right he could have preached the truth and yet never have been stoned at Lystra! (Acts 14:19). And what about Stephen? If he had only known how to do it right, he could have called the rebellious Jews "**stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears**" and yet have avoided being stoned (Acts 7:51,58). Let us ask our brother, did Stephen "*mess up*?" Perhaps Stephen should not have gotten in over his head in this fight against liberalism without the assistance of others. Did he not know he was not to fight for the souls of men against such odds? If only he had possessed the "*wisdom*" to have done it differently. Boy, did he mess up! (Obviously, I am using sarcasm.) And we wonder what is wrong with the church today?! With this type of thinking going on in the minds of some of our preaching brethren, how can we wonder any longer? Is the foregoing a sample of the thinking of one who views preaching as a courageous work of love regardless of the cost, or is this the thinking of one who views preaching as a glorified secular career? Does this intellectual snobbery of a stance reflect the concept of fighting a selfless "**good fight**" (2 Tim. 4:7), or does this reflect a self-promoting, half-hearted fight? Now, those of you who have been fortunate enough to work only under sound elders will not have experimental knowledge of this issue. However, those who have worked among churches without sound leadership and where the office of the eldership is almost unheard of will know exactly whereof I speak.

### **Consequences Of This Faulty Perspective**

**One of the sickening consequences of this false philosophy is the resulting lofty commendation of cowards and the hateful condemnation of the faithful** (see Isa. 5:20). Perhaps guilt of personal neglected duty explains the mean-spirited zeal of this type of critic or maybe it is just the attitude exhibited by all those who insist on riding the ever swirling merry-go-round of church politics. Some remind us of King Saul who obeyed **most** of what God commanded but not all. He killed **most** of what God commanded to

be killed but he refused to kill **all** God had desired (1 Sam. 15:22). Today, all error in a given controversy needs to be killed (exposed) regardless of the cost. Do you believe this, fellow preacher?

### **The Crying Need Today**

The crying need today is for these hirelings and self-promoters in pulpits to repent like Saul and say, "I have sinned...because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice" (1 Sam. 15:24). If repentance is not forthcoming then faithful brethren should disregard the outward show of long resumes of achievement and put them out of the pulpit of God. Saul could add the impressive "King" on his resume but his behavior canceled out its importance in the mind of God.

### **The Point Of The Matter**

Yes, we are to speak the truth in love, strive to preach a balanced gospel, practice longsuffering, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, know the difference between contentious and contending, but if *great* persecution follows, this is not to be termed "messaging up" (Eph. 4:15; Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:1-3; Jude 3; Phi. 2:5). After all is said and done there is a price to pay (2 Tim. 3:12). Paul told young Timothy, "endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5). Hopefully, the degree of persecution one will receive will be minimal, but there are no guarantees in that it will depend on the spirituality level of the leadership of the church along with the integrity level of the area. **Due to the present apostasy among us, the faithful gospel preacher will dutifully face the consequences; even if it means "making tents" in order to continue to preach the true doctrine of Christ.** The existence of the present apostasy implies some will be persecuted to a great degree. Let us boldly refuse to live out of the consciousness of the hirelings among us. Let us place such hirelings in the category that brother Ira Y. Rice Jr. has courageously described when he has continuously told us, "You just can't warn some brethren." There are some who preach some sound doctrine in pulpits who simply refuse to admit the true condition of the churches of Christ in certain areas of the country. There are still some among us who are in eternal denial as to the great degree of ignorance and rebellion to the Word of God in some areas. Brother preacher, when you truly preach the *needed* truth, you can expect Diotrephes (if there is one) whose toes are smarting from your preaching to backbite you to others with faulty characterizations. Do not expect to remotely recognize these characterizations when you finally hear them. This will happen when it is

even *perceived* that the preacher strongly believes what God's standard teaches about: the sinfulness of all drinking of alcohol for recreational purposes, hoarding the Lord's money from God's designed purposes, the inordinate love of money, the sinfulness of mediocrity, the recreational use of tobacco, indirectly upholding false teachers, the sinfulness of dancing, immodest dress and other pet sins of some. Be it known that preaching **all** the counsel of God will bring the true colors out of the pious appearing unconverted types. Paul knew what it was like to have the truth twisted and therefore suffer "trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds" but he said

the Word was still not "bound" (2 Tim. 2:9).

So trust in God during the times of persecution and continue seeking to be a God pleaser (Gal. 1:10). Rest assured, in spite of the fact that you refuse to be a party to the good-ole-boy-network of the self-serving among us, you will receive the crown of life on that day (Jam. 1:12). While we may have the utmost and profound respect for the meek, faithful, dedicated, impartial, hardworking, sound preacher, the day that "contending for the faith" (Jude 3) is *messing up* is the day the accuser has *messed up*.

2128 Crystal Court; Cookeville, Tennessee 38501

*Make Plans to Attend:*

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*June 8-12, 1996*

## Voices From The Past:

From *The Apostolic Times* October 1945, Vol. 15, No. 2; page 19.

# WE ARE NO SECT

*Benjamin Franklin*

We belong to no sect or heresy, no "denomination," and recognize none in any sense, only as existing in opposition to the will of God—in a rebellion against the government of God. We know sects only as antagonistic powers to the law and kingdom of God. They are heretical and schismatical, in alienation to each other and to the kingdom of God. We find them in no complete union on anything of importance, except in opposing the gospel of Christ. In this they are a unit. Never did loving brethren more completely unite than they one and all do in this. One voice sounding out the gospel precisely as preached by the apostles, and propounding the terms of pardon as they came from the ambassador of Jesus (to whom He gave the keys of the kingdom of God), will silence all their jars among themselves, their differences and disputes, and bring them all around side by side, facing the common foe. It will call out their confusion of tongues, and the cry, "Lo! Here, and lo! there," will be heard on all hands. The cry is raised, "To your tents! Danger! danger! dangerous doctrine! Do not hear him! keep away! He will unsettle your views!"

Why are they all opposed to this? There is a very reason for it. It is opposed to all of them! In it's very nature it proposes to sweep them all away! It leaves not

an inch of ground for one of them to stand on!

We came not with a new doctrine, but with the gospel of Christ, a distinct entity in itself, not only having no fellowship with any other gospel, but pronouncing a curse on man or angel who shall preach any other, no matter whether near like it or not near like it—a perversion of it or mutilation. The gospel of Christ itself is the thing to be preached, and nothing else; the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; the preaching of the cross, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. To this nothing is added, and from it nothing is to be taken away. In this gospel, Christ, the "one Shepherd," is presented, and the one kingdom of God, or one body of Christ. All the followers of Christ are members of this one body, or citizens of this one kingdom. There are no "denominations" of them. They are all members of His body, citizens of His kingdom by faith, the children of Abraham, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, saints, holy brethren. They know no other king but the "King of kings and Lord of lords." Their King, in His times, will "show who is the only Potentate." Their King has no negotiations with any other spiritual kings. He puts them down—against Him.

He has no communications nor negotiations with Pope Pius or any other pope. He has no fraternal greetings for any of them; but His Father has sworn, with an oath, that He shall reign till He shall put down all rule and all authority and power—till He has put His enemies under His feet.

The kingdom of Christ recognizes no other kingdom. It is an absolute monarchy. Christ is the Monarch. He has [no] parliament, no senate or congress, no legislative body in His kingdom. As the rightful Sovereign and the absolute Monarch, He is the Lawgiver. His will is the law, as spread on the pages of Scripture—the absolute authority—and His subjects have simply to consult the law, ascertain what it requires, and obey it. They are not responsible for the law. They need not trouble themselves about results or consequences. Do as the Supreme Authority commands, and leave the consequences with Him. He is so wise, good and great, that He will bring all out right, for all those who put their trust in Him. His subjects stop not to counsel with those who have other laws, to compare them with the

law of the Lord Messiah, to see how near they are to His, or how far from it. Their business is to throw aside all other laws, and accept Him as their Monarch, and His law, and obey it! This is simply all there is of it. He who is not for Him is against Him.

The citizens of His kingdom have no authority from Him for negotiating with any sectarian party, about union with His people, comparing their views and determining how nearly they agree. He has left them no discretionary power to compromise with anybody, or to stipulate terms of union and fellowship. He has stipulated the terms for us all. If we comply with these terms He receives us, and we are bound to receive each other, and certainly will desire to do so. If we comply not with these terms He will not receive us. No man has a right to prescribe terms on which to receive any man. The terms are already prescribed in the law of the Great King. We must not go to man, but to the King, to know who shall be received. It is not a question whether **man** will receive us but whether the **Lord** will receive us.

## PROVERBS 4:23

*Shan Jackson*

We have all seen and heard of people who hesitate in their decision to become a Christian because of the strictness of God's will concerning their actions. In essence they seem to feel that the Lord's church would hem them in and restrict their actions so much as to limit their capacity to enjoy life. However, the truth of the matter is that Christ is even more strict than many people believe. Their concept of religion relates almost exclusively to the outward man, but true Christianity goes far deeper than that. The true Christian ideal seeks to regulate the action but also the thought, even to the intent of the heart. Henceforth, the statement of Solomon, which we are using as our guide, is conducive to our thoughts today, as he says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it [heart] are the issues of life" (Pro. 4:23).

### **SIN MAY RESIDE IN THOUGHT AS WELL AS ACTION**

The Bible speaks oft of a man's character. In another portion of the Proverbs, Solomon says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Pro. 23:7) which is simply another way considering our theme. Christ also taught this godly truth when He implied that anger with a brother, without just cause, is of the nature of murder. In fact, Christ taught that murder can be committed in

the heart without the physical deed being done, and so it is of all sins, therefore:

### **CONVERSION TO CHRIST REQUIRES CHANGE**

Our conversion to Christ involves a change of heart, mind, and conduct. God exhorts through the prophet, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts" (Isa. 55:7) and Paul, in Second Corinthians 10:5, makes plain our duty to "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." At our conversion our life and conduct underwent a godly change, but what about our thoughts?

### **THOUGHT PROCEEDS ACTION**

Generally speaking our deeds are predetermined. Seldom do we act (good or bad) without previous thought. Napoleon, a great military leader, considered for years his plans of action before he even amassed his troops. From youth to adulthood history shows him as a man of war, building mud forts and leading his playmates in the charge. Likewise, Christians need to make plans of attack. Just like one should not become a follower of Christ without thought, neither does one become a sinner without being a sinner in thought first.

In other words, thought may become sin long before the deed is accomplished. But, just because we cannot stop the birds from flying overhead we do not have to invite them to build nests in our hair.

### THE SIN OF NOT KEEPING THE HEART

The sin of not keeping the heart is a sin easily hidden from the view of others and a sin easily ignored by the person himself. Whereas as outward life is readily seen by others the inward life is open only to Christ's watchful eyes. Therefore, these two suggestions need be made. First, strive to avoid all things that allow for evil thought. An impure book, and unchaste picture, a suggestive movie, a tainted song, evil companions all

such things we must guard against simply because their influence bring a tendency to think bad thoughts, unfit for a child of God.

Second, a much better thing for a Christian is to keep bad thoughts out by filling the mind with good and wholesome thoughts. Bible readings, sound papers, church attendance and work, faithful companions, prayer, etc., all help to give us thoughts of which we need not be ashamed. It is possible to keep the Christian heart with such diligence that pure thoughts will not only be welcome but will soon become the habit of the mind.

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## "NEW WORLD TRANSLATION" AND SECOND PETER 3:10

Jesse Whitlock

Judge Rutherford, founder of Jehovah's Witnesses, attempted to explain away Second Peter 3:10 by saying that "the apostle is here using symbolic language." The passage states that "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be **burned up**." The *New World Translation* (NWT) has corrupted the text to read, "Yet Jehovah's day will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a hissing noise, but the elements being intensely hot will be dissolved, and the earth and the works in it will be **discovered**." Now let me say that there is a world of difference in a thing being **burned up** and a thing being **discovered**! Which had you rather hear: "Our dinner just got **burned up**!" or "Our dinner was just **discovered**!"

I recall the first time that I read this perversion of God's Word in Second Peter 3. The words that immediately came to my mind were the words recorded in Isaiah 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Later, it dawned upon me that this is the same error made by those who cling to the A.D. 70 heresy introduced from denominationalism to the Lord's church by Max R. King. Jehovah's Witnesses and the followers of Max King both have made the same error of judgment as pertains to Second Peter 3.

The words "burned up" are taken from the Greek *katakaio* which means "to burn up, to consume with fire." The Greek for "discovered" is *katanoeo*. The

scholars have stated, "discovered is strange and improbable" (Thayer). Also, "discovered obviously makes utter nonsense of the place" (Burgon). The evidence is highly in deference to "burned up."

The NWT, like the current A.D. 70 heresy, is not even consistent. The same Greek phrase is used elsewhere in the Scripture. Matthew 3:12 states, "but the chaff he will **burn up** with fire" (NWT). Revelation 8:7 uses the phrase three times, "a third of the earth was **burned up**, and a third of the trees was **burned up**, and all the green vegetation was **burned up**" (NWT). Why would they translate correctly in these four instances and then incorrectly in the only other occurrence of the phrase? Because Second Peter 3:10 stands diametrically opposed to Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine. This same place also stands diametrically opposed to the A.D. 70 error.

Not only is the NWT inconsistent in its translation (or mistranslation!)—it also contradicts itself on this very matter. Consider the wording of Hebrews 1:10 in the NWT. "You at the beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are the works of your hands, They themselves **will perish**." Then, within the context itself notice Second Peter 3:7 in the NWT, "by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now **stored up for fire**." Shades of contradiction—what shall it be? The A.D. 70 errorists are in league with the doctrine of Jehovah's Witnesses. Paul warned in First Corinthians 15:33, "BE NOT DECEIVED: EVIL COMMUNICATIONS CORRUPT GOOD MANNERS."

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# WRONG PRIORITIES

*Toney L. Smith*

I suppose that I should not be overly surprised to see various congregations of the Lord's church getting caught up in the "flow of modernism." But, I really am taken aback to observe how many are altering the worship to observe the "Holiday Season." It is just hard for me to think that the Lord's church would find it needful to adjust so as to accommodate denominational practices.

One congregation shortened the services "due to the need to be with families." Did I miss something, or isn't time spent in worship quality time in which families can be together? Why would anyone shorten or omit worship time together? The Bible is so plain as it teaches the need to train and direct our young. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Pro. 22:6). Some may feel that these verses do not pertain to the topic which is being addressed in this article, but I feel that they are directly related. How we train our children is very important! When we teach them that "religious holidays" are more important than worship we have made a grievous error. And make no mistakes, if worship to God is altered to accommodate holidays we have shown our priorities!

Has the church of Christ forgotten that it is not authorized to observe religious holidays? Have we forgotten that we are to observe every Lord's day the death, burial and resurrection (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-26)? This is to be our observance. It is God's plan for us to observe those things which are authorized. How can God's people be distinct and separate from the world when it allows a holiday to shorten and in some cases to cancel the "assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:24-25)?

Please do not think that I am saying that this lesson

should be ignored. Giving gifts, having festive get-togethers, meals, etc., does not mean that one is observing a religious holiday. Many observe this time of year without associating it with religion. This sort of observance is not practicing and observing Christmas as a religious holiday.

The point I would like to make to my brethren is this: When we make worship a convenience so as to observe the holiday, we have elevated holiday above worship. Some will say no. Then why was worship altered in favor of the holiday? The season can be enjoyed, but it should have no effect in our worship to God. It must not cause us to neglect or shorten our periods of assembling for worship.

I am truly thankful for strong, dedicated congregations and pray that we all will work so as to please God. Why not try to spend **more** time in our worship to God?

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



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

Volume XXV

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Number 3

## SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE?

*Burt Jones*

As have most citizens of this Country, I simply marched along in lock step to whatever fodder the bureaucrats and politicians chose to dispense to us sheep.

Recently, I was in a Bible study with an individual who has been living and working in the United States for several years. He is scheduled to take his oath of citizenship this summer.

Dear reader, very seldom have I felt so embarrassed, as when, in attempting to make a point concerning our freedom of religion. I was discussing the good and bad aspects of our "separation of church and state." The young man to whom I was expounding my knowledge of our government then asked an extremely disarming question: "Where is the separation of church and state discussed in the United States Constitution?" I replied rather weakly that I thought it was somewhere around the middle. He asked if it were an individual Article or a section within an Article. I replied once again that I thought the statement was somewhere around the middle.

The next week at the start of our Bible study this young candidate for Christ and country mentioned that he had looked all the way through the Constitution and its preamble and had been unsuccessful in locating the fact that we, indeed, have a separation of church and state. The only thing remotely similar had been in Article I of the Amendments to the Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to

petition the Government for a redress of grievances." And in Article IX: "The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people."

My reply to this young man was... "Oh!"

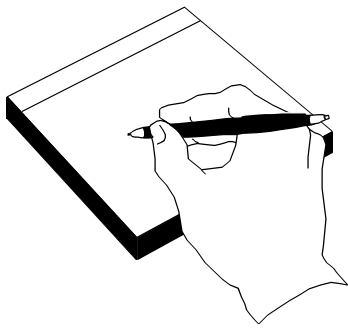
**Congress** is the subject of the First Amendment to our Constitution, NOT we the people. We did not, and do not, want Congress to have the authority to make a national religion. This amendment is clearly a prohibition of the national government; a restraint upon the **Federal Government** so as to protect **our** religious rights. The amendment never intended a separation of church and state. Article I of the First Constitutional Amendment was to act as a wall, if you will, keeping the **government out of our religious freedom** rather than the other way around.

Now, regarding that infamous, but all-too-familiar phrase, "**Separation of church and state**," it is found **nowhere** in the Constitution of the United States. The origin of this expression can be traced to a private letter written years after the writing and ratification of our Constitution. The occasion, in 1802, was Thomas Jefferson writing to the Danbury Baptist Association, reassuring them that, in no way should they have any concern about the federal government intruding on any religious group because the government and the church were totally separate.

One of the most revolutionary truths ever to fall from the lips of Jesus Christ were these: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Mat. 22:21).

*(Continued on page 3)*





# Notes From The Editor

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## Marriage

“Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). Marriage is a relationship that God instituted at creation for the benefit of mankind. In last months editorial, we studied what constitutes marriage. The man and woman must make the decision to live together as husband and wife, thus intending to get and be married. They must meet the requirements of God to get married and they must meet the requirements of the state. Upon meeting these requirements, God joins them together in the bonds of holy matrimony.

While the marriage relationship is honourable, precious, valuable, and esteemed; there are times when it is best not to be married. Paul discusses this type of a situation in First Corinthians 7. Because of “the present distress” (1 Cor. 7:26) it would be better to remain, as Paul, unmarried. He recognized that because of “the present distress” that those married would have “trouble in the flesh” (1 Cor. 7:28). However, even during these times it was not sinful to marry; inexpedient at the time, but not wrong.

There are also cases where an individual must remain unmarried. When the Pharisees tempted Jesus concerning the lawfulness of a man putting away his wife for every cause, Jesus gave the correct teaching. God designed marriage to be one man for one woman for life. Man is not to put his wife away (Mat. 19:3-6). They continued to press him, since Moses allowed them to give her a writing of divorcement and put her away. Jesus teaches that it has never been God’s intent for a husband and wife to divorce, “For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away” (Mal. 2:16). The disciples then state, “If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry” (Mat. 19:10). Jesus teaches them that not all can remain unmarried,

but there are some who cannot marry. “All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*” (Mat. 19:11-12).

John was involved with the situation of Herod and Herodias. They had married, but John told Herod, “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife” (Mark 6:18). They did not have the right to be married to each other, thus they did not have the right to get married. Since not all have the right to get married we must find out who has the authority from God to get married.

Those who have never been married have the God given right to get married. In the discussion of “the present distress,” Paul shows that those who have never been married have the right to get married. “I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn” (1 Cor. 7:8-9). Then he adds that “if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned” (1 Cor. 7:28). He additionally tells fathers of virgin daughters that they do well for giving them in marriage. “So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well” (1 Cor. 7:38).

A second group are those who have lost their mate by death. “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man” (Rom. 7:2-3). Paul also discusses this matter in the answering questions regarding marriage. “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39). Thus, if a couple gets married and one of them dies, then the mate who still lives has the right to remarry.

Then the one who put away their mate because their mate has committed fornication. The general rule is if you divorce you sin, commit adultery. “And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery” (Mark 10:11-12).

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery” (Luke 16:18). “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife” (1 Cor. 7:10-11; see also verse 39 above). Go back and reread Romans 7:2-3. These plainly teach that once you are married, you stay married; you divorce, you sin. Possibly we have been guilty of discussing the exception to such an extent we have forgotten the principle. The Bible does reveal an exception to this rule. When a mate commits fornication, God allows the one not guilty of fornication to put their fornicating mate away. “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Mat. 5:32). “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Mat. 19:9). The innocent party has the right, he does not have to, to put away the fornicator and marry another without committing adultery. God does not give that right to the guilty party, He gives the right to the innocent party and only the innocent party.

Those within these three groups: the person who has never married, the person who has lost their mate by death, and the person who puts away a fornicating mate have the right to marry. All others sin, commit fornication. They must, if they want to go to heaven, get out of any and all sinful relationship.

MH

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(Continued from page 1)

In that one statement He defined our relationship to the two structures that have competed for the love and loyalty of mankind through the ages.

The quest for political and religious liberty drove the first European settlers to this land. Here they established what had not been known in their mother country—the opportunity to worship God according to the dictates of their faith.

History has demonstrated the damage that is done when Caesar attempts to control **the church**. But, as Christians, we have a responsibility both to the state and to God. Daniel Webster said, “Whatever makes men

good Christians, makes them good citizens.” A man cannot be a good, Christian who is not a good citizen.

Because of my **first** birth, which happened to be in the great state of Alabama. I am a citizen of the United States and, because of my **second** birth which was in the cleansing waters of baptism. I am a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

My responsibilities as a citizen are very explicitly spelled out in His Word. I am to pay the taxes that are due my government (Mat. 22:17-21).

Second, I am to be a subject of my government recognizing that the government is ordained of God (Rom. 13:7). The exception to this principle is the application of Acts 5:29. “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

Third, I am to pray and give thanks for all those in authority with a view to a godly and honest life lived in quietness and peace (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Finally, I am to obey the ordinances of man, whether federal or state laws are in question. By so doing, I can silence the ignorance of foolish men (1 Pet. 2:13-17).

The influence of the government in the church is being widely felt. Big government appears ready to dole out money to any willing religious organization. Many, who for years complained about the Roman Catholics accepting taxpayer money to support and build their cause, seem ready now to admit that everyone is doing it; and without federal help, they cannot survive.

A college professor once told me, years before I became a Christian, that “If we don’t want the federal government telling us what to teach in our schools and colleges, then we had better pray to God that we find the means to finance those programs without their help.” He said, “The source of the money is the source of control.” I have noticed this over the years in every arena—the wealthy widow that dictated church policy—the rich man’s son escaping a proven drug charge—the ability of well-financed hate groups to sway public opinion.

Democracy is a page from the book of Christianity. Unfortunately, I feel that this page has been torn out, divorced from its Christian context and, in America, secularized.

The first Constitution actually drafted in the United States was the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, written in 1639. It pledged its signers “to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess.”

There is overwhelming evidence of the divine origin of government found in all fifty state constitutions. The Ten Commandments hang over the head of the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. “In God We Trust” appears on the walls of the House and Senate chambers.

In the White House, where our president lives, over a fireplace are these words placed there by John Adams, the first-president to live in the mansion: “I pray heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this White House and on all that shall hereafter inhabit it.” More inscriptions are found on buildings ranging from the Library of Congress to the Capitol rotunda to the Washington Monument.

Brethren, “the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9:17).

Today America is out of tune. She has gotten off pitch by removing God from government.

It is abundantly clear that the First Amendment clauses were prompted because the **people** were afraid that one religious group, or two, or more might come together and establish a religion to which they would compel others to conform. The framers of our constitu-

tion had no intention of eradicating a belief in God by the First Amendment.

Today the historic doctrine of the First Amendment to our Constitution is being perverted, violated, falsified, corrupted, prejudiced and distorted beyond anything our founding fathers could have imagined.

Only history will reveal whether or not those reading this article and others like them continued to allow our servants—those working in government—to divorce God from government.

*PO Box 985, Moundsville, WV 26041*

*Editor's Note: With the upcoming election and the realization that government is to be the servant of and for the good of man; we encourage all to become informed concerning the issues that face us and where each of the candidates stand on the issues and get out and vote. We must always remember that moral issues are far more important than social issues. God said, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34). Let us use the right that our government gives us to vote and vote to bring righteousness to our nation.*

## CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

*Steve Gunter*

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12). Inspiration demands that we contend for the faith. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). These words are a rebuke to a listless generation of God’s people.

The modern mentality urges a false union or merger among all religious organizations. This “peace at the price” attitude prevails far and wide in the church of our Lord. The man of God who determines to obey the inspired command to fight the good fight of faith may find himself fighting the non-fighters within the church more than the faithless foes who are ranged against the church in our secular and playboy world!

The Bible says our sword is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). The Hebrews writer said, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the

thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Paul said to Timothy, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

The Scriptures are propositional in form. That is they are either true statements (propositions) or they are false. The Bible presents arguments that prove the inspired propositions. Remember, an argument isn’t a nasty dispute, but rather it is the presentation of evidence in behalf of one’s belief or thesis.

I often assert to my hearers that the principle of “sufficient reason” guides our universe. The ancient question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” is the ground of the sufficient reason concept. There is something, i.e., a universe, therefore something greater than the universe created it. The material universe is the greatest contingent truth one may think of, outside that of the human mind itself.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Friends, we must renew our vigorous defense of the faith and of the sacred Scriptures if we are to restore apostolic Christianity.

*1202 Royal Dr., Bentonville, AR 72712*

# THIRTIETH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

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MARCH 31 - APRIL 4, 1996

## “THE APOSTLE PAUL: GREAT SOLDIER OF THE CROSS”

### Sunday, March 31

9:30-10:20 AM	Birth, Early Life, Education and Early Career of Saul of Tarsus	Eddie Whitten
10:30-11:30 AM	Saul a Prominent Pharisee and Persistent Persecutor	Steve Ellis
6:00- 7:00 PM	Conversion of Saul—Great Evidence for Inspiration	Garland Elkins

### Monday, April 1

9:00- 9:50 AM	First Missionary Journey	Glenn Hitchcock
10:00-10:50 AM	Paul—Defender of the Faith	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:50 AM	Wives, Be In Subjection to Your Husbands (Women's Class)	Corinne Elkins
11:00-11:50 AM	Paul's View of the Nature of Man	David Brown
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Paul's View of Truth and Inspiration Class 2: A Study of the Apostleship—and Paul Class 3: Paul and the Gospel Plan of Salvation Class 4: The Work Ethic in Paul's Writings	Gerald Reynolds Jesse Powell Eddy Gillpin Jerry Joseph
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	Lessons from Paul on Morality	Gary Colley
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: Paul in Athens: Discourse on the Living God Class 2: Paul's View of the Christ and of the Cross Class 3: Salute Priscilla and Aquila My Fellow-Workers (Women's Class)	Dan Jones Ted Clarke
2:10- 3:00 PM	Paul's Teaching on Benevolence and Church Cooperation	Irene Taylor
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Bobby Duncan
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	Garland Elkins
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATION SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Great Example in Prayer and Trust	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

### Tuesday, April 2

9:00- 9:50 AM	Second Missionary Journey	Kenneth Gossett
10:00-10:00 AM	Paul—Defender of the Faith	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:50 AM	Phoebe...A Servant of the Church (Women's Class)	Zelma McDaniel
11:00-11:50 AM	Paul's View of the Law of Moses and Judaizers	Virgil Hale
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Dealing with False Teachers in Paul's Writings Class 2: Paul's Teaching on Church Organization Class 3: Paul and the Name “Christian” Class 4: Authority in Paul's Writings	James Boyd Kent Bailey Joel Wheeler Waymon Swain
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:00- 2:00 PM	Lessons from Paul on Preaching	Harrell Davidson
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: Before Felix: Reasoning on Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment Class 2: Paul's View of Christ's Second Coming, Judgment Class 3: Eudoria and Syntyche, Be of the Same Mind in the Lord (Women's Class)	Melvin Hampton W. D. Jeffcoat
2:10- 3:00 PM	A Study of Election and Apostasy in Paul's Writings	Vada Rice
3:10- 4:00 PM	PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR	Dub McClish
4:00- 7:00 PM	Open Forum	Ronnie Hayes
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	Garland Elkins
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATION SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Great Example in Evangelism and Love	Tom Holland

### Wednesday, April 3

9:00- 9:50 AM	Third Missionary Journey	Jim Laws
10:00-10:50 AM	Paul—Defender of the Faith	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:50 AM	Women: Adorned in Modesty and Humility (Women's Class)	Lois Duncan
11:00-11:50 AM	Paul's View of “Unity and Diversity” vs. True Unity	Curtis A. Cates
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Paul's View of Grace, Law, Faith, Works, Love Class 2: Paul's Teaching on the Role of Women (A Male Chauvinist?)	B. J. Clarke
11:50- 1:10 PM	Class 3: Paul and the Seven Unities of the Spirit Class 4: Paul's View of Sin and its Consequences	Paul Sain
1:10- 2:00 PM	LUNCH	Jessie Whitlock
1:10- 2:00 PM	Lessons from Paul on Encouraging Young Preachers	Keith Dixon
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: Paul Before Agrippa: A Christian Soldier Just Like Paul	Flavil Nichols
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 2: Paul's View of Worship: Singing, The Lord's Supper	Roger Jackson
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 3: Women: Grave, Not Slanders, Temperate, Faithful (Women's Class)	Dan Goddard
2:10- 3:00 PM	A Study of the “Gospel” vs. “Doctrine” Heresy	Lavonne McClish
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Wayne Coats
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	Garland Elkins
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATION SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	Great Example in Encouragement and Endurance	Kenneth Randolph

### Thursday, April 4

9:00- 9:50 AM	Journey to Rome: Prisoner in Rome: Before Nero	Edwin Jones
10:00-10:50 AM	Women: Helpers in Christ Jesus in Molding Morality (Women's Class)	Annette Cates
10:00-10:50 AM	Paul—Defender of the Faith	Thomas B. Warren
11:00-11:50 AM	Paul's View of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage	Joe Gilmore
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1: Paul's View of Change Agents and Restructuring the Church Class 2: Paul's Teaching on Miracles and Spiritual Gifts Class 3: Paul and Financial Support of Gospel Preachers Class 4: Hope in Paul's Writings	David B. Jones M. L. Sexton Dennis Gullledge Robert Rawson
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	Lessons from Paul on Fellowship	Lindell Mitchell
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1: Paul and Philemon: A Study in Human Relations Class 2: Paul's View of Worship: Teaching, Giving Class 3: Honor Widows: Widows as Special Servants (Women's Class)	Toney L. Smith Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
2:10- 3:00 PM	A Study of the Bodily Resurrection in Paul's Writings	Jane Foster
3:10- 4:00 PM	Open Forum	Mac Deaver
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	Garland Elkins
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATION SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	The Old Soldier's Farewell	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

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

WATER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED

Appreciation dinner honoring Ira Y. and Vada Rice, for their years of dedicated service in the kingdom of Christ, Monday, April 1, 4:30 p.m. Make necessary reservations by calling 901-362-5139.

## Voices From The Past:

From *Christian Light*, August, September 1984, Vol. 4, No. 10; page 102, 108.

# SINS OF PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

*J. Noel Merideth*

There is the clear responsibility to preach against the sins of people in the world. The sins of the flesh, the inordinate desires of worldly things and the swaggering pride must be condemned. But at the same time there is also a need to preach against sins of people in the church. Sometimes people in the church listen to preachers talk about the sins of the world and tell the preacher to really step on their toes. But there are times when the preacher also needs to step on the toes of church members who are in sin. All preaching is to be done in the spirit of love and backed up by a "thus saith the Lord." But we do not need to forget to preach to the church.

### **Omission of Duty**

Omission of duty is a sin committed by people in the church. James 4:17 says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." How many times have you seen church members who ought to do good, could do good and just plain fail to do it? In Matthew 25:31-46 the judgment scene pictures those who should have done good but because they did not do it they will be lost. They will try to plead their case saying "Lord, when saw we thee ahungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." In the Old Testament the inhabitants of Meroz should have helped Deborah and Barak defeat Sisera. But because they failed to help it was written: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (Jud. 5:23).

### **Lukewarmness**

Some people in the church should repent of their sin of lukewarmness. They have lost their zeal and enthusiasm for the Lord and His work. The Lord wrote to the church at Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev.

3:15,16). Solomon says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecc. 9: 10). Paul writes, "and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (Col. 3:23). It is appalling to see preachers, elders, deacons, teachers and members drift into indifference and laziness.

Very few of our people read and keep up with what is going on in the church. As a result many are swept away whenever a new heresy comes along. Many good works go without support because brethren are just not that interested. One missionary said he did not think a letter from Jesus himself would get him a hearing in some churches for they never do mission work. Let us work with enthusiasm.

### **Compromise**

Some people who appear so good in the church will compromise and disobey Bible truths to please their relatives or friends. The Lord said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mat.10:35). Jude says we should "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Paul did not compromise with Peter at Antioch but rebuked him when he saw that he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel (Gal. 2:11-14). Paul also wrote, "but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).

### **Choked By World**

Some people in the church are choked with the cares riches and pleasures of this life (Luke 8:14). They let the affairs of the world get them down and pull them away from the Lord. Some get discouraged with all their cares and quit the church. Then there are those who are guilty of covetousness and the love of money. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). This world is not our home and we must lay up treasures in heaven (Mat.:19-20). To covet money is a form of idolatry; in fact Colossians 3:5 says "covetousness" is "idolatry."

## Envy

"Envy" is chagrin or discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another; resentful, begrudging. Envy pains and destroys a man like a knife in the chest, it splits churches and causes murders. Envy can shrink our circle of friends, ruin our business and dwarf our souls. Our personality and spiritual welfare are ruined by envy. Proverbs 14:30 says, "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones." We are not to envy sinners (Pro. 23:17). Neither should we envy our closest friends. Joseph's brothers were envious of him (Gen. 37: 11) and sold him into slavery. But in the end a perilous famine forced them to recognize his superiority. Envy is one of the works of the flesh that will keep one out of the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). Pilate perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered Jesus up to be crucified (Mark 15:10). Men with envy persecuted the early church and opposed Paul (Acts 13:45). Envy sometimes creeps into the hearts of church members. And "where envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work" (Jam. 3:16). Thompson said, "Base envy withers at another's joy, and hates the excellence it cannot reach." Friendships, happiness and our souls are too sacred and dear to be lost through the sin of envy.

## The Evil Tongue

Proverbs 18:21 says "death and life are in the power of the tongue." The tongue can be a source of bitterness or sweetness; good or evil. Jesus said, "And 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. 2:36-37). Solomon writes, "He that hideth hatred is of lying lips; and he that uttereth a slander is a fool" (Pro. 10:18). And, "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter" (Pro. 11:13). The evil tongue can do great

damage. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (Jam. 3:6). Colossians 4:6 says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one." We certainly need to watch what we say. A person can say more in five minutes than he can live down in five years.

## Division

Paul wrote, "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses 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). He besought the Corinthians "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). Solomon wrote, "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Pro. 16:28). One of the seven abominations is a person "that soweth discord among brethren" (Pro. 6:19). The spirit of the Christian is one of peace and harmony in truth. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God" (Mat.5:9).

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# Defender



*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Volume XXV

April 1996

Number 4

## “IT HATH BEEN SAID”

*Allen Webster*

There were many false ideas floating about in Jesus' day. Many thought the earth was flat. Jesus, as far as is recorded, never said otherwise. Others thought the sun revolved around the earth. He smiled to Himself. Their medical practices were woefully insufficient. He held His peace. Their geography maps were altogether wrong. He made no waves. They taught false ideas about religion. **He began to preach!**

It is interesting that He did not just go along with false religion to get along with His contemporaries. He confronted spiritual error because it was dangerous. One could go to heaven thinking the world was flat or ignorant of the western hemisphere. One cannot go to heaven disbelieving He was the Christ or practicing immorality.

Jesus went up into a mountain one day, sat down, and began to preach (Mat. 5-7). It could be called the “It-Hath-Been-Said” sermon for, in this lesson, He systematically stated false religious positions and corrected them. He was a man of love, but He did not find this inconsistent with refuting error. Actually, it was love for souls and truth that motivated such action.

Let's study an “It-Hath-Been-Said” lesson for today. It hath been said that “it does not matter what one believes as long as he is sincere.” Many today feel that all that really matters is being a good moral person. We do not, they affirm, have to dot all the “i's” and cross all the “t's” in religion to be accepted by Jesus.

**SINCERITY IS NECESSARY.** One must be sincere about his service to Christ. If insincere, no matter how much truth he practices, one is unacceptable to God (2 Chr. 25:2). Jesus condemned the hypocritical

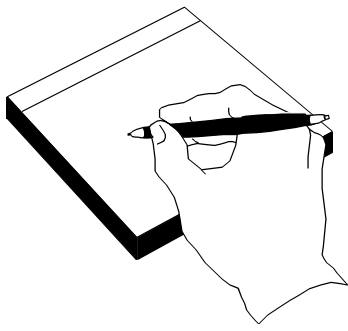
Pharisees saying, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mat. 15:8). He complimented Nathanael as being a man “in whom is no guile” (John 1:47). He practiced what He preached (1 Pet. 2:22).

Paul wrote, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a **pure** heart, and of a **good** conscience, and of faith **unfeigned**” (1 Tim. 1:5). Paul was sincere (1 The. 2:3-5). He asked the Corinthians to prove their sincerity (2 Cor. 8:8,24). He hoped the Philippians would be “sincere and without offence” (Phi. 1:10). God expects sincerity to characterize young men (Tit. 2:6-7), worship (John 4:23-24), preaching (2 Cor. 2:17), the Christian life (2 Cor. 1:12), and public relationships (John 9:16-17).

**RIGHT DOCTRINE IS NECESSARY.** The next question is, “Is sincerity **enough**?” Centuries ago, Christopher Columbus was warned of sailing off the earth's edge by those who honestly believed it was flat. It is believed that George Washington's life was ended prematurely by sincere doctors who thought bloodletting would help. John Wilkes Booth thought he was doing the country a favor by assassinating Lincoln. Hitler had similar feelings about ridding the world of Jews (Cox). Sincere? Yes. Wrong? Absolutely!

Does the same reasoning apply to religion? Most, when pressed, would admit that at least some tenants of truth are necessary for salvation. For instance, neither a sincere atheist (Psa. 14:1) nor a sincere Hindu or Muslim could be saved (John 8:24).

*(Continued on Page 3)*



# **Notes From The Editor**

**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## **Change**

The other day, I took my first golf lesson. I have been playing for years but never had a lesson. The instructor made several changes: stance, swing, movements, grip. As I was trying to implement these improvements, he mentioned that change is difficult. How right he was.

We hear a great deal about change today; both in society and in the church. It is not news to anyone that we live in a changing world. Things are changing at an alarming rate, and it does scare many. Examples of drastic and quick change can be seen in the field of technology, medicine, science, etc. By the time we learn one thing, we are already behind.

In the church, we have a group of men called change agents, because of the change they wish to bring about in the Lord's church. Allow me to establish at the outset that I believe in change and the need for it and the scriptural right to change.

The hope of salvation comes as a result of change. Jesus taught, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). He also instructed His disciples to preach repentance. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). The basic idea of repentance is change. It is first a change of mind that leads to a change of action. That change is not always easy, often very difficult to make. It was difficult for me to make all those changes in my golf swing, but hopefully, it will make me a better golfer. Only by individuals changing their lives can they live right and pleasing to God. That change is often difficult, but it is necessary. Yes, I believe in change, and desire to be a change agent (urge people to repent).

There are many things relating to the church where change is good. Sometimes changing the order of our

worship can be helpful and can be a teaching method. Teaching methods can and should change when we learn of some better or more effective method. The way in which many study the Bible has changed over the years. I, along with most preachers, have a computer. I have the Bible and many Bible books on my computer. Looking up a word in Strong's, Vines, Arnt and Gingrich is much faster on the computer than finding them in a book. I have the complete works of the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers on computer, as well as many of Alexander Campbell's works. It is much easier to find something on the computer version than in the book form. I am on the Internet (the information superhighway). I can only image the study and teaching opportunities on the Internet, which I have not learned. As the technology and methods change we need to change also, we must keep up to date. However, change just for the sake of change is not always the best. Often the older ways of doing things (traditional) are better than other ways.

There are things relating to the church which we cannot change and do not wish to change. No one disagrees with the changes mentioned above, although sometimes there is disagreement concerning what and how is the most expedient. However, the liberal change agents that have reared their ugly heads in the church want to change things that must not change. While God made some things optional (things we can change), there are some things obligatory. Those things God made obligatory cannot and must not be changed. What are those things that are obligatory? The Bible describes those as the doctrine of Christ (Acts 2:42; 2 John 9); the faith (Eph. 4:5; Phi. 3:9); the gospel (Rom. 1:15-17; 2 The. 1:6-9); the law of Christ (Jam. 1:22-25); the Word (Acts 3:22; 1 Tim. 4:5); the truth (John 8:32; 2 The. 2:10-12); the New Covenant (Heb. 8:8-13).

It is our duty to ascertain those things that are obligatory. Our determinations does not make something obligatory, God makes them obligatory, we simply determine what God has made obligatory. God reveals what is obligatory in three ways in the Bible: (1) direct statements, (2) implications, and (3) examples. While the liberal ungodly change agents in the church ridicule this method, the Bible shows this to be God's way. In Acts 15 the brethren gather regarding the Judaizing teachers who went out from Jerusalem. They were teaching that Gentiles must observe the Law of Moses and be circumcised. Barnabas and Paul withstood them. It was determined to go to Jerusalem about this question. In verses 15-17, James uses a direct statement,



quotes the prophet Amos, to show that God does not require the Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the Law. In verse 12, Barnabas and Paul use examples to show this. They spoke of the miracles and wonders God worked among the Gentiles by them. By this example, God shows that He approves the Gentiles without circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses. In verses 7-11, Peter uses implication to show God's Will in this matter. After rehearsing the conversion of the Gentiles, Peter draws the conclusion (implication) that God did not put any difference between the salvation of the Gentiles and the Jews (verse 9). Since the Jews were no longer under the Law of Moses and circumcision, the Gentiles were not either (verses 10-11).

While we see that using direct statements, implications and examples is the way these inspired men determined this question, is this way correct. We have affirmation that this is the way God expects us to use when we study Galatians 2 with these events. Paul, an inspired man, accepts the teaching given (Gal. 2:10). Thus, we know from God's Will that He uses this method (direct statements, implications and examples) in revealing what He has mandated. When evil men try to change these things, we must oppose them in the strongest, biblical ways possible. *MH*

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*(Continued from page 1)*

What does the Bible say? The man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath was sincere, but still displeased God (Num. 15:32-36). Uzzah was sincere when he steadied the ark of the covenant, but was still punished (2 Sam. 6:6-7). Saul of Tarsus was sincere when he persecuted Christians (Acts 23:1), but was wrong (Acts 9:4).

The Bible shows great concern for right doctrine. Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Mat. 24:4). Paul told Timothy to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3). Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat. 15:9).

**OBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY.** One might have the right doctrine, sincerely believe it, and still be lost. Obedience is necessary for salvation. Some Christians have the idea that attending a few services will save them. Sitting in a church building does not make one a Christian any more than sitting in a henhouse makes one a chicken! Obedience to God's truth and appropriating His grace saves!

Without obedience, one cannot enter the kingdom. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord,

Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21). There will be sincere people surprised by their verdict on Judgment Day (Mat. 7:22-23). Sadly, they will face flaming fire at Christ's second coming (2 The. 1:7-9; John 12:48). Jesus asked a question that needs to be repeated to many religious people today, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46; cf., 19:19-22). Some by their actions ask Pharaoh's question, "Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice" (Exo. 5:2). "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jam. 1:22).

Without obedience, one cannot be made free from sin. Paul said, "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" (Rom. 6:17). Note carefully that the Roman Christians were no longer sinners (servants of sin), because of two things. First, they obeyed from the heart—sincerity. Second, they obeyed God's "form of doctrine"—obedience to truth. In this context, the form of doctrine refers to Jesus being killed, buried, and resurrected. They had crucified the old person (lifestyle), been buried in water (baptism) and resurrected (from the water) to walk a new life (Rom. 6:3-4).

Without obedience, one cannot have a purified soul. Peter taught that sincerity, "rightness" in doctrine and obedience are required. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*" (1 Pet. 1:22). Notice salvation (purified souls) is attributed to obeying the truth (conformity to New Testament teaching). Further, Christians must practice unfeigned (unpretended) love and possess pure (sincere) hearts.

Without obedience, one cannot show his love for Christ (John 14:15). John said, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4; cf., 5:3). Truth sets men free (John 8:32); but only after it is obeyed (Heb. 5:8-9).

Watch out for "It hath been said." Trust in the words of Christ, "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

*P.O. Box 512; Jacksonville, AL 36265*

# Preaching God Demands

## Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures

### June 8-12, 1996

#### Saturday, June 8

7:00 PM	God Demands Logical Preaching	Bob Berard
8:00 PM	Preaching On The Worship Of The Church	Stanley Ryan

#### Sunday, June 9

9:00 AM	We Must Be Willing To Be Hated By The World And The Brethren	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:00 AM	Preaching On The Plan Of Salvation	Michael Hatcher
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	Micaiah As A Preacher	Clifford Newell
3:00 PM	Preaching On The Christian Life	Shan Jackson
4:00 PM	Preaching On Heaven And Hell	Mel Futrell
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	Preaching On The Church Of Christ	Ronnie Hayes
8:00 PM	Preaching That Turned The World Upside Down	Garry Barnes

#### Monday, June 10

9:00 AM	Amos As A Preacher	Eddie Whitten
10:00 AM	1, 2 Timothy, Titus	Wayne Coats
11:00 AM	Peter As A Preacher	Harold Bigham
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	Jesus The Master Preacher	Paul Sain
3:00 PM	The Work Of A Preacher	David Brown
3:45 PM	Open Forum Discussion	Curtis Cates
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	The Preaching Of Today	Garland Elkins
8:00 PM	Woe To Me If I Preach Not The Gospel	Harrell Davidson

#### Tuesday, June 11

9:00 AM	John The Baptist As A Preacher	Tommy Hicks
10:00 AM	1, 2 Timothy, Titus	Wayne Coats
11:00 AM	Philip As A Preacher	Bobby Liddell
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	The Changeless Message	Marvin Weir
3:00 PM	Exposition Of 2 Timothy 4:1-5	Gary Colley
3:45 PM	Open Forum Discussion	Garland Elkins
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	The Honor Of Preaching	Winfred Clark
8:00 PM	The Preacher's Message	Noah Hackworth

#### Wednesday, June 12

9:00 AM	Paul As A Preacher	Lindell Mitchell
10:00 AM	1, 2 Timothy, Titus	Wayne Coats
11:00 AM	Stephen As A Preacher	Buster Dobbs
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	Preaching On The Work Of The Church	Tim Smith
3:00 PM	Exposition Of Jeremiah 1:4-10	Dub McClish
3:45 PM	Open Forum Discussion	David Brown
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	Preaching The Old Paths	Curtis Cates
8:00 PM	Preaching On The Grace Of God	Guss Eoff

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 904/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). A motel is available nearby and is providing *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway; Pensacola, FL 32506) offers the following price (tax not included) \$40.00—1 to 4 people per room. Their phone number is 904/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this advertisement announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the *Bellview Lectures*. For those who have Rvs, a limited number of hook-ups are available on the grounds of the building. Contact the office to reserve a space.

### MEALS

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

### EXHIBITS

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

### 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.

### BOOKS

The Lectureship book, "*Preaching God Demands*" will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* and afterwards by mail. It will contain twenty-eight chapters and approximately 400 pages. Everyone who attends the *Bellview Lectures* will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

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

# LET'S GO SHOPPING!

*Bill Brandstatter*

America loves to shop. More and more shopping malls are being built every year. Let us go shopping for the latest spring attire. Only two stores are open Fredrick's and God's. As we shop ask yourself which store you would purchase your spring fashions.

Frederick's has all the latest fashions. Many of the clothes have been modeled by famous people. Buying clothes from Frederick's will put a person with the "in" crowd. Most of the clothes are immodest. There are the latest swimsuits in one section. Shorts can be found in another part of the store. Perhaps we can even find girdles like those made by Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8).

In God's shop only modest apparel is found (1 Tim. 2:9). The people who are clothed by God are sensible in dress ("sobriety" in KJV). The clothes are not costly, but are the kind Christians should wear. They indicate a godly life (1 Tim. 2:10). God designed these clothes long ago to take the place of the ones Adam and Eve made (Gen. 3:21). Not many people are shopping at this store any more. When a person is clothed by God, however, everyone knows the tailor.

Where would you shop; Fredrick's or God's? The women of Jerusalem no doubt would go to Fredrick's. Isaiah describes these women in the third chapter of the book that bears his name. The prophet writes, "Moreover Jehovah said, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet; therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion...In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents; the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers; the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume-boxes, and the amulets; the rings, and the nose-jewels; the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels; the hand-mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils" (Isa. 3:16-23). God regarded these vain and wanton women as a contributing factor in the corruption and fall of Judah. The ladies are pictured in a conduct and character that is contrary to the holiness and righteousness of God. Such also is the case today of the Christian that would desire to shop Fredrick's rather than God's. God was so displeased with the ladies in Judah that their fortunes changed. This resulted because they turned to the way of the world instead of God. James asks Christians "know ye not that

the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (Jam. 4:4b). What will your spring attire indicate to the world? Will you show the world you are a Christian, or are you with the "in" crowd? "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (Jam. 4:10).

*P.O. Box 338; Wood River, IL 62095*

Make plans to attend these Lectureships:

## **The Truth In Love Lectures**

May 15-19 Pulaski, TN  
"Strength For Daily Christian Living"

## **Bellview Lectures**

June 8-12 Pensacola, FL  
"Preaching God Demands"

## **Houston College Of The Bible Lectures**

June 16-19 Spring, TX  
"Isaiah (II)"

## **Power Lectures**

August 18-22 Southaven, MS  
"The Two Covenants"

## **Truth For The World Mission Forum**

August 23-25 Olive Branch, MS  
"Spreading Sound Words"

## **Annual Denton Lectures**

November 10-14 Denton, TX  
"Romans"

## *News Item:*

# Spreading Sound Words

"Spreading Sound Words to all the World" is the theme for the fifth annual **Truth for the World** Mission Forum, which will be held August 23-25 at the church of Christ meeting at 9100 East Sandidge Road in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Speakers include C. W. Bradley, Ken Chumbley, Winfred Clark, John Grubb, Paul Kidwell, Sr., Ian McPherson, Kevin Rutherford, Rod Rutherford and Ken Willis. Australia, England, Malaysia and Minnesota will be the mission fields highlighted along with lectures dealing with the media in world evangelism. Ian and Mabel McPherson of Hobart, Tasmania, Australia will be honored at a special dinner on Saturday for their outstanding contribution to the Lord's work. For additional information, please call (601) 895-9740 or write to: **Truth for the World**, PO Box 751135, Memphis, TN 38175-1135.

# INQUIRING OF BAALZEBUB

*Joe E. Galloway*

The book of Second Kings begins with Ahaziah, son of weak and wicked Ahab, reigning over Israel. Injured by a fall through the lattice in his upper chamber, he sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whether he would recover (2 Kin. 1:2). Under instruction from the angel of the Lord, Elijah informed the messengers, and finally the king in person, that his injury would be fatal. Notice God's reason for this grim pronouncement: "Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, *is it* not because *there is* no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die" (2 Kin. 1:16).

Ahaziah had not been ignorant of the fact that the Lord had a prophet in Israel (2 Kin. 1:8). Instead, he had blatantly ignored God and His prophet because of his agreement with the wickedness of Baal worship. His attitude was that of his wicked father who had said regarding God's prophet, Micaiah: "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (1 Kin. 22:8).

Is there not an important lesson in this for God's people today as we live in a climate where many spurn the doctrine of Christ and the advice of His faithful servants for that of the denominational world?

## **Seeking Denominational Methods**

Many of us can well remember several years back when some among us became intrigued with some of the denominational mega-churches. Their growth had come rapidly through their "bus ministries." Faithful Christians had transported those needing rides to our services for years, and some congregations had used buses to expedite this good work. But, we had not experienced such spectacular, rapid growth! So, it was decided that we needed to go to these denominations to learn how to bring people to our services enmasse. Some were even so over-enthusiastic that they missed worshiping on Sunday morning with God's people in order to be present at these denominational gatherings to observe and learn exactly how this means could be used. This resulted in many dubious (and some outright, sinful) promotional methods being used to entice people to our services.

Forgotten was the method God had given to draw people to Him: (1) The death of Christ for us is the

drawing power. Jesus, discussing His impending crucifixion, said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me" (John 12:31-32). (2) Jesus explained that the Father draws men to Him by the teaching process. It is those who have been taught, and have learned the Father's will, who properly come to Him (John 6:44-45).

## **Using Denominational Teachers**

Some decided that showing films on the family, morality, etc., could greatly enhance our teaching on needed topics in the assembly, even when produced and narrated by denominational preachers. It was "reasoned" that the occasional false doctrine in these films could be explained when the film was shown (but, sometimes no correction was ever given). And it was falsely claimed that there is no difference in this from our reading commentaries, or singing hymns, written by denominational people.

Now we are learning of more and more who are bring denominational speakers into pulpits, or into classes, in person!

## **Following Theologians and Philosophers**

Before me is a book, purporting to be a theology for the 21st century church. It is written by two former gospel preachers. (I say "former" because the message now preached by them, as was the case in Galatians 1:6-7, is not another **gospel**, but a perversion.) Why would any follower of Christ think that the only way we can meet the demands of the 21st century is by a "clarified ecclesiology"? Has God, having given us the Bible, not given us a sufficient guide for **all centuries**? (See 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

At least 23 theologians and philosophers are quoted in this book, including Kung, Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, Niebuhr, and Berth. While I do not know the religion of every person quoted, the only one I can identify as a member of the Lord's church is Alexander Campbell (and the one quote from him is Campbell's quote of what a Seneca Indian supposedly said about religious division!).

In reading the book one can easily see the reason for citing this varied group of writers. The error taught regarding the kingdom not being the same as the church, the rejection of the restoration principle, the emphasis on the social gospel, the subjective, existential ideas regarding worship, and myriad other errors do not

come from the Bible, nor from God's faithful preachers of past and present generations. Instead, they come from these non-Christian writers!

### **Tragic Results**

Ahaziah lost his life because he inquired of Baal-zebub instead of submitting to God. Even more tragically, he helped accelerate Israel's departure from God which finally resulted in their national destruction.

The individual who turns to the prominent theologians and philosophers of our time suffers spiritual death. Peter wrote of "false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. 2:1). He then showed that "many shall follow their pernicious ways" and says that "their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Pet. 2:2).

*218 Pinecrest Drive; Greeneville, TN 37743*

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### ***Daniel Denham***

A third meeting was convened in Cookeville, TN, at the Northeast Church of Christ on February 26, at 7:00 P.M., to discuss the recent announcement by the Sycamore Church of Christ in that city to have Steve Flatt and G. P. Holt to conduct Sycamore's gospel meetings for 1996. Dozens of churches were represented by their elderships, preachers, and concerned members. An estimated 175 people total were in attendance. The meeting ran about two hours. The Sycamore eldership and their minister, Johnny Fox, were invited, but chose not to attend. An opportunity was extended to them to explain and defend the decision to use Steve Flatt and G. P. Holt. A number of congregations had previously informed the Sycamore eldership of their concern over that decision. The close fellowship of

brother Flatt and brother Holt with Rubel Shelly, the Nashville Jubilee, and Pepperdine University was presented, documented, and discussed. Some of the specific doctrinal errors taught by Steve Flatt were also presented and documented. Sycamore has been called upon to cancel the use of these men. A decision was made by the congregations at the meeting to purchase space and place in the local paper an advertisement, to be printed should the gospel meetings occur with these men (Flatt and Holt) conducting them, to the effect that the undersigned churches do not support, endorse, nor have any fellowship with the Sycamore brethren in these matters. It is hoped that the elders of the Sycamore church will repent of their decision to use Steve Flatt and G. P. Holt. These men are causing division and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 16:17; 2 The. 3:6; 2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11). It is the desire of the concerned brethren who met to encourage the Sycamore elders and their minister to stand with faithful brethren against the current digression embodied in the efforts of the Jubilee crowd and the self-appointed "change agents" seeking to restructure the Lord's Church. There exists no scriptural rationale for the Sycamore congregation to use false teachers supposedly to further the Cause of Christ. If that Cause is truly dear to these brethren, then repentance of their decision is the only logical and scriptural recourse. Sycamore has been the sponsor and leading exponent of the ONE NATION UNDER GOD campaign.

*736 Mtn. View Dr., Morrison, TN 37357*

*Editor's note: There are some who need to rethink their support of the campaign "One Nation Under God." Many sound brethren have supported them, not really knowing where they stood. This helps us understand just what this congregation believes and supports.*

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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

# Defender



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

Volume XXV

May 1996

Number 5

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A LIBERAL ARE YOU A LIBERAL?

*Gary L. Grizzell*

The word *liberal* is a word that brings to the mind different ideas from different groups of people. Sometimes the word *liberal* is frowned upon while sometimes it is embraced with open arms. The term may be heard today in someone's comment as follows, "He's (or She's) a liberal!" This may be used in the context of either politics or religion in our day and time.

It may surprise some but the word *liberal* is in the Bible. W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testaments Words* says of the words, *Liberal*, *Liberality*, *Liberally*—of one noun form: "denotes (a) simplicity, sincerity, unaffectedness...Rom. 12:8, 'simplicity'; ...2 Cor. 11:3...Eph. 6:5 and Col. 3:22, 'singleness'—(b) simplicity as manifested in generous giving, 'liberality,' 2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11 (A.V., 'bountifulness'...) ...9:13 (A.V., 'liberal')." A second noun form "is rendered 'liberality' in I Cor. 16:13, A.V.)." And the Greek dictionary goes on to point out that the adverb for *liberality* in James 1:5 reveals that God Himself is the gracious and liberal Giver.

Based on the above information, if we follow God's example we will be liberal givers, i.e., of our lives, time, finances, and influence to God's will and to Christ's cause. Jesus teaches to seek first the kingdom (Mat. 6:33).

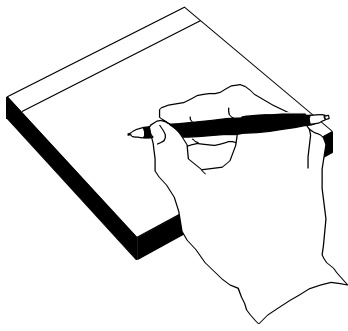
Vine also tells us of the word *liberally* in James 1:5 that: "The word may be taken either (a) in a logical sense, signifying unconditionally, simply, or (b) in a moral sense, generously."

Now, with reference to the common usage today of the word *liberal* as it relates to the field of religion *theologically* we will now turn our attention. The word *liberalism* has come to be used today to describe the unconditional surrender of respect for the authority of the Bible. It is an attitude of disrespect for what God has bound on men now living and with vain and puffed up arrogance displays itself as superior to those who believe the Bible to be the all-inspired and authoritative revelation from God. These are very liberal in their disdain for the miracles in the Bible, the supernatural origin and providential watch-care over the text of the Bible, and for the strictness of Jesus' teaching in regard to various subjects.

The following are a few of the characteristics of a modern day liberal—check these carefully to make sure you have not fallen into the trap of liberalism. A liberal today:

1. Is indifferent to personal Bible study since he reasons that God really does not expect him to be **that** serious about going to heaven and being spiritually minded (2 Tim. 2:15).
2. Finds personal prayer a chore instead of a joy and a heaven-given privilege (Phi. 4:6-7).
3. Thinks that teaching a lost person about the heaven to be gained and the hell to be shunned is to be left up only to preachers, elders and such (Mat. 28:19-20).

*(Continued on Page 3)*



# **Notes From The Editor**

**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## **Unchangeables**

God in His infinite wisdom made some things obligatory, and He also left some things in the realm of expediency, He made some things optional. In those areas of expediency and option man certainly has the right to change. However, whether we discuss obligatory matters or optional matters, we must have authority for all our actions (Col. 3:17). We must ascertain what God obligates us to do. While we have the God-given right to change in certain areas, there are certain things which do not change and it would be sinful for us to change. Some of these unchangeable things are what I want us to consider.

We must not change regarding the uniqueness of the church. There is one church and only one church. Jesus only built one church, His church, the church of Christ. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18; cf., Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16). "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*" (Eph. 4:4). That body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Those who are saved are added by God to this one church. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls....God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved [those who were being saved—NKJV]" (Acts 2:41,47). The result is that all religious groups (denominations) are opposed to the one church.

We cannot change God's plan of salvation and entrance into Christ's church. Upon hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:12-17) we must believe (accept the testimony of the Scriptures). "But without faith *it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God

must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6; cf., John 14:1; Mark 16:15-16). Upon his believe he must repent of his sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). He must confess his faith in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37). He then must be immersed in water for the forgiveness of his sins. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). These are things that do not change. However, we have some, change agents, who are trying to change these unchangeables.

We cannot change the worship of the Lord's church. Christ established the standard of acceptable worship. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Our worship must be directed to the Father; we do not worship each other, Mary the mother of Jesus, the apostles, or anyone else. Our worship must be done with the proper attitude, in spirit. Third, our worship must be done according to God's revealed Word, in truth. The Bible reveals five avenues through which we worship God. God has given us the obligation to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs one to another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15). He has obligated us to offer our prayers to Him (Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 14:15; 1 The. 5:17). Upon the first day of each week we have the opportunity to commune with our Lord in partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine in memory of Christ's death (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34). Also, every Sunday we have the responsibility to return to God what is rightfully His in giving of our means as He has prospered us (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9). Then there is the obligation of preaching and studying God's Word (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Change agents wish to change what God has outlined in our worship. They try to bring in choirs or add mechanical instrumental music to our singing, partake of the Lord's supper other days than Sunday, preach other things than God's Word (cf., 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:2), along with making many other changes. These things cannot be changed with God's approval.

The organization of the Lord's church cannot be changed. Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). As such, He has the right to control, dictate what takes place within the church. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto

me in heaven and in earth” (Mat. 28:18). Within the local congregation God established the works of the eldership and the deaconry. The elders have authority in the local congregation to make decisions relating to expedient matters within the congregation. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) Deacons are special servants to work in areas appointed to them by the elders (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). Some have tried to change God’s ordained organization by taking authority or refusing to submit to the eldership or preachers trying to take over congregations, etc. God established this organization and it will not change.

God’s Word does not change. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mat. 24:35). “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pet. 1:25). While men try to change and alter God’s Word, it does not change and on the day of judgment, we will face that unchangeable Word. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48; cf., Rom. 2:16; Rev. 20:12). Those who try to change the unchangeables will suffer the torments of an eternal hell. Do not be in that number. *MH*

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

4. Mocks true to the Book, faithful gospel preaching. The strong and sound pulpit is not wanted by this individual and should be cast aside as a thing of the past. Reproving, rebuking and exhorting preaching as Paul commanded in Second Timothy 4:2-4 is really to be interpreted as a mean ole’ hateful “preacher” who is out to get someone. True, balanced preaching (which pleases God!) is considered destructive and non-upbuilding to the liberal since his very perspective is perverted being based upon his very dislikes rather than the position of—“What kind of preaching does **God** want me to hear?”

5. Believes that God will not **really** do what He said He will do, that is, destroy in eternity those who do not obey His Son (John 12:48; 5:28-29; Heb. 5:8-9).

6. Believes that preachers are just “carried away” with themselves when they preach that men today can really **know** what the Bible teaches about the plan of salvation, what pleases God in worship and what the actual work of the church is (and what it is not). Of course these are sure and certain that they themselves

**know** exactly what **they** are saying. Consistency means little to those caught up in liberalism (see for reference John 8:32; Eph. 5:17).

7. Believes in the “pastor” system of denominationalism that the preacher is hired to do his visiting for him (or her). A preacher will do his visiting of the sick (and others), but because he is also a Christian. Yet, this same individual would not believe the preacher is hired to do his praying, giving on the first day of the week, singing, and other things for him (Gal. 6:3-4; Phi. 2:12).

8. Majors on minors doctrinally and is generally ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).

9. “Nit-picks” the faithful elders, preachers, and those sound in the faith generally. This may be done out of a deep-seated hatred for the truth of the gospel on some secret-of-the-heart issue. Yet, one who respects the authoritative words of Christ will spend that energy (with meekness) on those who are wayward and truly in need of correction (truly there is much to do) (Gal. 6:1; Mark 16:15-16; Mat. 28:18-20).

10. Will use anything that goes under the title, “Holy Bible.” This is the case though so many modern-day “versions” are no more than **perversions** of the inspired text of God’s Word. This person has never considered that Satan **has** done, **is** doing, and **will** do all he can to mutilate, corrupt, and misapply the text of God (Jer. 36:22-23, 27-28, 32; Mat 4:6). Is it shocking to us that Satan will try to gain control of translators? If so, why? The New Testament teaches us not to be ignorant of the devices (tricks) of the Devil (2 Cor. 2:11).

11. The modern-day liberal will always allow in himself (herself) that which he (she) disallows in others. For example, he **judges** you may not **judge** (John 7:24). He **argues** you may not **argue** and **debates** that you may not **debate** (Jude 3; 1 Pet. 3:15; Phi. 1:17). He **criticizes** the conservative **criticizer** for criticizing (Rom. 16:17; 2:1). He **knows** that you cannot **know** anything (John 8:32; Eph. 5:17). When such inconsistencies are pointed out to such an individual he usually becomes full of wrath, accusatory, and very little can be done with such a one.

12. One who is liberal does not like any discussion which exposes him (her) as a liberal, that is, exposes him as someone who disrespects the New Testament and its authority over our lives today (John 12:48; Gal. 6:2). He will cast this tract aside as just so much flak. Yet, such a discussion **is** necessary since liberalism has led



men to advocate false and damnable doctrines such as:

- Unity in diversity (The “Let’s just agree to disagree” attitude, but see 1 Cor. 1:10).
- That we are saved by grace alone or faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 11:8; Jam. 2:24).
- That it is not necessary to understand that water baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- That preachers who quote book, chapter and verse to prove that which they preach is from the Bible are silly to do such—yet, First Thessalonians 5:21 teaches to “Prove all things.” Inform the liberal of this passage and he mocks further not realizing he is really mocking God’s Inspired Word (Gal. 6:7-8).

And many other foolish and hurtful doctrines. Friend, only good doctrine will please God and save in eternity (Mat. 7:15-20; 2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11). Liberal preachers have no authority for what they preach and do not want to be asked to prove all things. Any wonder why they poke fun at preachers who do give Bible authority?

Those in the Old Testament who were doctrinal or theological liberals were “deeply” religious people like Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1). They offered strange fire (unauthorized worship) to God. Fire from heaven devoured them. This was written for the learning of New Testament Christians (and all others) today (Rom. 15:4). **Don’t miss the lesson!**—which is: God despises the liberal attitude (theologically or doctrinally).

**Liberalism** (theologically) in that religious realm seeks to loose where God’s Word does not loose in matters pertaining to morals, ethics, doctrine, MDR (marriage, divorce & remarriage) and religious practices (Gal. 5:19-21). It seeks to persecute all those who are advocates of being doctrinally sound in the faith and taking the Bible seriously. (The other extreme is **anti-ism**, that of binding where God does not bind which one also wishes to avoid, cf., Gal 5:1; 2 John 9).

This has been only a general treatment of the word *liberalism* but suffice it to say that if you are liberal in giving to God of your life, finances, energy, time, etc., then you are on the right track. However, if you are one who detests Bible authority and those who advocate it, you should repent now before it is too late (Luke 13:3). **Are you a liberal?** If so, what kind are you? Can you rejoice or are you in need of repentance? “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith” (2 Cor. 13:5).

*2128 Crystal Court; Cookeville, TN 38501*

*Editor’s Note: This article is in track form and may be ordered from Pillars Publications, 2128 Crystal Court, Cookeville, TN., 38501. Phone: (615) 432-6984. Brother Grizzell also has a new book available entitled: “Unscriptural Binding—A Current Discussion.” This is a written discussion on the subjects of Saints Only Doctrine, Church Fellowship Meals and the Orphan Home Issue.*

## “I CAN’T HEAR YOU!”

*Allen Webster*

As a child, do you ever remember putting your fingers in your ears and saying “I can’t hear you” to a playmate whose words you’d rather not hear? Stephen’s murderers did this (Acts 7:57). Does God ever “put His fingers in His ears” and say “I can’t hear you?” Sure He does. He’s not childish, but He’s not going to listen to some people. Hear are eleven men who can’t get God to hear their prayers.

**GOD WON’T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO IS HARD OF HEARING.** “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;...Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me” (Pro. 1:24,28). “Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law...therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not

hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zec. 7:12-13). A man who is deaf to God’s call (His Word), will find that God is deaf to his.

**GOD WON’T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO IS HARD-HEARTED.** “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard” (Pro. 21:13).

**GOD WON’T LISTEN TO A MAN WITH BLOODY HANDS.** “And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil” (Isa. 1:15-16). While it is unlikely that we might have the literal blood of others on our hands, isn’t it too common for a backstabber to try to petition God? Or one who is responsible, because of a bad example, for

the spiritual death of a brother (cf., Mat. 18:6).

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO WORSHIPS IDOLS.** "Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them...For *according to* the number of thy cities were thy gods" (Jer. 11:11,13; cf., 11:14). Americans are too civilized and enlightened to bow to an image of some bug or bull, but that does not mean that we have out-grown idols. We worship the gods of science, sex, and silver (cf., 1 Tim. 6:20; 1 Pet. 2:11; 2 Pet. 2:14; Col. 3:5).

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO WANDERS.** "Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them...When they fast, I will not hear their cry" (Jer. 14:10-12). The Psalmist prayed "O let me not wander from thy commandments" (Psa. 119:10). Paul condemned busybodies who learned to be idle, "wandering about from house to house...speaking things which they ought not" (1 Tim. 5:13). Jude spoke of some who were as "wandering stars" (cf., Amos 4:8) who had reservations in the "blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO MAN WHO HATES THE GOOD AND LOVES THE EVIL.** "And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob...Who hate the good, and love the evil... Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them" (Mic. 3:1-4; cf., 1 Kin. 21:20; 22:6-8; John 7:7; 2 Tim. 3:3). "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9b)

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO WILL NOT FORGIVE.** "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:24-25).

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO Wavers.** "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways" (Jam. 1:6-8). "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mat. 21:22; cf., Mark 11:24). If a Christian does not believe God can, and will, answer his prayer, he might as well not pray.

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO IS SELFISH.** "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts" (Jam. 4:2-3; cf., Luke 15:13,30).

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO DOES NOT HONOR HIS WIFE.** "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7). Can you imagine children who have been listening to their momma and daddy fussing, fuming, and fighting being called into the family room and daddy say, "Come on, kids its time for us to pray"? If one were so hardened as to try it, do you think that God would answer it?

**GOD WON'T LISTEN TO A MAN WHO IS DISOBEDIENT.** "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22), "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*" (Psa. 66:18; cf., Psa. 7:11).

A group of children was watching a man fill helium balloons at the fair. Occasionally, he would let one go just to hear the oohs of his audience. After watching all kinds of balloons go up, a little black boy asked, "Will a black balloon go as high as the others?" The wise man said, "Yes, son. It's not the color on the outside, but what's on the inside that counts." And so it is with our prayers. It's not the flowers of adjectives we may plant in our prayers, but the seeds of sincerity sown from a soft-tilled heart (Mark 7:6).

P.O. Box 512; Jacksonville, AL 36265

Make plans to attend these Lectureships:

**Houston College Of The Bible Lectures**

June 16-19

Spring, TX

"Isaiah (II)"

**Power Lectures**

August 18-22

Southaven, MS

"The Two Covenants"

**Truth For The World Mission Forum**

August 23-25

Olive Branch, MS

"Spreading Sound Words"

**Annual Denton Lectures**

November 10-14

Denton, TX

"Romans"

# Preaching God Demands

## Twenty-first Annual Bellview Lectures

### June 8-12, 1996

#### Saturday, June 8

7:00 PM	God Demands Logical Preaching	Bob Berard
8:00 PM	Preaching On The Worship Of The Church	Stanley Ryan

#### Sunday, June 9

9:00 AM	We Must Be Willing To Be Hated By The World And The Brethren	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:00 AM	Preaching On The Plan Of Salvation	Michael Hatcher
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	Micaiah As A Preacher	Clifford Newell
3:00 PM	Preaching On The Christian Life	Shan Jackson
4:00 PM	Preaching On Heaven And Hell	Mel Futrell
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	Preaching On The Church Of Christ	Ronnie Hayes
8:00 PM	Preaching That Turned The World Upside Down	Garry Barnes

#### Monday, June 10

9:00 AM	Amos As A Preacher	Eddie Whitten
10:00 AM	1, 2 Timothy, Titus	Wayne Coats
11:00 AM	Peter As A Preacher	Harold Bigham
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	Jesus The Master Preacher	Paul Sain
3:00 PM	The Work Of A Preacher	David Brown
3:45 PM	Open Forum Discussion	Curtis Cates
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	The Preaching Of Today	Garland Elkins
8:00 PM	Woe To Me If I Preach Not The Gospel	Harrell Davidson

#### Tuesday, June 11

9:00 AM	John The Baptist As A Preacher	Tommy Hicks
10:00 AM	1, 2 Timothy, Titus	Wayne Coats
11:00 AM	Philip As A Preacher	Bobby Liddell
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	The Changeless Message	Marvin Weir
3:00 PM	Exposition Of 2 Timothy 4:1-5	Gary Colley
3:45 PM	Open Forum Discussion	Garland Elkins
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	The Honor Of Preaching	Winfred Clark
8:00 PM	The Preacher's Message	Noah Hackworth

#### Wednesday, June 12

9:00 AM	Paul As A Preacher	Lindell Mitchell
10:00 AM	1, 2 Timothy, Titus	Wayne Coats
11:00 AM	Stephen As A Preacher	Buster Dobbs
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
2:00 PM	Preaching On The Work Of The Church	Tim Smith
3:00 PM	Exposition Of Jeremiah 1:4-10	Dub McClish
3:45 PM	Open Forum Discussion	David Brown
<i>Dinner Break</i>		
7:00 PM	Preaching The Old Paths	Curtis Cates
8:00 PM	Preaching On The Grace Of God	Guss Eoff

## Bellview Lectures Information

### HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 904/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). A motel is available nearby and is providing *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway; Pensacola, FL 32506) offers the following price (tax not included) \$40.00—1 to 4 people per room. Their phone number is 904/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this advertisement announcing this special rate, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the *Bellview Lectures*. For those who have RVs, a limited number of hook-ups are available on the grounds of the building. Contact the office to reserve a space.

### AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

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

### MEALS

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

### 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.

### EXHIBITS

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

### BOOKS

The Lectureship book, "*Preaching God Demands*" will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* and afterwards by mail. It will contain twenty-eight chapters and approximately 375 pages. Everyone who attends the *Bellview Lectures* will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

# INTRODUCING THE CHURCH

*Douglas Hoff*

When discussing a new subject it is wise to introduce the material properly. God in His wisdom gave mankind a thorough introduction to the church. Even though the word church does not occur in the Old Testament, the Israelites were told about a coming kingdom (2 Sam. 7:12-17). David and the people could relate to this promise since they had already been ruled by king Saul for forty years. About three hundred years after David's time the prophet Isaiah foretold the establishment of the Lord's house (Isa. 2:2-3). Later, Daniel told of the future kingdom of God (Dan. 2:44).

In the New Testament the word church first appears in Matthew 16:18. The concept of the church was developed even before Jesus explicitly mentioned the word "church." As the forerunner for Jesus, John the Baptist had been teaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Mat. 3:1-3). Shortly after His baptism, Jesus also began teaching about the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 4:17). Much of the Sermon on the Mount deals with the kingdom (e.g., Mat. 5:3,10; 6:10). Every chapter from Matthew 4 through 13 mentions the kingdom of heaven.

Having introduced the coming kingdom it was reasonable for Jesus to expect His disciples to see that the church and the kingdom are the same thing (Mat. 16:18-19). After Jesus issued His promise of building His church, the disciples did not ask the Lord to what He was referring. They saw the connection even though they did not fully understand God's plan regarding the establishment of the church.

Shortly before Jesus ascended back into heaven the apostles were still thinking of the church as an earthly kingdom. They asked the Lord if He was going to **restore** the kingdom to Israel. It was only natural for them to think this; their concept of the kingdom was

firmly rooted in Old Testament history. Well established patterns of thought are hard to change.

Though some similarities exist between the church and the Old Testament kingdom, the nature of the church is radically different. Through inspiration Peter was able to correctly declare the gospel on the day of Pentecost. About thirty years after this sermon was preached the historian Luke was able to record that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). The Bible does not reveal whether Peter mentioned the word church when he exhorted his hearers to be saved (Acts 2:40). However, a study of Acts 2 quickly reveals that Peter was using the keys which Christ had earlier promised him (Mat. 16:19). He had introduced God's promises regarding the throne of David and powerfully showed that these promises were fulfilled in Jesus. While Peter may not have specifically mentioned the church on the day of Pentecost, he surely did later (1 Pet. 5:13).

God carefully introduced the church to the Jews and yet they still misunderstood it. It took inspiration for Peter to accurately declare the counsel of God on Pentecost. Today, people still need the inspired Word of God to give them a proper understanding of the church's true nature. It would be good to remember how long the disciples, including Peter, persisted in a flawed view of the church. This may help us to remember that we need to carefully introduce the church to the world and still expect misunderstandings.

*Route 1, Box 91 Scio, NY 14880*

*Editor's Note: Since one must have a correct understanding of the church prior to baptism (Acts 8:12), Peter did teach those on Pentecost about the church, even though he might not have used the term.*

**Defender** is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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

# Defender



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

Volume XXV

June 1996

Number 6

## CHRISTIAN SUPPORT ON MORAL ISSUES

*Larry D. Mathis*

The people of God have always had to face great moral issues. And so it is today. We are urging individual Christians to help us fight all corrupting influences of our society. Of all people on earth, Christians should stand up for what is right. The church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). It is not simply the responsibility of a handful of preachers and elders, it is the obligation of every member of the body of Christ to do so. Until the members of each local congregation accept this challenge, the church will never reach her full potential for good among men. A better world begins with **me**. If Christians do not support the truth on moral issues, who will?

What choices are before us? We can ignore the issues. Such, of course, is foolish thinking. We could simply surrender. Such is unthinkable! We can stand up and fight for what is right. This is what God would have us to do: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12).

By "support" we mean that Christians are to uphold and defend the truth on moral issues. They are to lend assistance or help to those who are fighting for the right. They are to serve as a foundation or prop for those who are teaching the Word of God. They are to keep the truth going themselves. Our support must be more than a wringing of the hands. It must be more than a pessimistic outlook on what the world is "coming to"! It must be more than an occasional, timid sermon on such issues. An emotional outburst in a church bulletin or a brotherhood journal will not suffice. We must put

our words into action.

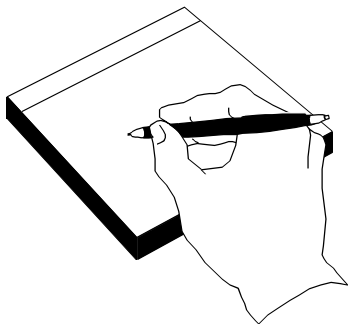
In our efforts to support the truth on moral issues, we must constantly remember that the ethical code of Christianity came from God and not from men. All moral questions must be tested by the Divine Standard. While the thinking of the masses may have changed on moral issues, the teachings of the Bible forever remains the same.

### **The Christian Is Different From The World**

To be pleasing to the heavenly Father, the Christian cannot be neutral on moral issues. He must take a stand. The child of God is "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). There are many passages dealing with this issue in the New Testament. For instance, the Christian is commanded, "Love not the world" (1 John 2:15-17), and to keep himself "unspotted from the world" (Jam. 1:27). The apostle Paul wrote, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17). Again he wrote, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). Peter warned, "abstain from fleshly lust which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11-12), and Paul told the Thessalonian Christians to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 The. 5:22).

Encouragement is also given to the Christian. In Colossians 3:2 we read, "Set your affection on things above," and Paul encourages, "let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phi. 1:27). "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"

*(Continued on Page 3)*



# **Notes From The Editor**

**Michael  
Hatcher**

Email address:

## **Battle**

Paul teaches us that we are in a battle, a fight, and describes us as soldiers in the army of Christ. Paul encourages us to “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12). Notice the charge or command he gives Timothy and us. “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare” (1 Tim. 1:18). Jude teaches us “that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Paul would likewise encourage the Ephesians to “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). He knew that we are in a battle with Satan and all his forces. Paul was faithful in that battle so he could say at the close of his life, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).

We are in a life and death struggle, battle, for the mind of man. One evidence of this battle is seen in the question of the origin of man. Satan has convinced millions that man simply evolved from lower life forms—man is not the creation of God, but exist because of blind chance. Satan has already won the fight with many and is winning more to his side constantly. Anytime someone advocates allowing creation to be taught in schools, most scientists fight arduously to keep any “religion” out of the classroom.

We are in a fight with Satan over moral issues. The list we could discuss here is long. To mention just a few, we begin with abortion. Since the supreme court legalized abortion, Satan has worked overtime to convince people that nothing is wrong with murdering the fetus. Today we are faced with about 1.5 million

legalized murders every year. Anytime there is an attempt to put a stop to it or even slow it down, thousands get up in arms declaring it is the woman’s right. Immodesty to the point of pornography is another battle. Satan has been so successful that many today do not realize that magazines like *Playboy* or *Penthouse* are pornographic. Additionally, even many members of the Lord’s church no longer realize what God’s definition of nudity is (see Isa. 47:2-3; when there is the uncovering of the thigh). Much of the modern clothing and virtually all swim wear are immodest, yet many Christians have been swayed into Hollywood styles instead of God’s styles. Then there is fornication in all its forms. Homosexuality is being accepted as an alternate life style instead of what it is—sin. Fornication is advocated for the youth of America, all they need to do is make sure it is “safe sex.” Often the formula for trouble in a marriage is for one or the other partner to commit adultery. Seldom is heard the need for purity both before and during the marriage relationship. Gambling has become the national pastime, especially in the form of lotteries. The majority of Americans now admit to lying. We could discuss many other moral issues, but these show the point. We are in a battle with Satan over the mind of man whether to live according to the moral precepts of God or to live immoral lives.

We are also in a war with the Devil over the doctrine of Christ. False teachers have perverted the gospel of Christ since it was given. Paul warns us of this, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1). There is the truth, that which is revealed within the pages of the New Testament (see John 17:17). Anything that is different from the truth is false doctrine and thus the doctrine of the Devil. For years we have fought the denominations over the false doctrines they have taught. We using the truth of God’s Word showed the plan of salvation; the proper worship, work, and organization of the church and its uniqueness (that there is only one church). We constantly preached on these and other subjects pointing out false ways and showing the right way. We recognized we were in a battle and most were happily engaged in the fight for right and truth. However, we slowly began to change, to “come across the tracks.” We did not want to offend our friends in denominations, so we “toned it down.” We “converted” people from the denominations, but they brought their denominational beliefs with them. Slowly over time, the same errors that denominations were involved in were

brought into the church and accepted by many. We now are in a battle with some of “our own” who are now teaching the same denominational tommy-rot we defeated years ago. We have “our” Rubel Shelly’s, Max Lucado’s, Buddy Bell’s, Joe Beam’s, Jim Woodroof’s, Denny Boltinghouse’s, et.al., who are teaching denominational doctrines (salvation by grace only, faith only, open fellowship with denominations, kingdom and church not the same, social gospel, Lord’s Supper on any day of the week, elders have no authority, women becoming elders, deacons and preachers, etc.). We are in a fight against the liberals who have infiltrated our number. However, many individuals do not even realize we are in this battle. They have sat on the sidelines for years and continue to do so today. They would never put up with what the liberals want to do to the Lord’s church, but they will not do anything to oppose them (to enter the battle, do what God says). By their silence and inaction they are supporting the cause of the liberals destroying the church. There are others who are finally realizing what is happening and now want to get involved. We are thankful that they are starting to get involved, but we also wonder why it took them so long. If they had taken a stand years ago we might have been able to stem the tide of this great apostasy. We need all individuals; elders, deacons, preachers, every member, to join the battle against these liberals.

There are many sound brethren who have been fighting the liberalism and false teachings for years. We are thankful for sound brethren who have been able to realize liberalism and those who are liberal and have been battling them. Many will be saved from the clutches of error because of men such as this. However, some in their defense of the truth have aimed their guns at other sound brethren. Some are willing to break fellowship with other faithful brethren over matters that should never sever fellowship between brethren. One of those issues among us today is the matter of women translators. One brother (who opposes women translators) wrote, “due to the enormity of the problem and the potential for a serious break in fellowship...” Others have expressed to me that this either will be or is a matter of fellowship. While there are good brethren who disagree on this matter, it should not be a matter of fellowship. If one opposes the use of women translators, then they do not have to use such; no one is forcing them to use them (I do not know of many, if any, places where they are being used today). Another example is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit question. I am not discussing how the Spirit works but how He dwells in

us. There are again some who are so opposed to the personal indwelling view that they will not fellowship those who hold this position. These are but two examples we are seeing among faithful brethren today.

Brethren, when Satan gets us to divert our attention from the real enemy and center our attention on one another, he will win the battle. We need to learn the lesson Paul expressed to the Philippian brethren. “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand” (Phi. 4:5). We also need to learn another important lesson. “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15). Brethren, we are biting and devouring one another to such an extent that liberals are having a hey-day. They ridicule us and the fact that we cannot even get along with each other, and in many cases they are right. Brethren, let us take aim at the real enemy and quit trying to destroy one another. *MH*

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

(Tit. 2:11-15). “That ye [we] may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye [we] shine as lights in the world” (Phi. 2:15). “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9), “as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:14-16). And finally, “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

Dear Christians, are you willing and ready to fight all moral evil? If not, you will answer to God for your decisions on judgment day.

### **Some Things Christians Can Do**

First, Christians should try to learn what the issues are. We need to become informed. Blind zeal is seldom productive and often destructive (Rom. 10:2). Make sure that each matter under consideration is really a moral issue, and not just a “hobby” or an opinion of some radical brother. Second, carefully and prayerfully consider what should be done in each particular case. Then, to the best of your ability, do what is right. Third, join hands with others who have launched a Christian counterattack against moral corruption. Fourth, pray for leaders in the church who stand up for the truth. We need men who will publicly lead the members into

affirmative action. Let them know that they have your support. Fifth, ask the elders to bring in qualified Christian leaders to educate and inform the congregation. Sixth, be willing to invest your funds in this fight. Seventh, honor church discipline. Withdraw fellowship. Do what God said to do in this matter.

### **Some Things Preachers Can Do**

The local preacher needs to convince the brethren of the great importance of their being supportive of his preaching on moral issues. He needs to make sure that he is really identifying real moral issues and not riding a hobby or promoting personal opinions.

He should preach enough on positive things that Christians should do (those things that are good and right) that when he preaches against things which are immoral, the members will respectfully listen and be convinced that they should support his preaching. Our preaching must be both positive and negative, but a preacher could be so negative all the time that brethren reach a point that they are apt to ignore him!

Preachers should stress that the moral guidelines of God's Word came from the infinite mind of our Maker. All the restrictions He places on us in the Bible are for our good and protection. Our God knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows that certain things will hurt us and even destroy us. Moral living is a matter of trusting God. It is believing that God knows what is best for us, and that He knows what will hurt us and destroy us. Jesus came that we might have life more abundantly. He did not come to deprive us of the "good life" (John 10:10). Living rightly profits us in this life (1 Tim. 4:8).

### **Some Moral Issues Of Concern**

The following is but a sampling of the many moral issues we face today. All Christians must rise to the occasion and take a stand against these evils.

**Profanity.** Vulgar language is a great problem in our society. It is a degrading sin against God. Those who swear bring contempt upon God, offend others and belittle themselves. Christian, "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; cf., Exo. 20:7; Lev. 24:15; 19:12; Mat. 5:34,37; 12:36-37; Rom. 12:14).

**Pornography.** Christians are to think on things that are pure (Phi. 4:7). Pornography will not help us to obey this command. Pornography promotes all types of sexual sins. It distorts sex from its God-given purposes into vulgar lust. It exploits women. It promotes crimes

of rape, violence and murder. It even promotes sexual abuse of children (see Heb. 13:4; 1 The. 4:3-8; Mat. 5:27-28; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3).

**Abortion.** Abortion clinics show a low view of human life. A fetus is a human being from the moment of conception. Since a fetus is a human being, it must possess a soul. The Bible makes no distinction between a fetus of two weeks, ten weeks or twenty weeks, but refers only to a child in the mother's womb (Psa. 139:13-16; Luke 1:41,44). An induced abortion constitutes murder and violates God's law on the sanctity of life (cf., Exo. 20:13; Mat. 19:18; Rom. 13:9).

**Dancing.** Dancing amounts to lasciviousness and is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Anything which has the tendency to arouse unlawful desires in an individual is lasciviousness. The word means "wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." One guilty of lascivious conduct must repent of it (2 Cor. 12:21). Paul not only said that the specific things he mentioned would keep people out of heaven, but "such like" (Gal. 5:21), things like that which he had just mentioned.

**Social drinking.** Christians (of all people) should be the last ones to affirm "social drinking." But some are doing so today. We are told, "Social drinking is okay; drunkenness is what is condemned in the Bible." The truth of the matter is, drunkenness is a matter of stages or degrees. People begin to be drunk when they begin to drink! If it takes six beers to make one drunk, then one beer makes him one-sixth drunk. There has never been an alcoholic who didn't take his first drink (see Pro. 20:1; 23:29-32).

**Adultery.** Unscriptural marriages are a great problem in society and in the church. However, such "marriages" cannot be continued in with God's approval. We must ever teach that God recognizes only one reason for divorce, whether it be saint or sinner, and that is for fornication (Mat. 19:9). The church is allowing the world to influence her, and the worldly view of marriage and the home is attempting to fill the church with adulterers and adulteresses. Bible teaching does not allow a New Testament church to tolerate fornication in its midst. Study First Corinthians 5 carefully. Members of the church must take a stand against adultery and all sexual sins.

**Indecent clothing.** God's standard concerning modest apparel applies to both men and women—there is no double standard in purity! Christians must not



“ape” the world in the wearing of immodest apparel. Paul said Christians should be adorned in “modest apparel” (1 Tim. 2:9). This means to be “well arranged, seemly, modest; respectable, honorable,” that which may “be regarded as genuinely moral and respectable.” Now, what about the woman who dresses in such a way that she invites men to lust after her? Is she free from blame? How does your clothing identify you? As a child of God, or as a child of Satan? The Christian’s body

must not become an instrument of lust (1 Cor. 6).

### Conclusion

God’s people must stand up and fight against all moral evils. God has given us His Word to direct us. We cannot afford to be neutral or indifferent. God seeks for men to “stand in the gap” and fight the enemy (Eze. 22:30). Let every dedicated Christian rally to support the truth of God on all moral issues.

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## THE HIGH VALUE OF SACRIFICE

*James McIntyre*

One does not read too far into the pages of the Old Testament before he reads about men sacrificing to God. We read of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:3-4), Noah (Gen. 8:20), and Jacob (Gen. 31:54) offering sacrifices to God. Moses told Pharaoh to free his people so they could make sacrifices unto God (Exo. 5:3). Throughout the remainder of the Old Testament, one observes the sacrifices which God required of His people. As Christians, we are commanded to offer sacrifices unto God as well. Peter wrote, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5).

What is meant by the term “sacrifice” and what are we to sacrifice? One definition for sacrifice is “the forfeiture of something **highly valued** for the sake of one considered to have a greater value or claim.” We are to forfeit those things which are of high value to us for the sake of our Lord who we most certainly consider to have a greater value or claim. We are commanded to present our bodies as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1). All of us would consider our physical bodies to be of “high value.” The giving of our money to the Lord is also referred to as being a sacrifice (Phi. 4:18) or an offering (Rom. 15:2,16). Again, we look upon our money as something which is of “high value.” Although we do not esteem our money above God, our families, or our spiritual blessings which we have in Christ, it is nonetheless of “high value” to our lives. We need it to live. Remember the words of the wise man, “A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all *things*” (Ecc. 10:19). We should understand that God demands that we give Him our best, those things which are highly valuable to us.

Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God

means that we quit the sinning business. Our bodies appear blemished in the sight of God when they have been dirtied by the stain of sin. God required His people under the old law to offer sacrifices which contained no blemishes (Deu. 15:21; 17:1). Christ desires His church to be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27). The sacrifice of our bodies as living sacrifices will not be accepted if they are blemished with the stain of sin. Let us flee those things which could possibly stain the purity of our bodies (1 Cor. 10:13). If we flee evil we must follow after righteousness. In order that our bodies may be presented as an acceptable living sacrifice to God let us follow the charge which Paul gave to Timothy: “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). Let us look upon our bodies as being of “high value” and flee those things which might corrupt them and pursue those things which will preserve them.

Offering to God our financial gain as a sacrifice involves giving with the right attitude and with an abundant amount. Paul spoke of our attitude in giving when he said, “For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor. 8:12). Perhaps, we have stressed too often the attitude and not the amount. Many people are very content to give only three or four percent of their income to the Lord; yet, they spend that much or more on dining out weekly and/or on pleasures. God has **never** commended anyone for being covetous! Covetousness is a sin (Col. 3:5). We are to give to God out of our want, not out of our abundance (Mark 12:44). It is when we are willing to sacrifice those things we want and give them to the Lord that we will be commended by Him! God desires that we will learn the art of Christian sacrifice by sacrificing those things

which appear to be of “high value” to us so that we can receive those things which are truly valuable. We need to let go of our pocketbooks and the things of this world so that our hands may be free to grab hold of the treasures and pleasures of heaven.

Let us remember that sacrifice involves “the forfeiture of something **highly valued** for the sake of one considered to have a greater value or claim.” When we remember this all important fact and demonstrate it in our presenting our bodies as living sacrifices and our

purses as generous offerings, then we will have freed ourselves from the stranglehold of selfishness and covetousness. God’s face then will smile upon the sacrifices which we offer and we can be remembered as Abel was of whom it was said, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4).

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## ISAIAH SPEAKS TO AMERICA

*Bill Brandstatter*

Isaiah is often referred to as the “Messianic Prophet.” Of all the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah writes more about Christ than any other. He also wrote a commentary on the times and on ours today as well. Solomon asked before Isaiah: “Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us?” (Ecc. 1:10). Basically, Solomon states that history repeats itself. We need to learn from what Isaiah wrote to Judah. Isaiah’s message for Judah is also one for America.

In chapter five, several woes are pronounced on Judah that need to be examined. These are woes directly related to the sins of the nation of Judah and its prosperity. The fate of wicked men then and now can be plainly seen.

**The first woe is to greedy land barons.** “Woe unto them that join house to house” (Isa. 5:8). There are many today like this. Their whole being is consumed with the love for more and more money, no matter how they get it. They buy more property to bring in more money. One of the sins that many in America are guilty of is materialism. Jesus said, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

**The second woe is on heavy drinkers.** America has many heavy drinkers today. The parking lots at taverns are often lined with cars. The number of teenage alcoholics continues to climb at an alarming rate. Solomon wrote: “Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Pro. 20:1). Needless to say, America is full of the unwise. Hosea adds: “Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart” (Hos. 4:11).

**The third woe depicts men pulling iniquity with cords of falsehood (Isa. 5:18).** The men Isaiah mentions are so entangled in sin and iniquity that they become slaves to it. Paul indicates that “to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). Is America headed in the same direction? In some areas, she is already there.

**The fourth woe is upon those that “call evil good and good evil (Isa. 5:20).** This woe is pronounced against moral corruption. If a person doubts the moral corruption America is undergoing all that needs to be done is watch about two hours of prime time television to see what is being put into the homes of Americans. Many today as in Isaiah’s time want nothing to do with the Bible. In the time of Hosea, people were destroyed for lack of Bible knowledge (Hos. 4:16). Hosea indicates they had forgotten the law of God. The law of God is often disregarded today.

**The fifth woe is upon those who are wise in their own eyes (Isa. 5:21).** People of this vein are a dime a dozen. Anytime man tries to rely on self entirely, failure will result (Pro. 14:12). The humanist of today clearly fits into this category. The humanist believes that man has outgrown the idea of God. Man’s goal according to the humanist is the development of his own personality, which according to his philosophy ceases to exist after death. The humanist believes that man is a result of a continuous natural process. Those who hold this philosophy will answer some day for it (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom 14:12). Jesus stated, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the

last day” (John 12:48). Those who are wise in their own eyes will be judged by the Word of God.

Let us learn from the lessons of Isaiah. In so doing Christians should strive to faithfully live a godly life by being “not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

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## PARENTS BEWARE

*Tom W. Snyder*

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). Oh, the blessed assurance we had in our “Christian” colleges. Just think—sending our children to a school where they would be surrounded by strong, spiritual and scriptural men who would teach them in word and deed the things they need, that they might take their place in society and the church.

This day it seems, is gone, for our colleges. Some of our schools are bravely shedding their outer sheeply garments and the wolves are emerging. What do I speak of? This: (Parents, Preachers, Pastors sit up, take note and beware!!!) Last week I received in the mail two advertisements—one from Harding University, the other from Lipscomb—each advertising upcoming youth programs. Harding calls theirs “Uplift.” Please take note of the speakers and performers (and I quote): “This year’s speakers include Lee Milan, Jeff Walling, Mike Cope, and Ronnie White as well as the nationally renowned drama of Curt Cloninger. The popular music group Acapella will be performing.” Lipscomb call their program “Impact.” Note their speakers and performers: “Speakers include Buddy Bell, Jimmy Hampton, Walt Leaver and Jeff Walling. Other activities include performances by the A Cappella Vocal Band, From the Heart, Alliance and In His Name, special entertainment, game,

singing and much, much more!”

The names Jeff Walling, Mike Cope, Walt Leaver, A Cappella Vocal Band ought to stick out like a sore thumb. These are the names you will find on such programs as the “Jubilee” and the International Soul-Winning Workshop in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which have been spewing out error for years now. The names Jeff Walling and Acappella you will find in association with denominations such as the Baptist Church and the Christian Church. I’m not going into all their errors at this time, for sufficient has been written by others to show where these men stand, for those who want to know. (See Goebel Music’s book, *Behold the Pattern*). My question is, why are these schools wanting these men on their programs unless they believe in and support them?

There are two things that will put a stop to the direction our schools are heading: parents and supporters. We preachers, as Paul did, can “warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31). We can “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine,” but in the long run, it will be your voices that will be heard. So won’t you speak up and make our schools what they ought to be? Won’t you protect our children against the wolves?

613 E. Pine St.; Atmore, AL 36502

Make plans to attend these Lectureships:

### **Kanawha Valley Lectures**

August 6-9 St. Albans, WV

“Evangelism Into The 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

### **Power Lectures**

August 18-22 Southaven, MS

“The Two Covenants”

### **Central Oklahoma Lectures**

September 6-8 McLoud, OK

“Why I Left...”

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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# Defender



*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

Volume XXV

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Number 7

## THE PREACHING OF TODAY

*Garland Elkins*

### INTRODUCTION

One merely needs to open his eyes and look around and he will see both the great need for preaching the gospel, and the need for dedicated preachers to preach the gospel. Paul wrote, “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). The apostle also wrote, “But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).

The importance of preaching is seen when one considers that “faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day” (John 6:44). Jesus then informs us as to how one is drawn by the Father to the Christ. He said, “It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, *cometh* unto me” (John 6:45). Thus Jesus informs us that the process of coming to Christ involves teaching, hearing, learning, and coming to the Lord. Therefore, we are not drawn to the Lord by a direct miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit, nor by an angel but by, being taught, hearing, learning, and coming unto the Lord.

The gospel is for all nations, and even to every creature (Mat. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; and Mark 16:15-16). When Paul wrote to the church in Rome he was addressing brethren with many contrasts. There was poverty in the midst of wealth, and there were both free men and slaves. However, he pointed out that the gospel is God’s power to save all. He wrote:

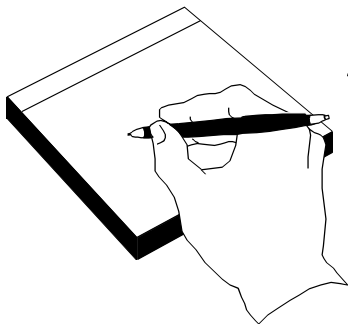
For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith (Rom. 1:16-17).

### THE PREACHING OF THE FIRST CENTURY

The preaching of the first century was always done in love (Eph. 4:15; 1 Cor. 13:1-13). However, it was also a very bold and courageous preaching, wholly without compromise; and yet always kind, and gentle, though it was bold and to the point.

Stephen’s preaching is a case in point. We have only one of Stephen’s sermons recorded. However, it is evident that under the most trying circumstances came one of the most sublime sermons ever to come from the lips of a man. Though his enemies were attacking him, and later that day killed him, it was less a defense of himself than of the truth that Jesus was the Messiah. Stephen cared less for himself than for the cause of Truth. The council, before whom he preached his sermon, became enraged against Stephen. The man that they held as a convict became their accuser! His words stung them like scorpions. They realized that if they accepted the truth that he preached, they would have to repent. Fearlessly, Stephen undertook his defense. Rehearsing the ancient history of Israel, he skillfully showed that God’s revelation to His people had been over a period of time. He showed that God had no need of an earthly temple. At first, his hearers were silently attentive; but as they caught the drift of his argument, they displayed signs of anger which Stephen could not have failed to see. When he was permitted to speak he took advantage of what he must have known to be his last opportunity. He gave a marvelous sketch of their ancestors from the call

*(Continued on Page 3)*



# Notes From The Editor

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## GOD'S GRACE

We generally define grace as a gift, free gift or unmerited favor. In dealing with God's grace there are several aspects that can be discussed. However, we must study the grace of God dealing with salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "The gift of God" is the salvation which comes through faith, not as some erroneously teach faith itself. Since we are dealing with a gift, there are four facets of gifts which we must consider.

- **The gift itself.** As mentioned above, we are dealing with the gift of salvation (Eph. 2:8). That grace of God has been extended to all men. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11; consider also Christ died for all, Heb. 2:9). That salvation is manifest in two ways. Salvation from past sins, remission or forgiveness of sins. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16; cf., 1 Pet. 3:21). Then there is salvation in heaven. "Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls" (1 Pet. 1:9; cf., Heb. 9:28). This salvation, whether from past sins or eternally in heaven, comes by the blood of Christ. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7; cf., Rom. 5:9-10; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5).

- **A giver.** Without a giver, someone to give a gift, there is no grace. Grace is the Bible term for what God (the giver) did through Christ. God is the only source of our salvation. The phrase "grace of God" is found 24 times in the New Testament. The golden text of the Bible clearly shows the grace of God. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God is the one that gave His Son (Jesus Christ) to a lost and dying world for their salvation. "But

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). It is no wonder that Paul would say, "Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). While God is the only source of our salvation does **not** mean that we are saved by grace alone or grace only as some are now teaching.

- **A Receiver.** Man is the recipient of the grace of God. God was doing for man what man could not do for himself. Man has committed sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23; cf., Gal. 3:22; 1 John 1:8,10). Man, as a sinner, has earned himself death. "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jam. 1:15). Man was in a hopeless situation. He could not devise his own way in which he could attain salvation from sin. "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). Nor could man do something by which he earns his salvation. "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" (Eph. 2:8-9). Thus, because of man's sin and need to be saved and reconciled to God, He gave us His Son.

- **Conditions.** A giver has the right to place conditions upon the reception of a gift he gives, or he may give a gift without any conditions. This is left up to the discretion of the giver. In either case, it is still a gift and still comes under the classification of grace (Luke 17:10). God placed conditions upon the salvation He offered to man. There must be the hearing of the gospel message because "*faith cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), and "*without faith it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Upon that belief we must repent. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). This is why "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). We need to confess our faith in Jesus as God's Son. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). An illustration of that confession is seen in the conversion of the Ethiopian (Acts 8:37). For the initial salvation (forgiveness of past sins) we must be immersed in water for the purpose God designed, the forgiveness of sin. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall

be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16; cf., Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Then for eternal salvation in heaven, we must live faithful to God’s commands till death (Mat. 10:22; 1 Cor. 15:58; et. al.). *MH*

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

of Abraham to the birth and circumstances of the twelve sons of Jacob—and all without a single word that referred to the charges made against him. In this way, he secured their attention and paved the way for the great sermon which he preached; one of the greatest and most powerful sermons on record.

Let us briefly examine Stephen as a preacher, and the great sermon that he preached. Stephen believed as did Paul: “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). He could have said with Paul, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). He could have also said, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:5).

The inspired record of Stephen, the preacher, and his preaching, reveals many of the characteristics of an ideal preacher. He was of course, an inspired preacher. Let us take note of a few of those characteristics.

**First, we note that his sermon was filled with Scriptures.** His entire sermon was full of the sacred Scriptures. To be a great preacher one must be full of the Word of God, not given to using cheap substitutes instead of the grand old gospel story. The gimmickry of our day does not constitute sound gospel preaching, but rather it cheapens preaching. There is no substitute for gospel preaching, and there are no illustrations that will equal those that are recorded in the Bible. Clever and sophisticated lectures on the topics of the day—science, literature and philosophy—are but poor substitutes for gospel preaching. We must always remember that the power is in the gospel (Rom. 1:16). If one desires his sermons to be powerful, let him remember to correctly preach the powerful gospel (Acts 18:28).

**In the second place Stephen had deep convictions, and he was willing to die for them.** He spoke the truth even in the face of death. There are few things that will give more weight to a preacher’s sermon than for him to be sincere and possess deep convictions (2 Cor. 4:1-2; 2 The. 2:1-12).

**In the third place, Stephen manifested the proper Christian attitude in his preaching** (Eph. 4:15; 1 Pet. 3:15). Much depends upon the manner of presentation. Many otherwise great sermons have been hindered because

of the manner in which they are presented. The proper attitude on the part of the preacher is often decisive (Acts 14:1-3).

**In the fourth place Stephen did not “Preach the gospel and let others alone,” as some contend that preachers should do.** The very nature of the gospel is such that it makes such a course impossible. No true prophet, neither the Lord Jesus Christ, nor any of His apostles followed this course. Jesus, His apostles, and Stephen, could have lived longer lives if they had followed this course. They all preached things contrary to the belief and practice of other people, even very religious people. They pointed out where people were wrong in their doctrine, practice, and worship. Christ, and His apostles, and other inspired men, pressed upon those who were wrong religiously, that to go to heaven it was necessary to renounce error, and to obey the truth (John 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:22).

The gospel is designed to save men from sin, and all have sinned (Rom. 3:23; Jam. 1:18; Eph. 1:13). It should also be pointed out that the gospel remedy must be applied to the sick, the sinner, whether he be guilty of the sins of immorality or of so-called doctrinal sins (Luke 5:31-32; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). A doctor could not have a successful practice if he attempted to practice medicine and leave the sick alone!

**In the fifth place Stephen engaged in negative preaching.** He told his audience that they were wrong (Acts 7:51-53). Peter began his great sermon on Pentecost negatively. He said, “For these are not drunken, as ye suppose” (Acts 2:15). Paul commanded Timothy to, “reprove, rebuke, exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2). Jesus did much negative preaching. He said, “Judge not” and “Judge not according to appearance” (Mat. 7:1; John 7:24). He told the Sadducees: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Mat. 22:29).

**In the sixth place Stephen exposed specific sins.** We must, “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9). Jesus “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity” (Heb. 1:9). David wrote, “I hate every false way” (Psa. 119:104).

People do not like to be proved wrong in religion, so the surest way is to silence the preacher. Stephen was silenced, but his message lived on through others who took up his words and kept them ringing in the ears of the people. The Word is living (Mat. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25; Heb. 4:12); and regardless of how many preachers are silenced in death, it lives on, and by it all are to be judged (John 12:48)!

## **THE PREACHING OF OUR DAY**

Though the “seven thousand have not bowed the knee” and there are many faithful and able gospel preach-

ers; nevertheless, it is a sad fact that there are vast numbers of preachers in the church who no longer preach sound doctrine. In fact, some have really never learned sound doctrine, therefore they do not preach it. There are numerous others, who, in the past, preached the truth, but now have apostatized; and, therefore, now teach fatal error. Some of these insist that they have not changed, and have either changed the congregations from believing the truth to now believing error; or in some instances, those in the congregations who largely determine the directions of the congregations, are in "smooth and fair speech" gradually "pulling the wool" over the faces of the congregations. Regardless of who or how it is done, such a state of congregations and individuals is sad beyond description. As space permits I call attention to some of the wrong type of preaching of our day.

**1. Many preachers of our day do not tell people how to be saved.** This type of preacher will preach sermon after sermon but never tell an audience what to do to be saved. In many instances alien sinners could attend for months, even years, and never hear from such preachers what to do to be saved. Peter, Paul, and other preachers in the first century told alien sinners what to do to be saved (Acts 2:36-38; Acts 16:25-34; Acts 8:26-39).

**2. Many preachers will not distinguish and identify the church of our Lord so that denominational friends who are present can see the difference.** No preacher is declaring the whole counsel of God unless he is declaring God's plan for unity, and His hatred of division (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13). The gospel is not being preached when the audience cannot learn that the Lord's church is essential, and that one cannot be saved in denominationalism.

**3. Many preachers of our day will not teach and preach the truth relative to what constitutes true worship to God.** We are to worship God in spirit and in truth. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Therefore, for New Testament worship to be acceptable we must: (1) worship God as the object of our worship, (2) we must worship God "in spirit" i.e., with the proper attitude, and (3) we must worship God "in truth." But what is truth? Jesus tells us that the truth is God's Word: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Therefore, true worship must be, and is, regulated by the Word of God. The New Testament teaches us that we must limit our worship to singing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). That is all that is authorized as musical praise to God in the New Testament. All things offered as worship to God without His authorization are sinful. Mechanical instruments in worship are not authorized. Therefore, mechanical instruments in the worship of

the New Testament church is sinful! We read in Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Again, this verse teaches, as I have pointed out, that for worship or anything else done in religion, to be accepted by God, it must be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Instrumental music cannot be used "in the name of the Lord Jesus" i.e., by His authority, therefore its use is sinful!

**4. There are many preachers among us who are attacking the church, and faithful brethren in general.** In the *Nashville Tennessean* newspaper on the front page of the "Today" section of June 13, 1991 there was an article entitled "Conservative Churches may foster incest, panel says." The article was written by Ray Waddle, Religion News Editor. The article begins:

"Rigidly conservative churches attract power addicted preachers and encourage incest and pornography at home because they too often teach distortions about sex, a church of Christ preacher said yesterday."

In an unusually frank discussion at David Lipscomb University, four male professionals said Christians should re-examine the biblical action of female submission, which many men use to demote their wives to second-class status or justify domestic violence.

"We so distorted the concept of 'headship' and 'submission' that we've produced a pathological family model," Gayle Napier, family life minister at Harpeth Hills Church of Christ, told about 200 people at the annual Lipscomb Lectures.

Napier also is quoted as telling the audience: "The more conservative the church the more incest you have in families." Gayle Napier, Harold Hazelip, the President of Lipscomb University, and the board of Directors owe not only an apology to the church, but also to the public, due to the fact that such an attack was permitted by Lipscomb on the part of Gayle Napier and others during that lectureship. An apology is due to the church for neither did, nor could he prove his accusation. An apology is due the public for the article depicting Napier's false charges against the brethren received wide publicity. I was at a gospel meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, and while there, I saw the article in a large newspaper in that city.

**5. In the "Religion" section of a Tri-Cities Newspaper of Alabama, there appear pictures of a Methodist preacher, Stanley Clark, and a brother listed as Joe Van Dyke, a minister of the Church of Christ, and also a picture of both groups as they engaged in a "joint meeting."** Joe Van Dyke should be withdrawn from by every faithful congregation (2 The. 3:6).

**6. Rubel Shelly has, for years, compromised with numerous denominations.** In the bulletin entitled "Love Lines," "the weekly newsletter of the Family of God at

Woodmont Hills” in Nashville, Tennessee, where Rubel preaches we read the following:

**Community-Wide Worship  
Sunday Evening/April 10, 1994**

IT IS A DATE TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR, include in your prayers, and plan to share. At 7 p.m. on Sunday, April 10, **members from at least seven churches in the Green Hills area plan to meet for a community post-Easter worship service.**

It is a small beginning for the sort of thing many of us have dreamed about and prayed to see happen for years. **People from diverse backgrounds will come together to affirm the central elements of Christian faith on which we agree. That, in turn can provide us a framework for understanding and mediating our differences. The seven churches involved are Woodmont Baptist, Covenant Presbyterian, St. Paul Southern Methodist, Woodmont Christian, Trinity Presbyterian, Calvary United Methodist, and us.**

We will have all our regular services on that day. **Then all who care to participate can assemble in the main auditorium of Woodmont Christian Church for a one-hour assembly. Special music will be provided by children’s choirs and adult groups.** Biblical texts will be read, and prayers will be said. **There will be a sermon dealing with the meaning of the resurrection. I have been asked to present that sermon.**

**A Report on the Community-Wide  
Worship of April 10**

If you were not able to attend the special co-hosted assembly last Sunday evening at Woodmont Christian Church, you missed a wonderful experience. At 7 p.m. last Sunday evening, approximately 1,100 people came together for an hour in that church’s sanctuary. It is estimated that another 200 were turned away at the doors, and many others were waved off the parking lot because of the overflow conditions.

People sat in chairs placed in aisles and down hallways, stood in the foyer, and lined the walls. Voices were raised in joyous praise. Smiles were abundant.

All these people were together to affirm the common elements of orthodox Christian faith to which we are committed. In spite of doctrines and traditions that divide us, we were able to join with Presbyterians, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, and Baptists to affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its meaning.

The evening was a small but significant step in tearing down old walls of prejudice and misunderstanding. Thank God for such a night.

Brother J. E. Choate attended the “union service” on April 10, 1994, to see and hear what Rubel would say and do. He sent copies of Rubel’s bulletins to me and wrote, “As you can read, Rubel was elated over the events, and exulted in every aspect of it including his full participation in the worship.” Brother Choate informed me that both Rubel and Philip Morrison sang with the mechanical instrumental music.

More recently Rubel preached to a Pentecostal denomination in Nashville, during which time he compro-

mised the truth, and as usual for him, he ridiculed the church of Christ. Among other things he said: “Some of you know my tradition, the churches of Christ as a very narrow, legalistic, arrogant, everybody is going to hell but us, kind of tradition.” Some of his attacks on the Lord’s church caused great laughter from the audience, and also much applause. I do not think that he will be laughing about such matters on the day of judgment (Ecc. 12: 13-14; John 12:48).

7. In both sermons and articles the Liberals among us ridicule the church, attempting to make it appear that the Church of Christ is a denomination, arrogant, unloving, and composed of hateful bigots. In *Image* magazine, an extremely liberal journal, a brother by the name of Gene Shelburne wrote an article entitled “A Small Heaven.” Among other things he said,

Our conversation began that day on a very friendly, low-key level. Brother Smith talked about his ministry in several areas of the country.

Years ago he and his wife had moved to a small town where there was no Church of Christ, to a state that had hardly heard of us. “In five years,” he said, “we baptized fifty-nine people—Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans.” and then, he said, they moved a thousand miles across the country and did it again. He was obviously quite pleased to be able to report this.

I sat, saying almost nothing, not really wanting to get into a fuss with this good man. But inside I was saying, **How dreadful! How absolutely dreadful! I can’t imagine spending my whole life’s ministry just stealing sheep. Surely we have something more important to do than convincing our religious neighbors that they’re wrong!**

By implication Shelburne would condemn Christ and His apostles for they spent much of their time in an effort to “convince our religious neighbors that they are [were] wrong!”

8. Lynn Anderson charges that the church of Christ is “A Big Sick Denomination.”

Lynn Anderson preached a sermon on a Sunday morning in 1973 to the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, during which he said, “You know the Church of Christ is a big, sick, denomination. And I meant each word, Big, Sick, Denomination.” He still contends that the church of Christ is “a big, sick, denomination.” He then related a conversation that ensued between him and his wife. He said, “The other day Carolyn and I were driving down the road when I turned and frankly said to my wife, ‘you know the church of Christ is a big, sick, denomination.’ Her answer startled me: ‘I have believed that, too, for a long time.’” In a recent article in *Wineskins* edited by Rubel Shelly and Michael Cope, Lynn Anderson wrote an article entitled, “The Big, Sick Denomination Revisited.” In his article in *Wineskins* he states, “The editors of *Wineskins* asked me, ‘what would you say to today’s church Big, Sick Denomination sermon?’ He then wrote, “Frankly, for the most part I would recommend the same course I did in 1973.” He also wrote, “So, what I said



then, I repeat with more confidence.” Lynn Anderson believed that the church of Christ was a “Big, Sick Denomination” in 1973. He still believes that the church of Christ is a “Big, Sick Denomination” in 1996! Brother Anderson (he is an erring brother) wrote that after he charged the church of Christ with being a “Big, Sick Denomination that Sunday morning the response was: “At that point, a corporate gasp of shock swept across the congregation.” It should be pointed out that not only was there a “gasp of shock” during his infamous sermon at Fifth and Highland, but that same “gasp of shock” swept the brotherhood.

The church of our Lord as a whole was very strong in the faith in 1973. Therefore on September 10, 1973, perhaps more than two hundred Christians met in Memphis, Tennessee, to discuss Lynn Anderson’s compromise, i.e., his charge that the church of Christ is “A big, sick denomination.” The group of brethren involved in this discussion were for the most part elders and preachers. They came from as far away as California. There were numerous speakers, among them brethren E. R. Harper, Thomas B. Warren, James D. Willeford, Alan Highers, and even Rubel Shelly spoke against the compromising views of Lynn Anderson. Unfortunately he now holds the same unscriptural views as does brother Anderson regarding these matters. It is extremely significant that of the approximately two hundred preachers present, not a single one publicly, and so far as is known privately, spoke in favor of the conduct of the liberal element at Highland, with the exception of the *Herald of Truth* representatives. The brethren requested that I be in charge of the meeting. The meeting continued for ten to thirteen hours. A calm Christian attitude prevailed. Lynn Anderson is wrong, and needs to do repent!

9. Andre Resner, a professor at Abilene Christian University has attacked the Virgin Birth of Christ, in an article entitled “Christmas At Matthew’s House.” The article was printed in *Wineskins*, April 1993. Among other things Andrew Resner wrote:

I’m at Matthew’s house for Christmas, and Matthew is sneaky. He’s almost too matter-of-fact for me. I need some intonation. I need some exclamation marks. Maybe a couple of winds. A raised eyebrow here and there. A gasp. For Matthew it begins in sexual scandal and it ends in political power plays. Before he can tell the scandal of Mary’s “immaculate conception” he has to subtly remind us of other scandalous women.

And Ruth—“dear sweet Ruth.” Well, just what was she doing out there at the threshing floor at Boaz’s feet? And why did he want her to stay there all night, yet leave before daylight, and not let anyone see her? Hmmm.

Though we’re still quite surprised by Matthew’s covert statement “she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.” Matthew has set us up for it. It’s a sort of “Here we go again, folks—.” Another sexually questionable woman. And what about Joseph’s faith in the face of Mary’s story? For it was he, who after a single dream, went ahead and married her. A dream that was real, yes, but still a dream. Could it have been a message from God? Or could, could it have been his own imagination, his

wanting to believe her so much that his subconscious produced a nocturnal justification for marrying her, even in the face of such an outlandish excuse? But there’s Joseph, crawling into bed with her every night the rest of his life, relying on a dream, believing in her word, that she really hadn’t slept with another man and used him to cover her shame.

I have never read a more blasphemous attack against the Virgin Birth of the Lord. Isaiah 7:14 definitely predicts that Christ would be born of a virgin, and in Matthew 1:18-25 we see the fulfillment of that prophecy. Matthew quotes Isaiah and says that it was fulfilled when Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. **Question:** Are Isaiah and Matthew telling the truth, or is Andre Resner? That is just how simple the matter is. Isaiah and Matthew wrote the truth, therefore, Andre Resner needs to repent!

10. In writing relative to another subject the Hebrews writer wrote: “Now of the things which we have spoken *this is the sum*” (Heb. 8:1). In reference to the liberals of our day, there are so many of them that neither time nor space permit a mention of all of them who are known to us. However, in addition to the ones mentioned in this lecture, I conclude by pointing out that such men as: C. Leonard Allen, Richard T. Hughes, Michael Weed, Bill Love, Carroll D. Osburn, Joe Beam, and multitudes of others, appear to be determined to turn the church of Christ into a denomination. However, the “seven thousand” have not “bowed the knee.” We must follow Paul’s example in opposing error that is taught within the church. Paul wrote:

and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (Gal. 2:4-5).

## CONCLUSION

As hope was given to the remnant of Judah, “And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward” (2 Kin. 19:30); even, so with the church, the beautiful bride of Christ, she “**shall yet take root downward, and bear fruit upward.**” May God hasten that day!

4400 Knight Arnold Rd.; Memphis, TN 38118

*Editor’s Note: Our thanks to brother Elkins for this excellent article which he prepared for the 1996 Bellview Lectureship book: “Preaching God Demands.” Especially every preacher should have one of these books. Elders, if your preacher does not have one buy one for him and have him read it. Likewise, elders should buy one for themselves and the library of the congregation you serve. It is imperative that we as the people of God get back to the type of preaching God demands. See the back page for details on buying this or any of our other books.*

# Review of 1996 Bellview Lectures

Marvin L. Weir

There could have been no greater theme chosen for the 1996 Bellview Lectures than *Preaching God Demands*. Each word in the theme is significant and so relevant to the Lord's church today. The Holy Spirit through Paul commanded, "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). It was my privilege to hear every lesson presented at this year's lectureship, and I am grateful for such an opportunity. The word to be proclaimed is not what is popular and in vogue, but that which is demanded by God! If you love the precious church of our Lord and His glorious truths you will enjoy studying the lessons contained in this lectureship book.

- ▶ The lectures were **scriptural** as they contained book, chapter, and verse preaching. Each lesson was founded upon a "thus saith the Lord."
- ▶ The lectures were **practical** as the lessons focused on the Lord's church today. Has the mission and work and worship of the church changed? Has the gospel message changed? Must gospel preaching be logical and understandable? What lessons can one learn from such faithful proclaimers of truth as Peter, Paul, Philip and John the Baptizer?
- ▶ The lectures were **encouraging** as they revealed that God's faithful servants of old were commended and rewarded for their steadfastness and defense of the truth.
- ▶ The lectures were **needed** as many brethren today are being "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). Every congregation needs to study and teach the soul-saving truths and lessons that were proclaimed at this lectureship.

The Bellview elders, Michael Hatcher, and the congregation are to be commended for working diligently to provide such a lectureship. *Preaching God Demands* will continue to have an impact on the kingdom through the means of audio tapes, video tapes, and the attractive, durable hardbound book of 351 pages. The volume will be

an asset to your library. Only eternity will reveal the good that is accomplished by lectureships that respect and proclaim God's glorious truths!

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## KIEV BIBLE SCHOOL

The Kiev Bible School is a full time three year preacher training school that was begun by the Centre Church of Christ in Kiev in 1992. It is presently training men to preach from Ukraine and Russia. The director is Roger Campbell, former missionary to Taiwan. Campbell speaks both Mandarin and Russian. Other Americans serve as faculty. New terms begin August 26-31 and January 1-6. Very low cost. No tuition.

Contact: Roger Campbell; P.O. Box 171; Kiev, Ukraine 252 001, Phone: 011-380-44-513-5634; Email: Roger@campbell.hkpi.kiev.ua.; fax: 011-380-517-0298 (after 4:00 pm E.S.T)

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September 19-21 St. Louis, MO

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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# Defender



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

Volume XXV

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Number 8

## THE PREACHER'S MESSAGE

*Noah A. Hackworth*

### INTRODUCTION

During the last decade it has been said more than a few times that the church that has existed in the past has been lost forever. If this is the case, how did it happen? When did it happen? Why did it happen? Such questions as these can perhaps best be answered by recognizing (1) the changes that have occurred in the contents of the preacher's message, (2) the introduction of a new hermeneutic, (3) the interpretation of the Bible in terms of cultural factors, (3) the decline of qualified leadership, and (4) a marked deterioration of membership dedication (cf., 2 Tim. 2:2). Bible subject-matter has not changed and is not subject to negotiation. The only preaching that can be done, therefore, is that which is authorized by the Lord Himself. The instructions God gave the prophet Jonah are still applicable: "preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (3:2). If this rule is not followed the result will be human opinion in exchange for divine revelation.

### THE PREACHING THAT SHOULD BE DONE

It would be beneficial to us all to pause long enough to ascertain where we have been and where we are going with our preaching. Is it our intent to develop and perpetuate new "schools of thought," or is it our task to lead the minds of people back to Jerusalem where the greatest events of religious history began to unfold?

The living, vital roots of Christianity were planted deep upon the day of Pentecost. Its great outstanding facts were unfolded by the Spirit of God upon that history making day. Upon this day a new era and epoch had their beginning in the annals of time. The facts of Pentecost should be planted in the heart of

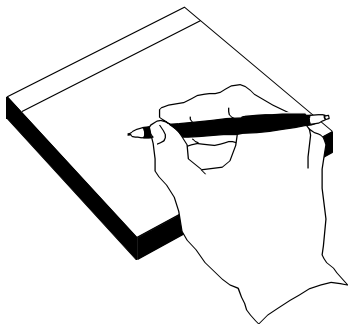
every Christian and in the hearts of all men, as to that matter. To forget them or even by-pass them is fatal to any Christian. When we become indifferent to such essential truths we become lukewarm in promoting them. The more greatly imbued we are with them the more zeal we show in making them known to others. Like a mighty ship that has broken away from its mooring and drifts helplessly upon the angry waves of the ocean, so have men broken away from this great historical landmark, the focal point of Christianity's beginning in the world. Ignorant of these bed-rock principles men become hapless victims tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Eph. 4:14).<sup>1</sup>

The things that began on Pentecost need to be preached again and again to this present generation if we expect the identity of the church to be preserved. We will, otherwise, become another denomination. Acts 2 furnishes us with strategic information which must be preached to the world.

### The Revelation Of The Mystery

In Ephesians 3, God's eternal purpose for mankind is said to constitute a "mystery," a word which translates the term *musterion*, which means "a thing not yet revealed." There was a plan in the mind of God which no one knew about until He was ready to reveal it. It was a carefully laid plan which provided for the salvation of all mankind. It represented God's eternal purpose. It was so important that even the angels desired to "look into" it (1 Pet. 1:12). Paul refers to it in Romans 16:25 as something kept in silence through times eternal. He further develops it in Ephesians 1:10 when

*(Continued on Page 3)*



# **Notes From The Editor**

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## **Godly Women**

We often read articles dealing with the limitations or restrictions God placed upon women. These articles are necessary for many disregard God's instructions. However, godly women can do many things. God has placed a high value on women. They can be the greatest blessing to man, or if they are evil one of the greatest blights. Solomon's statement was accurate when he wrote, "A gracious woman retaineth honour: And strong men retain riches" (Pro. 11:16), and, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed *is* as rottenness in his bones" (Pro. 12:4). To observe godly women as revealed in God's Word is one of the best ways to learn what women can do with God's approval. Thus, let us consider some (not all) godly women in the Bible in no particular order.

Paul calls Phoebe a servant of the church. "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Rom. 16:1-2). The word servant is the Greek word *diakonos* meaning servant, minister or attendant. While God does not reveal in what way she served others, we do know that she ministered to the church. God also reveals that she was a succourer of many including Paul. This word means she is a guardian, protectress, patroness, someone who cares for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources. Thus, we learn that women can serve others along with helping them and caring for their affairs.

Dorcas was a woman full of good works. "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all

the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them" (Acts 9:36,39). Luke, by inspiration, says she was full of good works and almsdeeds or charitable deeds. These good works and almsdeeds included making clothes for widows. She was practicing pure religion. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jam. 1:27).

Priscilla along with her husband Aquila were worshipping people. They heard Apollos preaching. "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:25-26). We also note that she along with her husband knew God's Word, and were ready to defend it. Thus, when Apollos taught error, she along with her husband took him and taught him God's Word correctly. We can correctly deduce that she did this within the realm of God's teaching concerning the role of women in First Timothy 2:11-12, but she was still engaged in the teaching process. Later Paul would write, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16:3-4). They were co-workers ("helpers") with Paul who were willing to die for him. Part of this working together would be in providing a place for him to live as he preached the gospel. "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers" (Acts 18:2-3). In being willing to die for Paul, we observe the love that God expects of Christians. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:10-11). Here are three great examples for women today in being a virtuous woman. Women today should follow their pattern.

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(Continued from Page 1)

he says, "made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." This wonderful, carefully conceived, tremendously important plan was made known to Paul by revelation (Eph. 3:10). To generations antecedent to the coming of Christ it (the plan) was not made known. The Jews and Gentiles (all mankind) would be the beneficiaries (Eph. 3:6) of a plan which had been for ages hid in God (Eph. 3:9). This plan had to be "made known." This was done by the Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. The present world must know of God's eternal purpose (the plan), and the instrument designed to effect this is the New Testament church. It becomes the "instructor," through (*dia*) which the world learns about the mystery. The church becomes a "theatre" where the divine works are displayed. It (the church) must "make all men see" (understand) the nature of God's wonderful plan.

### **The Establishment Of The Church**

Beautifully situated in the very heart of God's eternal purpose is the New Testament church of which Christ is the Builder (Mat. 16:18); Saviour (Eph. 5:23); Head (Col. 1:18), and for which He (Christ) shed His blood (Mat. 26:28; Heb. 9:22; Acts 20:28). What a shame it will be if at the end of time the world does not know about the church of Christ. But how can this be effected unless the message is proclaimed by gospel preachers and teachers (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 8:4)? Isaiah spoke of the church (Isa. 2:2-4); Daniel described it (Dan. 2:44); Jesus built it (Mat. 16:18), and all men can become members of it (Acts 2:47). The church for which Christ died came into existence on the day of Pentecost, the record of which is found in Acts 2. It has survived attempts to discredit and extinguish it. It lives, as Philip Schaff says, "in unfading freshness and vigor of eternal youth."

### **The Goodness And Severity Of God**

God's goodness and severity permeate the Sacred Pages. It all began in the garden of Eden subsequent to the sin of Adam and Eve. God placed, at the east of the garden, the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). The flame of the sword may well represent the justice of God, while the Cherubim represents the mercy of God. Should this be the case, the flame of the sword would indicate God's severity, while the Cherubim could represent His goodness. In Romans 11:22, Paul says, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee,

goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." The emphasis of this passage is the acceptance or rejection of the Jew and Gentile, the good olive tree and the wild olive tree respectively. The Jews, because of their unbelief, were cut off; the Gentiles, due to their obedience, were "grafted into the good olive tree" hence becoming a partaker of God's blessings. All men need to know that the time is coming when they shall feel the severity or bask in the goodness of God Almighty, depending upon their attitudes toward the gospel of Christ.

### **The Law Of The Spirit Of Life**

Paul said, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). The "law of the Spirit" is the gospel. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit who, through the gospel, "convict[s] the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Men cannot be saved apart from the gospel (Rom. 1:16), for "therein is the righteousness of God revealed" (Rom. 1:17). Hence "go ye into all the world" literally means, "you must go." Every case of conversion in the Acts of the Apostles involved the preaching of the gospel. The salvation of the people on Pentecost (Acts 2); the Eunuch (Acts 8); the Samaritans (Acts 8); Cornelius (Acts 10); Lydia (Acts 16); the Philippian jailor (Acts 16), the Corinthians (Acts 18), and the Ephesians (Acts 19) depended upon the hearing, believing and obeying the gospel of Christ. The basic, primary reason for the existence of the church is to "preach the gospel." The people of God tend to forget that the gospel is universal, that all men are amenable to it, and by it all men will be judged. No man can be saved without faith (Heb. 11:6); repentance (Luke 13:3); confession (Rom. 10:10); and baptism (Acts 2:38). However, the people of God have forgotten "how" they were once purged from their sins (2 Pet. 1:9). The world must know that there is something to be believed and something to be obeyed if its sins are to be remitted. "Obey the gospel" is an almost forgotten term in the minds of many, yet obedience is the thing that frees one from sin (Rom. 6:17-18). The Bible teaches that there is a "form," "pattern," or "plan," which must be obeyed from the heart, the seat of understanding. The battle that raged over the "man or the plan" a few years ago was no more senseless than the battle that we are now engaged in over "Pattern Theology." Was there a "plan"? Yes! Is there a "pattern"? Yes! And men must know what it is so they can obey it.

## Christians Only And The Only Christians

Belief of and obedience to the Word of God is the difference between the church of Christ and the denominational world. Since the church for which Christ died (Acts 20:28) is not a denomination, and since God adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), and since all the saved are in the church, which is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:21-23), it is correct to say, "We are Christians only, and the only Christians." This claim is neither bigoted nor prejudicial. It is, on the other hand, respectful of truth (John 8:32). To imply that we are not the only Christians is to imply that there are Christians in all churches. To believe this, one would have to believe that one church is as good as another; and to believe this, one would have to deny that the Lord has only one church. Children of God who have obeyed the gospel, but have apostatized and joined a denomination, must "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (cf., 2 Cor. 6:17). The only Christians are those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:1-4), and "Christians only" means that we are not a part of the denominational world with its names, creeds, and doctrines. How pathetic and shameful it is to have members of the body of Christ who are afraid to speak the truth, to tell people that there is no need to ever be a part of a denomination, that one needs only to be a member of the church for which Christ died (Acts 2:47). Relative to a situation of this kind, Moses E. Lard wrote (Campbellism Examined) a lengthy refutation of Baptist doctrine.

The term "church" is employed in two different senses, one a more, the other a less, comprehensive sense. When used in the former sense, it comprehends the whole body of Christians since the commencement of Christ's reign to the present. But, in the latter, it applies only to a particular congregation composed of a limited number of these Christians meeting at some stated place for worship. Now, the "sophism" consisted in this; Mr. Campbell left his audience to infer that he and his brethren exhaust the meaning of the term in its largest sense, i.e., that they alone constitute the body of Christ. The following is Mr. Jeter's language: "He" [Mr. Campbell] "did not inform us, however, what body is the body of Christ. He trusted in the intelligence and candor of his hearers to infer that the body of Christ is the body that embraces the 'ancient gospel,' and that has restored the 'ancient order of things'....That he may have denied that the Methodist church, or the Presbyterian church, or even the Baptist church, as such, constitutes the church of Christ, either in whole or in part, is what we are ready to believe....The term "church," as already stated, has but two, acceptations, in the Bible. In the one, it included the whole family of the elect since Christ to the present

time....In the other, it denotes a particular congregation, composed of those who have entered the kingdom....But in neither acceptation will the term apply to any one nor even to all the denominations just named. They are neither collectively the church in the one sense, nor singly a church in the other; nor as denominations are they even a part of the church of Christ in any sense....A Baptist church of Christ is as unreal a thing as a Roman Catholic church of Christ, and there is as much authority in the Bible for the one as for the other....If the term Baptist denotes not something essential to a Christian as a Christian, neither something essential to a church of Christ as such, then it denotes something which is not Christian....And hence it would follow, since the Bible sanctions only a church of Christ, that it does not sanction a Baptist church of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

## GREAT BIBLICAL THEMES

### The Generations Of Men

The term "generation" is derived from *genea* meaning age; *genesis* meaning origin, lineage, or birth; *gennema* meaning offspring; and *genos* meaning kind. Concerning *genea*, W. E. Vine says:

Connected with *ginomai*, to become, primarily signifies a begetting, or birth; then, that which has been begotten, a family; or successive members of a genealogy, Matt. 1:17, or of a race of people, possessed of similar characteristics, pursuits, etc., (of a bad character) Matt. 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41; 16:8; Acts 2:40; or of the whole multitude of men living at the same time, Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 1:48; 21:32; Phil. 2:15, and especially of those of the Jewish race living at the same period, Matt. 11:16, etc. Transferred from people to the time in which they lived, the world came to mean an age, i.e., a period ordinarily occupied by each successive, generation, say, of thirty or forty years.<sup>3</sup>

In Genesis 5:1 we read of the generations of Adam, including Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, and Enoch. In this generation it is said that, "And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:24). In Genesis 10 we read of the generations of Noah, including Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their sons. In Genesis 11 there are the generations of Shem, including Arpachad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah and Abraham. We, therefore, see that a generation is the average time limit between the birth of parents and their children, with each generation marked by particular characteristics.

### The Degeneration Of Men

Degeneration refers to deterioration or decay. Paul the apostle spoke of this process when he said to Timothy: "But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). To this Moses adds, "And Jehovah saw that the

wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). “And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth...The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them” (Gen. 6:11-13). Matthew Henry remarks:

The wickedness of that generation is here again spoken of. 1. All kinds of sin was found among them, for it is said (v. 11) that the earth was also filled with violence and injustice towards men. Wickedness, as it is the shame of human nature, so it is the ruin of human society. Take away conscience and the fear of God, and man becomes beasts and devils to one another. Sin fills the earth with violence, and so turns the world into a wilderness, into a cock-pit. 2. The proof and evidence of it were undeniable; for God looked upon the earth, and was himself an eye-witness of the corruption that was in it. 3. What aggravated the matter was the universal spreading of the contagion. All flesh had corrupted his way. When wickedness has become general then universal ruin is not far off; while there is a remnant of praying people in a nation, to empty the measure as it fills judgments may be kept off a great while.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Regeneration Of Men**

The term “regeneration” occurs only two times in the Sacred Text (Mat. 19:28; Tit. 3:5). The word translates *palingenesia*, (*palin*, again, *genesis*, birth). Hence the word refers to a new state of things. In Matthew’s reference the word refers to a new state of things. It began when Christ took His seat on the throne of His glory. This had occurred when Peter, on Pentecost, said, “Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear” (Acts 2:33). Furthermore, the apostles would be sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel during the same period of time Christ was sitting on His throne. The apostles began their judging when they began to preach the gospel. In Titus’ reference, the word “regeneration” refers to the new birth which is accomplished through baptism. “Not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (3:5). In this reference it is a case of “not by,” “but by.” Not by works which we did, but by His mercy and the washing of regeneration (baptism) He saved us. Alexander Campbell remarked:

This process may consist of numerous distinct acts; but it is in accordance with the general usage to give to the beginning or consummating act the name of the whole process. For the most part, however, the name of the whole process is given to the consummating act, because the process is always supposed incomplete until that act is preformed...We have already seen that the consummation of the process of generation or creation is in the birth of the creature formed. So it is in the moral generation, or in the great process of regeneration. There is a state of existence from which he that is born passes; and there is a state of existence into which he enters after birth. This is true of the whole animal creation whether oviparous or viviparous. Now the manner of existence is wholly changed; and he is, in reference to the former state, dead, and to the new state, alive, so in moral generation. The subject of this great change, before his new birth, existed in one state; but after it he exists in another. He stands in a new relation to God, angels and men.<sup>5</sup>

### **Judgment**

Another great biblical theme is judgment. The Bible records the judgment of nations. Babylon (Isa. 13); Moab (Isa. 15); Damascus (Isa. 17); Egypt (Isa. 19); Tyre (Isa. 23); Several times in the book of Daniel (4:17,25,32) God made it unmistakably clear that the “most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan 4:25). Babylon, for example, had been a “golden cup in Jehovah’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed” (Jer. 51:7-8). God has emphatically stated that He will “punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity” (Isa. 13:11). “The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol, Even all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9:17; NKJV). In the New Testament the judgment of God upon all nations is made crystal clear. Matthew 25 has been falsely labeled “a kingdom scene.” It isn’t! It is a judgment scene! The Lord Almighty is not coming to set up his kingdom, He is coming to judge all nations and receive the faithful.

### **GREAT CHARACTERS FROM WHOM WE LEARN**

#### **Jeremiah**

All those who preach the Word must love and appreciate the indomitable spirit of Jeremiah. His voice could not be silenced. The Word of God had penetrated the very depths of his soul; so much so that he cried, “My anguish, my anguish! I am pained at my very heart; my heart is disquieted in me; I cannot hold my peace; because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the

trumpet, the alarm of war” (Jer. 4:19). Matthew Henry comments:

The prophet is here in agony, and cries out like one upon the rack of pain. The expressions are pathetic enough to melt a heart of stone. My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart. A good man, in such a bad world as this is, cannot but be a man of sorrows. My heart makes a noise in me, through the tumult of my spirits, and I cannot hold my peace. It is not for himself, or any affliction in his family that he grieves thus; but it is purely upon the public account, it is his people’s case that he lays to heart thus.<sup>6</sup>

Jeremiah acknowledges that there was in his heart as it were “a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot *contain*” (20:9). Within the breast of every gospel preacher should be a spirit that cannot be contained, a never ending desire to preach the Word under every conceivable circumstance. A desire, not to please men (cf., Gal. 1:10), but to “please him who enrolled him as a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:4).

When I preach there are some who say

That they could listen to me all day.

Others think I preach too long;

And some think I go about it all wrong

Some say my sermons are too deep

To others so shallow, they fall to sleep

Some report I hold them “spell-bound”

While others squirm and look around.

Some seem to think that I’m too bold,

Others smirk and say I’m cold.

They used to think I was too young

Now they claim my spring has sprung

Some folks tell me I’ve reached success

Others think my life’s a mess.

None seem to think my pay’s too low,

In fact they think I move too slow.

A precious few think I’ve climbed the peak

Others shout, “He works only one day a week.”

From all this it’s plain to see

That as a preacher I’m up a tree

Condemned if I do, condemned if I don’t

Criticized when I will, even when I won’t

I can’t please men of such accord,

So I’ll just try to please the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

### **Peter And John**

In the New Testament account of apostolic activity, as recorded by the Holy Spirit, two names which first emerge are Peter and John. Although all the apostles of Christ received the keys of the kingdom (Mat. 18:18), Peter was the first to use them to open the doors of the kingdom (Mat. 16:19) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). It was Peter and John who went to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1). It was Peter and John who first aroused the anger of the Sadducees by preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 4:1). It was Peter and

John who fearlessly, daringly, and courageously withstood the council which tried to curb their activities through threats, insults and intimidation (Acts 4:13-20). It was Peter who withstood Ananias and Sapphira in their attempts to deceive the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). It was Peter and John, along with the rest of the apostles of Christ, who led and directed the activities of the New Testament church subsequent to its establishment on Pentecost (Acts 5:12-13; 6:1-2). Much of the energy, enthusiasm, courage, determination, and conviction needed by every gospel preacher comes from Peter and John. If we were bestowing credits on the apostles for their service to Christ, a great deal would have to be given to Peter for his efforts among the Jews, and to John, the “apostle of love,” for his supportive role in the preaching of the gospel in the early days of Christianity.

### **Paul**

Subsequent to the murder of Stephen (Acts 7), a young, arrogant, enthusiastic Pharisee named Saul, thought by some to be a member of the Sanhedrin Court (Acts 26:10), whose zeal by far exceeded his knowledge, continued his assault against the followers of Christ by “breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1). Following an appearance by the Lord to Saul (Acts 9:3-9), but before his birth into the kingdom of God (Acts 9:18), a certain disciple named Ananias, who had heard of the evil Saul had perpetrated against the Lord’s people, was visited by the Lord (Acts 9:10). The Lord said to him, “Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:15-16). What a debt every Christian, especially gospel preachers, owes to Paul. He will surely enjoy the highest degree of heaven’s blessings and reward (cf., Luke 12:47-48). British scholar, Sir William Ramsey, correctly suggested that without Paul we would know little or nothing about Greek and Roman civilization. But more importantly, without Paul how much would we know about heaven? How much would we know about the church? Without the efforts of Paul we would be missing thirteen or fourteen New Testament books that instruct in Christian living.

### **Peter And Paul**

Peter and Paul were beloved brethren in the Lord (2 Pet. 3:15). They never were competitors. They were co-laborers in the spread of the gospel. Paul had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision (Gal. 2:7), but



there never was but one gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). The difference was in the people to whom they preached, not in the message. It was F. C. Baur, founder of the Tubingen school of criticism, who promulgated the theory that the New Testament "writings were the surviving echoes of partisan strife between Judaistic and Gentile Christians as championed respectively by Peter and Paul."<sup>8</sup> The unprejudiced reader of the epistles of Peter and Paul will regard as self-evident "two different hearers of the same gospel."<sup>9</sup> The "Gospel of the circumcision," and the "Gospel of the uncircumcision" denotes a difference in the sphere in which the gospel was to be preached, not in the type of gospel.<sup>10</sup> The distinction between the two phrases is not one of content, but of persons. From these two brethren we who are gospel preachers learn what it means to be brethren in the Lord, co-workers in the spread of the gospel of Christ, and faithfulness to the Cause of Christ until we have "Crossed The Bar" (cf., 2 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Pet. 1:14-15).

### PREACHING THAT MEETS OUR NEEDS

Every sermon we preach that is doctrinally sound and lovingly presented will do our hearers good. However, the relevance of all biblical teaching to the present age, especially that of the New Testament, must not be ignored or forgotten. Only wisdom and discretion can determine which lesson is appropriate for teaching. For example, we can all see the possible difficulty of possessing a correct "mind-set" for participating in the Lord's Supper after we have studied the works of the flesh for 45 minutes, or singing "O Why Not Tonight" as an invitation song on Sunday morning. The writers of New Testament books dealt with the needs of the people to whom they wrote (cf., 1 Cor. 5:3-4; Heb. 5:12-14). Consider the contents of the First Corinthian Letter. It certainly was not by accident that Paul discussed the subjects that appear in each chapter. How did Paul learn of the needs of the Corinthians? Some information relative to this was supplied by the house of

Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11). Some was supplied by Timothy (1 Cor. 16:10-11); some by Apollos (1 Cor. 16:12); some by Titus (2 Cor. 8:23). That Paul met the needs of the people to whom he wrote on every occasion admits of no doubt to the careful Bible student. Most importantly, however, is the fact that the New Testament writers recognized the need for additional instruction in matters pertaining to Christian living (cf., 2 Pet. 3:16; 1 John 2:1,7,12; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phi. 1:1).

### CONCLUSION

The Bible remains unchanged. For two thousand years men have been privileged to preach only what is authorized by God Himself. There is no authorization to add to, subtract from, or modify the Word of God. Anyone, man or angel, who attempts to do this has the anathema of God upon him (Gal. 1:8-9). The Word of God is as powerful and authoritative today as it was when it first came from the pens of the inspired writers of the Divine Volume (cf., Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:11). The words of Paul to the Thessalonians will perpetually apply to all men for all time to come: And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, *even the word* of God, ye accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe (1 The. 2:13).

*Endnotes available on request and in lectureship book*

*Editor's Note: Our thanks to brother Hackworth for this excellent article on the message preachers need to be preaching today. He prepared this material for the 1996 Bellview Lectureship book: "Peaching God Demands." We believe that every preacher should have one of these books. With so many Christians misunderstanding the nature, work and message of the preacher, this book is vital for today. See the back page for details on ordering this book or any of our past lectureship books.*

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# Defender



*“I am set for the defense of the gospel”*

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## “THE UNITY-COMMITTED CHURCH”

Gary W. Summers

On Monday evening, February 19, of this year, Mark Henderson of Boulder, Colorado, spoke at the Abilene Christian University lectureship on the subject “People Need the Unity-Committed Church.” The purpose of this article will be to evaluate that speech.

This writer freely and openly confesses that he does not know Mark Henderson, nor has he made any effort to speak to him about his speech. (This admission is made so that Henderson’s fellow-liberals can begin clucking their tongues and pointing their fingers immediately without having to inquire if such was done.) Since Henderson’s speech was made publicly, the response will likewise be public. He has not offended an individual brother, as per Matthew 18:15-17; he has sinned against Christ and the brotherhood by publicly teaching that which is grievously false.

As usual, there were some points of agreement. When he quoted Psalm 133, John 17, or Ephesians 4:11, he was correct. In fact, we enthusiastically agree that the unity enjoined in these Scriptures should be emphasized continually because many problems and church splits have arisen over opinions on less than crucial matters or on personalities rather than Truth. An earnest commitment to spirituality, love, and unity could prevent many future heartbreaks.

In some of the quotations that follow there may be a reference to “our fellowship” or “the American Restoration Movement.” The reader should know that these are terms devised by liberals so that they can better get along with their denominational friends. They refrain from using biblical terminology such as “the Lord’s church” or “Christians”; they talk instead about

“our fellowship” as distinguished from the Baptist fellowship. It’s more subtle than just referring to ourselves as a denomination, which is what liberals genuinely believe that we are.

The reference to the American Restoration Movement implies that our current beliefs are based upon the theology of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone, to whom Henderson frequently refers. The fact is that, while we have all profited from these men (as we have from Luther and Calvin), we believe the doctrines we teach and practice today because the Bible teaches and authorizes them, not because great men of the past held such positions. The truth of the matter is that most of us would strenuously disagree with Stone (especially on his view that Jesus was a created being) and Campbell (especially on his acceptance as President of the Missionary Society, an unauthorized concept, and his answer on baptism in the Lunenburg letter).

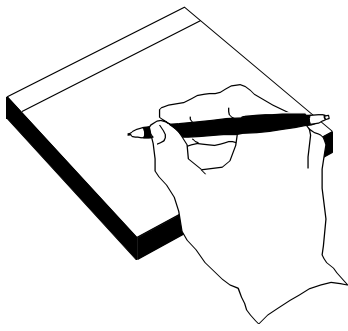
### Implications of the Introduction

Consider what the following words (transcribed from a tape of Henderson’s speech) imply.

Now I’m not in any way for compromising truth, but we must not ignore the plea for unity because not only will we deprive ourselves of the blessings God attaches to the unity of His people, but we will also diminish our witness before an unbelieving world which desperately needs the unity-committed church.

Most of us would probably make this statement the other way around: “We are committed to unity, but we must not sacrifice the truth to obtain it.” One wonders where he is heading. (Notice the denominational {and incorrect} usage of the word *witness*.) “Jesus loves

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# Notes From The Editor

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## Godly Women

In last month's article we considered the great value and preciousness of women. God has always placed a great value on godly women (Pro. 11:16; 12:4; 31:30). We also looked at Phoebe, Dorcas, and Priscilla in learning what women can and should do with God's approval. Let us notice other godly women in the New Testament.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a wonderful example of a godly woman. Undoubtably, this is the reason God chose her to bring His Son into the world. Gabriel came to her and said, "Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women" (Luke 1:28). Why would the angel say that Mary was highly favoured and blessed? First, we realize that she had kept herself pure for marriage; she was a virgin. According to a study published in 1989 by Arlene F. Saluter, 7,742 teenagers become sexually active every day. The Bible teaches all to "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18). Paul taught Timothy, "keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22). Mary is a wonderful example of one who remained sexually pure for her husband (Mat. 1:23; Luke 1:34). Additionally, Mary was living faithful to the Law of Moses. This becomes obvious, for God would not send His Son into this world to be brought up by heathens. We also know this from their fulfilling the law from the time of His birth and taking Him to Jerusalem for worshipping God (Luke 2:21ff).

Two godly women are Lois and her daughter Eunice. Paul mentions these two ladies in his letter to his son in the faith, Timothy. "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5). These two godly women were teachers. Paul mentions that the faith Timothy possessed came as a direct result

of their teaching. It is also important that apparently they did this without any help from his father. They took the responsibility to train and teach their children God's way. How we need godly women that will teach their children God's Word and instill within them a great faith in God.

Two other women closely associated with Jesus are Mary and her sister Martha. We remember these two with their brother Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11). We observe their faith in Jesus as God's Son and belief of the resurrection during that time. On another occasion we read:

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:38-42).

Notice that Martha received Jesus into her house. This shows her hospitable nature. We, also, are to be hospitable. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2). This is almost a lost trait in our secluded society. Both Martha and her sister, Mary, were also used to serving, tending to the cares of the home. Thus, we observe their domestic nature. Paul instructs older women to teach the younger women, "To be discreet, chaste, **keepers at home**, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Tit. 2:5). How we need godly women who will stay at home and take care of the needs of the home instead of going out into the work force. We also learn that Mary realized that spiritual matters came first. Jesus taught, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:33). Although there were the physical needs within the home, she realized that God and spiritual concerns took priority over the cares of the home. How we need people to learn the same principle, that spirituality is the most important thing within life.

One last example would be the women mentioned in Luke 8:2-3. "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many

others, which ministered unto him of their substance.” They took their goods (substance) and used them to serve or minister to Jesus. Are we willing to sacrifice our material substance for the cause of Christ?

A brief overview of these examples show us that godly women put the kingdom of God first; they used their goods for the Master and His cause; they teach, which includes teaching adult men (as long as they do not exercise authority over men; 1 Tim. 2:11-12), women, and children; they are faithful to the Law of God; they will use their goods and abilities to aid others; will worship God faithfully; and remain pure in living the life God sets before us. As one considers this, we would conclude that women may do anything a man can do. The only restriction upon women is that they do not exercise authority or dominion over the man in that which they do.

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

those people, and I have every confidence that He is going to raise up a unity-committed church. The question is whether we will be His partners in that undertaking, or whether He will do it without us.”

Perhaps the speaker possesses greater insights than the rest of us do, but upon what is his confidence based that the Lord will raise up a unity-committed church: the Scriptures, current conditions, or something else? And what does he mean by that? And why would we, members of the Lord’s church, be excluded from genuine attempts at unity? And if those who are members of the body of Christ are excluded from whatever Henderson thinks is going to happen, who will be involved in it, non-members? How can those who have never obeyed the truth generate unity? Unity of what? “To be a unity-committed church will require the humility to rethink some things which have been very important to us.”

What an arrogant assumption and charge. We cannot speak for Mark Henderson, but the writer rethinks everything each time he studies to teach a Bible class, preach a sermon, write an article, or teach someone the gospel. Can one pay heed to First Peter 4:11 and do otherwise? It is truly insulting for the speaker to act as if no one (but him?) ever evaluated anything.

But what does he imagine we so desperately need to rethink: baptism for the remission of sins, correct worship, the boundaries of fellowship, what? We have studied and debated those matters for decades; we believe we know the truth on these matters, but we are always interested in compelling evidence.

## The Unity of All Believers

Mark Henderson discussed four things we **must** do. “First, we are going to have to rediscover a passion for the biblical doctrine of the unity of all believers.”

This is a valid point, depending on how the word **believers** is defined. The importance of this point was commented on earlier in this article. The speaker did not, however, make many applications of this idea, except to say: “Today, in the name of doctrinal purity, we are facing tensions over differing styles of a cappella music in worship.”

What does he specifically mean: that brethren should not object to solos, choirs, and groups like Acappella Vocal Band? We can maintain unity if brethren will quit insisting on doing that for which there is no biblical authority. Were brethren commanded to sing solos or to sing to one another (Eph. 5:19)? Were they to pick out the best singers, or was everyone to participate (Col. 3:16)? The purposes for singing are praising God and mutual edification. Some brethren prefer to substitute God’s reasons for singing with their own—to please the ear. The New Testament teaches that we are to edify and admonish one another. Some want to go beyond that concept.

Furthermore, the New Testament never says make vocal sounds or music; it says, “Sing.” Those who want to introduce something new and different just because it is new and different should not expect their innovations to remain unevaluated.

The lecturer next made the point that Jesus could have prayed for anything the night He died, but He chose unity. That is true, but it’s not the whole truth. Jesus prayed for several things. Part of the prayer concerned a request for Himself—that He be glorified (John 17:1, 5).

Next, Jesus began a long prayer for His disciples. Some of the key points are highlighted by the following verses.

For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me....I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil....Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:8,15,17).

Unity is important (John 17:11,20-21), but the other subjects, including Truth and not being **of** the world, are also important. It is not as though our Lord prayed for only one item; there were several. And the importance of the disciples having accepted His words (truth) precedes the plea for unity (John 17:6-11,17-21).

Truth undergirds unity. Without it, unity can exist. Atheists, evolutionists, and humanists can be united in error just as those in denominations can be. But Christian unity can not exist unless it is built upon truth.

2. Henderson's second point was: "We must learn to allow for some diversity in belief and practice among congregations and individual believers." While this bit of wisdom is certainly in accord with the humanistic philosophy of the day, how does it compare with the following Scriptures?

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).

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church (1 Cor. 4:17).

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phi. 1:27).

A few years ago one could visit a congregation of God's people almost anywhere, and the only difference one could find was whether the Lord's Supper preceded or followed the sermon. What happened? Now, when members traveling on vacation, visit other churches, they do not know what they are likely to find—due to **diversity** of beliefs and practices.

"Those issues which are central to the faith are presented clearly and without ambiguity in the Scriptures." Most would probably agree with this statement, but what does the speaker mean by it? What does he consider ambiguous? Would he argue, for example, that we cannot take a firm stand against instrumental music because to do so involves logic and the use of implication?

These are valid, God-given tools of interpretation. The Sadducees failed to see the importance of the statement, "I am the God of Abraham" (Mat. 22:23-33). The issue of the resurrection had been debated for centuries. Apparently, even the proponents of the doctrine had not drawn the correct inferences from Exodus 3:6, or the dispute could have ended much sooner.

If we understand that we need authority, the authority of Christ, for all that we teach and all that we practice (Col. 3:17), then we will not desire to introduce

anything into our teachings or our worship that lacks authority. That kind of attitude will maintain unity. Division results from people saying, "Well, maybe there's no biblical authority for this practice, but I don't see anything wrong with it. In fact, I like it." Some may claim certain teachings are ambiguous just so they may do them in the absence of authority.

### **"The Sounds of Silence"**

Henderson continues: "We have divided over our opinions about what the Bible says concerning other matters and our opinions concerning the silence of the Scriptures." In some instances, this statement would apply. Some have misunderstood and misapplied the silence of the Scriptures, which illustrates that we must be very careful. But the flawed logic which was used by those brethren has been exposed in public discussion. Unfortunately, a careful presentation of the truth did not always end the division, but at least it afforded the opportunity for all honest hearts to reconcile themselves to it.

Those to the "right" of center have generally proven to be more "noble" than those on the "left" because they are willing to put their views to the test. They believe strongly in them and are willing to defend them. But liberals (those on the "left") remain silent when it comes to defending their beliefs. They either tersely decline or resort to ridicule ("I refuse to puke with buzzards").

When a person refuses to stand up for his beliefs, one has to wonder why. Are liberals not confident enough to put their beliefs to the test? They sound arrogant enough most of the time. (Of course, there is a difference between arrogance and confidence.) Perhaps they don't hold their views all that strongly (in which case they should quit propagating them). Or maybe they just know they are false teachers and don't want to be exposed.

Can anyone imagine Paul refusing to defend his beliefs? Engaging in controversy was the norm for him because to him Truth was paramount. Can anyone picture our Lord Jesus refusing to answer those who questioned Him? On many occasions the multitude marveled at His answers. Today's liberals would amaze most brethren if they would even appear on the polemic platform. Their cowardice bears witness to the fact that they have not the spirit of Christ.

### **Excuses for Diversity**

Henderson now begins to explain why we should fellowship divergent views. These will be categorized below and stated in his own words.

a. “As long as we who are sinful, uninspired readers attempt to interpret words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, we will inevitably arrive at differing conclusions.” This statement denies the power of God, who created us and who inspired the Word. Fallible human beings can understand an infallible book, or God wasted His time. God knows man’s short-comings and weaknesses, but He also knows our capabilities, and He charged us to be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.”

b. After making the “human frailty” argument, Henderson next tries the “We’re all in error on something” gambit.

I believe we will more readily allow for diversity of practice and opinion if each of us will simply acknowledge that our doctrinal positions and opinions are necessarily and inevitably a mixture of truth and error. The only alternative I know to that admission is to claim that we have perfectly understood and perfectly obeyed every teaching in this great book, and I know of no one among us who would be willing to make such an arrogant claim.

Truly, this is an astonishing doctrine—not because it holds any validity, but for its confusion and obfuscation. Read the first sentence of the above quotation again. Notice that he equates **opinion** with **doctrinal positions**. Which is it that we are discussing: opinion or doctrine? The two cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered equivalents. In matters of faith (doctrine) there must be unity; in matters of opinion there should be liberty. They are not (nor ever have been) the same, but Henderson uses them interchangeably.

Equally egregious is his outlandish statement that our doctrinal positions are a mixture of truth and error!! What does such a fantastic suggestion do to the inspired Word of God? Several Scriptures will need to be rewritten.

And ye shall know the truth [though because you are human and fallible it will be mixed with error], and the truth [albeit mixed with error] shall make you free (John 8:32).

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God [except he can’t because he is a human being and will therefore mix the oracles of God with error] (1 Pet. 4:11).

Why was Paul so harsh in his statements to “mark” false teachers (Rom. 16:17) if we all teach a mixture of truth and error anyway?

In the second part of the above quotation he says we would be arrogant to claim to have understood perfectly every teaching and to have obeyed perfectly

every teaching. Of course we would! Even the apostles could not do that; Peter was to be blamed in Antioch (Gal. 2:11). But notice that we have now jumped from **opinion** to **doctrine** to **obedience**, as if no difference existed in these concepts.

As human beings, we will always fall short of practicing what we preach; does that make the teaching any less true? And does not understanding every intricate teaching in the Bible prevent us from teaching its fundamental principles? Henderson is arguing that imperfection implies fellowship of everything.

### An Invitation to Humor

On the way to his next excuse for diversity, Henderson makes an irresistible offer for critics to have a little fun at his expense. “I have no doubt whatsoever that I currently embrace some wrong opinions and conclusions concerning what the Bible teaches.” AMEN! In fact, he provides an example shortly. “I do the best I can. I approach the Word with all the integrity I can muster, but my understanding is limited by my own ignorance....” Well, what else can be expected from someone who spent three years in Abilene’s graduate program? With professors like Carroll Osburn, it’s a wonder he hasn’t become part of a man-made denomination.

c. “and sinfulness.” The admission is appreciated, but such does not necessarily impair one’s ability to understand the Bible. It may—as in the case of dishonest homosexuals who pervert the Scriptures in a vain effort to justify their sins. But even atheists and the most immoral people alive can understand what the Bible teaches. They may not want to accept it or to repent of their sins, but they can comprehend it. Notice that the accusers of the immoral woman were sinful, but they understood what Jesus said (John 8:2-11).

d. “and a lifetime of immersion in a western culture which in so many ways is foreign to the Bible.” Granted that the more information we gain from our study of the Scriptures, including cultural insights, the more we profit. But God knew these things when He gave us His Word in the Greek language. (He also knew that many people would need to rely on translations into their own languages.) God knew that we would still understand the major doctrines of the Bible—even if we did not catch all of the nuances.

“My thinking is not always clear.” (AMEN again); “my motives are not always pure.” Henderson may be the first liberal who has questioned his own credibility; we shall not challenge him concerning it.

e. “Paul says in First Corinthians 13 that on this side of heaven our knowledge is always going to be partial; so I don’t suspect that I’ll ever have it all figured out.” WHOA!! This is the example referred to earlier of a wrong conclusion concerning what the Bible teaches. What Paul actually said is quoted below.

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away...For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known (1 Cor. 13:8-10,12).

### 1 Corinthians 13

The purpose of First Corinthians 13 is to demonstrate to the church that there is something better than spiritual gifts. In terms of quality love far transcends the spiritual gifts. In fact, one could possess the ability to speak in unknown tongues, to prophesy, to know spiritual truths without studying, or to miraculously move mountains (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Yet without love none of those things matters.

Furthermore, those things are not only inferior in quality; they are inferior in duration. All those spiritual gifts shall **fail, cease, vanish away**. When? At the end of time? If such is Henderson’s position, which his statement indicates, then he could not deny that spiritual gifts are in use at this very moment! The text, however, indicates that the temporary gifts will cease **while** faith, hope, and love abide (1 Cor. 13:13). They abide now. In eternity faith and hope will be unnecessary (Rom. 8:24).

Paul’s overall point is that the gifts are temporary; he therefore contrasts the temporary with that which is permanent. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge all pertain to the revelation of God’s will, which was incomplete at the time Paul wrote. When it became complete, the means of revelation (prophecies, tongues, knowledge—the gifts, in other words), would be done away.

Henderson makes a dangerous statement when he says that our knowledge is always going to be partial this side of heaven. First of all, he has ignored the context of First Corinthians 13. But even worse is that he has denied what the other Scriptures plainly teach.

As his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto

the saints (Jude 3).

If God’s revelation to mankind is not complete, then inspiration must have continued to this present hour. Either God has given all of His revelation to us, or He has not. If He has, then we can know and understand it. If not, we are at the mercy of everyone who claims to have seen a vision.

Paul, in First Corinthians 13, was not saying that the best we could do this side of heaven was to have partial knowledge; partial knowledge was the best Christians could do until the revelation was complete. It is wrong to imply that if we fail to understand every Bible nuance, we will be lost. No one believes that. Even the first century Christians understood salvation and worship, which is more than can be said for liberals.

3. “I believe that if we are going to make any sort of a positive contribution to the unity of all believers, we must learn to reach to our left.” Exactly what Scriptural principle is this idea based upon? Apparently we can rule out Second John 6: “this is love, that we walk after his commandments.” His own definition of “the left” involves “a point of view which sees the Scriptures as allowing for more freedom for diversity of practice.” Is it permissible to allow more freedom than the Scriptures grant?

When I say that we need to reach to our left, I mean that we need to find ways to engage in meaningful dialogue with those we have traditionally rejected simply because of their understanding of Scripture, and therefore their practices are less restrictive than our own.

Satan should have been rejected in the garden of Eden because of his understanding of the Scriptures; Eve would have been better off to have had no dialogue with him. Jesus did reject the devil’s interpretation of Psalm 91:11-12 in Luke 4:12. (Why is it that whenever liberals want us to move in a different direction we need to break with **tradition**? But whenever they want us to follow what men like Campbell, Stone, and Lipscomb said, they speak reverently of our **heritage**?)

Henderson first suggests that we reach to the left in our own “fellowship.” Considering the doctrines he espouses and that he was speaking at one of the most liberal universities still claiming to be affiliated with churches of Christ, one wonders how much further left he and his audience could reach (without their arms coming clear out of their sockets)?

Echoing Doug Foster, Henderson alleges: “We are all biblical conservatives, who are all seeking the will of God as it is revealed in both the written word and the

living word.” (Would someone like to explain what he means by “the living word”?) “But we have different approaches to the Scriptures, or at the very least, different interpretations of troublesome passages.” In light of what he is about to say, apparently those “troublesome” passages include Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Matthew 16:18, 1 Timothy 2:9-14, and other verses that once were plain (at least they were before we began to engage in “meaningful dialogue”).

After we reach to the “left” in our “fellowship,” guess what the next step is. “Brothers and sisters, we do not have to live in estrangement and isolation from

those who honestly differ with us inside or outside our fellowship. We don’t have to agree with them at every point, nor do we have to convince them to agree with us on every issue.”

By implication we have permission to isolate ourselves from those who **dishonestly** differ with us (whoever they are).

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*Editor’s Note: Because of the length of this fine article by brother Summers, I will have to divide it into two parts. Save this part and read the remainder in next months “Defender.”*

## RECOGNIZING APOSTASY

*Steve Miller*

We are witnessing the same situation that the apostle John wrote about in A.D. 90. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 John 2:19). This passage given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the apostle John plainly reveals that there would be those who would depart from the faith and leave the fellowship of God the Father, Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, and those in the one body of Christ.

We are able to know when people depart from the faith and go into error. “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). We are able to recognize those who have left us because they are not of us. We are exhorted to “try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Then we are commanded to refuse to bid false teachers and apostates of the one faith “God

speed” (2 John 9-11).

Sadly, at this day and time, there are very few who will “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13).

Compromising with the devil, fellowshipping false doctrine, false teachers, apostate congregations, denominations, and rejecting the authority of the Scriptures, have led to the extreme liberalism that exists in the body of Christ today.

We are facing a similar situation in the church today that our brethren faced over a hundred years ago. It is true that “history repeats itself.” We should pay close attention to history and learn as much as we can from it. By doing this, we will hopefully save ourselves from making the same mistakes as our forefathers.

May we continue to study, learn, preach, teach, and live the truth and all the truth, that we can say with the Apostle Paul, “I am set for the defence of the gospel” (Phi. 1:17).

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# Defender



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

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## "THE UNITY-COMMITTED CHURCH"

Gary W. Summers

*Editor's Note: This is part two of brother Summers' excellent review of Mark Henderson's lesson at Abilene Christian University lectureship on the Subject "People Need the Unity-Committed Church" delivered February 19, 1996. You might want to review the first part of this article in the September issue.*

### Christians Outside Our "Fellowship"

Where has this speech been leading? Mark Henderson now sets forth what he truly believes, which is: (1) The churches of Christ are merely a denomination; and (2) One does not have to be baptized to be saved. And remember, these things were taught at a "Christian" university. Now read carefully the following remarks, which continue exactly where the last quote ended (so as not to lose the context).

All we have to do is look to our left, to those who have felt the sting of our rejection, and everywhere we see one who has committed his or her heart and life to the lordship of Jesus Christ, we may rejoice that we have found a brother or a sister. And we may extend to that child of God the same inviting hand of grace and acceptance which we ourselves have received from the Lord Jesus. It won't be easy to do that; it is hard to lay aside the mantle of exclusivity.

This passage is nearly identical to Max Lucado's Law of Inclusion (accepting nearly anyone). Notice, everyone who has committed himself or herself to Christ is a Christian (brother or sister). In other words, according to Henderson and Lucado, a person becomes a "child of God" at the point of commitment. Never mind baptism for the remission of sins, which must be one of those "troublesome" passages.

Then he has the audacity to speak of "our common commitment to the authority of God's word." Can we see now why the wolves dress in sheep's clothing? They look and talk like sheep in order to get close enough for the kill. "We are conservatives," they mouth. "We believe in Biblical authority." But what they advocate clearly denies those sentiments.

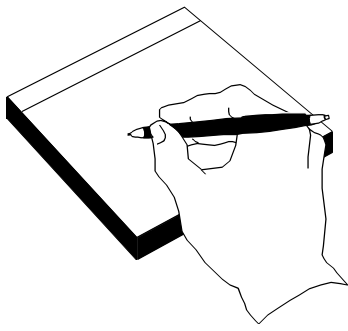
We do not have the right to extend the right hand of fellowship to those whose sins have never been washed in the blood of the lamb and who have not therefore been added to the body of Christ. They may be sweet, kind, devout friends, neighbors, or loved ones, but they are not Christians until they have obeyed the gospel. God never gave us the right to personally determine who is a Christian. Such is not determined subjectively but rather objectively.

Furthermore, exclusivity is not easy. Israel remained in constant trouble for her failure to remain separated from the peoples of the land. Likewise, it is the spirit of our age to be loving and peaceful, to make every endeavor to "get along" and to stand for nothing, lest we be called names like "radicals" and "extremists." We're all encouraged to have irenic spirits and not make waves, just as Micaiah the prophet was so warned before he appeared before Ahab. After all, demanding a "thus saith the Lord" is so legalistic.

### "Attend The Church Of Your Choice"

4. "I don't know anything which will motivate us to a commitment to unity faster than recognizing who the real enemy is." Henderson then speaks about our real enemy being Satan and not people (Eph. 6:12), which

*(Continued on Page 4)*



# **Notes From The Editor**

**Michael  
Hatcher**

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## **Politics**

The church's work is spiritual. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). It has the same work as Christ. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This work is accomplished by preaching to the lost, edifying the saved, and benevolent acts to those in need. It is not the purpose or work of the church to deal in the secular. Saving the whales, fighting pollution (whether air or water pollution), the arms race, etc., is not as important as saving souls. Included in the secular is the question of politics. The political realm is not the realm of the church. During the days of Christ and the first century church, the political scene was very evil. Additionally, the rulers during those days were wicked (just as wicked if not worse than what we have today in the United States). Yet, the Scriptures teach us that we have certain obligations to the government. Some sum up our obligations as (1) pay, (2) pray, and (3) obey. I might add our need to respect and honor those in governmental authority. Our government has also established that the government is not to make laws regarding the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise of it. The first article of the amendment to the constitution has been interpreted as the separation of church and state and almost as freedom from religion. As a result, the government will not allow religious organizations to support either parties, individual running for office, or particular issues upon which we will be voting. It is certainly **not** our intent to do this.

Some Christians see such a separation of church and state that they will not even vote. While I realize that it is not the responsibility of the church to be

involved in politics, that does not mean that individual Christians cannot be involved in the political process. Since our government allows all citizens to vote, all Christians should exercise their right to vote in the political process.

God reveals through Solomon that "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Pro. 14:34). Thus, God will either bless a nation or curse it based upon its righteousness. Righteousness is that which is morally right and correct. God reveals His righteousness in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). Obviously, moral issues should be of utmost concern to Christians in their determination of how to vote. While physical concerns cannot be ignored, the main factors will be who and what will lead this nation in the way of righteousness.

With these thoughts in mind, how could any Christian vote for anyone who supports abortion or euthanasia? These practices degrade human life, whereas God reveals the value of human life. God made man in His image. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:26-27). Some politicians will even support the ungodly action of partial birth abortions. These types of individuals will not uphold righteousness, but they are upholding ungodliness.

Another major issue of today is homosexuality. The Bible is very clear on this subject. The Old Testament reveals that those who practice homosexual acts were to be put to death (this was under a theocracy, God ruling the nation). The New Testament states that those who practice such things are worthy of death (Rom. 1:26-28,32). Yet, we have a government that not only is tolerant of such actions, many holding government offices support and some are openly homosexual. The Christian, as he considers moral issues, cannot vote for these individuals.

While there are many other important moral issues today, these two (murder or abortion and homosexuality) are a good start. As we decide whom we will vote for in the upcoming elections (and yes, we as Christians should use our right to vote), let us always remember to uphold what is morally right in God's sight by the way we cast our vote.

*MH*

# FIFTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

NOVEMBER 10 - 14, 1996

## STUDIES IN ROMANS

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

9:00 AM	Kevin Cauley	The Book of Romans—An Introduction
10:00 AM	Dub McClish	Sundry Greetings and a Final Plea (16:1-27)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Curtis Cates	Paul's Evangelistic Passion
3:00 PM	Joseph Meador	Answering False Doctrines: Does the Holy Spirit bear direct witness to Christians (8:16)? Does the Holy Spirit utter groanings for the Christian when he prays (8:26)? Did God unconditionally foreordain and elect the very individuals who would be saved (8:29; et al.)? Are belief in the resurrection of Christ and confession of Him as Lord all one need do to be saved (10:9-10)? Difficult Passages: In what sense are Christians "not under law" (6:14-15)? Is Paul describing his struggle with sin before or after he was converted (7:15-24)? Identify "the law of the Spirit of life," "the law of sin and death," "the law," "the ordinance of the law" (8:2-4). To what "resurrection" does Paul refer (8:11)?
4:00 PM	Bob Berard	
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Goebel Music	Blessings and Responsibilities of Being In Christ (8:1-17)
8:00 PM	Lester Kamp	Instructions Concerning Optional Matters (14:1-23)

### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11

9:00 AM	Michael Hatcher	Answering False Doctrines: Is eternal life an unconditional free gift from God, requiring no human effort whatever (6:23)? Is man so inherently evil that he cannot keep from sinning and should therefore not be blamed for his sin (7:18-23)? Since there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, can the Christian miss Heaven (8:1,31-39)? Does the Holy Spirit lead us by immediate means in addition to His Word (8:14)?
10:00 AM	Jesse Whitlock	Saving Faith Comes Through Hearing the Word of Christ (10:1-2)
11:00 AM	Tyler Young	Difficult Passages: Identify "the creation," "the whole creation," and "the first fruits of the Spirit" (8:19-23). Does the promise of "all things" working together for our good include such tragedies as the death of a child, divorce, terminal illness, crippling accidents, and such like (8:28)? Can Christians carry arms in the military or police forces of their country (13:1-7)? Why was Paul speaking of "fulfilling the law" several years after its annulment (13:8-10; cf., 4:1-6)?
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Lynn Blair	Sundry Encouragements to the Elect (8:18-39)
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum	What Must One Know About Baptism for It To Be Valid?
3:45 PM	Gary Summers	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	B. J. Clarke	The Power of the Gospel and the Sins of the Gentiles (1:1-32)
8:00 PM	Lindell Mitchell	Abraham, an Example of Justification by Faith (4:1-25)

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:00 AM	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.	Difficult Passages: What is the meaning of "from faith unto faith" (1:17)? What is "the work of the law written in their hearts" (2:15)? In what sense were sins "passed over" by God in previous times (3:25)? What is the meaning of "by faith...through faith" (3:30)?
10:00 AM	Daniel Denham	Answering False Doctrines: Is man totally and inherently evil from birth, having inherited Adam's sin (3:10-18; 5:18-19; 7:14-15,18-23)? Is the personal righteousness of Christ reckoned ("imputed," KJV) to us when we become Christians (4:3-6,22-24)? Are grace and law mutually exclusive (6:14-15)? Are alien

11:00 AM	Tim Ayers	sinners not obligated to keep the law of Christ since they are "free in regard of righteousness" (6:20; 8:7)? All Are Under Sin and Can Only Be Saved by Faith (3:1-31)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Robert Dodson	The Pattern of Our Justification by Faith in Christ (6:1-23)
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum	Are Grace and Works Mutually Exclusive?
3:45 PM	Mac Deaver	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Garland Elkins	God's Judgment Upon the Jews (2:1-29)
8:00 PM	Bobby Liddell	Why God Rejected Israel and Accepted the Gentiles (11:1-36)

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:00 AM	Richard Melson	Answering False Doctrines: Is salvation by faith alone on man's part (1:16; 3:22,28,30; 4:3-4,16,23; 5:1; et al.)? Are "non-covenant" people not amenable to the law of Christ, but only to a "law written in their hearts" (2:15)? As long as we keep the "spirit" of God's law, do we have to be concerned about the "letter" (i.e., the details) (2:27-29; 7:6)? Is all judging of our fellow men forbidden (2:1-3; 14:4,10,13)? Miscellaneous Exhortations and a Preview of Paul's Plans (15:1-32)
10:00 AM	Darwin Hunter	The Duration and Function of the Law of Moses (7:1-25)
11:00 AM	James Meadows	Paul's Appeal for Holy Living (12:1-21)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	John Shannon	Does the Grace of God Guarantee Our Final Salvation?
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
3:45 PM	Buster Dobbs	
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	David Brown	How the Holy Spirit Dwells in the Christian: He Does So Representatively Through the Word of God Alone
8:00 PM	Terry Hightower	How the Holy Spirit Dwells in the Christian: He Does So Literally and Personally

### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:00 AM	Robin Haley	Israel Rejected, the Gentiles Accepted by God (9:1-33)
10:00 AM	Tim Nichols	Answering False Doctrines: Does one need only ask the Lord to save him in order to be saved (10:13)? Is salvation by grace alone, thus excluding all works of every kind men may do (11:6)? Will all of fleshly Israel someday return to God, be converted to Christ, and be saved (11:26)? Was Phoebe an "official" deaconess at Cenchrea, thus establishing the precedent for having such in the church today (16:1)?
11:00 AM	Jim Laws	The Blessings of Justification by Faith (5:1-21)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Gary Colley	Difficult Passages: In what sense are Christians "not under law" (6:14-15)? Is Paul describing his struggle with sin before or after he became a Christian (7:15-24)? Identify the following: "the law of the Spirit of life," "the law of sin and death," "the law," and "the ordinance of the law" (8:2-4). To what "resurrection" does Paul refer (i.e., the final resurrection, one's "resurrection" from baptism, or some other) (8:11)?
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum	Is It Uncharitable To Label and Name False Teachers?
3:45 PM	Jerry Moffitt	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Marvin Weir	Duties Toward Civil Authorities and the Debt of Love (13:1-14)
8:00 PM	Darrell Conley	The Book of Romans—A Summary

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DAILY DISCUSSION FORUMS ON CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS

(Continued from Page 1)

is, of course, true. But that fact does not preclude Paul from saying that those who preach any other gospel are accursed (Gal. 1:8-9), which is why they need to be challenged, not fellowshiped. Although we are fighting erroneous *ideas*, men are the ones who champion those ideas; therefore, Paul does not hesitate to call by name those who overthrow the faith of some (1 Tim. 1:18-20, 2 Tim. 2:17-18).

This ACU graduate pooh-poohs “our intramural squabbling over petty differences which don’t have anything whatsoever to do with the salvation of lost souls.” Petty? Not only has baptism “for the remission of sins” been characterized as non-essential; now he relegates it to the “petty” file. When Henderson talks about “intramural squabbling,” he undoubtedly refers to debates that we have had with denominational ministers over “petty” issues such as what the Bible teaches about salvation. He has learned well from Carroll Osburn (or those like him) who, in his book, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, affirmed that “there should be room in the Christian fellowship for those who believe that Christ is the Son of God, but who differ on...soteriological matters such as whether baptism is ‘for’ or ‘because of’ the remission of sins.”

In other words, Osburn is saying (like Lucado and Henderson) that baptism has nothing to do with a person becoming a Christian, that those in denominations who have made some sort of commitment to Jesus are brethren. Sorry, but Osburn, Lucado, and Henderson are false teachers far to the left of the Bible. They have gone beyond the boundaries of fundamental New Testament teaching and are no longer walking in the light.

Henderson lauds the Boulder Ministerial Fellowship in Boulder, Colorado, as men who anointed him “with the precious oil of unity.” As he listened to them pray, he “found a lump forming” in his throat. He mentions “great tears of release” rolling down his cheeks. His emotions obviously took precedence over what the Bible teaches. He was particularly affected by what an Assembly of God preacher (whom he termed a ministerial “colleague”) prayed.

God, I thank you for this brother, and I ask your blessings on his ministry and his family. Oh, God, thank you for the churches of Christ and for their commitment to your word. I pray that you will give them a powerful ministry in our community and that they will reach many lost souls for Jesus Christ.

## The Bounds Of Fellowship

There is nothing wrong with the prayer (in fact, it contains the things we ought to be praying for one another). But the man praying it is not a brother in Christ. Neither is the Baptist, the Presbyterian, the charismatic, the man from the community Church, nor the one from the Reformed Church (were there any women preachers there?). Not one of them preaches what Peter did on the day of Pentecost when people asked him what to do to be saved, nor has any of them been baptized in order to have his sins forgiven. What good is the prayer (1 Pet. 3:12) of one who has never had his sins washed away and been added to the body of Christ?

Imagine the implications of Henderson’s teaching. One man teaches that babies are born with original sin and that they need to be sprinkled to get rid of it. He’s a brother? Another teaches that sinners are saved by “faith only.” He’s a brother? Yet another teaches that God is still working miracles today despite the fact that His Word has already been confirmed (Heb. 2:1-4). He’s a brother? All these are brethren? Can Unity prevail over Truth? Such thinking just about destroys limits of fellowship altogether. Oh, we can still exclude the modernists who deny the miracles of Jesus and the inspiration of the Word—unless we happen to attend a meeting of these men and they pray fervently for us and shame us for being exclusivistic.

### “We Need Each Other”

Henderson talked about how ungodly the townspeople of Boulder, Colorado, are—how that only 7% of the population attends worship anywhere (as opposed to the national average of 40%). This serves as his rationale for joining with the denominations.

Yes, we still have our differences, and some of them are more significant than others, but what we do at those prayer meetings is we recognize that our common commitment to the lordship of Jesus Christ and our common hope that His kingdom would come in Boulder even as it is in heaven is greater than those things which divide us. So we unite with one voice to engage the battle against the enemy. Boulder is too big and the strongholds are too great for any one of us to do all the work; we need each other.

Corinth was a sinful city which included the evils of drunkenness and sexual immorality. God didn’t advise Paul to form an alliance with Hymenaeus and Philetus, or any false teacher of their stripe, because the task was too great for him (it is always too great for us). The Lord comforted Paul by saying, “I am with you” (Acts 18:10).

Brethren, we who have obeyed the gospel need each other. But those who have not done so are not brethren. Furthermore, they need to be taught the truth so that they can be saved. If we really loved them, that's what we would do.

### **The Real Unity-Committed Church**

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).

Only let your conversation [conduct] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phi. 1:27).

Let's consider the above Scriptures. The first rule of interpretation involves asking the questions, "Who is the writer?" and "To whom is the author of the letter writing?" In both of the above instances Paul has written to brethren within one congregation. Unity within the church is imperative, not optional. Furthermore, there is a purpose for unity—that we may work together "for the faith of the gospel." If brethren become bogged down in petty squabbles, how can the work of the church advance?

Not only was internal unity crucial to congregations in the first century, it is just as necessary today. The very presence of these exhortations in the epistle shows us that even Christians are not perfect (though perfection is our goal—Heb. 6:1). We will offend one another (presumably unintentionally); those moments of friction should be dealt with in love, not hostility. We should not assume and assign impure motives on the part of our fellow family members. We are not each other's enemies. Jesus taught that communication is the solution to the problem (Mat. 5:23-24; 18:15-17).

But sometimes people approach things differently. There are variations of thinking, expression, and emphasis. Since human beings do differ in these areas, we must exercise love toward one another while certain matters are being worked out. Love is defined in part by being patient with each other ("beareth all things"—1 Cor. 13:7); thinking the best of each other ("believeth all things"—1 Cor. 13:7); having confidence that a solution pleasing to all will be found ("hopeth all things"—1 Cor. 13:7); and that when things are not resolved in our favor, we continue anyway, putting it behind us ("endureth all things"—1 Cor. 13:7). Regardless of how matters of judgment turn out, we are brethren committed to one another. If doctrinal differ-

ences arise, we must not be suspicious of one another's motives, but rather devote ourselves to both individual and group study of the matter. Ideally, a better understanding will result.

One of the biggest hindrances to congregational unity is pride—MY feelings were hurt beyond repair; MY opinion was disregarded; MY interpretation of the Scriptures did not prevail. Therefore, some divorce themselves from a congregation on inadequate (not to mention selfish) grounds. We ought to treat our relationship with the local church just as we do marriage—we only divorce ourselves from it for unfaithfulness (to the Lord).

Unfortunately, what we have observed over the years is that some leave sound congregations of God's people for totally inadequate and often trivial reasons. Equally amazing are the brethren who have Scriptural grounds for divorce (the church which they attend is unfaithful to the teaching of Christ), but they remain with that unfaithful congregation. We must amuse Satan considerably.

The passages in First Corinthians 1:10 and Philipians 1:27 are not optional; they are commandments like any other; we must commit ourselves to striving for unity. Anyone who wants to walk worthy of his calling as a Christian must develop humility and patience; he or she must work hard to maintain unity.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-3).

Seven reasons are listed to remind us of what all we have in common (Eph. 4:4-6). Paul wants brethren to work at unity so that their work in the gospel may progress.

### **Unity Among Churches**

What does the Bible teach about unity between various congregations in an area? There ought to be peace, harmony, love, and cooperation. In Colossians 4:16 Paul tells the brethren in Colosse to exchange letters with the brethren in Laodicea. This instruction implies that they knew one another and enjoyed an amiable relationship, which is the way God designed it.

We ought to be interrelated in a positive way. Brethren in Thessalonica became examples to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia (1 The. 1:6-8). The zeal of the Corinthians in preparing a gift for the poor saints in Jerusalem inspired several other churches

(2 Cor. 9:2-4). Unity and harmony between congregations of the Lord's church ought to exist. And it will—if we all teach the same thing the Bible does. Paul taught the same doctrine in all the churches (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16). Failure to achieve unity on this level can also hinder the Lord's work.

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:14-15). The New Testament recognizes, however, the existence of false teachers, who will teach things not authorized by God nor in harmony with what Paul taught the churches by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Paul said to **mark** such men (Rom. 16:17-18). John said not to receive them (2 John 9-11).

But what do we do when false teachers are working with neighboring congregations or are in fellowship with them? If God has forbidden us to fellowship the false teacher, and some church fellowships that individual, then we have no choice but to withhold fellowship from those brethren who have violated the Scriptures (namely Romans 16:17-18 and 2 John 9-11). They are the ones who have disrupted fellowship by departing from the Word of God. They may be acting out of ignorance; therefore, we should still exercise love and patience toward them as we seek to communicate with them about the barrier to fellowship they have introduced.

Unfortunately, most of the time, such congregations know exactly what they are doing, and they have absolutely no wish to discuss the matter. Sadly, they leave God's faithful churches no alternative but to exclude them from Christian fellowship. We are committed to unity, but Truth and faithfulness to our Lord take precedence over unity, and we cannot fellowship them while they remain in their apostasy.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

What about unity with all who claim to be Christians? The Bible does not specifically address this issue because our twentieth century condition did not exist in the first century. Furthermore, it would be wrong (not to mention inaccurate) to attempt to apply biblical passages enjoining unity among brethren to those in denominations who are not brethren. Consider Jesus' prayer for unity. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20-21).

Any effort to apply this passage to all the denominations would simply be poor exegesis. Campbell,

Stone, and others may have begun with such a notion, but they were assuming that members of the various denominations were all Christians. If that assertion were true, their procedure would be valid.

If all members of denominations are Christians, then all ought to be willing to give up those creeds and doctrines that divide. Being separated into different “Christian” camps lacks any biblical authority whatsoever, and it directly disobeys Jesus' prayer. Furthermore, if those in denominations are Christians and members of the churches of Christ are Christians, then (1) we are just a denomination, (2) we have been wrong in separating ourselves from other “equal” churches, and (3) we ought to quit being divisive and begin treating everyone else as brothers and sisters in the kingdom. (Such was Henderson's position.)

The problem is, however, that those in denominations are **NOT** Christians. (This statement is not made out of vindictiveness, cruelty, or self-righteousness; it is made solely out of respect for the Truth.) Let's look more closely at what Jesus said. “I do not pray for these alone [the apostles], but also for those who will believe in Me **through their word**.” Now answer honestly: “Is Jesus referring to anyone who just happens to hear about Him as a ‘believer’?”

No, these individuals for whom Jesus is praying are ones who have come to believe through the apostles' word—the teachings now recorded in the New Testament. They are ones who have obeyed the same gospel taught by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-41). They are ones who have repented of sins and been baptized in the name of Christ in order to have their sins forgiven.

What denomination teaches that doctrine? Some sprinkle instead of immersing (biblical baptism); others make their children members of their denomination though they can neither believe nor repent. But all of them teach that one is saved before and without baptism for the remission of sins! So how can they be Christians? They cannot be because they have never obeyed the apostles' words. (Remember Jesus was praying for those who had obeyed the apostles' words.)

The unity-committed church is not seeking fellowship with religious groups claiming to belong to Christ but rejecting the Bible's teaching regarding salvation. We are not equal denominations; we are not even brethren. There can be no fellowship, much less unity. Of course, we are interested in the spiritual condition of those in denominations, just as we would be about Jews, Moslems, and atheists. But we can have no spiritual

fellowship with any man-made religious group. We are members of the church of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our head—**THERE IS NO EQUIVALENT!**

Let us commit ourselves to the unity Jesus actually prayed for—for unity among brethren within the local congregation and between faithful churches. “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*” (Eph. 4:4-6).

### “Loving Those Who Hate the Lord”

To attempt to fellowship those who have never obeyed the gospel would be just as bad as the mistake King Jehoshaphat made. This king of Judah went up to visit Ahab, king of Israel, who invited him to join in the battle against Ramoth Gilead. Jehoshaphat’s response to Ahab was, “*I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war*” (2 Chr. 18:3).

What prompted Jehoshaphat to speak this way? Was there a sweet, irenic, ecumenical spirit sweeping the land in his day (as there is in ours)? While it is true that they were all brethren in the flesh, nevertheless, they were not brethren **spiritually**. Why not? The reason involves (liberals, sit down for this) **doctrine**. Judah followed (albeit imperfectly) the commands of Jehovah; Israel followed the changes instituted by Jeroboam. Thus, they still had the golden calves, unauthorized priests, a different feast day than what God had commanded, and two cities to worship in other than Jerusalem (see 1 Kin. 12:25-33).

So what’s the problem? Well, sure, the golden calves are a direct violation of the second commandment, but the others are not so bad. After all, God never said that members of the other tribes could NOT be priests. So they added another feast day; at least it didn’t conflict with the one in Jerusalem; people could attend both if they desired. And the cities? Why, it is

only a matter of convenience. Traveling all the way to Jerusalem could prove to be a hardship for some; why not make it easier for people to worship? (Don’t these sound like some of the same arguments that brethren are using today to change things and fellowship nearly anyone?)

“Besides, none of us is perfect; we are all in error on something. Unity must prevail over Truth; if we are going to insist on truth, we will reap nothing but division.” So says the wisdom of this modern age.

Now consider God’s wisdom. He sent Hanani the seer to speak to Jehoshaphat after the battle was fought, in which Ahab died: “*Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD?*” (2 Chr. 19:2). That’s right. Those who have changed God’s doctrines and are worshiping falsely, according to the Scriptures (not just the “opinion” of harsh, unloving conservatives) **hate the Lord**. Furthermore, it is wrong for us to **fellowship** them in a spiritual way.

Like so many brethren today who remain in congregations who fellowship those who hate the Lord (whether denominations or brethren in serious error), Jehoshaphat was a slow learner. Ahab’s son and successor, Ahaziah (who walked in his father’s evil ways), proposed a business venture to Jehoshaphat, and again he was eager to have fellowship with Israel. This time the prophet Eliezer told him: “*Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works*” (2 Chr. 20:35-37).

Jehoshaphat finally understood God’s will in this matter. When Ahaziah suggested rebuilding the ships and letting the sailors be from both nations, the king of Judah refused (1 Kin. 22:48-49). He finally complied with God’s position on fellowship. Will some of our brethren ever comprehend this point?

*312 Pearl St.; Denton, TX 76201*

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# Defender



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

Volume XXV

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## Led By The Spirit Dub McClish

*(Note from the author: The following article is basically one I wrote approximately twenty years ago for the church bulletin I then edited. It represents what I have believed and taught for many years and what I continue to believe and teach.)*

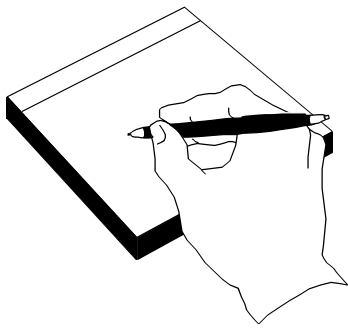
One is not a child of God, a Christian, unless he is led by the Spirit: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). How does God lead His children through the Holy Spirit? Most denominationalists, in their doctrinal confusion and emotionalism, are under the delusion that there is some sort of direct guidance of the Spirit in their lives. Some feel that this is done by giving free reign to their impulses or yielding to their hunches. Some believe the Spirit must "illuminate" the written Word for them if they are to understand it. Further, some claim that they receive some special blessing of spiritual strength (or the ability to behave righteously) from work which the Spirit does for them directly and internally beyond and apart from the written Word and apart from God's external activity in the realm of providence. Others believe they hear a voice speaking directly to them from the Spirit. Still others believe the Spirit leads them by showing them special signs which indicate specific decisions that need to be made at a given time. (Some wait on the Spirit to "lead" them to get up in the morning, which socks to wear, and even which one to put on first!).

It is not surprising, but expected, that unbelievers advocate the above-listed errors. Nor are we surprised that "change agents" and "new hermeneutic" advocates are urging at least some of these activities of the Spirit

of God in their do-or-die agenda to wreck the church of the Lord. The matter that causes both surprise and dismay is that some otherwise sound brethren are now saying that the Spirit operates in a direct mode apart from and in addition to His Word in the realm of sanctification. Our concern is that they apparently do not have in mind merely how God operates and what He does through His "behind-the-scenes" providence or in answer to our prayers, indirectly and external to our hearts and minds (which biblical doctrines are practically universally taught among the elect [e.g., Gen. 50:20; Est. 4:14; Rom. 8:28; et al.]). These brethren seem rather to be insisting that the Spirit does some things directly and internally to and in the Christian's heart that He does not do through His Word alone. If this is not what these brethren mean by their words, they should say so and do it plainly (and we would hope soon)! It is imperative that our words on this subject be carefully-chosen, precise, and well-defined so as not to raise questions unnecessarily. (We say this realizing that we all fall short of this lofty aim occasionally.) If one's concept of the way the Holy Spirit does His work for the Christian cannot be stated in unambiguous, clearly-comprehensible terms, it may be a strong signal that he has an incorrect concept that he needs to abandon or at least hold only to himself if he must hold it.

Two major differing views concerning the way the Spirit dwells in the Christian (i.e., representatively or personally) have been held by those who have genuinely pleaded for the restoration of the ancient order over the past two centuries. The "how" of the Spirit's indwelling,  
(Continued on Page 3)





# Notes From The Editor

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Hatcher**

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## Holy Spirit's Work

The Holy Spirit is an oft misunderstood being, not only in the denominational world, but sadly in the Lord's church. We, generally, understand that the Spirit is a person of the godhead. The Bible uses personal pronouns, masculine gender, singular number describing the third person of the godhead. He possesses all the attributes and characteristics of deity. He does the works of God (had a part in creation, salvation, etc.).

When studying the Holy Spirit our interest turns to the Spirit's work relating to man. The Spirit took the mind of God and made it known to man. This is **revelation**. "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:10-12). Inseparable from revealing the mind of God is the process of making that mind of God known to man unmixed with error (inerrancy). This process of inerrantly revealing God's mind to man is **inspiration**. The result of this process is the Scriptures. "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his

Spirit [revelation]: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 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 [inspiration]; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:7-13). Then, the Spirit confirmed the truth as divine revelation. This is **confirmation**. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:3-4).

Jesus informed the apostles concerning the work of the Spirit when He said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:7-13). Notice what the Spirit was to do: convict (reprove) the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

The question we face today is how does the Spirit accomplish that work. He accomplished His work by revealing the mind of God to man and that revelation taking place unmixed with error. He then confirmed that Word by the use of miracle and the apostles and holy prophets wrote that Word down for us to have today. Thus, today by use of the Scriptures the Spirit is accomplishing His work. It is no wonder that Paul was inspired to write, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Why is the sword of the Spirit the Word of God? It is because that is what the Spirit is using to convict (reprove) the world today of sin, righteousness and judgment.

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*(Continued from Page 1)*

in and of itself, has not been considered a “fellowship” issue by respected men among us in past generations and should not be now. However, so far as we know only an infinitesimal number who were/are counted faithful through all these years have advocated (until very recently) the idea that the Spirit leads, guides, instructs, strengthens, or produces spiritual fruit in the Christian in any direct or immediate way, apart from or in addition to His spiritual “sword,” His Word (Eph. 6:17). (We realize that “how many” or “which” brethren believe a certain doctrine does not guarantee its truthfulness. However, it hardly seems wise to disdain or abandon hastily doctrinal convictions arrived at by many able men over a long period of time.) To contend that the Spirit thus operates on the heart of the Christian in some direct, immediate way has generally been (and continues to be) correctly perceived both as (1) a surrender of the all-sufficiency of the Word of God and (2) an opening of the door to unrestrainable subjectivism.

It is not always kept clear (but it should be) that the way the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian and the way the Holy Spirit works in the life of the Christian are separate issues. Some (both among representative-indwelling advocates and personal-indwelling advocates) apparently believe that the personal indwelling view somehow implies or at least tends toward the direct work view of the Holy Spirit. However, we deny even the tendency, much less the implication. The personal indwelling view no more implies or tends toward the direct work of the Holy Spirit than the doctrine of the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins implies or tends toward “salvation by meritorious works” (as denominationalists have long averred). We do not know of any brother who faithfully teaches the role of baptism in God’s salvation pattern who would ever think of considering it some sort of work of merit on man’s part. Likewise, until lately faithful brethren have been all but non-existent who hold that the Spirit dwells in one personally and who therefore believe that this conviction implies some work in or for us by the Spirit separate from, in addition to, His written Word. Again, let us keep clear the distinction between the indwelling and the operation of the Spirit.

Now back to our original question: How does the Holy Spirit direct, lead, and do His work in the Christian? Does He provide direct leadership and influence in our lives? Does He directly (apart from, in addition to His written Word and His external providence) tell us where to go, what to do, when to do what, and such

like? Does He directly (apart from, in addition to the Bible and providence) give us spiritual strength and cause us to produce His fruit (Gal. 5:22-23)? Please bear in mind that however the Spirit leads, He leads not a few, many, or most, but all of us, according to Romans 8:14.

In the first century, miraculous power was given to the apostles, and they were able to impart it to others for the purpose of revealing and confirming the Gospel (Heb. 2:3-4). However, so far as we can discern, the New Testament neither explicitly nor implicitly teaches that every Christian possessed miraculous gifts. On some occasions, the Spirit directly told someone to go to a certain place and to do or not do a certain thing (e.g., Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 16:6-7; et al.). However, it is readily observable that such direct messages and instances of guidance, even in the days of miracles (long since ended [1 Cor. 13:8-10, et al.]), were not the ordinary, but the extraordinary occurrence. Since even these miraculous incidents of the Spirit’s leadership were exceptional and were confined to only some or perhaps even a few individuals, it is manifest that such miraculous leadership was not in Paul’s (or the Spirit’s) mind in Romans 8:14. The kind of leadership of which Paul wrote is that which the Spirit gives to every Christian, implying that it is not occasional and extraordinary, but constant and ordinary.

How then are sons of God led by the Spirit? We repeat that until very recently, faithful brethren, whether they held a personal or a representatively-only view of the Spirit’s indwelling, answered almost unanimously as follows: “We are led by the Spirit when and as we obey the Word of the Spirit.” Paul commanded: “Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). Surely none would deny that to “walk by the Spirit” is to be “led by the Spirit.” Immediately after His statement just quoted, the Spirit (through Paul’s inspired pen) led us to understand what the “works of the flesh” are and what the “fruit of the Spirit” is (Gal. 5:19-26), with the implied obligation to shun the former and produce the latter. There is not the slightest hint that Paul had in mind any idea that the Spirit apart from or in addition to the written Word would somehow directly produce this beautiful and everywhere-lawful fruit in us.

Our conviction is that there is only one way in which any man (whether alien sinner or God’s child) is “led by the Spirit”: it is by obeying the Word of the Spirit. Any other claimed leading of the Spirit degrades and even nullifies His written Word by which He leads

us! After all, if the Holy Spirit directly produces the fruit of the Spirit in us, what need have we for the instructions and urgings of the written Word? Yet, it is that very written Word (“Scripture”) which is profitable for our every spiritual need and craving and which, if followed, will bring us (without any extra direct assistance of the Spirit) to full spiritual maturity (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Only as we read, understand, and obey the Word does the Spirit lead, direct, teach, and work in us. Any other view of the Spirit’s work in us is an aberrant view in light of both the Bible and the almost-unanimous convictions of generations of earnest brethren in modern times.

So long as brethren are united on this bedrock foundation of biblical principle, we cannot see why the manner of the Spirit’s indwelling the Christian should ever be considered a divisive issue. We therefore appeal to all brethren (whether they are believers in the representative or in the personal indwelling) to earnestly join hands and hearts concerning the work of the Spirit on the hearts of men through His Word alone. As one man let us go forth to face the change-mad liberal heretics within and the many and mighty Satanic foes without who are attacking Zion from every direction.

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## ISAIAH SPEAKS TO AMERICA

*Bill Brandstatter*

Isaiah is often referred to as the “Messianic Prophet.” Of all the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah writes more about Christ than any other. He also wrote a commentary on the times and on ours today as well. Solomon asked before Isaiah: “Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us?” (Ecc. 1:10). Basically, Solomon states that history repeats itself. We need to learn from what Isaiah wrote to Judah. Isaiah’s message for Judah is also one for America.

In chapter five, several woes are pronounced on Judah that need to be examined. These are woes directly related to the sins of the nation of Judah and its prosperity. The fate of wicked men then and now can be plainly seen.

**The first woe is to greedy land barons.** “Woe unto them that join house to house” (Isa. 5:8). There are many today like this. Their whole being is consumed with the love for more and more money, no matter how they get it. They buy more property to bring in more money. One of the sins that many in America are guilty of is materialism. Jesus said, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).

**The second woe is on heavy drinkers.** America has many heavy drinkers today. The parking lots at taverns are often lined with cars. The number of teenage alcoholics continues to climb at an alarming rate. Solomon wrote: “Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Pro. 20:1). Needless to say, America is full of the

unwise. Hosea adds: “Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart” (Hos. 4:11).

**The third woe depicts men pulling iniquity with cords of falsehood** (Isa. 5:18). The men Isaiah mentions are so entangled in sin and iniquity that they become slaves to it. Paul indicates that “to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). Is America headed in the same direction? In some areas, she is already there.

**The fourth woe is upon those that “call evil good, and good evil”** (Isa. 5:20). This woe is pronounced against moral corruption. If a person doubts the moral corruption America is undergoing all that needs to be done is watch about two hours of prime time T.V. to see what is being put into the homes of Americans. Many today as in Isaiah’s time want nothing to do with the Bible. In the time of Hosea, people were destroyed for lack of Bible knowledge (Hos. 4:16). Hosea indicates they had forgotten the law of God. The law of God is often disregarded today.

**The fifth woe is upon those who are wise in their own eyes** (Isa. 5:21). People of this vein are a dime a dozen. Anytime man tries to rely on self entirely, failure will result (Pro. 14:12). The humanist of today clearly fits into this category. The humanist believes that man has outgrown the idea of God. Man’s goal according to the humanist is the development of his own personality, which according to his philosophy ceases to exist after death. The humanist believes that man is a result of a continuous natural process. Those who hold this philos-

ophy will answer some day for it (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12). Jesus stated, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Those who are wise in their own eyes will be judged by the Word of God.

Let us learn from the lessons of Isaiah. In so doing

Christians should strive to faithfully live a godly life by being "not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

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## THE AGE OF INSOLENCE

*Burt Jones*

It is the generation, the era, of insolence. It is the period of insultingly contemptuous speech and conduct. It is the day of impudence and pride.

During a far gentler time it was "The Age of INNOCENCE." Perhaps that is a proper assessment of those seemingly gullible, unsuspecting and childlike years during which we blushed when we were ashamed instead of being ashamed when we blush, as we now are. But, those times are so nice to recall in the glare of this sullen and sour scene. Grossness, base conduct, perversion and shocking behavior seem to be the order of the day.

We accept as the norm lies from repairmen and from chairmen of the board. We accept prevarication from our government; and the dishonesty of a number of politicians is, at present, so pervasive that it has ceased even to be the material of late night talk-show hosts.

Brethren, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5:30-31).

### WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS INSOLENCE?

**It promotes a confusing concept of love for your neighbor.** It further advances the view that the primary aim of man should be the pursuit of pleasure and instant self-gratification, and it communicates this view cleverly and with considerable sophistication. It is dressed in the latest styles and equipped with gourmet food, luxury cars, and earthly mansions on every hilltop.

**It places man in control instead of God.** Insolence reduces the essence of our character to personal preference, obnoxious behavior and instant satisfaction. This is precisely what was taking place during the days of the Old Testament judges: "every man did *that which* was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25).

The mature Christian will inevitably find himself

caught in situations where he must decide to take the high road of Christian behavior or the low road of insolent and defiant conduct. What must be made clear is that the difference between "walk in the light, as he is in the light" (1 John 1:7) and audacious, impenitent behavior is the difference between the necessary evil that is evil and therefore needs repentance, and the necessary evil that is paraded as good.

This shallow presumptuous age raises a question that is crucial for the Lord's church during the balance of this century that has seen us go from Pony Express way-stations to NASA space-stations. That question is: "What difference does it make?" History and the Scriptures bear witness to the fact that there can be no **public** unspottedness without private adherence and allegiance to His righteousness. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 5:20). The character of the church of Christ will never be better than the character of the individual members of His body.

We have but to read Second Chronicles 34:29-33 for the solution to this insolent presence which is threatening to undermine the very fabric of fellowship within the church. Josiah brought together all the men, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests, the Levites, all the people great and small—and he did three very important things:

- (1) He read to them all the Words of the Book of the Covenant.
- (2) He made a personal covenant to follow the instruction of the Word of God himself, totally.
- (3) He caused his people to accept his plan.

If the leadership within His church today (elders, preachers, Christian workers and teachers) begin to truly seek after Him, instead of preeminence, and if

Christians vow to “keep His commandments (John 15:10), God may yet restore this nation to righteousness.

Josiah might have considered his cause to be hopeless. He might have thought that nothing could avert the insolence of his day. But he did what he could do, and his concerted effort was blessed by the turning back of the nation of Israel to God.

“Is the pilgrim spirit quenched within us?  
Now, when our land to ruin’s brink is verging,  
In God’s name let us speak while there is time:  
Now, when the padlocks of our lips are forging,  
silence is a crime!”

Whittier

P.O. Box 985; Moundsville, WV 26041

Mark you calendars!!!

Make plans to attend!!!

# **22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures**

June 7-11, 1997

## **Theme: Leadership**

### **HOW THE SCRIPTURES VIEW THE LOST PERSON**

*Steve Miller*

In God’s eyes there are only two kinds of people in the world, the saved and the lost. These two groups are traveling different paths. “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). Those who are saved have been washed by the blood of Jesus Christ and are pursuing the strait and narrow way which leads to life, while the lost are going down the broad road that leads to an eternal hell. Paul plainly stated that at the second coming, Jesus would come “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 The. 1:8-9). Those who do not know God, the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, will be lost eternally.

The Bible views the lost as separated from God. Isaiah stated, “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between

you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). Sin is what keeps a person out of heaven. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). When does sin separate one from God? Is it at birth? Many sincere people believe that we are born in sin. They can credit reformer John Calvin with this false denominational doctrine. Man does not inherit sin; it is by choice. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). James reveals that man is “tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jam. 1:14-15). We are not born in sin! Remaining in sin keeps us separated from God and brings destruction.

The lost person is one without hope. In speaking of the Ephesians before they obeyed the gospel, Paul stated, “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). The unsaved are aliens, strangers, who have no hope and are without

God. The Christian has the hope of a heavenly home after this life is over (John 14:1-4; Eph. 4:4).

The Bible shows the unsaved person as one who will receive the proper wages for his condition. Hear the apostle, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The number one deceiver is Satan, and he will try his best to keep people from obeying the saving gospel of Christ. He will accommodate those who sow to the flesh and reap corruption. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8). A person who sows to the flesh and stays in his sinful state will receive eternal destruction for his pay. We need to sow spiritual seeds in order to reap an eternal harvest in heaven.

The Bible views the lost person as one who is separated from God, without hope, and one soon to receive his wages—death. The Bible also reveals that the unsaved person is one who cannot be with Christ. This means that the lost do not have eternal life in heaven. The Scriptures view the lost person as one who does not have his name in the Book of Life. If you are not in Christ, where salvation is found, then you have a dark future. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was **cast into the lake of fire**" (Rev. 20:15).

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## WITH TREMENDOUS SUPPORT FROM THE BROTHERHOOD *MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING* NEARS GOAL

*Bobby Liddell*

A generous response from our beloved brethren has brought us near enough our goal to see the light at the end of the tunnel. In November 1995, Memphis School

of Preaching, a work of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ, set a goal of raising \$900,000 to build a new School building. God has greatly blessed us, and through your prayers and support, we now have just over \$800,000 in hand. That means we lack **less than \$100,000** in reaching our goal.

Now, we simply need to add the finishing touch to bring this effort to a close.

We are happy to extend our sincere appreciation to all who have helped in what we trust is a needed work, and worthy of the support of faithful brethren. Many have given to this cause by denying themselves, because of their love for the Lord and His church. God will surely reward you with far better than our expression of gratitude. Simply put, without your active interest, and your putting your money where your heart is, we could not be as near the finish line as we are today. Thanks so much, brethren!

Possibly, some have not given all they planned to give, and are ready to do so before the year ends. We look forward to hearing from you. Others, who have already helped, may be willing to go the second mile, and contribute again. Now is the time, brethren. You will have the great satisfaction of contributing toward the training of men who will traverse the globe with the Gospel of Christ. In addition, your help will, if this world stands, continue to benefit the brotherhood for decades to come, as the School continues to train men to be "Men of the Book."

While we know this is not a primary concern, we do understand the need, and the benefit to you, of a receipt for your contribution. We respond to each one who helps with a letter of thanks and a receipt acceptable to the IRS. Your financial support is tax deductible.

With your help, brethren, we can reach our goal before the year ends. How great that would be to put our fund raising efforts behind us, and to go forward with the completion of the new School building.

*4400 Knight Arnold Road; Memphis, TN 38118*

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**MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR**

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